UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND (UNE)

Authoritarian Regimes in Small Island States: The Anomalous Cases of Electoral Autocracies in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles

Mosmi Bhim

MA in Governance, University of the South Pacific
BA in Journalism and History/Politics, University of the South Pacific

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Humanities, UNE, Australia

27 November 2020

Abstract

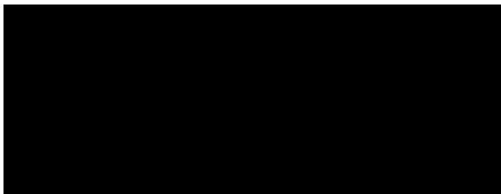
Authoritarian regimes established through multiparty elections are nearly as prevalent in the world as full democracies and near democracies. Yet most small island developing states (SIDS) are democracies. Despite their diminutive size, Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles are anomalous because, post-independence, they developed security forces, experienced successful coups, and established authoritarian regimes. This thesis examines political, military and governmental developments in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, before and after they attained independence from Great Britain, to ascertain why autocracies emerged. Deficiencies in democracy contributed to the occurrence of coups, authoritarianism and unaccountable leadership. The nature of politics, the role of defence forces, and the features of authoritarian regimes are explored using theories of authoritarianism, personalist leadership, democratisation and political-military relations. Prevailing international norms resulted in multiparty elections being held, however, authoritarianism persisted in the 21st century through manipulation of elections to produce electoral autocracy, rather than electoral democracy. As a consequence, certain civil and political rights, the media, judiciary, opposition politicians, and civil society were constrained and security forces were manipulated or politicised. The resulting authoritarian elections perpetuated autocratic government. The role of the international community in the development of militaries and authoritarianism in the three SIDS is assessed. The scope for government and citizens to reinstate genuine democracy amidst restrictions is explored using theories of democracy, civil-military relations and international electoral norms.

Keywords: Fiji, Maldives, Seychelles, electoral, authoritarian, military, democracy

Declaration

I certify that the analyses and conclusions in this thesis are my own work. Assistance received for this thesis, and all sources used in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

I also certify that the work has not been previously submitted for any other degree or qualification.



………………………………

Mosmi Bhim

27 November 2020

Acknowledgements

This thesis has been enriched from the information shared by senior qualified and prominent persons during interviews in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. I acknowledge their generosity in availing themselves for lengthy interviews to share their experiences of living in authoritarian nations.

I thank the University of New England for providing the scholarship which enabled me to conduct this PhD research. I also am indebted to my employer, the Fiji National University (FNU), for granting me with study leave so I could pursue the PhD.

I am grateful to Dr Karin von Strokirch, who has been my Principal Supervisor since I was half-way through my thesis, and has been my co-supervisor since I completed the Confirmation of Candidature (COC). Dr von Strokirch encouraged me to explore all avenues for my thesis. I thank Dr von Strokirch for her moral support and professional advice during this journey. I also thank my co-supervisor Dr Johanna Garnett for her guidance on academic writing and for her personal support and encouragement. Dr Garnett has been my co-supervisor since I was half-way through my thesis, and also has been a reliable friend. I acknowledge Dr Rebecca Spence who initially was my Principal Supervisor and took me through the COC process and stayed till I completed the field trip to the three countries. Lastly, I acknowledge Emeritus Professor Graham Maddox who was my co-supervisor for four months in 2018, and encouraged me to explore theories of democratisation.

I owe appreciation to my daughter, Smriti Devi, who was only 3 years old when I commenced my studies. I also owe gratitude to my siblings – my brother Mohan Chand Bhim for looking after my sick father Om Chand, thus freeing me to leave for PhD studies, and my sister Dr Meena Devi, who has been caring for my sick mother Chandra Wati. I thank everyone who assisted me with babysitting.

Lastly, I thank FNU’s Professor Nii-K Plange for helpful editorial feedback, particularly on the Fiji chapter, and Torsten Strokirch for proofreading three chapters. I thank the friends that I made in Armidale - from Australia, Fiji, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, and other parts of the world who made my stay in Armidale pleasant.

Publication from this research

Bhim, M. 2019, 'Chapter 10 - Does Electoral Authoritarianism Persist? A Comparison of Recent Elections in Fiji, Seychelles and Maldives', in Lahai, JI, von Strokirch, K, Brasted, H & Ware, H (eds), *Governance and Political Adaptation in Fragile States*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 243-270.

Papers Presented

2018 – 'Authoritarian Regimes in Post-Independence Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles'. Draft paper presented at the 25th IPSA (International Political Studies Association) World Congress on Political, 21-25 July 2018, Brisbane Convention Centre, Brisbane, Australia.

2018 – 'Development of Militaries after Independence in Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles'. Draft paper presented at the Australian Association for Pacific Studies (AAPS) Conference, 4-7 April 2018, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia.

2017 – 'Decolonisation in Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles'. Paper presented at the International Conference on Social Research & Innovation (ICSRI), 17-19 November 2019, Villa College, Male', Maldives.

2017 – 'Does electoral authoritarianism persist? A comparison of recent elections in Fiji, Seychelles and Maldives'. Seminar Presented at University of New England, Australia, on 1 September 2017.

2016 – 'A case for Fiji's grassroots citizenry and media to be better informed & engaged for democracy'. Seminar presented at University of Seychelles, Anse Royale, Mahe, Seychelles, 7 October 2016.

2015-2016 – seminars presented at the UNE Post Graduate Conference, and the UNE Peace Conference.

Acronyms

AIMS	Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea
ANC	Armed Native Constabulary
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
ARID	Association for Rights Information & Democracy
AU	African Union
BIOT	British Indian Ocean Territory
CAMV	Conservative Alliance-Matanitu Vanua
CCCE	Concerned Citizens for Credible Elections
CCF	Citizens' Constitutional Forum
CEPS	Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles
CMR	Civil Military Relations
CoNI	Commission of National Enquiry
COP23	23rd annual Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSP	Center for Systemic Peace
CSR	Colonial Sugar Refinery
CRW	Counter-Revolutionary Warfare
DP	Democratic Party
DQP	Dhivehi Qaumee Party
DRP	Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party
ECS	Electoral Commission of Seychelles
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FAP	Fijian Association Party
FDF	Fiji Defence Force
FEC	Fiji Electoral Commission
FEO	Fiji Elections Office
FICAC	Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption
FICTU	Fiji Islands Council of Trade Unions
FLP	Fiji Labour Party
FMF	Fiji Military Forces
FTUC	Fiji Trades Unions Congress

FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GCC	Great Council of Chiefs
GIP	Gaumee Itthihaad Party
HRCM	Human Rights Commission of Maldives
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDP	Islamic Democratic Party
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
ISS	Institute of Security Studies
JP	Jumhooree Party
JSC	Judicial Services Commission
LDS	Linyon Demokratik Seselwa
MDA	Maldives Development Alliance
MDN	Maldivian Democratic Network
MDP	Maldivian Democratic Party
MEC	Maldives Elections Commission
MIDA	Media Industry Development Decree
MIRAB	Migration Remittances Aid Bureaucracy
MNDF	Maldives National Defence Force
MNU	Maldives National University
MOG	Multinational Observer Group
MPS	Maldives Police Services
NA	National Assembly
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NBF	National Bank of Fiji
NCBBF	National Council for Building a Better Fiji
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NFP	National Federation Party
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NGOCHR	NGO Coalition on Human Rights
NLTA	Native Land Trust Act
NLTB	Native Land Trust Board

NSC	National Security Council
NSG	National Security Guard
NSS	National Security Services
NYS	National Youth Service
NZEF	NZ Expeditionary Force
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PA	People’s Alliance
PANU	Party of National Unity
PLOTE	People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
PPM	Progressive Party of Maldives
PSU	Presidential Security Unit
RAF	British Royal Air Force
RFMF	Royal Fiji Military Forces / Republic of Fiji Military Forces
RTU	Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity Bill
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBC	Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
SDF	Seychelles Defence Force
SDL	Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua Party (Fijian political party)
SDP	Seychelles Democratic Party
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIUP	Seychelles Islanders United Party
SLP	Social Liberal Party (Maldives)
SNP	Seychelles National Party
SODELPA	Social Democratic Liberal Party
SPDF	Seychelles People’s Defence Forces
SPLA	Seychelles People’s Liberation Army
SPPF	Seychelles People’s Progressive Front
SPUP	Seychelles People’s United Party
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SVT	Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (Fijian political party)
TM	Transparency Maldives
UGP	United Generals Party

UN	United Nations
UNEP	The UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UniSey	University of Seychelles
UN-OHRLLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
UO	United Opposition
USP	University of the South Pacific
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation

Table of Contents

Page Number

Abstract …………………………………………………………………………….. ii

Declaration ………………………………………………………………………… iii

Acknowledgements ……………………………………………………………….. iv

Publication from this research …………………………………………………… v

Papers presented ………………………………………………………………….. v

Acronyms ………………………………………………………………………….. vi

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Self-governing small island states with less than 1.5 million population ……. 21

Table 3.1 Conditions and measures of democracy …………………………………... 41

Table 4.1 Regime types in Fiji …………………………………………………….. 57

Table 4.2 Fiji: Rights and freedoms ratings by Freedom House ……………………….. 58

Table 4.3 Fiji population trends ……………………………………………………… 59

Table 4.4 Fiji: Perception of rights, freedoms and corruption ………………………….. 121

Table 4.5 Fiji 2014 elections results ………………………………………………… 128

Table 4.6 Fiji 2018 elections results ………………………………………………… 134

Table 5.1 Regime types in the Maldives ……………………………………………... 141

Table 5.2 Maldives - Rights and freedoms ratings by Freedom House ………………… 142

Table 5.3 Maldives population trend ………………………………………………… 143

Table 5.4 Malé and atolls population growth trend ……………………………………... 143

Table 5.5 Maldives: Perception of rights, freedoms and corruption under Yameen ……. 198

Table 6.1 Regime types in Seychelles ………………………………………………... 217

Table 6.2 Seychelles : Rights and freedoms ratings by Freedom House ……………….. 218

Table 6.3 Seychelles population trend ……………………………………………….. 219

Table 6.4 Seychelles: Perception of rights, freedoms and corruption …………………... 258

List of Images

Figure 1.1 The cause and effect relationship between the five themes. …………………… 3

Figure 1.2 Great power competition in the Indian Ocean region …………………......... 6

Figure 1.3 Map of the Pacific Ocean ………………………………………………… 7

Figure 4.1 Map of Fiji Islands ……………………………………………………..... 55

Figure 5.1 Map of the Maldives 139
Figure 6.1 Map of Seychelles 215

Chapter 1 Introduction 1
1.1 Research questions, aims and objectives 1
1.2 Significance 4
1.3 Originality 8
1.4 Methodology 10
1.4.1 Fiji 13
1.4.2 Maldives 13
1.4.3 Seychelles 14
1.5 Thesis structure 15

Chapter 2 The anomalous cases of SIDS with coups 18
2.1 Examining SIDS to find case studies 19
2.2 SIDS where post-coup regimes did not succeed 24
2.3 Debate about democracy in SIDS 28
2.4 Conclusion 31

Chapter 3 Theories and norms of authoritarianism, democracy and elections 33
3.1 Authoritarianism 33
3.1.1 Types of authoritarian regimes and rulers 34
3.1.2 Political military relations and regimes 37
3.2 Democracy 40
3.2.1 Transition to democracy 40
3.2.2 Incomplete transitions and electoral authoritarianism 45
3.3 Measuring democratisation 47
3.3.1 Civil-Military Relations reform 48
3.3.2 Elections as a measure of democracy 50
3.4 Conclusion 54

Chapter 4 Fiji 55
4.1 Introduction 56
4.2 Fiji – Pre-independence political history 60

4.2.1 Precolonial Fiji: aristocratic-chiefly society ……………………….. 61
4.2.2 Colonial Fiji – arrival of Indians ………………………………….. 62
4.2.3 Political representation and education under colonial autocracy ….. 64
4.2.4 Universal suffrage and independence ……………………………… 66
4.2.5 Development of the military in pre-independence Fiji …………….. 68
4.3 Transition to democracy in Fiji – 1970 independence to 1987 coup ………… 71
4.3.1 Major issues and elections after independence …………………….. 72
4.3.2 Growth of the armed forces till 1987 ……………………………… 74
4.4 Fiji: 1987 - first coup ………………………………………………………. 76
4.4.1 1987-92: the coup and the civil/military coalition …………………. 76
4.4.2 Authoritarianism and the armed forces in Fiji – military ideology and training ………………………………………………………. 81
4.4.3 Fiji - civil society challenges after the first coup in 1987 ………….. 85
4.4.4 Fiji - competitive authoritarian regime 1992-99 …………………… 88
4.5 Fiji – 2000 – second coup …………………………………………………. 91
4.5.1 The 2000 coup …………………………………………………… 91
4.5.2 Fiji - civil/military coalition 2000-2001 and the 2001 elections …… 94
4.5.3 Fiji – civil society challenges after the 2000 coup …………………. 96
4.5.4 Armed forces development 1990s-2006 …………………………… 98
4.5.5 Fiji - Attempts at CMR reforms …………………………………… 100
4.6 Fiji – 2006: third coup …………………………………………………….. 103
4.6.1 The coup and personal/military rule 2006-2014 …………………... 104
4.6.2 Increased authoritarianism after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution ……………………………………………………….. 107
4.6.3 Developments in the military post-2006 coup ……………………... 109
4.6.4 Impact of the 2000 and 2006 coups on the military ………………... 112
4.6.5 Fiji – civil society challenges post-2006 coup & 2014 elections …... 115
4.6.6 Reconciliation opportunities post-2006 coup ………………………. 122
4.7 The conduct of elections and elections observation …………………………... 124
4.7.1 Fiji's authoritarian 2014 general elections ……………………….…... 124
4.7.2 Fiji's competitive 2018 election under an electoral autocracy ……… 130
4.8 Conclusion ………………………………………………………………….. 136

Chapter 5 Maldives ………………………………………………………………… 139
5.1 Introduction ………………………………………………………………… 140
5.2 Maldives pre-independence political history ……………………………… 144
5.2.1 Precolonial Maldives – monarchy-sultanate ……………………… 145
5.2.2 Colonial Maldives – monarchy and colonial autocracy …………... 146
5.2.3 WWII and the lead-up to independence …………………………... 148
5.2.4 Development of the armed forces in pre-independence Maldives ………………………………………………………………. 150
5.3 Maldives post-independence authoritarianism 1965-2008 ………………….. 153
5.3.1 Nasir – one-man dictatorship from independence till 1978 ……….. 153
5.3.2 Gayoom – one-man personal rule from 1978-2008 ……………….. 156
5.3.3 Maldives - development of the armed forces under post-independence authoritarianism ……………………………………... 161
5.3.4 Maldives - civil society challenges under one-man rule …………... 163
5.3.5 The push for democratisation ……………………………………… 166
5.4 Maldives transition to democracy 2008-2012 ……………………………….. 169
5.4.1 The 2008 and 2009 elections ………………………………………. 170
5.4.2 The 2012 coup ……………………………………………………… 171
5.4.3 Maldives - CMR reforms for democratisation 2004-2012 ………… 177
5.4.4 Maldives – caretaker government 2012-2013 ……………………… 181
5.4.5 Impacts of democratisation and the 2012 coup on the armed forces... 183
5.5 Electoral authoritarianism 2013-2018 ……………………………………... 188
5.5.1 Yameen's electoral autocratic rule ………………………………… 188
5.5.2 Maldives – civil society challenges under electoral autocracy ……... 193
5.5.3 Maldives - developments in the armed forces post-2013 …………... 199
5.6 The conduct of elections and elections observation ………………………….. 203
5.6.1 Maldives 2013 presidential & 2014 parliamentary elections ………. 204
5.6.2 Maldives 2018 presidential elections ……………………………… 207
5.7 Conclusion ……………………………………………………………………. 213

Chapter 6 Seychelles …………………………………………………………….. 215
6.1 Introduction …………………………………………………………………… 215
6.2 Seychelles' pre-Independence political history ……………………………… 219
6.2.1 Possession by France …………………………………………….... 220

6.2.2 Seychelles as a British colony 221
6.2.3 Politics and the emergence of political actors 222
6.2.4 Armed forces in pre-independence Seychelles 226
6.3 Transition to democracy in Seychelles – 1976 independence to 1977 coup 227
6.3.1 Major challenges for democracy after independence 227
6.3.2 Seychelles - 1977 coup d'état 229
6.4 Post-1977 coup – socialism and single-party rule 231
6.4.1 René's personal dictatorship from 1977-1992 232
6.4.2 Seychelles – post-coup development of the armed forces 236
6.4.3 Military ideology, training and use by politicians 241
6.4.4 Seychelles – civil society challenges under single-party rule 243
6.5 Seychelles – resumption of multiparty elections 247
6.5.1 Return to democratisation 247
6.5.2 Electoral autocracy 1993-2004 250
6.5.3 Competitive authoritarian 2004-2016 252
6.5.4 Seychelles - civil society challenges under electoral authoritarianism 1993-2016 255
6.5.5 Armed forces under electoral authoritarianism: 1993-2016 259
6.5.6 Seychelles – Civil Military Relations reforms 262
6.6 The conduct of elections and elections observation 266
6.6.1 Seychelles 2015 presidential and 2016 national assembly elections... 266
6.6.2 Seychelles' progress towards democratisation after the 2016 elections 271
6.7 Conclusion 273

Chapter 7. Conclusion 276
7.1 Thematic comparison 278
7.1.1 Precolonial and colonial political history 278
7.1.2 Authoritarian regime types post-independence 279
7.1.3 Development of the armed forces and reform of civil military relations 281
7.1.4 Civil society 284
7.1.5 Elections 286
7.2 Factors contributing to coups, authoritarianism and transition to democracy… 289

7.3 Limitations of the research ………………………………………………………… 292
7.4 Avenues for further research ……………………………………………………….. 293
7.5 Recommendations ………………………………………………………………….. 294
7.6 In conclusion …………………………………………………………………..... 296

References ……………………………………………………………………………….. 298

Appendix
List of people interviewed in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles …………………………. 342

Chapter 1. Introduction

> *"But there is another way to break a democracy. It is less dramatic but equally destructive. Democracies may die at the hands not of generals but of elected leaders – presidents or prime ministers who subvert the very process that brought them to power," (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018, p. 3).*

The above quotation depicts the phenomenon of electoral authoritarianism, which has allowed autocratic leaders to gain legitimacy through multiparty elections and then undermine democracy and human rights by implementing autocratic rule. Such derogation of democracy by elected leaders has occurred in select Small Island Developing States (SIDS).[1] As shown in Chapter 2, the limited land, population and resource endowment of most SIDS have discouraged the growth of military forces, coups and authoritarian regimes. This was not the case in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles.

The anomaly of authoritarianism in these three countries constitutes the central theme of this thesis. Accordingly, this thesis examines the political, military, and social trends in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles to ascertain why autocracies emerged there. It also explores the role of external actors. The chronological scope ranges from the post-independence period till December 2018 in order to include the 2018 elections in Fiji and the Maldives.

1.1 Research questions, aims and objectives

The thesis addresses the central research question:

How did authoritarian regimes develop in the small island states of Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles after independence?

A subsidiary research question explores the reasons why these small island states with populations of less than 1.5 million experienced successful coups and established post-coup governments. To do this, the histories, colonial legacies and post-independence political systems and institutions in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles will be explored.

[1] See section 2.1 for the names and characteristics of countries that are regarded as SIDS.

A related task is to examine characteristics of authoritarian regimes as documented in the secondary literature, and compare these to the experience in these three small nations. Authoritarian rulers rely on security forces to coerce compliance to their rule. The crucial relationship between different modes of authoritarianism and the armed forces is depicted in the theories of the eminent scholars Perlmutter (1981), Janowitz (1975), Huntington (1970), Cobban (1971), and Geddes (1999), which are scrutinised in the literature review in Chapter 2. Thus, a key research objective is to investigate the development of security forces and their role with regards to coups and authoritarian rule. This analysis will further understandings about the nature of governance under authoritarian rulers, and the contribution of foreign powers in promoting democracy or authoritarianism in small island nations.

The thesis investigates challenges faced by civil society under authoritarianism and electoral autocracies, including the impact on key civil and political rights and related institutions, as well as the degree of corruption and transparency in these nations. The conduct of elections is assessed to ascertain whether they have upheld the principles of democracy. A final question explores how the emergence of authoritarian regimes in SIDS can be prevented through democratic reforms, including of civil military relations (CMR).

The justification for the selection of Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, as case studies for this PhD is discussed in Section 2.1. Chapter 2 also analyses the relationship between the size of the armed forces and frequency of coups in SIDS, and discusses scholars' propositions about democratisation in SIDS. Post-coup unelected regimes were successfully established in the three case studies for extended periods after the removal of democratically elected governments, with adverse consequences for the rule of law, parliamentary mechanisms, freedom of expression and government accountability. These regimes are classified as authoritarian, based on the definition by Perlmutter (1981, p. 24).

An analytical framework of five key thematic areas is adopted for this thesis: precolonial and colonial political history; authoritarian regime types post-independence, development of the armed forces, status and role of civil society, as well as the conduct of elections. Figure 1.1 below shows their cause and effect relationship with authoritarianism. For example, historic legacies of authoritarian rule play a part in thwarting transitions to democracy.

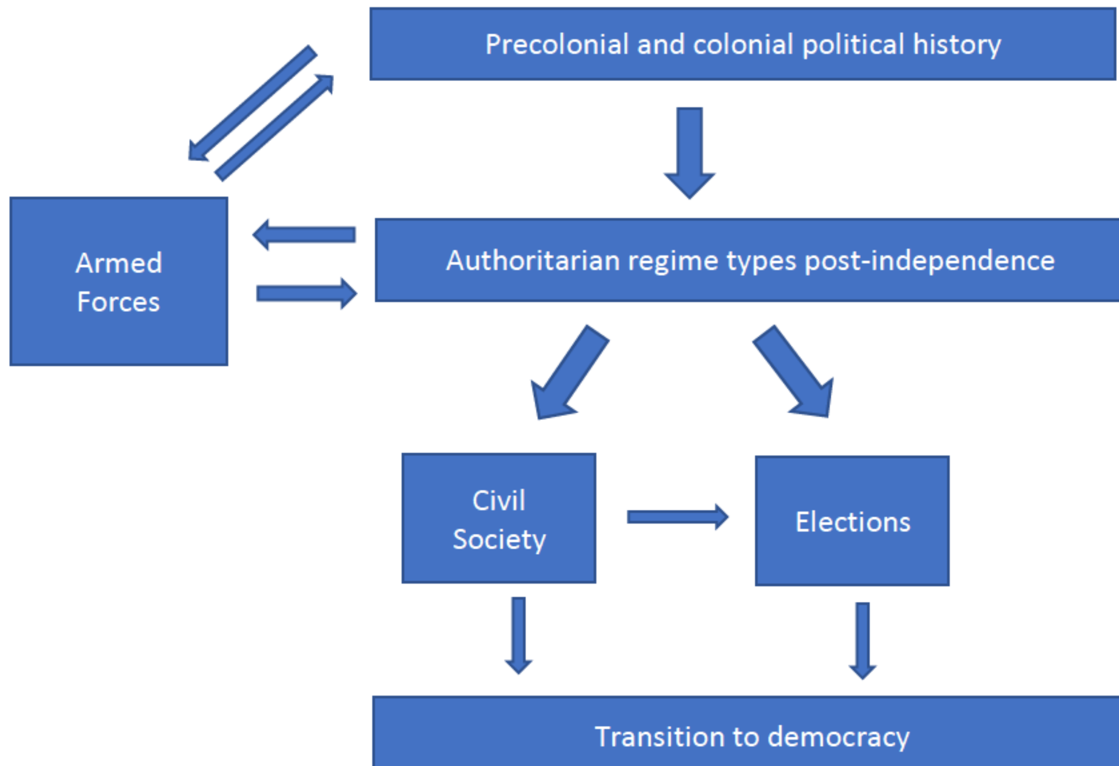


Figure 1.1 The cause and effect relationship between the five themes. (Bhim, 2020)

Moreover, the armed forces tend to be nurtured through patron-client relations by authoritarian rulers, both during precolonial/colonial times and under post-independence authoritarian regimes. Rulers utilise the armed forces to coerce the public's compliance to their rule. The military's politicisation is explained through the application of Janowitz's (1975) political-military relations theory.

The diagram depicts authoritarianism resulting in suppression of rights and freedoms for the wider civil society, and also the political society, which may lead to authoritarian, rather than democratic elections. However, united civil society action has the potential to overturn authoritarian rule, either by electing a government disposed towards democracy, or by pressuring a change in the regime's behaviour. Linz and Stepan (1996) emphasise the vital role of civil and political society in bringing about democracy.

Dahl (1998) warns that a stable democracy is impossible if the military and the police are not under the control of elected civilians and the country lacks a democratic political culture. Theories by prominent scholars pertinent to authoritarian regimes, the armed forces, civil

society and elections, are discussed in Chapter 3. There is further discussion of how the five thematic areas and related theories are utilised to investigate post-independence authoritarian rule in section 1.5.

It is vital to research authoritarianism in small island nations because key international databases on authoritarianism exclude small countries with populations of less than one or two million, such as the *Autocratic Regimes Data Set* by Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014a, p. 314), and *The Global State of Democracy* (IDEA 2017, p. 286). The findings of this thesis thus contribute towards filling this gap in the literature. It is crucial to understand why democracy is not working properly, regressing or being overthrown by force. However, it is equally important to understand how and why newer types of authoritarianism have developed in small island states as part of a wider global trend, in order to find ways forward for sustainable democratisation.

1.2 Significance

This study is of intrinsic importance because citizens of small nations are entitled to democracy which facilitates enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. Problems of authoritarianism in these places merit as much attention as large countries because the controlling nature of authoritarianism results in curtailment of civil and political rights and undermines the integrity of security forces and democratic institutions. By drawing on lessons from Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles this thesis can point to ways to restore democracy in SIDS where it has been overthrown by coups and repressed by authoritarian regimes, as well as to consolidate and sustain democracy in small island states where it is fragile or under threat. It also provides an intriguing contrast for existing studies on far more populous developing countries.

Small states are also members of the United Nations (UN). As such, they can utilise the entitlement of one vote per nation in the UN General Assembly to censure or support non-democratic nations in international decisions. The Maldives was the first SIDS to become a member of the UN Human Rights Council from 2010 to 2016. During this period, the Maldives was reprimanded by Commonwealth and other agencies for infringements of freedom of expression and judicial independence after the 2013 election of President Abdulla

Yameen. Likewise, under the authoritarian rule of the 2006 coup leader, Voreqe Bainimarama, who was subsequently elected Prime Minister, Fiji became a member of the UN Human Rights Council in 2018. It is important that democracy and human rights issues are addressed in small island states so they perform effective roles in international forums, otherwise they could shield large countries from scrutiny for human rights violations and vice versa.

Furthermore, SIDS are beneficiaries of aid from international organisations such as the UN, the Commonwealth, and European Union (EU), as well as from individual donor countries. Aid to recipients can in part be conditional on a commitment to upholding human rights and tackling corruption. Misdirection of aid tends to be higher in places where democracy has regressed due to the impairment of transparency and accountability mechanisms. Aid from democratic nations was still received by the Maldives after it left the Commonwealth in 2016 under Yameen's rule, and by Fiji while it was suspended from the Commonwealth from 2009-2014 under Bainimarama's unelected regime. If democratic donor nations placed emphasis on recipients to show a commitment to democratisation, it could greatly assist in removal of authoritarianism in small island states.

Another key point is that geopolitical rivalry has a huge impact on whether SIDS adopt and consolidate democracy or authoritarianism. The case study countries were colonised by Britain for strategic reasons. The Maldives and Seychelles were amongst countries that enjoyed aid with few strings attached during the Cold War, yet were compelled to democratise after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ambition of the rising power China is also having a significant impact on the geopolitics affecting microstates. Figure 1.2 shows the locations of Chinese ports and refuelling stations in the Indian Ocean in countries indebted to China, as well as the locations of India's listening stations in island nations, including Seychelles. The US$200 million China-Maldives friendship bridge was built by China in 2018 (*Maldives Independent* 2018). It is part of China's efforts to utilise the Maldives as a strategic port. China's overt aspiration to control the Indian Ocean has not been taken lightly by India. To counter this, India signed an agreement with Seychelles in 2015 to jointly develop a naval facility on Assumption Island (Chaudhury 2018).

Figure 1.2 Great power competition in the Indian Ocean region. (Map source: Asian Military Review 2018)

International organisations and western democracies need to take greater interest in SIDS in order to prevent China filling the void as a rising world power. Due to the disregard China has for human rights and freedoms, it is a grave concern that in an era of democratic reversals, Fiji post-2006 coup and the Maldives post-2013 election, forged closer links with China. As shown in Figure 1.3, Fiji is located in a central position in the Pacific, which, being the largest ocean in the world, can provide useful resources for countries like China. China's increased interest in the Pacific triggered alarm in the regional power Australia. To counter China's advance, Australia[2] increased its military aid to Fiji since 2018, which is discussed in section 4.6.3.

[2] Australia also increased its aid to other Pacific nations in areas of communications and security, over this period.

Figure 1.3 Map of the Pacific Ocean. (Map Source: CountryReports.org)

Finally, small island nations need assistance from, and collaboration with, larger nations to maintain regional security. Their isolation protected them in the pre-colonial era, but globalisation has led to the infiltration of criminal syndicates and extremist non-state actors into some small island states. For instance, the Maldives' closer ties with Saudi Arabia has resulted in a surge in Islamist extremism there over the past decade with Maldivian *jihadists* flying to Syria to join the Islamic State (see section 5.5.3). Having scarce resources, SIDS are dependent on the benevolence of a regional power in their sphere of influence to police their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). They need partnerships to combat crimes such as drug and human trafficking, identity fraud and money laundering, piracy and wildlife exploitation, as well as to manage challenges from climate change and rising sea levels (United Nations 2015). Seychelles effectively dealt with piracy because of partnerships with the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Similarly, India readily assisted the Maldives and Seychelles during disasters such as sending water to the Maldives during crisis, and its navy assisting to foil coup attempts against the Presidents of the Maldives and Seychelles in the 1980s. Assistance to SIDS from democratic geopolitical powers can safeguard regional security while at the same time encouraging democratisation.

1.3 Originality

Through a review of secondary literature, four gaps were identified that this research could potentially contribute towards addressing.

Firstly, repressive periods under authoritarianism have resulted in very few PhD thesis emerging from citizens of these three countries on its impacts. The Maldives and Seychelles have fewer scholarly publications compared to Fiji, which has more than twice their population and is better resourced academically. But while there is a secondary literature on coups and militarisation in Fiji, suppression of expression and academic freedom after the 2006 coup - magnified after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution - led to a decline in public commentary and scholarly research on politics by its own citizens.

There is only a handful of political science scholars from the Maldives who have acquired PhDs from western universities. The scene is worse for Seychelles as the only academic authors of its political history – McAteer and Scarr – were not born there. Many local scholars in Fiji and the Maldives have had to relocate overseas to avoid persecution under authoritarianism. Furthermore, universities in the Maldives and Seychelles do not even have political science departments.

Comprising populations of less than 1.5 million means these countries have a relatively small pool of local academics and academic institutions are less resourced than developed nations. Consequently, there is a lack of data to draw on in order to compare the three SIDS case studies. Erk and Veenendaal (2014, p. 138) lament the lack of data and country experts, saying that the world's smallest states suffer from a "data dearth". The entrenchment of post-independence authoritarian rule in the Maldives and Seychelles contributed to the lack of academic writings as regimes intolerant of dissident opinions curtailed freedom of expression.

Secondly, a review of the literature on authoritarian regimes reveals very little detailed research on SIDS countries. Even the voluminous *Autocratic Regimes Data Set* by Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014a, p. 314) identifies autocratic regimes between 1946 and 2010, but only in countries with populations greater than one million, thus excluding the SIDS under

examination here. Most comparative books on authoritarian regimes focus on African, Asian, Latin American, European and Middle Eastern countries with populations over two million. International studies on democracy also tend to leave out SIDS. For example, *The Global State of Democracy* (IDEA 2017, p. 286) report did not include countries with populations of less than one million in their sample of 155 countries. The comprehensive study of authoritarianism in SIDS in this thesis will compensate for the non-inclusion of these small countries in many international data sets and fill an existing gap in the literature.

A third strength of this thesis is that cross-regional comparative research on these three SIDS, where coups were mounted and authoritarian regimes installed, has not been conducted before. Some cross-regional analysis has been undertaken on governance and democratisation issues in SIDS, such as by: Clague et al.; Dahl & Tufte; Anckar, Srebrnik, Diamond & Tsalik; Hadenius; and more recently by Erk & Veenendaal, who include select countries with available data (see the discussion in section 2.3). Corbett and Veenendaal's (2018) new book examining 39 small states, focuses on democracy, not authoritarianism. Political scientists typically single out one region for comparative purposes, or one country, including politics in Fiji, the Maldives or Seychelles. But these microstates were not compared in relation to coups and authoritarian regimes as they are in different regions of the world.

The Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) region, where the Maldives and Seychelles are found, has the smallest number of SIDS. Each of these has very distinct ethnic and cultural make-up and they are huge distances apart whereas the Oceania and Caribbean SIDS are closer together. The AIMS region is scattered over the Middle East, Africa and Asia. A literature review has revealed no specialist writer for this region as a whole; however, academics have written on particular countries. Secondary literature is lacking on some SIDS in the AIMS region which are dwarfed by their large continental African, Asian and Middle Eastern neighbours. Compared to the AIMS region, the political and governance problems of the Pacific Island countries have been widely researched by Pacific and western scholars. Tertiary institutions such as the University of the South Pacific (USP), Australian National University (ANU), University of Hawaii and Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), have substantive programs on Pacific politics and several other universities in Australia and New Zealand have researchers on Pacific island issues. In

contrast, comparative political studies programs are non-existent at the Maldives National University (MNU)[3] or the University of Seychelles (UniSey).[4]

The comparative cross-regional approach to politics in SIDS adopted for this study is unique, with one country in the Oceania region and two in the AIMS region. Some scholars have taken the cross-regional approach to compare Fiji to Caribbean countries such as Suriname, Trinidad and Guyana, as they too had descendants of Indian indentured labourers brought by the British to work on sugar cane plantations. Yet successful coups did not occur in these Caribbean nations. By comparing Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, the distinctive cross-regional study in this thesis analyses coups and post-coup regimes in small island states with starkly different settlement, cultural, historical, religious, geographical and ethnic factors.

1.4 Methodology

An intensive analysis of the three countries was conducted for this research through the multiple case study method using the descriptive case study approach. Yin (2009 p. 18) described the case study as "… an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." The small island states where coups occurred are in different geographical locations and have unique physical, environmental, historical, social and political features. Therefore, each country was investigated as a distinct entity before engaging in comparisons of their commonalities and differences.

Currently, insufficient comparative research exists on coups in SIDS. The case study method allowed the gathering of data on these small states which assisted in analysing the patterns of success and failure of democracy there. The analysis of three different countries can produce stronger results in relation to big picture trends and lessons by providing a broader array of evidence than single cases (Yin 2012, p. 131).

[3] Maldives National University website, viewed 30 August 2018, <http://mnu.edu.mv/courses-2018/> , <http://mnu.edu.mv/organizational-chart/>

[4] University of Seychelles website, viewed 30 August 2018, <https://www.unisey.ac.sc/faculties-courses/list-of-courses/undergraduate>

From the 40 independent SIDS nations, 28 SIDS countries were focused on, that have populations of less than 1.5 million (see section 2.1). From this group, it was found that in only three SIDS countries, post-coup regimes were successfully established, and, therefore, they could be classified as extreme or deviant cases as defined by Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 307).

In addition to drawing on the secondary literature, the methodology included field trips to the three countries between July 2016 – December 2017, and further interviews by other means up to May 2018. The impact of authoritarianism on everyday life is not always evident in scholarly writings which focus more on analysis of statistical data. For this reason, field trips were required for in situ observations and to conduct qualitative interviews to make an original contribution to the literature. Fieldwork enabled gathering of poignant firsthand accounts of the emotional and social impacts of authoritarianism, including victimisation and persecution. It created an awareness of the unique culture, language, and lifestyle, as well as the challenges encountered by people in these nations.[5]

The purposeful sampling method was utilised to select people for interviews in the three countries. According to Palinkas et al. 2015,[6] "purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest". In short, interview subjects were chosen as those especially knowledgeable about an issue of interest, and who are also articulate and willing to participate (Palinkas et al. 2015). Prominent public actors were identified through a perusal of the daily news media of the three nations.

The interviews add value to this research as contemporary data and insights were gathered from a range of respondents, the majority of whom were: current or former politicians, senior members of the public service, members of the security forces, academics, civil society advocates, religious leaders and the media. In-depth interviews ranged from one to two hours. The interviews provided insights on the features of authoritarianism and conduct of recent elections, as well as perceptions of the government, judiciary and corruption, the impacts of coup-type events, and recommendations for prevention of such instability in future.

[5] The visit to the Maldives and Seychelles provided first-hand experience of the daily travel challenges posed by the granitic mountainous terrain of Seychelles and conversely, the congested, flat Maldivian atoll island of the capital Malé connected to the airport and neighbouring islands through ferry services.

[6] Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015.

Interviewing public figures during field trips compensated for the limited secondary literature, especially for the Maldives and Seychelles. It is acknowledged that people interviewed may not reveal all information due to fear of retaliation as they were subject to varying degrees of authoritarianism in their countries, or they may have been selective due to their own complicity in illegitimate political activities. To overcome this drawback, those interviewed were mainly senior people or public officials who were willing to be identified, so their views could be attributed in a transparent manner and interpreted accordingly.

The methods of qualitative research include direct observations during the field trips, open-ended (in person and online) interviews, secondary and primary documentary resources gathered during field trips, and those available through the library, online journals, e-databases, and websites of news media, governments, inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), and non-government organisations (NGOs). Analysis drew on theories relating to democracy, authoritarianism, political-military relations, elections and human rights.

Elected governments were overthrown in these countries illegally by force. The coups resulted in a crackdown on civil and political rights while media and other sources of information were repressed to varying degrees and time periods. This limited the variety of sources of data available. Some sources of information were censored or not independent. Wherever possible, evidence from multiple sources was triangulated to achieve the most accurate information. Triangulating involves checking the consistency of findings from different as well as the same sources to establish converging lines of evidence (Yin 2012, p. 13). Since the three countries suffered instability and were under repressive authoritarian regimes, triangulating evidence highlighted any contradictions and showed opposing viewpoints, providing a more holistic, balanced account. To further verify accuracy, sources with rival explanations were included. These competing perspectives are important to investigate in case studies to identify plausible explanations for events and trends (Yin 2012, p. 118).

Although this research is primarily based on qualitative data, vital quantitative data was obtained from national statistics relating to: the economy, population, elections, corruption and transparency levels, civil and political rights, including media and judiciary, and data to gauge the population to security forces ratio. The limited scholarly material on politics – especially on the Maldives and Seychelles – was overcome by recourse to reports by inter-

governmental and non-government organisations, notably reports by the UN, Transparency International, Freedom House, the World Bank, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Center for Systemic Peace, Commonwealth, European Union, The Military Balance as well as reputable online news media. Furthermore, this research benefitted from online access to SIDS government publications, statistics and daily national news made available online in recent years.

1.4.1 Fiji

The field trip lasted eight weeks from 28 June – 23 August 2016.[7] A range of prominent personalities were interviewed for this case study including the former Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase who was deposed in the 2006 coup, and the 1987 coup-leader and former Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka. Other politicians interviewed included leaders of the opposition as well as senior academics, senior journalists, prominent civil society advocates, former senior public servants, younger generation civil society leaders, and former senior military officers. Despite restrictive decrees promulgated in 2010 that curtail freedom of expression and the media that were still in force, there were no significant obstacles to conducting interviews. A total of 24 interviews were conducted in Fiji; most in the capital Suva, and two in Nadi.

1.4.2 Maldives

The visit to the Maldives lasted four weeks from 24 October – 21 November 2017, with a further 10 days in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 21 November – 1 December 2017 where many Maldivian political actors lived in exile. Great difficulty was encountered in organising the field trip to the Maldives because it was essential for a host organisation in the Maldives to arrange a business visa. By mid-2017, political tensions were worsening in the capital Malé with the government cracking down heavily on opposition. Prospects for a field trip were growing dimmer. Fortunately, the Villa College held the International Conference on Social Research and Innovation (ICSRI) from 17-19 November 2017 in Malé. Acceptance of the author's paper, entitled 'Decolonisation in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): A comparison of Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles', enabled her to visit the country.

---

[7] Just to reiterate, the author is an Indo-Fijian who grew up in Fiji and worked there as a civil society activist, journalist and academic, thus observing many political events in the country, including coups and post-coup authoritarian rule and elections. However, the dedicated PhD fieldwork was for two months.

The restrictive atmosphere meant that only six people were formally interviewed in the Maldives including: an opposition parliamentarian Ali Hussain of Jumhooree Party, a former senior member of the Maldives National Defence Force, former members of independent institutions, and a civil society advocate Ahmed Tholal. The 10-day stay in Colombo, Sri Lanka, which has the largest Maldivian diaspora community, enabled an interview with the former Chair of the Maldives Elections Commission Fuwad Thowfeek. Online interviews of two former Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) Ministers, a Maldivian academic, and a former senior police officer were conducted after the author returned to Australia. A total of 15 people were interviewed which enabled the collection of a diverse range of views. After the arrest of the former President Gayoom and members of the judiciary in February 2018, the political situation worsened in the Maldives making people fearful and reluctant to grant interviews.

The field trip to the Maldives revealed the physical and geographical circumstances of people's daily lives including the challenges they face living on the lowest lying atoll island country in the world. The capital Malé is one of the world's most densely populated cities, and a visit there allows one to experience the social and security pressures that such overcrowding create. It is a Muslim nation, where over half of women wear head scarves (*hijab*), and about a quarter of women wear the *burkha* and *niqab*.[8] All women are required to wear sleeved tops and clothes that go below the knees. The atmosphere is such that visitors must observe conservative dress codes and take care not to discuss religion or politics.

1.4.3 Seychelles

Seychelles, a granitic country with mountains jutting out of the ocean, is the opposite of the Maldives. Seychellois have a relaxed attitude to life. Theirs is not a traditional society, which means that women are not subjected to restrictive dress codes. Again, visiting Seychelles makes one aware of the challenges of living in a fertile, yet harsh environment. On Mahé, the main island, narrow roads wind along the cliff's edge overlooking the sea because the terrain becomes too steep further inland. The cost of living is very high.

[8] A *niqab* is where the face is covered with a veil but the eyes are uncovered, whereas the *burkha* covers the whole body with a mesh screen over the eyes to look through (view the following link on BBC for explanations: https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/24118241).

The field trip lasted five weeks from 7 September – 13 October 2016. It was facilitated by the University of Seychelles. The UniSey campus at Anse Royale is not far from the capital Victoria. The author also visited Praslin and La Digue islands. The timing of the fieldwork was fortuitous due to the historic 8-10 September 2016 National Assembly elections, when the opposition won the majority for the first time since a return to multiparty elections in 1993. This created an air of euphoria as people were filled with a sense of freedom and hope. The peaceful democratic change of government was celebrated with tooting of car horns and vehicles hoisting party banners.

An informal meeting was held with the first President of Seychelles Sir James Mancham at his residence in Glacis. Mancham was recovering from a stroke at the time and passed away a few months later in January 2017. The former Chief of Operations of the Seychelles People's Defence Force (SPDF), Robert Ernesta, who had also been involved in the civil military relations reform process, was interviewed. In addition, interviews were held with activists, news editors, civil society leaders, as well as current and former opposition politicians, including Rev Wavel Ramkalawan, who became the leader of opposition. A few years later, in October 2020, Ramkalawan became the first opposition leader to be democratically elected as president of the Seychelles. Other significant interviewees were Judge Bernadin Renaud, Chair of the Constitution Commission of Seychelles in 1993, and the Deputy Secretary General of Party Lepep, Peter Sinon. A total of 20 interviews were conducted in Mahé, Seychelles.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis has two main components. Chapters 1-3 provide the conceptual and analytical framework for evaluating political trends in the three countries. Fiji, Maldives and Seychelles are then examined separately as case studies in Chapters 4-6. Chapter 2 is vital for this thesis because it surveys all small island nations with less than 1.5 million people in order to identify the only three countries to date where coups resulted in the establishment of lasting authoritarian regimes. These three are thus the extreme or deviant cases selected for this thesis. Comparisons are made with small island nations where coups did not result in post-coup governments. The size of the armed forces in small island states, frequency of coups and attempted coups, as well as national population densities are assessed. Common factors

as to why these countries returned to multiparty electoral governments after coups are analysed to gauge what influences democracy or authoritarianism. Propositions by scholars on the viability of democracy in SIDS are scrutinised. The data on the problems of democracy and governance in SIDS, as well the implications of resource vulnerabilities of SIDS are discussed, with reference to their effect on whether politics takes a democratic or autocratic turn.

Theories and concepts of authoritarianism, democracy and elections that arose after WWII, are examined in Chapter 3. These include typologies of authoritarian regimes and rulers, and generic literature on the military's relations with government, coups and authoritarian rule, which have considerable relevance for this thesis. Requisite conditions for democracy are particularly useful in assessing the role of political and civil society, and provide theoretical explanations as to why transitions to democracy fail. Recent theories about modes of electoral authoritarianism are discussed. Theories on civil military relations (CMR) reforms and electoral observation are also evaluated because they are crucial for measuring a nation's democratisation. This includes a critique of the criteria used by international observers to declare elections 'free and fair', which allow some elections that fall short of democratic conditions to be declared credible.

The uniqueness of the three countries, including differences in the incidence, duration and degree of authoritarianism they experienced, warrants their presentation as separate case studies: Chapter 4 Fiji; Chapter 5 Maldives; and Chapter 6 Seychelles. To ascertain the factors contributing to the development and sustenance of authoritarian regimes in the three nations post-independence, the case studies, in chronological format, are structured around the five key themes central to this thesis. The theme on precolonial and colonial political history shows the modes of autocratic rule prior to independence and the resultant colonial legacies, shedding light on problems of democracy in the three nations after independence.

The theme of authoritarian regime types enables different periods of rule to be clearly distinguished and classified. After assessing the political systems and institutions in particular periods, regimes are differentiated according to precolonial and colonial autocratic rule, post-independence dictatorships and authoritarian rule, amalgams of military rule, modes of personal and single party rule, and transitions to democracy. This approach

demonstrates that the transitions to democracy in these nations were fairly short compared to their long histories of authoritarianism.

The post-independence sections of the three case studies are analysed according to the different regime types. This also assisted in assessing the characteristics of authoritarian rulers. For each distinct mode of government, the following key themes are looked at: political society and role of elites in transition to democracy; development of the armed forces; the impact of authoritarianism on civil society and vice versa, as well as the conduct of recent elections and their observation by international election monitors to gauge to what extent they were democratic or authoritarian.

The armed forces are the crucial instrument for implementation of authoritarian rule. This theme necessitated assessing the evolution of the security forces, as well as major developments that altered the security forces. The section on military ideology and training examines political-military relations and how the security forces were utilised by politicians. Interviews with former soldiers reveal why they participated in illegitimate actions such as coups and supported authoritarian regimes, as well as the impact of coups on soldiers. The challenges encountered by civil society in the aftermath of coups and during authoritarian rule, including curtailment of key civil and political rights, are analysed. The interviews with leading actors from different sections of society provide valuable insights and empirical data on the impact of authoritarianism on the armed forces and civil society and also on their respective roles in restoring and sustaining democracy.

The conclusion in Chapter 7 engages in a comparative discussion of the findings in this thesis with relevance to the five thematic areas. It explains the various factors which enabled authoritarian regimes to develop in these small island nations post-independence, together with lessons from the successful implementation of CMR reforms during Seychelles' democratisation process. There is reflection on broader lessons learnt with regards to coups, authoritarianism and transition to democracy in SIDS. Limitations of this research and avenues for further research are considered. Most importantly, recommendations are made for the political elites, military and police, election observers, aid donors and international organisations, which may assist in the process of achieving sustainable democratisation and reduce chances of a reversion to authoritarianism.

Chapter 2. The anomalous cases of SIDS with coups

Coups and authoritarian regimes are regarded as anomalies in small island states in the post-Cold War era. How such anomalous countries were identified and selected as case studies for this thesis is explained in this chapter. Countries where authoritarian regimes did not last post-coup are examined to ascertain the reasons for this outcome. To better comprehend why authoritarianism tends to be an anomaly in small island states, scholars' propositions regarding democracy and SIDS are perused. The subsidiary research question tackled here is: *In which small island nations with populations of less than 1.5 million did coups result in establishment of successful post-coup governments?* The Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) defines a coup d'état as:

> "…a forceful seizure of executive authority and office by a dissident/opposition faction within the country's ruling or political elites that results in a substantial change in the executive leadership and the policies of the prior regime," (Marshall & Marshall 2018, p. 1).

The three types of groups categorised by Ezrow and Frantz (2011a, p. 99) are: reform coups – where the military aims to create a new political order, veto coups – where the military aims to limit political participation, and guardian coups – where the military aims to restore order and reduce corruption. Aspects of coups extensively discussed by Huntington (1968, p. 198) include breakthrough coups and the soldier as a reformer. The definition of a coup[9] by Marshall and Marshall 2018 above, will be utilised in the coming section.

SIDS are recognised as a distinct group of developing countries by the United Nations (UN), due to their specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) describes SIDS as "…a group of countries that share similar sustainable development challenges, including: small population, limited resources, susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks and excessive dependence on international trade" and "…disproportionately expensive public administration and infrastructure," (UNEP Newsdesk). Development challenges specific to SIDS include not just small size and insularity, but also geographical, societal, political and economic issues (Everest-Phillips 2014, p. 8). The paucity of employment options in some microstates[10] makes them dependent on migration, remittances, aid and bureaucracy (MIRAB) for income

[9] For further discussion on types of coups, the military's role and political circumstances giving rise to coups, see Huntington (1968), and Ezrow and Frantz (2011a). For the military's role in coups, see Finer, Decalo, Nordlinger and Stepan.
[10] Microstates are countries with very small populations. For instance, countries with populations of less than 500,000, are regarded as microstates.

(Bertram & Watters 1985). These vulnerabilities impact greatly on how SIDS respond to political problems compared to bigger nations.

2.1 Examining SIDS to find case studies

Island nations with populations of less than 1.5 million are scrutinised below for selection of case studies. The Commonwealth (2016) defines small states as: "sovereign countries with a population of 1.5 million people or fewer". In this chapter small island states are identified and data on their militaries' sizes and coup histories are collated. Countries where post-coup authoritarian regimes were successful in terms of longevity are extreme or deviant cases which constitutes the basis for selecting the three case studies in this thesis.

International databases on conflict and peace studies tend not to include very small countries in their list. For instance, the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP), in their list of coups d'état from 1946-2017, included all countries in the world, except those with populations of less than 500,000. This meant that the coup attempts in Sao Tome and Principe, the Maldives, Seychelles, Dominica and Grenada were not on their list. The extensive *Autocratic Regimes Data Set* by Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014, p. 314) identifies autocratic regime types between 1946 and 2010 in countries with populations greater than one million. This means only Bahrain and Trinidad and Tobago from the CSP's list would have qualified for inclusion in their data, had they experienced successful coups. In their *Autocratic Regimes Codebook* (Geddes, Wright & Frantz 2014, p. 22), the following SIDS: Bahrain, Comoros, Fiji, Grenada, Maldives, Samoa, Sao Tome, Seychelles, and Tonga, were not included for analysis. They were described as 'small', implying they were too insignificant to warrant further analysis. Ezrow and Frantz (2011, pp. 107-109) are an exception as they included coups in microstates in their book meaning that Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Grenada and Fiji are in their list. While Freedom House included small island states in their *Freedom in the World 2016* report, they were excluded from the *Freedom in the World 2019* report, although they still feature in the countries listed on their website. Yet Freedom House (2019, p. 4) did acknowledge that in the Asia-Pacific region the Freedom score for Asia declined overall and only improved for countries with less than a million people - mostly small Pacific islands. Such neglect of small island states in international studies can only be rectified through further research.

For this thesis, 38 SIDS UN members were examined from three regions: the Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) region, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. From the UN list, 10 countries were omitted because they did not meet the selection criterion of small island countries with populations of less than 1.5 million. These included the landlocked countries: Guinea-Bissau, Belize, Guyana and Suriname; and the larger island countries with populations of over two million: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Singapore. Accordingly, the countries being examined reduced to 28 small island states listed in Table 2.1 (below) with their coup histories. For the purpose of this comparative table the term ‘coup’ refers to a forceful seizure of power; ‘coup attempts’ refer to failures to seize power; and ‘coup plot’ refers to a known plan to carry out a coup that did not eventuate.

	Country	**Political Status**	**Freedom Status**	**Population**	**Coups d’Etat**	**Active Armed Forces**
	Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS)					
1	Bahrain	Monarchy	Not Free	**1,400,000	*3 alleged coup plots	8,000## (plus 11,000 paramilitary)
2	Cape Verde	Republic	Free	504,000	*1 coup plot	1,000##
3	Comoros	Independent	Partly Free	752,000	*3 coups, 11 coup attempts	500+
4	Maldives	Republic	Partly Free	352,000	°°2 coups, 4 coup attempts	2,404°°°
5	Mauritius	Republic	Free	1,249,000	None	No Military## (3,000 paramilitary)
6	Sao Tome and Principe	Republic	Free	198,000	###1 coup, 3 coup attempts	1,000 ^^
7	Seychelles	Republic	Partly Free	93,000	++1 coup, 2 coup attempts	420***
	Caribbean					
8	Antigua and Barbuda	Independent	Free	91,000	None	170^^
9	Bahamas	Independent	Free	383,000	None	1,000##
10	Barbados	Independent	Free	286,000	None	1,000##

11	Dominica	Independent	Free	72,000	°2 coup attempts	No military^
12	Grenada	Independent	Free	106,000	+++2 coups	No military^
13	St Kitts and Nevis	Independent	Free	55,000	None	150^^^
14	St Lucia	Independent	Free	184,000	None	No military^
15	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Independent	Free	109,000	None	No military^
16	Trinidad and Tobago	Republic	Free	1,344,000	*1 coup attempt, 1 coup plot	4,000##
	Pacific					
17	Fiji	Republic	Partly Free	887,000	*2 coups, 2 coup attempts, 1 coup plot	4,000## (plus 6,000 reservists)
18	Federated States of Micronesia	Independent	Free	104,000	None	No military^
19	Kiribati	Independent	Free	104,000	None	No military^
20	Marshall Islands	Independent	Free	53,000	None	No military^
21	Nauru	Independent	Free	10,000	None	No military^
22	Palau	Independent	Free	21,000	None	No military^
23	Samoa	Independent	Free	192,000	None	No military^
24	Solomon Islands	Independent	Partly Free	573,000	#1 coup attempt	No military^
25	Timor-Leste	Republic	Partly Free	1,152,000	None	1,000##
26	Tonga	Monarchy	Free	106,000	None	500^^^
27	Tuvalu	Independent	Free	10,000	None	No military^
28	Vanuatu	Republic	Free	258,000	None	No military^

Table 2.1 Self-governing small island states with less than 1.5 million population

Freedom Status: Political rights and civil liberties rankings by Freedom House[11] 2016, pp. 20-24. Population: United Nations 2014. *Center for Systemic Peace 2014. ***BBC News* 2018c. *** EU ISS 2016, p. 47. ##The Military Balance 2018. +*Al Jazeera* 2004. ^Macias 2018. #*BBC News* 2017. ++ Brewster & Rai 2011. ###*BBC News* 2018b. +++Sookram 2007. °*BBC News* 2017b. °°*BBC News* 2015a; Ashraf 2012; Zubair 2013; Maldives Independent 2016b. °°°NBoS 2014. ^^NationMaster 2018 (international statistics database). ^^^GlobalSecurity.org 2017.

[11] Freedom House has been publishing annual Freedom in the World reports since 1972. It ranks a country as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free, after analysing its electoral process, political pluralism and participation, the functioning of the government, freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, the rule of law, personal autonomy and individual rights (viewed 19 February 2020, https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world).

Table 2.1 (above) shows that generally, countries where coups occurred or were attempted were found to be ‘Partly Free’ or ‘Not Free’ by Freedom House. For Freedom Status, the table reveals 100% of Caribbean states were in the ‘Free’ category, 75% of Pacific states were ‘Free’, whereas only 43% of AIMS states were ‘Free’. Similarly, D. Anckar found 80% of small island states to be in the ‘Free’ category, compared to only 38% ‘Free’ for other states (2002, p. 378). D. Anckar using democracy data from Hadenius (1992) and Freedom House ratings found micro-states to be more democratic than larger states (2002, p. 377). He attributed their high level of democracy to literacy as 55% of small island states enjoy high literacy, with UNESCO data showing micro-states’ primary school enrolment at 92%, second only to Europe’s 95% enrolment (D. Anckar 2002, p. 382). Not surprisingly, of the 75% of small island states in Table 2.1 which are ‘Free’ the majority are democratic.

The table reveals that 50% of small island nations have militaries and the other 50% have no standing armies. Bahrain, the Maldives and Fiji have large armies relative to their population and all three also have had different types of authoritarian regimes in the preceding decade. Of the 14 with ‘No Military’, 11 did not suffer from coup attempts. Two of these nations, Grenada and Dominica, had armed forces when coups were attempted in the 1980s, but have no militaries at the time of this study, while Solomon Islands has just a paramilitary. Conversely, 11 of the 14 with militaries suffered coups, coup attempts and/or coup plots, although successful coups only occurred in six. Evidently, having an army greatly increased the likelihood of coup attempts.

The largest number of coup attempts were in the AIMS region whereby successful coups occurred in four nations: Comoros, Maldives, Sao Tome and Principe, and Seychelles. Unsuccessful coup attempts occurred in Bahrain and Cape Verde; with Mauritius the only country not experiencing any coup attempts. Not coincidentally, all countries in the AIMS region have a military, except for Mauritius, which has a paramilitary. In the Caribbean, attempted coups occurred in Trinidad and Tobago, and Dominica, while two coups succeeded in Grenada. Most Caribbean states have small militaries, four have no military, except Trinidad and Tobago which has a reasonable-sized military. Fiji is the sole Pacific country to have suffered multiple coups. The only other Pacific country where a coup was attempted is Solomon Islands in June 2000, by a militia group (*BBC News* 2017). Coups were not attempted in other Pacific countries probably due to a lack of ‘rich’ natural resources, lack of armed forces and reliance on aid from dominant western democratic powers. Just three

nations, Fiji, Tonga and Timor Leste, have armed forces in the Pacific. Thus, the AIMS region where most nations have militaries had the highest number of successful coups, whereas the Pacific region where most nations have no militaries, had just one nation with successful coups.

A proactive democratic power has the potential to deter coups in its sphere of influence. The Caribbean and the Northern Pacific – which include Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau, fall under the sphere of influence of the US, thus making coups there improbable. Coups are impossible in most South Pacific territories that lack sovereign power due to being French colonies, or who are protectorates of New Zealand due to their small size. Some Pacific SIDS – such as Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands - do not fall under the formal control of an external power. But the vulnerabilities, lack of resources and/or armed forces, make coups unrealistic there. One attempted coup, during a civil conflict in 2000 in Solomon Islands, was resolved through peace negotiations and a major intervention led by the dominant regional nation Australia. The 2006 riots in Tonga resulted in six deaths but no coup. The AIMS is the most politically unstable SIDS region perhaps due to the influence of larger neighbouring countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, which host the majority of the world's authoritarian regimes. The AIMS countries, the Maldives and Seychelles, do not fall into a neighbour's sphere of influence. Moreover, their – and Fiji's - coloniser Britain,[12] was unwilling stay involved or intervene to ensure that its former colonies stayed on a path of democratic transition. Lack of actions by a democratic metropolitan power meant that authoritarian regimes were established without hindrance in these three nations.

Fiji, the Maldives, Seychelles, Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros and Grenada are the SIDS where coups occurred. They are thus assessed to identify where post-coup regimes, in the aftermath of the most recent coups, were a success in terms of lasting more than a month. The six SIDS post-independence experiences are a deviation from the norm of 'democratic' political behavior anticipated from SIDS. As post-coup regimes were unsuccessful in Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros and Grenada, they were not selected as case studies, but are briefly examined in the next section. Conversely, post-coup regimes were fruitfully

[12] Although in recent decades, the Commonwealth has taken concrete actions to promote democratic values amongst its member nations.

established and sustained for lengthy periods in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. All three were former British colonies, suffered attempted coups, as well as successful coups and became republics. Their Freedom House status of 'partly free' indicates they are in transition and are not yet consolidated democracies. Table 2.1 (above) displays that unlike most SIDS, they maintained armed forces disproportionately large relative to their population. Seychelles' military became small by 2016 due to downscaling for democratisation reforms. Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles are anomalous because, despite their small size, they had sufficient resources to maintain authoritarian regimes. They are thus classified as anomalous or deviant cases and selected as case studies for this thesis.

This examination of 28 independent small island states identified that successful political takeovers occurred in six SIDs: Fiji, the Maldives, Seychelles, Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros and Grenada. It found execution of coups directly linked to having armed forces of reasonable size meaning most SIDS are still democracies because not only do they not have a sizeable army, but most do not have one at all, and they lack material resources to maintain a post-coup regime. Furthermore, being in the sphere of influence of a democratic regional power encouraged or compelled most SIDS to maintain democratic systems.

2.2 SIDS where post-coup regimes did not succeed

Authoritarian regimes were not successful post-coup, after the execution of the most recent coups in Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros, and Grenada, as shown in Table 2.2. To understand their lack of success, the three countries are explored briefly below.

In Comoros, interventions by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) prevented post-coup regimes from succeeding. An African island nation in the Indian Ocean, Comoros gained independence in 1975. From its four islands, its coloniser France retained one island, Mayotte, as an overseas department of France.[13] Comoros has endured three coups and 11 coup attempts.[14] Comoros holds strategic importance for France due to its location between Mozambique and Madagascar. Four coups in Comoros were backed by France (IRIN 2009, Al Jazeera 2004). The OAU, spearheaded by South Africa, has been intervening since June

[13] As a French territory, Mayotte is more affluent than the three remaining islands that comprise Comoros.
[14] After adding secession attempts, the number increases to over 20 (IRIN, 2009).

1998 to avoid the outbreak of bloody conflicts (Nthai, 2005). The Antananarivo Agreement for reconciliation signed in 1999 failed to prevent a coup in 1999 by Colonel Azali Assoumani. Nevertheless, the Fomboni Agreement signed in 2001, led to the 2002 elections with Assoumani elected President (Nthai, 2005). These peace agreements and the 2001 Constitution's provision for a semi-autonomous government with a rotating presidency from each island could not prevent the authoritarian President Mohamed Bacar from refusing to abide by the constitution and leave office in 2007 (IRIN 2009; Baker and Massey, 2009). He was eventually ousted by a joint Comorian-African Union (AU)[15] military action in March 2008. In December 2010, Ikililou Dhoinine won Presidential elections taking office in May 2011 (*BBC News*, 2015). Assoumani, coup-maker in 1999, won elections becoming President in 2002/2003 and again in 2016. Assoumani achieved his 1999 coup goal through a referendum in July 2018 when 92.74% voted 'yes' for him to seek another term, and to stop rotating the presidency between three islands, in questionable polls that were boycotted by the opposition (*Al Jazeera* 2018). Comoros stopped having coups but exhibits features of electoral authoritarianism due to the allegations of manipulated elections.

In Grenada, the first post-coup regime succeeded, but an invasion by the United States prevented the second one from being established. This Caribbean nation had its indigenous population exterminated when it became a French colony in the 17th century. When France lost the Anglo-French war, it became a British colony. The rule of Eric Gairy, Grenada's first Prime Minister post-1974 independence, was marked by abuse of political power, alleged human rights violations, oppressive, authoritarian and violent leadership (*BBC News* 1979). The New Jewel Movement (NJM) challenged Gairy's rule through protests from 1973 and overthrew his leadership on 13 March 1979 (Sookram 2007). The coup received public support and NJM formed the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG)[16]. The new government of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop forged links with the socialist world (Commonwealth 2018). The revolution collapsed when hardliners in the PRG executed Bishop and his close supporters on 19 October 1983, providing a justification for the US invasion of Grenada on 25 October 1983 (Sookram 2007). Bishop's attempt to form closer ties with the US was one reason for his assassination (*BBC News* 2018a). The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), alarmed that this coup might install a Marxist government

[15] OAU was dissolved and replaced by the AU in 2002.
[16] Roopnaraine (2010, p. 32) praised the 1979 revolution's achievements in healthcare, housing and education saying the slum inherited from Gairy was transformed in an attempt to "create a genuine participatory democracy".

in a US sphere of influence, had requested the US to invade Grenada. Grenadian troops numbering 1,200 were confronted by the US-led forces of about 7,300 (US History). Through operation 'Urgent Fury', US forces overwhelmed the opposition, rescued 720 US and foreign citizens, restored government, and eliminated a strategic threat to the US[17]. Casualties were: US forces - 19 killed and 116 wounded; Cuban forces - 25 killed, 59 wounded and 638 captured; Grenada forces - 45 killed and 358 wounded, and at least 24 Grenadian civilians killed (Cole 1998-1999). No further coups were attempted and regular elections have since been held.

In Sao Tome and Principe, pressure from large nations and international organisations prevented the formation of regimes post-coup. This West African nation in the Atlantic Ocean comprises two main islands and was uninhabited until Portugal colonised it in the 16th century (*BBC News* 2018b). It became a Republic at independence in 1975. Coup attempts were made in 1978, 1988 and 1995, and a coup succeeded in 2003 (*BBC News* 2018b). The government announced that, with Angola's support, it had suppressed a coup attempt in 1978. Sao Tome and Principe had a history of single-party socialist rule with politics based on personal patronage and kinship (Porto 2003, p. 33). The 1988 attempted coup, foiled by security forces, was mounted by exiled members of the National Resistance Front of Sao Tome e Principe (FRNSTP). They formed a political party after their convictions were pardoned (Seibert 2003, p.250). Following the first multiparty elections in 1991, there were frequent changes and dismissals of government. In the 1995 coup attempt, the armed forces protested against deteriorating work conditions and widespread corruption after democratisation following the end of the Cold War (Seibert 2003). Angola's negotiations led to constitutional order being restored. There were demonstrations and riots by discontented vendors in April 2003, and the government was toppled in a coup in July (Seibert, 2003). Prime Minister Maria das Neves and several ministers were detained. The military had rebelled against their poor living conditions, a pervasive social and economic crisis, and governmental corruption (Porto 2003). Eight countries and three inter-governmental organisations mediated using Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the AU forbidding seizure of power by extra-constitutional means (Seibert 2003). The coup was condemned by Angola, Nigeria, the African Union, United Nations, United States, European Union and neighbouring countries (Porto 2003, p.35). Negotiations and the threat of military intervention, led to

[17] The US arrested 30 Soviet advisers, 50 Cuban advisers and about 550 Cuban workers in the invasion justified by President Reagan to restore order and democracy after Prime Minister Bishop was killed in the coup (The Guardian 1983).

signing of a memorandum of understanding on 23 July under which the President and the National Assembly reassumed their prerogatives and the coup makers received an amnesty as well as commitment to deal with pressing problems within the armed forces (Porto 2003, p.35). Regular multiparty elections have since been held. Coup attempts in 2018 failed (Coelho 2018).

The coups in Comoros were sporadic acts by competing factions to obtain power over a weak government. The coups in Sao Tome and Principe were initiated by the military in response to socio-economic problems and the military experiencing hardship. In contrast, the first coup in Grenada, justified on ideological grounds, inspired the support of a significant amount of the population, resulting in a post-coup regime. Additionally, the immediate post-independence governments in Grenada, Sao Tome and Principe, and Comoros were not democratic. In Sao Tome and Principe, and Comoros, democratisation did not commence until after the end of the Cold War, whereas in Grenada, it was introduced after the 1983 US invasion. Sao Tome and Principe, and Grenada have settler populations dating from colonial times, while Comoros evolved from a pre-existing traditional society, however, none were democracies prior to independence. As democracy was not ‘homegrown’ their populations may not have embraced it. Consequently, no substantive protests were seen against coups. Similar to the outcome of Grenada’s first coup, the chapters on Fiji, the Maldives, and Seychelles will show that support from a significant amount of population assisted post-coup regimes to acquire legitimacy and deterred interference by outside forces.

Diplomatic pressure, concrete actions, and mediations by larger nations, international bodies, the OAU and AU, prevented establishment of post-coup governments in Comoros, and Sao Tome and Principe[18]. The US 1983 invasion of Grenada was too powerful for the second coup makers to resist. The forced introduction of democracy in Grenada ended possibilities of coups or post-coup regimes in the Caribbean. Regional powers deterred post-coup regimes in these small nations, who rely on the larger nations for aid and security.

[18] The SIDS nations Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros and Grenada were examined in the initial stages of this thesis. Due to space constraints, detailed information could not be retained.

2.3 Debate about democracy in SIDS

The proposition by some scholars that SIDS are more likely to be democracies in the post-Cold War era, is explored below to further understand why authoritarian regimes tend to be an anomaly in these small states. In addition, the features that make SIDS prone to be democratic are examined, as are the characteristics of leaders and governance that are not compatible with democracy.

A few studies assert that simply having small populations and land areas make states more conducive to democracy. Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle, along with Pericles believed a *polis* must be small to avoid tyranny (C. Anckar 2008, p. 433; Dahl & Tufte cited in Srebrnik 2004, p. 329). Dahl & Tufte's (1973) book *Size and Democracy* postulate that small countries are more likely to be democracies. The Commonwealth Advisory Group (1997), after studying 45 countries, found small states had a greater propensity to be democratic regardless of economic development levels and had enviable records of political stability (Srebrnik 2004, p. 330). Diamond & Tsalik (1999) observed about 75% of SIDS with populations of less than one million were democracies in 1998 compared to less than 60% of larger countries (Srebrnik 2004, p. 330). In Hadenius' (1992) empirical study of democracy, the majority of SIDS scored 9-10 (10 being full democracy). A more recent study of 39 states with populations of less than one million, also found that democracy, albeit hyper-personalised, was persisting in small states (Corbett & Veenendaal 2018). The examination of 28 SIDS in Table 2.1 revealed that, despite governance problems, coups occurred in six nations, while post-coup regimes following the most recent coups, succeeded in only three. Thus small size does seem to increase the likelihood of states being democracies post-independence.

Several factors orient small states towards democracy. These include being former colonies of Britain or USA who tend to promote democracy during decolonisation (D. Anckar 2008, p. 81). However, while most SIDS countries that are former British colonies are democratic, notably, four out of six SIDS where coups were successful were also former British colonies. Thus, SIDS being democracies is more linked to limited resources than being a former British colony. Favourable to democracy is the island nations' proclivity to be ethnically and linguistically homogeneous (Clague et al. 2001, pp. 23-31). Smallness renders some islands "doomed to democracy" as they lack room for growth (D. Anckar 2010, p. 7). Implicitly,

resource scarcity obligates them to accept the preference for democracy by larger nations, who are typically aid donors and providers of security. Another consideration is they can only maintain small armed forces, which added to their insularity, remoteness and environmental precariousness, creates a problem of acute indefensibility (Payne & Sutton 1993, p. 584-585). They have smaller militaries because island nations' water boundaries reduce external threats of conquest and limit the rulers from expanding their domains (Clague et al. 2001, pp. 23). But indefensibility generates reliance on larger nations' benevolence to deter invasion. Such 'big brother' magnanimity is performed by the United States in the Caribbean and the Northern Pacific, Australia in the South Pacific, the AU and instrumental African nations in the AIMS region, and by India[19] in the Indian Ocean. Awareness of their limited prowess and vulnerability incline SIDS to accept democracy voluntarily. Their small resource base makes it unusual to develop a security force of sufficient size, coercive capacity and experience to carry out a coup and establish an authoritarian regime. It compels the majority of small island countries to retain democratic systems favoured by regional powers.

Nevertheless, small countries are not immune from challenges to democracy due to ethnic differences and traditionalism. Payne and Sutton (1993, p. 587) found that plural societies could threaten the consensus on values, and political order sometimes broke down because small societies could not easily accommodate radical change. Srebrnik (2004, p. 336) observed "islandness" provided little protection against severe ethno-cultural cleavages, seen in divided plural societies. Examples of island nations with tensions between the major ethnic groups are: Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius and New Caledonia. The conflict in Solomon Islands was between people from two different islands. In Comoros as well, people from different islands are at variance. Evolution of separate identities caused breakaway new nations with: Tokelau splitting from Western Samoa in 1962, Anguilla splitting from St Christopher and Nevis in 1967, and Tuvalu (Ellice Islands) splitting from Kiribati (Gilbert Islands) in 1975, while other attempts to split were unsuccessful (Srebrnik 2004, p. 338). In the Pacific, some indigenous politicians and scholars viewed western democratic values as incompatible with traditional cultures. Ravuvu (1991, p. x) described democracy as a 'façade' as he felt it provided equality to other ethnic groups and deprived indigenous Fijians of their inherited rights. Democracy advocate Lawson (1996) discussed the conflict between traditional chiefly systems and democracy in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. Larmour (2002)

[19] India assisted in foiling coup attempts in the Maldives and Seychelles.

assessed tensions between Pacific cultures and democratic principles of representation, constitutionalism and liberalism. Thus, similar to larger nations, some small states are challenged by ethnic differences and customary cultures.[20] Most SIDS nations had traditional authoritarian and/or colonial autocratic governance systems. In many cases colonisers endowed them with democratic electoral systems. There are typically adjustment challenges during their transition to democracy.[21]

Despite issues potentially arising in the transition to democracy, most SIDS are regarded as politically stable. Payne and Sutton (1993, p. 587) emphasised small states have an enviable record of political stability and a low incidence of civil disorder. Many SIDS maintain democratic institutions in contrast to "the anarchy, autocracy, internal warfare" and militarism that can be present in larger developing states (Srebrnik 2004, p. 339). A UNDP paper acknowledged the negligible amount of empirical studies on government change relative to smallness; but found SIDS to be better governed than larger countries; enjoying more effective democracy; with easier achievement of participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and trust (Everest-Phillips 2014, pp. 10-11).

Some studies contrasted the tendency of SIDS to maintain electoral democracy with their undemocratic leadership characteristics. The view that smallness encourages democracy was disputed by Veenendaal (2015, p. 106) who found the informal and practical dynamics of microstate politics undermined the functioning of democracy because "… smallness primarily results in personalistic politics, polarisation and victimisation, disproportionate executive dominance, patron-client linkages, and particularistic forms of political participation". Erk and Veenendaal (2014, p. 136) refute the argument that small size is conducive to democracy proclaiming that the story of the microdemocratic miracle is not true, and "in fact, small states are *not* likely to be liberal democracies". In field research on four microstates, they (pp. 141-143) found closeness generates conflicts of interest; relations between citizens and politicians are largely particularistic; clientelism, patronage, nepotism, and cronyism are common and democracy is adopted in a minimalist way to satisfy international donors. Likewise, Payne and Sutton (1993, p. 587) found that politics in small states focuses on personality, patron-client networks abound, the public service is easily

[20] Due to space limitations, the literature on ethnic/cultural differences impact on SIDS democracy will not be explored in detail. Fiji is the only case study where ethnic differences contributed to coups, and relevant authors will be cited in that chapter.
[21] Theories of authoritarianism and transition to democracy and their relevance to developing countries, are discussed in the next chapter.

intimidated or corrupted and the opposition silenced or cowed, and “power becomes centred in one person”. The UNDP identified problems of weak governance in SIDS public service: disproportionally big governments; patronage, personalisation of politics, nepotism, corruption; lack of impartial institutions; blurring of lines between politics and public service; ‘bureaupathology’;[22] and vested interests (Everest-Phillips 2014, pp. 12-14). These problems were found in the Maldives and Seychelles, and to a lesser degree in Fiji.[23] Interviews in the Maldives and Seychelles revealed an over-dependence on state bureaucracy for employment, and fear of job loss made citizens unlikely to criticise the government. As these poor forms of governance are a feature of SIDS, it can be deduced that SIDS may have democratic mechanisms and institutions but are lacking a democratic culture.

Most scholars concur that small states are more inclined towards consensual politics and democracy. Some found SIDS contradicted these notions and suffered from ethnic differences, leadership and governance problems akin to authoritarianism. These problems may in part be due to the challenges of adopting liberal values in traditional societies during the transition to democracy.

2.4 Conclusion

Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles are anomalous because out of 28 small island states with populations of less than 1.5 million, these were the only ones where post-coup authoritarian regimes succeeded in retaining power. They were selected as the case studies for this thesis as they deviated from the norm that most small island states are viewed as democracies by the Commonwealth, among others. The examination of the freedom status, attempted coups and size of armed forces of 28 independent island states with populations of less than 1.5 million, revealed that the occurrence of coups more directly correlated to countries having armed forces of sufficient size, rather than their population size. Most SIDS are democracies because they do not have an army of reasonable size, and they depend on western aid donors who impose conditions relating to good governance and democracy. In most small states, coups and authoritarian regimes do not occur due to a lack of resources to both execute a coup and to maintain a post-coup regime. The lack of armed forces also helps to prevent

[22] Bureaupathology refers to public servants’ insecurity, poor pay and work conditions.
[23] Revealed in the later chapters of this thesis.

protracted violent conflict. Coups did not result in successful post-coup regimes in Sao Tome and Principe, Comoros and Grenada, because interventions by large nations prevented operation of post-coup regimes there. Those states then adopted multi-party elections to appease the international community and western donor nations from whom they need protection and assistance.

This research concurs with the literature that SIDS are more likely to be democracies post-independence, but can nevertheless suffer from problems arising from ethnic differences and identity politics. SIDS countries do experience varying degrees of non-democratic leadership and governance problems which indicate that they are not wholly democratic. Rather, they are transitioning towards consolidating fully-functioning institutions and mechanisms of democracy. Because of their peculiar vulnerabilities, SIDS can be encouraged by external actors to desist from coups, and adopt democracy, rather than authoritarianism. SIDS need the support of larger nations to safeguard their territories. If democratic powers offer aid and provide geopolitical security within their sphere of influence, SIDS are more likely to remain democracies. Democracy and authoritarianism in SIDS are under-researched topics; more qualitative research data and analysis are needed to inform policy making. To facilitate such analysis, the next chapter will look at theories of authoritarianism, democracy and elections.

Chapter 3. Theories and norms of authoritarianism, democracy and elections

Theories and concepts after the post-WWII period, are now examined as decolonisation was occurring at a rapid pace then. These are applicable to the post-Cold War era when many developing countries were compelled to democratise, including Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. The three countries became independent between 1965 and 1976, and their post-independence political challenges are the main scope of this thesis. Theories of authoritarianism are briefly discussed in relation to the precolonial and colonial political history before being briefly used to identify the authoritarian regime types post-independence. Political-military relations and civil military reform theories are pertinent to analysing the role of armed forces in maintaining authoritarian rule and their adjusted functions in the democratisation process. Concepts exploring the transition to democracy and setbacks to its progress provide insights into the post-WWII trend whereby many African, Asian and Latin American countries reverted to authoritarian rule post-independence. The three case studies in this thesis also succumbed to this trend. In the face of authoritarian trends, civil society has the power to bring change – its key role is briefly discussed in the transition to democracy section. Authoritarianism results in curtailment of civil and political rights that are essential in democratic societies to freely select governmental leaders through elections and hold them accountable. As elections are typically assessed by analysts and the international community to measure the levels of democracy in a country, evolving approaches to election observation are also critically evaluated. This is important as authoritarian regimes increasingly opt for multiparty elections in an effort to legitimise their continuing rule.

3.1 Authoritarianism

Theories of a few prominent scholars about the modes and characteristics of authoritarian rule, and the types of authoritarian rulers are discussed below. Their definitions are useful in classifying the different periods of precolonial, colonial, and post-independence rule in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. Their definitions are drawn on to classify the different periods of precolonial, colonial, and post-independence rule in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles.

3.1.1 Types of authoritarian regimes and rulers

Authoritarianism involves a high degree of political control over citizens by a group or person. The population suffers from repression and complies with the ruler out of fear or necessity. The utilisation of the state by leaders to coerce compliance is emphasised in Perlmutter's definition of authoritarianism:

> "… a system of relationships between state and society and between political and societal sources of power. It is based on a type of domination which is dependent on centralised executive control and coercion," (Perlmutter 1981, p. 24).

Perlmutter's explanation of authoritarianism as involving domination, control and coercion, is applicable to societies worldwide. It implies that the regimes resulting from illegal seizures of power, coups, conquest and colonialism are also authoritarian, as citizens are governed through varying levels of coercion and/or by the armed forces.

In tribal, clan-based, or pre-colonial societies, the state did not exist as an entity. Power tended to be inherited and was vested in the ruler, such as a king or chief. The traditional authoritarian regime types of monarchy, where leaders are not chosen but inherit power, and aristocracy, in which the civilian and military elites are integrated (Janowitz 1975, p. 58), are relevant to precolonial societies – including those in Fiji and the Maldives.

In contrast, 20th century Europe witnessed complex authoritarian rule where power could be based in the ruler, in a group, or a combination. Collective dictatorships (see below), oligarchy (see next section) and military government (Perlmutter 1981, p. 1) are examples of group-based authoritarian rule. Totalitarianism is an extreme example of collective authoritarian rule sustained through organisation and ideology (Perlmutter 1981, p. 175). Cobban termed totalitarian as the absolute state (1971, p. 175). Arendt (1962, p. 323) described totalitarianism as mass organisations of isolated individuals demanding total and unconditional loyalty of the member. Arendt (1962, p. 308) claimed that totalitarian movements depended on the force of numbers, making their existence in small countries almost impossible. There is no evidence of totalitarianism in SIDS (see next section).

Authoritarian rule through a group, alliance or coalition, has been evident in European, Latin American, Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries with variations that reflect the

distinct cultural background of their complex societies.[24] This form of rule generally does not apply to small island states, except for Fiji, which defied this trend post-independence and implemented military rule post-coups. Huntington observed (1970, p. 4) that traditional, simple forms of authoritarian rule are impossible in highly complex modern societies which are not likely to be governed effectively by absolute monarchs, personalist dictatorships, or military juntas. The post-independence societies of Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles also were not ruled by absolute monarchs or military juntas after coups, but had elected authoritarian rule. Nevertheless, they were inclined to become personalist, which is a characteristic of SIDS leaders (see Section 2.3). Perlmutter (1981, p. 179) depicted "modern authoritarianism as the authoritarianism of mass movements" while Huntington (1970, p. 4) saw the one-party system as the principal modern form of authoritarian government. Since the 1970s, scholars have found that authoritarian rulers need to justify their rule by either portraying mass support for their regime or by showing they came to power through elections. This latter phenomenon is electoral authoritarianism, where authoritarian leaders attempt to acquire legitimacy through election victories (see section 3.2.2).

The types of authoritarian rule where excessive power and control are vested in the ruler include dictatorships, autocracy, tyranny, and personalism. The following are some definitions by scholars. Dictatorship is the government of one man obtained by force or consent or by a combination of both (Cobban 1971, p. 26). The dictator has absolute sovereignty, has no limitation to the term of office, and is not responsible to another authority (Cobban 1971, p. 26). Autocracy is rule by a single person wielding absolute executive power. In a similar vein, tyranny involves personal and non-institutionalised rule, secured by conquest and maintained by fear (Perlmutter 1981, p. 2).

Personalist rule is when leaders concentrate power and resources in their own hands[25] (Geddes 2004, p. 28). Since 1946, leaders' efforts to personalise power in authoritarian regimes have succeeded about half the time (Geddes 2004, p. 29). Geddes (1999) distinguished personalist regimes from military, single-party, or amalgams of the "pure types" by explaining that the ruler is chosen by a group of officers in military regimes, and one party dominates access to political office and control over policy in single-party regimes, whereas:

[24] For lists of authoritarian countries, see Geddes, Wright & Frantz 2014a; Ezrow & Frantz 2011a.
[25] Geddes classifies 'personalist' authoritarian regime as a separate category.

> "Personalist regimes differ from both military and single-party in that access to office and the fruits of office depends much more on the discretion of an individual leader. The leader may be an officer and may have created a party to support himself, but neither the military nor the party exercises independent decision-making power insulated from the whims of the ruler," (Geddes 1999, p. 121).

Personal rule is not the same as having a charismatic leader who is able to attract populist support through their magnetic personality. In personal rule, the ruler may also be charismatic but amasses authoritarian control into his/her own hands.

The above concepts are utilised in the following ways in this thesis. The term dictatorship is applied to unelected regimes, or to single-party elected governments ruled by a controlling leader, or one-man (no party) rule. The phrase personal rule is applied to similar regimes, but only for situations where there is compelling evidence of personal control by the ruler. For instance, the post-independence Maldivian President Nasir was a one-man dictator, whereas his successor Gayoom was a one-man personal dictator (see Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2). Bainimarama's unelected rule from 2006-2014 in Fiji was a personal/military dictatorship (see section 4.6.1), whereas his elected rule from 2014-2018 was an electoral autocracy. René's reign in Seychelles from 1977-1992 was a single-party personal dictatorship, whereas his rule from 1993-2004 was an electoral autocracy (see Section 6.4.1). The term autocracy is used where excessive control is vested in the ruler of an authoritarian regime, notwithstanding their possible later confirmation by multiparty elections. Not all scholars use the above terminology to denote the rulers' qualities. For instance, Geddes, Wright and Frantz (2014a, p. 317) employ the term autocratic to denote an authoritarian regime rather than a ruler.[26] The scholars omit categorising colonialism and imperialism, where peoples and nations were denied sovereignty and ruled by the metropolitan power, as authoritarian. Colonial rule is included as a specific regime type in this thesis, as it had a major influence in all three cases although the British did decolonise these countries peacefully.

The literature on authoritarianism is extensive in both theoretical and empirical scope, yet it does not directly address its manifestation in SIDS. Many classifications of authoritarianism apply to complex societies during particular periods in the 20th century. Nevertheless, basic

[26] They classify a regime as autocratic if: an executive achieved power through undemocratic means; the government achieved power democratically but subsequently changed the rules to limit electoral competition; competitive elections existed but the military prevented parties from competing or dictated policy choices. Their *Autocratic Regimes Data Set*, is available on: http://dictators.la.psu.edu . It received the Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba Data Set Award in 2015 (See News – 2015 Section Award Winners, Comparative Newsletter, viewed 13 November 2015, http://comparativenewsletter.com/node/22)

characteristics of authoritarianism and broad classifications do resonate with the three case studies in this thesis.

3.1.2 Political military relations and regimes

Political-military relations are important as authoritarianism relies on coercion by the military or police to pressure people to comply with the regime. It may involve politicisation of the disciplined forces due to their voluntary involvement in politics to gain power, or involuntary involvement due to actions of elites in society. Military rule became less common in the new millennium, but the military still governed 19% of countries in 2010 (Geddes, Frantz & Wright 2014b, p. 148). There is an array of literature on the military and politics,[27] however, Janowitz's classifications of political-military relations are particularly useful for this thesis.

Janowitz identified four models of political-military elites – aristocratic, democratic, totalitarian, and garrison state. In the aristocratic model, civilian and military elites were socially and functionally integrated and existed in Western Europe before the industrial era (Janowitz 1975, p. 58). "The aristocratic family supplies sons to politics and military; political control is civilian control only because there is an identity of interest between aristocratic and military groups" Janowitz (1975, p. 58) stated. In the democratic model, the civilian political elite exercise control over the military through a formal set of rules; the military leaders obey the government because it is their constitutional, professional duty to do so while democratic parliamentary institutions guarantee civilian political supremacy (Janowitz 1975, p. 58). The aristocratic model has existed in many traditional societies including Fiji – where the chiefs and *bati* (warriors) enjoyed a special bond, and the Maldives – where the monarchical families and soldiers had a symbiotic relationship. The aristocratic models existed in many traditional societies including Fiji – where the chiefs and *bati* (warriors) enjoyed a special bond, and the Maldives – where the monarchical families and soldiers had a unique relationship. In the totalitarian model, a revolutionary political elite based on a mass authoritarian political party controls the military elite (Janowitz 1975, p. 59). Totalitarian control is "enforced by the secret police, by infiltrating party members into the military hierarchy, by arming its own military units, and by controlling the system of officer selection," Janowitz (1975, p. 59) stated. In Seychelles post-1977 coup, the ruling party's

[27] See writings of Samuel Decalo for coups in Africa; Samuel E. Finer for the role of military in politics; Eric A. Nordlinger and Alfred Stepan for military and governmental change.

indoctrination of soldiers and youth with socialist ideology did not result in totalitarianism, as a significant portion of the population did not support the regime (see section 6.4.3). Rather, it was a case of authoritarian-mass party control (see below). The garrison-state model is a coalition between the military and civil political factions, where the military groups wield unprecedented power, but retain their organisation's independence (Janowitz, 1975, p. 59). Since independence, Fiji has fluctuated between the democratic model and the garrison-state model, after the 1987 coup (see section 4.4.2).

Four fundamental modern authoritarian models were categorised by Perlmutter (1981, p. 38): the party-state exemplified by Bolshevik Russia; the police state exemplified by Nazi Germany; and the corporatist state. The fourth was the praetorian state and featured three forms of military dictatorship: personal – which involved despotic tyranny; oligarchical – where the military was autonomous; and corporatist – where the government was composed of military and technocratic groups (Perlmutter 1981, p. 28-39). Janowitz (1975, p. 139) also had military oligarchy as a category. An example of military oligarchy is Egypt, when the military removed the elected government of the Muslim Brotherhood in July 2013 and itself took control of the government. Perlmutter explained that in corporatist and praetorian systems, the military elite serve as the reservoir of political power and mobilised the political organisations and the state. The four models have been applicable to complex European societies but not to the three case studies in this thesis. Nevertheless, Perlmutter's (1981, p. 7) explanation that the military's proximity to political power motivates it to become involved in politics despite lacking political skills, indicates that the military's role is essential in determining whether a country is democratic or authoritarian. Janowitz (1975, p. 137) further asserted that the social structure of non-Western new nations predisposed the military officers to political activism and more involvement in domestic politics. Huntington (1968, pp. 4-5) attributed this tendency to political underdevelopment that resulted in political instability and disorder. Political underdevelopment is common in authoritarian countries that are transitioning to democracy (see section 3.2.1).

To analyse the military in the political development of new nations, Janowitz (1975, p. 138) identified five types of civil-military relations: authoritarian-personal control; authoritarian-mass party; democratic competitive and semi-competitive systems; civil-military coalition; and military oligarchy. According to Janowitz, authoritarian-personal control refers to regimes that may be based on personal and traditional power, and are likely to be found in

nations just beginning the process of modernisation. Examples of authoritarian-personal control were the rule of Idi Amin in Uganda and of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Authoritarian-mass party control was when authoritarian power maybe rooted in a one-party state, under strong personal leadership, without parliamentary institutions (Janowitz 1975, p. 138). An example of authoritarian-mass party control is the rule since December 2011 by Kim Jong-un of North Korea. The rule by René in Seychelles from 1977-2004, Gayoom in the Maldives from 1978- 2008, and Bainimarama in Fiji from 2006-2014 are examples of authoritarian-personal rule as well.

The armed forces of authoritarian countries can engage in civil military relations (CMR) reform (see section 3.3.1) to achieve Janowitz's democratic-competitive model, where the military's functions are limited by the strength of competitive democratic institutions and civilian control. In democratic competitive and semi-competitive systems, civilian supremacy limits the role of the military (Janowitz 1975, p. 138). Examples of democratic-competitive systems are western countries such as the USA, Britain and France, and also non-western countries such as India, South Africa and Japan. A civil-military coalition is when the military expands its political activity and becomes a political bloc; the civilian leadership remain in power only because of the military's passive assent or active assistance (Janowitz 1975, p. 139). An example of a civil-military coalition is post-coup in Turkey in 1980, after which parties had to get approval from the National Security Council to contest elections. Civil-military coalitions existed in Fiji from 1987-1992 and 2000-2001 following overthrows of elected governments.

The political-military relations categories developed by Janowitz and Perlmutter are useful for analysing whether the military is serving an authoritarian or democratic role in a country. While some theories on authoritarianism were more applicable to complex developed societies, Janowitz's classifications are particularly relevant for the three case studies and are thus utilised in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

3.2 Democracy

Issues of democracy pertinent for developing countries post-WWII are herewith discussed. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to appraise the abundant literature on definitions, types and

systems of democracy according to electoral systems or institutional mechanisms.[28] A perusal of scholarly texts reveals that the problems encountered by the three case studies are common for countries transitioning from traditional, precolonial and colonial authoritarian rule to democratic rule. Thus, the discourse on transitions towards, and consolidation of, democracy has particular relevance to this thesis and will be examined. Also explored below are modes of electoral authoritarianism that are likely to be concocted in countries with incomplete transitions to democracy. Democracy is a process where citizens exercise their civil and political rights to freely select representatives and leaders who will not just rule on their behalf, but act in consultation with them. Democracy provides citizens with mechanisms for participation in their nation's decision-making process and to hold leaders accountable. Integral to democracy are freedoms of expression, assembly, association, movement and the rule of law. These tend to be undermined in nations that are authoritarian, or weak during transition to democracy.

3.2.1 Transition to democracy

The features of democracy are now examined, especially those essential in the process of consolidating democracy. Firstly, the link between democracy and elections is outlined. Then the conditions and measures of democracy are identified which demonstrates that these venture far beyond elections alone. Special attention is drawn to the prerequisites for democracy proposed by Dahl (1998), Linz and Stepan (1996) and Przeworski (1991), as they are particularly relevant to this study.

Most definitions of democracy portray elections as either an expression or an outcome of democracy. US President Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as: government *by* the people and *for* the people (Lijphart 2012, p.1). Lipset (1959, p.71) defined democracy as "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions" through elections. The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance stated in its 1995 founding declaration: "Democracy ensures that decisions are taken with the fullest participation of those who will be affected

[28] Lijphart (2012, pp. 1-6), drawing on works by earlier scholars, contrasts the majoritarian model of democracy with the consensus model and the proportional model. Coppedge et. al. (2011, p. 254) provide these six conceptions of democracy: electoral, liberal, majoritarian, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian.

and aimed at local and participative self-governance. Inherent in the concept of democracy is that it grows from within and from below rather than being imposed from the outside or from above" (IDEA 1995). Democracy is expressed through citizens electing their representatives[29] to govern.

To measure democratisation, scholars and international organisations have listed attributes, some of which relate to elections. Pemstein, Meserve and Melton (2010, p. 429) summarised the measures of democracy from the 10 prominent international sources.[30] Their summation reveals that the main measures of democracy for Freedom House (2007) were political rights and civil liberties; and for Bollen (2001) were political liberties and popular sovereignty. Table 3.1 lists the attributes for measuring democracy by Arat, Bowman et al. and Coppedge et al..

Conditions of Democracy		**Measures of Democracy**		
Dahl (1998)	**Linz and Stepan (1996)**	**Arat***	**Bowman et al.****	**Coppedge et al.*****
Civilian control of armed forces	Free civil society	Participation	Political liberties	Free and fair elections
Democratic culture	Autonomous political society	Inclusiveness	Competitive elections	Freedom of organisation
No foreign hostility	Rule of law	Competitiveness	Inclusive participation	Freedom of expression
Market economy	State bureaucracy	Level of Coerciveness	Civilian supremacy	Pluralism in the media
Pluralism	Economic society		National sovereignty	

Table 3.1 Conditions and measures of democracy
* Arat 1991 (cited in Pemstein, Meserve & Melton 2010, p. 429).
** Bowman, Lehoucq & Mahoney 2005 (cited in Pemstein, Meserve & Melton 2010, p. 429).
*** Coppedge & Reinicke 1991 (cited in Pemstein, Meserve & Melton 2010, p. 429).

Coppedge et al. also have political and civil rights as measures, while Bowman et al. have civilian supremacy and national sovereignty as measures. Arat and Bowman et al. regarded participation and inclusiveness as important, whereas Arat was the only source that found it necessary to evaluate the level of coerciveness. Generally, they found it vital to include civil

[29] The representative democracy systems: parliamentary, presidential, and mixed, existed in the three case studies post-independence.
[30] Pemstein et al's precis indicates that the process of electing leaders were the main measures of democracy for Hadenius (1992); Przeworski et al (2000) and Cheibub & Gandhi (2010); Polity 2006; Vanhanen 2003; and Gasiorowski (1996) and Reich (2002).

and political rights as factors. This indicates that elections alone are insufficient for measuring democracy.

Furthermore, multiparty elections do not result in democratic nations (see next section) if some preconditions are lacking. Dahl (1998, pp. 146-147) stipulated five conditions in a country that are crucial for a stable democracy, illustrated in Table 3.1: control of military and the police by elected officials; democratic beliefs and political culture; no strong foreign control hostile to democracy; a modern market economy and society; and weak subcultural pluralism. Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 7) emphasise five conditions in addition to a functioning state, depicted in Table 3.1, without which a democracy cannot be consolidated: a free and lively civil society; autonomous political society; rule of law; state bureaucracy; and an institutionalised economic society. Their preconditions are utilised in analysing Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, as authoritarian reversals occurred there due to a lack of a democratic culture, manipulation of the military by the ruler or elites, and a subservient state bureaucracy that continued serving the regime in undemocratic circumstances.

Consolidation is difficult in countries where democratic mechanisms are not utilised to resolve conflicts or crisis. It creates a high risk of democratic reversals. When conflicts are processed through democratic institutions, democracy becomes consolidated, as "nobody can control the outcomes ex post and the results are not predetermined ex ante", with political forces compelled to comply (Przeworski 1991, p. 51). Additionally, democracy is consolidated if it becomes "the only game in town" which occurs when: there is no risk of groups overthrowing the democratic regime; government is not consumed by the problem of avoiding a democratic breakdown; a majority believe political change must emerge from democratic formulas; and all actors become habituated to resolving political conflict through established norms (Linz & Stepan 1996, p. 5). There was a democratic breakdown during and after coups in Fiji several times, the Maldives in 2012, and Seychelles in 1977, as the three states were unable to resolve political crises via democratic processes and subsequently experienced periods of authoritarianism.

The three nations could not consolidate democracy because they were not imbued with a democratic political culture, as stipulated by Dahl:

> "Unless a substantial majority of citizens prefer democracy and its political institutions to any nondemocratic alternative and support political leaders who uphold democratic practices, democracy is unlikely to survive through its inevitable crisis" (Dahl, 1998, pp. 157-158).

Dahl and Przeworski warn that democracies are unlikely to endure if the armed forces are not subservient to civilian rule. Przeworski (1991, p. 51) asserts that democratic transitions will not proceed in regimes that "limit contestation or suffer from a threat of military intervention". Dahl (1998, p. 148) cautions that: "Unless the military and police are under the full control of democratically elected officials, democratic political institutions are unlikely to develop or endure". Dahl viewed leaders who could access the armed forces as "the most dangerous internal threat to democracy" and warned that without civilian control, "the prospects for democracy are dim" (Dahl 1998, p. 149). Furthermore, democratisation is less difficult where the authoritarian ruler is a civilian, as in Seychelles, and more difficult for military regimes, such as Fiji. A hierarchical military is less likely to succumb to civilian pressure to withdraw from an undemocratic regime, and can negotiate to retain undemocratic prerogatives or impose constraints on political processes (Linz & Stepan 1996, p. 67). This obstacle was evident in the case of Fiji following the 1987 and 2006 military coups. It reinforces Dahl's concern that without civilian control of the armed forces, democracy is unlikely to endure.

The political society and civil society, according to Linz and Stepan (1996) play a mutually reinforcing role in democratic consolidation. Political society comprises of elites including government leaders. Elites, whether traditional or newly emergent, tend to have vested interests and do not want to give up power (Lipset 1959, p.84), whereas civil society exercises freedoms to make its voice heard and hold the power to change the government. The outcome of the democratic transition process depends on the alliance of political actors (Przeworski 1991, pp. 66-71). Post-Cold War, most democratic breakdowns have not been caused by armed forces but by elected leaders subverting the electoral process (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018, pp. 3-5). The election outcomes in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles reveal that elites can influence voters to favour democracy or, conversely, to favour authoritarianism, ethno-nationalism or religious fundamentalism. Ambivalence towards democracy among a significant portion of businesses and the upper class meant the three countries easily reverted to authoritarian rule. Thus, elites can use their power for democratisation, or lead the general populace astray by misconstruing the messages of democracy.

Moreover, in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, where the elites of one particular group controlled political leadership for a lengthy period, they were able to stack the state bureaucracy with loyalists from their ideological or ethnic group. Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 11) question the usability of the state bureaucracy by new democratic governments following the tenure of undemocratic regimes where the distinction between the party and the state was blurred. According to Linz and Stepan (1996), the democratic state operates through rational-legal bureaucratic norms. But in authoritarian regimes, the state bureaucracy, sustained through patron-client relations, can be a hurdle to transitions to democracy, as will be demonstrated through the three case studies.

Civil society comprises diverse individuals and groups and is integral for democracy as it challenges state power (Linz & Stepan 1996; Walzer 2003, p. 79). Civil society is autonomous, disseminates information and produces new leaders, and can stimulate resistance or overthrow of non-democratic regimes (Doorenspleet 2006, pp. 5-6). Civil societies that struggle against dictatorships can weaken the cultural foundations of authoritarianism, and serve as a base for democracy (Haynes 1997, p. 173). In the new millennium, civil society played an important role in advocating for a return to democracy, rule of law and anti-corruption in the case studies. A vibrant civil society is vital for a participatory democracy as leaders are more responsive to citizens' aspirations. Leaders are held accountable through active citizens exercising their civil and political rights, making abuse of power and authoritarianism preventable. Both civil society and political societies worked together to bring their countries back to democratisation in 2019 in the Maldives and in 2016 in Seychelles. As such, civil society is examined as a separate theme in the three case studies.

Elections provide an inadequate measure of democratisation. International sources proposed a more rigorous criteria comprising status of civil and political rights, coerciveness, role of armed forces, rule of law, political and civil society, and democratic culture. The conditions of Dahl, Linz and Stepan and Przeworski were found most suitable for utilisation in this thesis.

3.2.2 Incomplete transitions and electoral authoritarianism[31]

Multiparty elections in undemocratic circumstances or where the transition to democracy was incomplete, did not always result in democratic governments. Instead, it gave rise to various modes of electoral authoritarianism examined below.

Post-Cold War, authoritarian regimes increasingly embraced elections to stay in power, resulting in governments that were not liberal electoral democracies, but exhibited characteristics of both democracy and autocracy. Scholars devised terms such as competitive authoritarianism, electoral autocracy and authoritarian elections to describe such hybrids. When elections are conducted in illegitimate ways, they result in illiberal, unaccountable governments rather than democracies. One-party states and dictatorships could arise where an effective opposition was non-existent (Lipset 1959, p.71). Wahman et al. (2013) note different forms of electoral autocratic regimes depending on varying institutionalisation of competition, such as: multi-party regimes, no-party regimes, and one-party regimes. Schedler[32] (2002, p. 103) explored techniques of electoral manipulation authoritarian rulers employ to control electoral outcomes, as they want to minimise or even eliminate their risk of defeat and legitimise their continuity in office. Schedler (2002, pp. 104-109) adoptss terminologies such as 'manipulated elections' which involve: electoral fraud; political repression; unfair competition; manipulation of the actor space and issue space and rules of representation. He refers to 'semidemocratic elections', 'semiauthoritarian elections', 'autocratic elections' and 'electoral authoritarianism' to describe the types of elections that authoritarian rulers allow in their countries.

Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009, p. 404) utilise the phrase authoritarian elections to describe elections in undemocratic regimes which "range from the relatively free and fair to those in which candidates' and citizens' choices are more constricted". Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009, pp. 405-406) suggest that autocrats allow elections to divide opposition forces, to offer an alternative route to power to those who otherwise might launch a coup and because elections help autocrats establish legitimacy at home or abroad. Thus elections allow autocrats to reduce the risk of being violently removed from office and to legitimise their rule.[33] In Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, return to electoral government was voluntarily undertaken as

---

[31] Information from this section is also in Bhim 2019.
[32] Schedler (2006) edited the book: "Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition".
[33] Elections tend to be held when the incumbents believed, due to their popularity and tight control of the process, that they would win.

democracy brought benefits to these countries and to the dictator's supporters. Elections were used as a façade to legitimise authoritarian regimes, in a similar way to the larger countries examined by these scholars, raising the possibility that SIDS may not just be learning about democracy from larger countries, but are also learning about autocracy from them.

Autocrats may manipulate rules, such as those governing the media, to limit information, restrict the entry of opposition candidates and their abilities to campaign, and interfere with the composition and independence of electoral commissions that oversee counting and certifying of final results (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, p. 413). Trejo (2014, p. 332) describes electoral autocracies as the most common variety of authoritarian regime in the world today, in which autocratic governments allow partially free and unfair elections to occur. By legalising opposition parties and consenting to government-controlled elections, autocrats activate elections as the main arena for political contestation (Trejo 2014, p. 336).

Levitsky and Way's (2010) book on 'competitive authoritarianism' considers the new regimes where formal democratic institutions exist, but which combine electoral competition with varying degrees of authoritarianism in the post–Cold War era. Regimes:

> "… were competitive in that opposition forces used democratic institutions to contest vigorously – and, on occasion, successfully – for power. Nevertheless, they were not democratic. Electoral manipulation, unfair media access, abuse of state resources, and varying degrees of harassment and violence skewed the playing field in favor of incumbents," (Levitsky & Way 2010, p. 3).

Thus, they state competition was real but unfair. Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 3) found that 33 regimes were competitive authoritarian in 1995, exceeding the number of full democracies in the developing and post-communist world.

Newer writings by scholars such as Geddes, Gandhi, Lust-Okar, Levitsky and Way, explore ways in which dictators are using elections to hold onto power. Ezrow & Frantz (2011a) in their book *Dictators and Dictatorships*, reviewed definitions and typologies of authoritarian regimes and dictatorships. They analysed causes of dictatorships, survival strategies and trends of authoritarian regimes, and discussed types of pure and hybrid dictatorships in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. Yet they omitted

examples from small states with less than 1.5 million population,[34] such as those examined in this thesis.

Increasingly, authoritarian regimes are using parties and legislatures in an effort to legitimise their rule through elections. Evidence indicates that "parties and legislatures bolster the survival rates of dictatorships by shielding them from the destabilising effects of unconstitutional leadership transfers" (Ezrow & Frantz 2011b, p. 9). Their finding is ironic as it implies that although autocrats may attain power by force or use of extra-legal means, they do not want to be removed from power by use of the same harsh means. Later in depth analysis in the case studies will show that the embrace of multiparty elections by the autocrats - Gayoom in the Maldives, René in Seychelles, and Bainimarama in Fiji – was so that they could continue ruling under an electoral system that was not democratic but authoritarian.

While ostensibly representing progress, authoritarian elections can instead stall a country's transition to democracy.

3.3 Measuring democratisation

Democracy flourishes when citizens are enjoying their civil and political rights. To assess whether they are being repressed or upheld in post-coup authoritarian regimes, civil military relations (CMR) reforms and the conduct of elections are examined. CMR reforms are an essential part of democratisation as they ensure that armed forces can no longer be utilised to coerce people, nor to protect undemocratic rulers. Elections are regarded as a measure of democracy because the process involves the exercise of political and civil rights. Therefore, election observation and the criteria for declaring elections as free and fair are also appraised. CMR are influenced by aid and advice from influential powers (Feaver 1999, p. 222), as are multiparty elections. Some donors may require both from post-authoritarian nations to prove their commitment to democratisation.

[34] In addition to military, single-party and personalist, they analysed monarchic authoritarian rule and hybrid regimes (Ezrow & Franz 2011a, p. 20).

3.3.1 Civil-Military Relations reform

Authoritarian regimes need to implement reforms in the judiciary, laws, legislature and other state institutions if they are to democratise. The armed forces undergo democratisation reforms through processes called Civil Military Relations (CMR) reform or Security Sector Reform (SSR). In the three case studies, political elites utilised armed forces to support their regimes during post-independence authoritarian rule. Rulers manipulated the military through purges of dissenters and rewards for loyalists or, conversely, the military exceeded its mandate and usurped political authority. CMR and SSR reforms can help to prevent misuse of the military by creating accountability to civilians and the rule of law. SSR is relevant for countries that have suffered internal armed conflicts. CMR, discussed below, is relevant for the three SIDS case studies because they did not suffer armed civil conflicts.

Adherence to professional values is an expectation of militaries in democracies and is proposed in CMR reform for post-authoritarian countries. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) and Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier* (1960) provide the basis for CMR theories. Huntington (1957) argues that soldiers' professionalism is essential for civilian control in a democracy, while Janowitz (1960) examines the military as an organization and a profession, and the challenges they face. The drawback of these texts is they are focused on CMR relevant to US and other Western nations during the Cold War. Feaver's *Armed Servants* (2003) is also US-focused, but addresses issues in the post-Cold War era that are relevant for the three case studies. A limitation of these leading international texts is they are not focused on authoritarian, developing countries in dire need of CMR reforms. Nevertheless, their analysis of professional values of soldiers in the developed world who can be relied on to be patriotic and serve the people without harbouring desires to illegally overthrow elected governments to obtain powers for themselves, does hold salient lessons for coup-prone authoritarian countries. In this thesis, the professional values in Janowitz's (1975) democratic model of political-military relations (see section 3.1.2), Feaver's (2003) definition of shirking, and the CMR reform recommendations by Feaver (1999) will be utilised.

Feaver (2003) uses the term 'shirk' to describe military officers' neglect or violation of their professional ethics or responsibilities. This can range from minor acts of insubordination or misbehavior by soldiers to major acts amounting to treason including coup-type activities. Soldiers shirk when they deviate from their commitment to uphold the constitution "by not

doing what the civilians have requested, or not in the way the civilians wanted, or in such a way as to undermine the ability of the civilians to make future decisions" (Feaver 2003, p. 68). Feaver explains that:

> "In a democracy, civilians have the right to be wrong. Civilian political leaders have the right to ask for things in the national security realm that are ultimately not conducive to good national security. The military should advise against such policies, but the military should not prevent those policies from being implemented," (Feaver 2003, p. 65).

A coup is thus regarded as the most serious shirking of a soldier's professional responsibilities in a democracy as it undermines the civilian government's entitlement to make decisions, and the rights of citizens to collectively choose and change their government through elections. By engaging in coups the military act in ways to "tie the hands of its civilian leaders" (Feaver 2003, p. 66).

In the absence of an external threat in the three case studies, the armed forces were misused by coup-makers and authoritarian leaders to protect themselves and entrench their rule. This represents the civil-military problematique whereby, "the very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity," (Feaver 1999). In the Maldives, multiparty elected Presidents utilised the military in the political process, thus creating the danger of re-establishing the clientelist relationship from the authoritarian past (Ashraf 2012, p. 56). In Fiji and Seychelles, the armed forces were utilised politically to implement the coup-makers' agendas. Participation in coups and misuse of soldiers by political elites to retain power are damaging in the long term as they deplete soldiers' morale, lower their self-image and allow selection of loyalists as officers rather than the candidate with a more civic, apolitical and professional disposition. Coups are treasonous acts and severely violate good soldiering, notably their ethical and professional responsibilities to protect an elected government. The armed forces were easily manipulated to play coercive roles because they were accustomed to loyalty to a ruler, rather than to civilians. Loyalty to civilians infers upholding the rule of law and protecting legitimate governments and their lawful replacements. It does not mean total loyalty to one individual.

Solutions to reform the military exist in the CMR philosophy of professionalism which requires soldiers to be apolitical and subservient to the civilian authority. There is relatively little data about armed forces in SIDS. The literature on CMR reforms is sparse for Fiji and

the Maldives, and non-existent for Seychelles. Guidelines on how to assess democratisation of the military are also lacking. To generally appraise if the inculcation of professional values in soldiers, akin to Janowitz's democratic model was achieved, military ideology, training, oaths, soldiers' experiences in coups and use by politicians, are discussed in the case study chapters. These draw on interviews with senior officials and former members of armed forces. These interviews also enabled the impact of authoritarianism and coups on soldiers, and the success or otherwise of CMR reforms, to be gauged.

Feaver (1999, p. 226) recommends adjusting recruitment criteria and incentives for soldiers so they are inclined to uphold democratic civilian rule. This requires only selecting candidates who are likely to adhere to democratic norms. Soldiers who believe in democracy are more willing to submit to civilian control and not abuse the military's power. Feaver recommends that to prevent soldiers from behaving in an unprofessional nondemocratic manner, changes have to be made from the recruitment stage. Interviews for the three case study countries revealed no evidence that attributes supportive of democracy were required of soldiers during recruitment.

Reforms by way of better wages and conditions for the military are more conducive to loyalty but do not guarantee soldiers' obedience to civilian authority. Such obedience to civilian authority can only occur if the military accepts the legitimacy of civilian rule (Frazer 1995, p. 40). Perlmutter (1977, p. 281) argues that an institutionalised political regime should be stable and sustaining, to avoid succumbing to military pressure and rule because professionalism alone could not guarantee military compliance if the civilian regime collapsed. Soldiers' compliance can be guaranteed better if they believe in democratic rule.

Future coups and authoritarian rule can, in part, be prevented through soldiers having professional values, accepting legitimate civilian rule, and most importantly, soldiers believing in democracy. These attributes can be achieved through CMR reforms.

3.3.2 Elections as a measure of democracy

The evolution of election observation and criteria is analysed here to ascertain why this approach is failing as an adequate measure of democracy. Elections are widely viewed as a barometer to indicate how much a nation has progressed towards 'full' democracy. In the post-Cold War era it has become more important for non-western countries that their

elections are declared as legitimate, credible, free and fair. Developing countries are increasingly inviting election observers because they seek to boost their legitimacy and prestige and thereby potentially enlarge their share of internationally allocated benefits, such as aid, foreign investment, tourism, trade, and membership in international organisations (Hyde 2011, p. 3). Those regimes choosing not to invite international observers are assumed to be hiding electoral manipulation. More than 80% of elections in the world had been internationally monitored by 2006 (Hyde 2011, pp. 2-3). The perception that non-observed elections may not be democratic is another key reason developing countries – especially those desiring overseas approval and aid – invite international election observers. As democracy and human rights standards are valued by the major aid donors, mainly Western liberal democracies, independent scrutiny of elections is expected and sought.

International election observation is defined as:

> "…the systematic, comprehensive and accurate gathering of information concerning the laws, processes and institutions related to the conduct of elections and other factors concerning the overall electoral environment; the impartial and professional analysis of such information; and the drawing of conclusions about the character of electoral processes," (UN 2005, p.2).

The phrases 'electoral environment' and 'character of electoral processes' imply a favourable atmosphere for the conduct of free polls. However, international observers normally stay in the country for a number of days and only observe the processes of casting and counting of ballots, which means deficiencies of democracy in the lead up to election day are often not included in observation.

International observation gained prominence after the creation of the United Nations post-WWII. From the 1950s, the UN observed decolonisation elections; the Organisation of American States (OAS) began the practice in 1989; the Carter Center pushed the practice forward from the 1980s; and international election observation has become a 'norm' since 1990 (Collin 2016). The first detailed *Guidelines for International Election Observing* were prepared in 1984 by Larry Garber for The International Human Rights Law Group. In 1991, the Commonwealth adopted its own *Guidelines for the Establishment of Commonwealth Groups to Observe Elections in Member Countries*, revising it in 2018.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) adopted the *Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections* in 1994, giving credence to common use of the term 'free and fair'. The 1994 IPU

criteria are apt for the purpose of analyzing elections in regimes that are not fully democratic as it has sections on: '1. free and fair elections', '2. voting and election rights', '3. candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities', and most importantly on '4. the rights and responsibilities of states'. IDEA's *Code of Conduct for Ethical and Professional Observation of Elections* was released in 1997. The IPU's Sections 3 and 4 place the onus on states to ensure democratic processes and institutions are working and that individuals and parties can freely exercise their civil and political rights. The UN *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*, adopted in 2005, emphasised that democratic elections encompass respect for human rights, rule of law and democracy but does not refer to the substance of the IPU's sections 3 and 4. The Commonwealth 2018 (p. 1) similarly provides guidelines for the conduct of election observation but does not require monitoring of the IPU's designated rights and responsibilities. The Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) found in the early years of observation, when fast and simple characterization of 'free and fair' was sought on election day, the evaluation was insufficient. Subsequently, it upgraded the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation guideline in 2005. In 2016, the EU published its comprehensive fourth edition of *Compendium of Election Standards for Observation* to ensure adherence to key human rights treaties in elections, and breaches are identified by observers. But the 288-page document could be impractical compared to IPU's 5-page 1994 criteria.

As elections and their observation alone are not enough to guarantee democracy, some intergovernmental organisations and liberal states impose targeted sanctions to enforce human rights standards and deter further violations. The Commonwealth has observed more than 130 elections in 36 countries since 1980 while its Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) assessed violations of Commonwealth values and recommended measures to restore democracy including by suspending a member country (Commonwealth 2018b). Fiji was suspended from the Commonwealth in the aftermath of coups and reinstated following elections. The Maldives left the Commonwealth in October 2016 after warnings of suspension by the Commonwealth for curtailing media freedom, interfering in the judiciary and detaining opponents (*BBC News* 2016). In the past, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Nigeria were suspended by the Commonwealth, and Zimbabwe and Gambia withdrew.

International organisations have become wary of loose use of the term ‘free and fair’. There is no widely-accepted definition for practically evaluating if an election was ‘free and fair’ (IPU 2005, p. 5). Not all internationally observed elections are democratic (Hyde 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, free and fair elections are not enough because it can be facilitated without sustainable democracy; “what happens before and after elections is therefore as important as the elections themselves,” (IDEA 1995, p. 3).

International bodies are exercising caution to avoid giving credence to elections in countries that lack adherence to human rights. This was evident in the EU’s refusal to send an observer mission to the Maldives 2018 elections as their government consistently failed to abide by requests from the international community to stop jailing opponents, locking out opposition parliamentarians, victimising the media and manipulating the judiciary (see section 5.6.2). The EU also did not send observers to Cambodia’s 2018 elections where the authoritarian regime had dissolved the largest opposition party and shut down free media outlets (*Al Jazeera* 2018c). Boycotts of election observation missions were based on an expectation that elections in these countries would not be free.

Loose observation criteria can allow cases of authoritarian elections that do not conform to liberal democratic values, to be classified as ‘free and fair’. Elections are commonly viewed as the basis for making a pronouncement on levels of democracy in a state. Therefore, it is imperative elections are monitored against rigorous criteria that reflect democratic ideals. Observer groups tend to focus narrowly on the process of casting and counting of votes to declare elections credible, as in the cases of Fiji (2014) and the Maldives (2013) (see Bhim 2019). In this thesis the conduct of elections will be examined to gauge if they reflect attainment of democracy’s preconditions of: rule of law, freedom of expression, and an impartial state bureaucracy – free from control by the ruling party. Other preconditions of democracy discussed in this thesis that also impact elections, include freedom of association and peaceful assembly.

International election monitoring is useful for evaluating if elections were conducted during polling days in a credible and transparent manner. But such missions are insufficient to measure levels of democratisation in a country. To pronounce a country as democratic, observers need to ensure they measure not only the credibility of casting and counting votes, but also that institutions and processes leading up to elections are conducive to their

democratic conduct. Otherwise illiberal practices will persist in authoritarian states, such as abuse of state resources, control of media, and manipulation of independent institutions notably interference in the judiciary and electoral commissions.

3.4 Conclusion

Theories of authoritarianism and political-military relations were discussed as they are pertinent to precolonial, colonial and post-independence regime types in the case studies Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. The transition to democracy literature is drawn on to analyse the three nations as they became independent in the post-WWII era and faced pressure from the western world to democratise in the post-Cold War era. Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles succumbed to coups post-independence and later they became electoral authoritarian. These are authoritarian regimes that have multiparty elections and other ostensible trappings of representative democracy. In the three SIDS, regimes are characterised variously as military rule, single-party rule, personalist rule, and most recently, electoral autocracies.

Elections are regarded as the culmination of exercising key civil and political rights, thus observers utilise them to assess levels of democracy in developing nations. However, elections alone were deemed inadequate for assessing levels of democracy, as most international observation focuses on casting and enumeration of ballots, thus failing to take into account if the regime is coercive, rights are being violated, and if the judiciary, state media and bureaucracy are impartial. These considerations need to be included in more stringent election observation criteria to better assess democratic achievement. In addition to election observation, concepts of civil-military relations (CMR) reform were discussed as it is essential for armed forces that were used for coercive purposes to mount coups or sustain authoritarianism, to democratise. As civil society can instigate change and trigger the downfall of authoritarian rule, it has a key role in the transition to democracy. Ultimately, democracy will only survive if all sections and actors of society believe in it and uphold it. For democracy to be consolidated, it is essential for the country – including its military – to have a democratic culture. These issues will be examined in the next chapter on the first case study, Fiji.

Chapter 4. Fiji

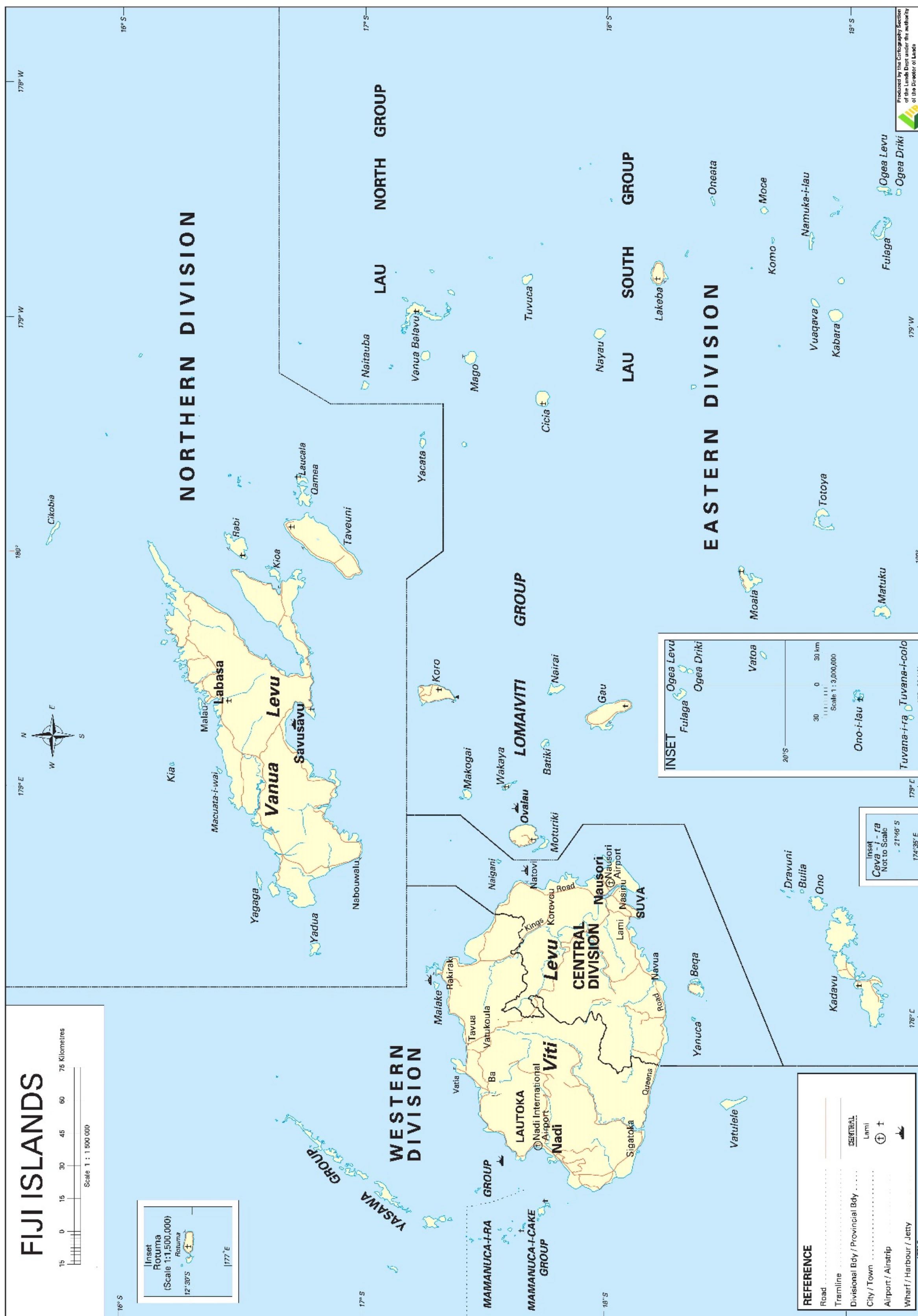


Figure 4.1 Map of Fiji Islands (Source: Lands Department, Government of Fiji).

4.1 Introduction

Fiji[35] is the only island nation in the Pacific afflicted by cycles of coups, military rule and return to elections. It was ostensibly a vibrant democracy for 17 years with the tourism slogans, 'Fiji the way the world should be', and 'Miles of isles, isles of smiles', depicting the multiracial harmony that was shattered by the 1987 military coup. Once touted as having the potential to thrive like Singapore or Mauritius, instead, Fiji has remained a lower-middle income country (UN-OHRLLS 2013, p. 23). The two main islands are Viti Levu – the most populated island with the capital Suva - and Vanua Levu.[36] Its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) covers about 1.3 million square kilometres of the South Pacific Ocean (Fiji High Commission 2018a). Post-coup many highly qualified Fiji citizens emigrated to western democratic nations such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada, thus slowing population growth which reached 885,000 in 2017. Notwithstanding its 'coup culture', Fiji remains the economic hub of the South Pacific and houses a number of Pacific regional organisations and diplomatic missions. Sugar remains a key export. Tourism grew into a major foreign exchange earner while fisheries, sugar and other crops are leading export commodities (Fiji High Commission 2018c).

Fiji's longstanding affinity with western nations has failed to generate sustainable democracy. Fiji's transformation from an aristocratic-chiefly tribal society to a multiethnic democracy could not be sustained. Instead, Fiji remains an ethnically-divided society. Distrust of Indians,[37] who are credited for much of Fiji's economic development, was proffered as the main justification for the 1987 and 2000 coups by ethno-nationalist indigenous Fijians who own 90% of the country's natural resources and dominate the military's composition. The last coup in 2006 claimed to be anti-racial and ushered in prolonged personal/military rule that was modified to electoral authoritarianism following the 2014 elections. To find out how authoritarian regimes were fostered in Fiji post-independence, the regime types over the precolonial, colonial and post-independence periods have been categorised in Table 4.1 using definitions of authoritarianism discussed in Chapter 3.

[35] The terms Fiji, Fiji Islands, and the Republic of Fiji will be used to refer to the country.
[36] It consists of 364 volcanic and coral islands, about 100 of which are inhabited (TLTBb). Its total land area is 18,333 square kilometres. There are three types of land in Fiji: native or *iTaukei* land (90%), state or crown land (4%), and freehold land (6%) (TLTB).
[37] Indo-Fijians and Indians are used interchangeably to denote Fiji Indian citizens.

Fiji	Year	Regime Type
Prior to 1874 cession to Great Britain	Pre-1874	Aristocratic-chiefly
Rule by Governor through the chiefs	1874-1904	Colonial autocracy
Europeans vote, Fijian chiefs nominate	1904-1929	Colonial European electoral autocracy
Indians vote, Fijian chiefs nominate	1929-1963	Colonial restricted electoral autocracy
Women and ordinary Fijians vote	1963-1970	Colonial multiparty electoral autocracy
Independence till 1987 coup – PM Ratu Mara	1970-1987	Transition to democracy
After 14 May 1987 coup ousted PM Bavadra	1987-1992	Civil-military coalition
Post-1992 elections – PM Rabuka	1992-1999	Competitive authoritarian
Post-1999 elections – PM Chaudhry	1999-2000	Transition to democracy
After 19 May 2000 coup – PM Qarase	2000-2001	Civil-military coalition
Post-2001 elections – PM Qarase	2001-2006	Transition to democracy
After 5 Dec 2006 coup – PM Bainimarama	2006-2014	Personal/ military dictatorship
Post-2014 elections – PM Bainimarama	2014-2018	Electoral autocracy
Post-2018 elections – PM Bainimarama	Nov 2018-	Electoral authoritarian

Table 4.1 Regime types in Fiji

During British colonial autocratic rule, the indigenous Fijians, Indians, Europeans, and other ethnic groups lived in segregated areas. Indians received the right to vote in 1929, but Fijians were represented by their chiefs until 1963. Britain had not removed race-based voting by independence in 1970. Fiji commenced transition to democracy with ethnic groups accustomed to communal representation and disparate professional development.[38] The indigenous population retained tight control over the military, which grew significantly from 1978 in response to UN peacekeeping. The military was utilised to carry out coups and maintain post-coup regimes. Following the 1987 coup, Fiji had civil-military rule, and then competitive authoritarian rule with coup-maker Rabuka as the elected Prime Minister. Efforts at transition to democracy in 1999-2000, were disrupted by the attempted 2000 civilian coup, but continued from 2001-2006. The military removed the indigenous Fijian dominated government of Qarase in 2006. Coup leader Bainimarama commenced a personalist-military rule and continued as elected Prime Minister following authoritarian elections in 2014 and 2018.

[38] Indians were successful in education, as well as the economic sector, whereas Fijians were mostly reliant on service-oriented jobs and the bureaucracy.

The adverse impacts of coups and authoritarianism on key civil and political rights can be assessed through the rankings by Freedom House, listed in Table 4.2 below for specific post-independence periods. The table reveals that Fiji's political rights ratings rose to 6 out of 7 (least free) during military rule in 2001, 2008 and 2010 which indicates political rights were curtailed. Its press freedom ratings were still Partly Free under military rule and were only Free during the transition to democracy period from 2001-2006. Its Freedom Status has remained Partly Free during both elected and military rule which indicates that, regardless of how the regime came to power, all rights and freedoms were not being fully enjoyed by all citizens.

Fiji	Year of Report	Regime Type	Freedom Status	Freedom Rating	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	Press Freedom
Independence	1971	Transition to democracy	-	-	-	-	-
After 14 May 1987 coup	1988	Civil-military coalition	-	-	-	-	-
Post-1992 elections	1998*	Competitive authoritarian	Partly Free*	3.5*	3*	4*	-
After 19 May 2000 coup	2001*	Civil-military coalition	Partly Free*	4.5*	3*	6*	Partly Free** (2002)
Post-2001 elections	2003*	Transition to Democracy	Partly Free*	3.5*	3*	4*	Free** (2003-06)
After 5 December 2006 coup	2008*	Personal/ military dictatorship	Partly Free*	5*	4*	6*	Partly Free**
After April 2009 constitution abrogation	2010*	Personal/ military dictatorship	Partly Free*	5*	4*	6*	Partly Free**
Post-2014 elections	2017*	Electoral autocracy	Partly Free*	3.5*	4*	3*	Partly Free**

Table 4.2 Fiji: Rights and freedoms ratings by Freedom House
*Freedom in the World Report for that country and year, by Freedom House; 1=Most Free, 7=Least Free.
**Freedom of Press Report for that country and year, by Freedom House.
- Data not available

Although Fiji was under electoral autocracy in 1998, its freedom and rights ratings had improved due to the removal of restrictive or discriminatory laws following the adoption of the 1997 Constitution. Political rights were restricted again in 2001 due to emergency laws imposed after the 2000 failed putsch. Fiji's freedom and rights ratings worsened after the 2006 coup. Repressive decrees promulgated after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution, curtailed exercise of key civil and political rights. The Partly Free status following the 2014 elections reflects that repressive decrees continue to be in force to date. In effect, this meant that elections had ushered in electoral authoritarianism instead of a transition to democracy.

The variable growth patterns of the different ethnic groups provided fodder for Fijian ethno-nationalism that in turn, contributed to the coups of 1987 and 2000. A summary of demographic trends from the first census in 1881 till 2007 is provided in Table 4.3 below. After the three coups between 1987-2007, the Indian population cumulatively declined by 34,906 due to migration, while the Fijian population increased by 146,434.

Fiji Population 1881-1921[39]							
Year	**1881**		**1901**		**1921**		
All	127,486		120,124		157,266		
Fiji Population 1946-2007							
Year	**1946**	**1956**	**1966**	**1976**	**1986**	**1996**	**2007**
Fijian	118,070	148,134	202,176	259,932	329,305	393,575	475,739
Indian	120,414	169,403	240,960	292,896	348,704	338,818	313,798
Others	21,154	28,200	33,591	35,240	37,366	42,684	47,734
All	259,638	345,737	476,727	588,068	715,375	775,077	837,271

Table 4.3 Fiji population trends (Source: FIBoS 2008, p. 14)

Fiji has a multiethnic population. About 60% of the current population are indigenous Fijian (iTaukei), 33% are Fijians of Indian descent (Indo-Fijians) and the balance comprises of Rotumans, Part-Europeans, Melanesians, other Pacific Islanders, Chinese and others. The 2007 Census recorded a population of 837,271 with the ethnic breakdown: iTaukei – 475,739; Indo-Fijians – 313,798, and others – 47,734 (FIBoS 2008). The 2017 Census

[39] Ethnic breakdown was not available for this period.

recorded a population of 884,887 (FBoS 2018). The Fiji government refused to reveal the ethnic composition data after the 2017 census, fuelling speculation about the population growth trends of the two main ethnic groups: iTaukei and Indo-Fijians, and the possible impact on the 2018 elections.

Religious affiliations in Fiji tend to be based along ethnic lines with the majority of iTaukei following Christianity and the majority of Indo-Fijians following Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism. The 2007 census revealed the highest amount of population – 539,536, were Christians; the second highest – 233,393 – were Hindus; and the third highest were Muslims – 52,520 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2019). Amongst Christians in 2007, the Methodist population was the biggest – 289,923; followed by Catholics – 76,433; Assembly of God – 47,778; and 7th Day Adventist – 32,308. In Fiji, most iTaukei converted to Methodism during the precolonial/colonial era, aided by the translation of the Bible into the iTaukei language. An indigenised version of Methodism was created. The Methodist Church, being an iTaukei stronghold, was manipulated by iTaukei ethno-nationalists during the 1987 and 2000 coups. Conversely, after the 2006 coup, it was victimised by coup makers – as will be revealed in later sections.

4.2 Fiji – Pre-independence political history

Fiji underwent periods of immense political change after becoming a British colony. The recently Christianised indigenous Fijians had to learn to co-exist with an Indian immigrant population and a minority European privileged group. To understand these changes, Fiji's precolonial history, colonisation, and key developments including the arrival of Indians are examined.[40] Also discussed are political representation and education, granting of universal suffrage, other political milestones in the lead-up to independence, and the development of the military. This historical survey will elucidate on resultant colonial legacies and how they made Fiji susceptible to authoritarianism post-independence.

[40] The pre-independence history section has largely utilised works of scholars who emerged after independence. Fiji historians in the pre-independence era include: R.A. Derrick (1950), K.L. Gillion (1962) and P. France (1968). Scholars emerging after independence include: R. Norton[40] (1977), T. Macnaught (1982), D. Scarr (1984) and D. Routledge (1985). Access to tertiary education saw Fiji-born scholars emerging after independence – Rusiate Nayacakalou (1970s) – who published on tradition and change, Ahmed Ali (1980) - who later became a politician, Asesela Ravuvu[40] (1983) – known for writings on Fijian ethos, and Brij V. Lal[40] (1983) – an ardent supporter of the National Federation Party (NFP), he became an internationally esteemed award-winning historian.

4.2.1 Precolonial Fiji: aristocratic-chiefly society

Fiji was first settled around 3500 years ago.[41] According to Fijian[42] legend, the great chief Lutunasobasoba, travelling in the canoe *Kaunitoni,* led his people across the seas to the new land of Fiji (Fiji High Commission). British explorer Captain James Cook named the islands Feejee in 1774, deriving from the Tongan pronunciation 'Fiji' of the original Fijian word 'Viti' (Fiji Museum).

Pre-colonial Fiji was an aristocratic, chiefly society. The official structure of traditional Fijian society comprised of the *vanua* (tribe or chiefdom), made up of several *yavusa* (clans), which are subdivided into several *mataqali*[43] (sub-clans), which are split further into several *tokatoka* (extended family units) (Ravuvu 1987, pp.14-18). The fluidity of ancient Fijian social and political systems led to discord between tribal groups and chiefs; the main reasons for war were disputes over land and women and insult to chiefs (Ravuvu 1991, pp. 1-2). There were no written languages and stories were passed down orally in songs and rituals. Frequent wars, dangerous reefs, ferocious warriors and the practice of cannibalism, discouraged European contact. Informal white settlement started from the 1840s. Sailors, beachcombers and traders first came for sandalwood, then to grow cotton, settling on the coasts and smaller islands engaging in uneven barter with Fijians to exchange artefacts for land. The first missionaries arrived in 1835.[44]

The spread of Christianity was not smooth in Fiji with particular resistance coming from the interior of Viti Levu. Villages rose up against clans that missionaries were associated with, to oppose Christianisation and Bauan expansion.[45] The 1855 Battle of Kaba established Bau and its *Vunivalu* (paramount chief) Ratu Seru Cakobau as the most powerful political force[46] (Nicole 2011, p. 16). Another event that fuelled resistance to colonisation was a deadly measles epidemic from 1875-1876 that killed about 40,000 Fijians[47] (Banivanua 2010, p. 271).

[41] The original inhabitants are known as the "Lapita people" after a distinctive type of pottery they produced (Fiji High Commission 2018b).
[42] The first peoples of Fiji were known as Fijians. A few years ago, the Bainimarama regime promulgated a decree to revert to the name *iTaukei* (owners of the land) to denote indigenous Fijians. Thenceforth, the term Fijian is used for all Fiji citizens regardless of ethnicity.
[43] The *mataqali* was the landowning unit. There were distinct roles within each *mataqali* such as the chief *(Turaga)*, executive chiefs *(Sau Turaga)*, heralds *(matanivanua)*, priests *(bete)*, warriors *(bati)*, fisherman *(gonedau)* and craftsman *(mataisau)* (TLTB 2019, pp. 4-5).
[44] Wesleyans William Cross and David Cargill arrived in 1835 on Lakeba island (Newland 2015, p. 258).
[45] See Derrick 2001 (first published in 1946) for Fiji's precolonial history till cession. It includes a copy of the 1874 Deed of Cession.
[46] "*Valu ni lotu*" or Christian wars of conquest by Cakobau and coastal chiefs from Western Fiji, who had converted to Christianity, to suppress Colo led to an association of the Bible and Christianity with coercive force and guns. Coastal and inland chiefdoms refused to pay tributes to Bau and interior Colo tribes defied Bauan expansion attempts (Nicole 2011, pp.16-17).
[47] It resulted in rumours the chiefs were cursed or deliberately infected by the Crown (Banivanua 2010, p. 271).

Settlers and the mission community proclaimed Cakobau 'King of Fiji'[48] in 1871 (Nicole 2011, p. 17). Cakobau, in alliance with Bauan and other Eastern Chiefs, ceded Fiji to Great Britain to have their debts settled.[49] Avoidance of armed aggression from foreigners and possible domination by the United States, strongly influenced the chiefs to cede Fiji to Britain in 1874[50] (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 9).

Following cession, British representative Sir Hercules Robinson stopped land sales, freed prisoners from labour service, reduced the Fijian militia, Fijian tax arrears were cancelled, and Fiji's debts controlled (Newbury 2008, p. 184). Chiefs were assured protection of their chiefly titles and privileges, and protection of their lands. In 1881, Rotuma[51] Island in northern Fiji, inhabited by Polynesians, was added to the territory (Commonwealth 2018).

From the above discussion, it is deduced that colonisation and Christianisation occurred in Fiji through the wilful participation of Cakobau and an alliance of Eastern chiefs. They were not peaceful processes due to violent suppression of resistance in some regions, particularly in the interior of Western Viti Levu.

4.2.2 Colonial Fiji – arrival of Indians

The colonial era in Fiji and the arrival of Indians are now examined, as the ensuing ethnic tensions contributed to two of the post-independence coups. The regime type during the period 1874-1904 was a colonial autocracy as the Governor, on behalf of the British monarch, ruled Fiji through the chiefs. The first Governor from Britain, Sir Arthur Gordon,[52] had a paternalistic interest in protecting the culture of the indigenous population. To safeguard Fijians from Western infiltration and ensure their paramountcy, Governor Gordon facilitated the creation of the Council of Chiefs and a Land Claims Commission to review earlier land sales (Ali 1986, p. 3). Governor Gordon was against using Fijian labour for commercial purposes.

---

[48] Derrick (2001, p. 201) described it as a coup d' état. In reality, Fiji was a tribal, chiefly society and the position of King did not exist.
[49] The Cakobau government's failure of revenue-earning capability, put at risk 'loyalty' to the government (*matanitu*) (Newbury 2008, p. 173). Nicole (2011, p. 19-24) discusses taxation, forced labour on natives who did not pay tax, and white settlers' petition for British annexation which led to the signing of the Deed of Cession in October 1874.
[50] After Cession in 1874, Fijian chiefs unhappy about their curtailed authority, would disobey arbitrary orders of the colonial administrators, incurring punishments such as: custody, deportation, work in European plantations, or execution (Ravuvu 1991, pp. 18-19).
[51] Rotumans - a minority indigenous group, are less than 5% of Fiji's population.
[52] Gordon served in Seychelles before coming to Fiji.

Search for a more profitable crop to make the economy self-sufficient led to the recruitment of Indian labourers under the indenture system over a period of 40 years to work on sugar cane plantations. From 1879-1916, 60,965 Indians were brought to Fiji[53] (Lal 2012, p.75). Crowded quarters in ships and later the plantation barracks, enforced interaction, and similar work tasks for everyone led to the breakdown of bonds of caste and kinship and formation of a new identity (Lal 2012, p. 47). This is reflected in the terms Indo-Fijians or Fiji Indians which implies the migrants' developed a group identity.

The migrants engaged for long hours in back-breaking labour in harsh conditions. These *'girmityas'* (indentured labourers) movements were restricted and they described the experience as '*narak*' meaning hell (Lal 2012, p. 48). They largely retained the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religions. Indentured agreements ended in 1920 (*BBC News* 2018). Many labourers stayed in Fiji as free citizens with new families formed during indenture. Others opted for a fully-paid trip back to India with about 40% returning. As most were choosing not to sign a second *Girmit*[54] term, the government offered leased land to induce them to settle in Fiji[55] (Rai 2011, p. 29).

Britain did not want Fijians and Indians to integrate. Two major Indian strikes, one coinciding with the end of indenture in 1920 and another in 1921, earned Indians some work autonomy although racial segregation by residence remained and the labour markets and wages were segmented sharply by race (Kaplan & Kelly 1999, p. 851- 852). Thus, although Indians were brought to work in Fiji and provided incentives to settle, they were given differential treatment. Furthermore, the colonial administration and the indigenous Fijians viewed their progress with distrust.

[53] The first indentured Indians arrived in Fiji on 14 May 1879 on the ship 'Leonidas' and the last arrived on 11 November 1916 aboard the 'Sutlej' (Loanakadavu 2016). The bulk of labourers came from North India (Uttar Pradesh) - 80%, Bihar and Bengal 13%, the rest from Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and elsewhere (Lal 2012, p. 45). Migrants came from all strata of rural North India with 12% of Brahmans and allied high castes, 37% agriculturalists, 6% artisans, and 33% lower castes; about 80% of all the emigrants were Hindus, 15% Muslims and the rest Christians, Sikhs and others (Lal 2012, p. 46). The ratio was 40 women to 100 men. Inter-marriage was common.

[54] Mispronunciation of indenture by Indians.

[55] Land was acquired from Fijians and leased to Indians by the government and Colonial Sugar Refinery Company (CSR). By 1929, most Indians permanently lost the free passage back to India and therefore had to remain in Fiji (Rai 2011, pp. 30-32).

4.2.3 Political representation and education under colonial autocracy

Politics, rights, education and political representation are now discussed. The differential progress by Fijians and Indians in these areas gradually built up inter-ethnic tensions. As was their practice in other parts of the Empire, the British followed a policy of divide and rule. The native commoners were restricted to live in villages, urban scenic areas were reserved for Europeans, while Indians were allocated sugar cane farming, other urban and peri-urban areas. Schools, religious places and social clubs were racially segregated. Fijian High Chief Ratu Sukuna described Fiji as a "three-legged stool, dependent for its stability on harmony between… the Fijians, Indians and Europeans" (Scarr 1983, p. vi).

The regime type during the period 1904-1929 was colonial European electoral autocracy, as only the minority Europeans had the right to vote. A Legislative Council comprising the Governor and his two nominees were provided for in the colony's 1875 founding charter (Lal 1992, p. 36). In 1903, the nominees increased to six official and four unofficial members. European settlers' agitation for greater rights saw the 10 October 1904 constitution allow six representatives on the Legislative Council (increased to seven in 1914) to be elected by 2,440 Europeans, while 92,000 Fijians and 22,790 Indians remained without the vote (Ali 1986). The Governor nominated two Fijians from names submitted by the Council of Chiefs (Scarr 1983, p. 4). Indians were unrepresented. The regime type between 1929-1963 was colonial restricted electoral autocracy because Indians acquired political representation in 1929. Yet to qualify for voting, Indians had to have an annual income of £120 and literacy in one language (Lal 1992, p. 91). Indian demands to choose their representatives bore fruit with three seats on a communal franchise allocated to them, while European seats reduced to six, and Fijian nominees increased to three (Ali 1986, p. 9; Lal 1992). A semblance of Britain's Westminster system of government was practiced with an appointed Senate and a Legislature elected through restricted voting.

High Chief Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna was concerned about indirect rule through a "façade of Government with native authorities", but did not want Fijians to elect their representatives, preferring the nominee system (Scarr 1983, p. 5; p. 177). The chiefs' lack of empathy for

Fijian protests against colonial repression[56] was revealed by Ratu Sukuna's disparaging comments about the rights activist Apolosi Nawai[57] recommending his deportation in 1917 (Scarr 1983, p. 57).

In 1933 the Council of Chiefs spoke against legislators elected by Indians because they did not want them to control matters affecting Fijians (Scarr 1983, p. 173). A perception grew among Fijians, fostered by Ratu Sukuna, that sugarcane made Indians wealthy.[58] In 1946, the Indians exceeded the Fijian population (see Table 4.3), fueling fears of Indian political and economic domination (Ravuvu 1991, p. 47). Paradoxically, Indians feeling discriminated against, and Fijians feeling that Indians were doing better economically, has shaped the discourse and political events in Fiji from colonial till contemporary times.

To maintain traditional standards of royal privilege and prestige, the chiefs appealed to colonial officials to be provided with elite education. Schools were opened for elite Fijians, such as *Vulinitu* (chief's learning) in 1880, Queen Victoria School in 1906, Adi Cakobau School in 1944 for chiefly girls, and Ratu Kadavulevu School for commoner Fijians (White 2006, p. 551). The Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) Company provided education for Indian children. Schools for Indians were established by Muslim, Hindu Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharma missions from India[59] (White 2006, p. 549). Ratu Sukuna groomed Fijian protégés for national leadership by sending sons of high-ranking chiefs for overseas education. These included Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau, and Ratu Sir George Cakobau, who played eminent roles before and after independence.

The Fijian village life and land-owning system was institutionalised. In 1941, the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) was established to oversee leasing of communally owned land. In 1944, the restructured Native Administration was renamed the Fijian Administration (White 2006, p. 563). New Fijian regulations restricted Fijian emigration and access to urban areas,

---

[56] Resistance movements during colonisation include: the Colo War of 1876, the Tuka Movement, the Movement for Federation and the Viti Kabani, organised plantation protests, everyday resistance in villages and plantations, and women's resistance (Nicole 2011). The Tuka Movement led by legendary figure Navosavakadua were viewed as heathen and criminal by colonial authorities and subjected to surveillance and deportation (Kaplan 1990, p. 3).

[57] Nawai led the *Viti Kabani* company movement which protested for the rights of iTaukei to engage in commerce and have greater freedom of movement.

[58] The Council's representative Ratu Sukuna stated in 1933 to the Legislative Council, "Indians have already drawn a vast amount of wealth ... and can hardly expect to continue to hold all the agricultural land in the sugar districts, in places where the plough mints money." (Scarr 1983, p. 147).

[59] Schools were also operated by the Methodists, Catholics, and Anglicans. Notably, the Methodists already had a stronger foothold in Fiji as by 1900, there were 1,453 Methodist mission schools with 25,610 registered Fijian students – 21% of the estimated 120,000 population (White 2006, p. 543).

and allowed chiefs to advance a ruralist ideology to safeguard Fijian socio-political institutions (White 2006, p. 563). For their part the Indians received discriminatory treatment because they were regarded as *vulagi* or foreigners. However, the commoner iTaukei were also treated disadvantageously as the chiefs wanted to retain powerful elite positions. The chiefs' desire to retain political control and cultural privileges became key issues in the post-independence coups, which are discussed in later sections.

4.2.4 Universal suffrage and independence

The gradual attainment of universal suffrage and political developments in the lead-up to independence are now examined. Despite government regulations to retain Fijians in the villages, by the 1960s, a significant number of educated Fijians were living and working in urban areas alongside other races and becoming active in trade unions and politics. International and British pressure pushed Fiji towards independence amidst divisions over the forms of government able to provide democracy while protecting rights of Fijians (Commonwealth 2018). Britain grappled with Governor Gordon's legacies of land protection, the Council of Chiefs, and the Fijian majority in both the army and the police which accustomed Fijians to preferential treatment. Not wanting to leave a country with a divided and segregated society at independence, British administrators discussed possibilities for a common franchise, but abandoned them fearing violence as they could not rely on the loyalty of the security forces (Norton 2002, p. 155).

The regime type for the period 1963-1970 can be described as colonial multiparty electoral autocracy because representative electoral government was exercised using Westminster parliamentary institutions. Women and commoner Fijians were enfranchised in 1963 (*BBC News* 2018). Fiji's first political party – the Federation Party, largely serving interests of the sugarcane farmers – emerged in 1964 and was renamed the National Federation Party (NFP) in 1968. Prior to independence, the unofficial (communal or race-based) Legislative Council seats were: 14 *iTaukei*, 12 Indian, and 10 General (Europeans, Part-Europeans, Chinese and others). This was starkly disproportionate to the demography of 51% Indians, 43% *iTaukei* and 6% others (Norton 2002, p. 151). Three of the unofficial seats allocated to each communal group were elected through cross-voting which members of all ethnic groups could vote for, while the rest were race-based. High Chief Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara became Chief Minister after the newly formed Alliance Party won 22 of the 36 unofficial seats in the 1966 parliamentary elections (Norton 2002, p. 153). The Federation Party won all nine race-

based Indian seats. The Alliance won many cross-voting seats and thus appeared to have some support across all ethnic groups.

British officials had difficulty persuading Fijians to advance towards self-government in the 1960s (Norton 2004, p. 182). Representatives of both the Alliance and the Federation parties were invited to the first Constitutional Conference in London in 1965 for discussion about Fiji's independence. British delegates mostly met with ethnic group leaders separately, allowing little opportunity for an open forum to negotiate contentious issues (Norton 2002, p.151).[60] The 1968 by-elections victory by the Federation increased Fijian hostility and triggered protests, violence and intimidation of Indians (Norton 2004, p. 169-170). This revealed Fijians' lack of tolerance for Indians gaining political power. As a result, instead of a common roll, ethnic voting and reserved seats for indigenous Fijians were enshrined in the constitution. Britain compelled Fiji to achieve independence due to prevailing international conditions.[61] Fiji attained independence on 10 October 1970 with an ethnically divided society and a privileged position for chiefs through Senate dominance.

To conclude, the regime type in precolonial Fiji was aristocratic as the mode of accessing or maintaining power was through hereditary succession. In colonial Fiji, an aristocracy model was preserved by the colonisers through the Council of Chiefs, however, executive authority rested with the Queen's representative – the Governor. The regime in colonial Fiji can be described as a 'colonial autocracy'. The extension of the franchise to Europeans, later to Indians and lastly to Fijians and women in 1963 did not bring equality as there was no common roll and legislative representation was disproportionate to the main ethnic groups' shares of the population. Britain introduced elections in a controlled and compromised way during colonial rule to safeguard the state's and British subjects' interests. Similar to British policy in other colonies, they granted extra powers to a segment of the traditional ruling class to ensure they could practice indirect rule which was less costly to maintain. The dominance of the Eastern chiefs persisted during the colonial era under Ratu Sukuna from Bau, and Ratu Mara from Lau.

[60] Another constitutional conference was held prior to independence in London in 1970. For detailed discussions about issues faced by the different ethnic groups in the lead-up to Fiji's independence, also see works by scholars Lawson (1991), Ali (1986) and Lal (1992).
[61] The international climate in favour of decolonisation at that time is also discussed in Chapter 6. Britain pushed Seychelles' independence for similar reasons.

4.2.5 Development of the military in pre-independence Fiji

The development of Fiji's military from the pre-colonial period till independence is herein examined to ascertain its part in laying the ground for future coups. The pre-colonial Fijian warrior tradition was based on *turaga-bati* (chief-warrior) relations (Baledrokadroka 2012b). The aristocratic model of political-military elites (Janowitz 1975) applied in precolonial Fiji due to the control of the warriors by the chiefs. During the colonial period, this mode of control was shared with the Queen's representative under colonial autocracy.

Internal warfare was so endemic in pre-colonial Fiji, that few Fijians lived to see middle age (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 7). In 1854, the Missions, through strengthened influence since Cakobau's conversion, prohibited traditional warfare[62] and warriors joined the Constabulary or the Police[63] (Goiran 2013, p. 59). In the early 1870s, Ratu Cakobau's government created a 'Royal Army' of 1,000 men. Following Fiji's cession to Britain in 1874, it was renamed the Armed Native Constabulary (ANC). In 1876, it clamped down on resistance movements against colonisation and Christianisation in the interior of Viti Levu (Nicole 2011; Ratuva 2011). Chiefs and former warriors may have perceived the colonial security forces as a substitute for their traditional warrior role. The ANC was disbanded in 1905/1906 (Goiran 2013; Ratuva 2011). Subsequent armed forces were controlled and headed by colonial representatives of the British monarch.

The British created the small Fiji Defence Forces (FDF) after WWI commenced in 1914 (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 9). Indians and Fijians were not allowed to enlist, however, 700 European men left Fiji for active service. A few young chiefs studying overseas joined Maori units; Ratu Sukuna, a decorated hero in the French Foreign Legion, convinced the colonial authority to send a Labour Detachment of 100 Fijians to Europe in May 1917 (Goiran 2013, p. 60). The Fiji contingent serving in France earned its reputation in Labour Corps (Ratuva 2011, p. 100).

During the colonial era, outbreaks of unrest were attributed to industrial disputes, racial differences and land tenure misconceptions (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 8). After WWI, the

[62] The earliest organised armed forces in Fiji were warrior armies assembled by chiefs in response to internal warfare, leading to the formation of warrior clans (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 9).
[63] Although Christianisation dampened violence, rivalries and regroupings of chiefdoms into war alliances persisted into the late 1860s (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 9).

FDF commanded by Western Officers were deployed against striking Indian workers, creating a feeling of alliance between Fijians and Europeans against Indians (Goiran 2013, p. 60). In the 1920s, 1940s and 1960s, Fijian troops were used to quell Indian industrial actions (Ratuva 2011, p. 101). Deployment of the army during the 1943 cane strike created fear amongst Indian farmers (Kelly 1995, p. 79). Thus, the Indians were seen as agitating for rights whereas the Fijians were viewed as obedient and loyal to Britain.

During WWII, the FDF were renamed the Fiji Military Forces (FMF) in December 1942 to reflect the change from an internal defence role to overseas operations (Howlett[64] 1948, pp. 38-39). New Zealand assisted in defending Fiji and developing Fiji's military during WWII, including staffing the FMF School of Instruction (Howlett 1948, p. 241-242). In 1941, the Indian platoon was discharged because they protested against pay differences between Europeans and Non-Europeans. Only the Reserve Motor Transport had Indians with two officers and 70 other ranks. However, in 1943, an Indian Company of 160 personnel was recruited by Legislative Council member K.B. Singh who constructed a fighter strip and an aircraft maintenance depot at Nadi (Howlett 1948, pp. 26-44).

The Council of Chiefs supported Governor Sir Philip Mitchell's request at a meeting in September 1942 to send a large number of Fijian soldiers for active service overseas[65] (Howlett 1948, p. 35). Lieutenant Colonel Ratu Sukuna was the FMF's recruiting officer and played an instrumental role in boosting the FMF's strength to 789 by the end of 1942 (Howlett 1948, p. 35). Fijians enlisted in the military to serve their chiefs and achieve distinction and *mana* (prestige) (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 9). WWII military recruitment widened racial divisions in Fiji with Ratu Sukuna estimating about 50-60% of Fijian young men served in WWII compared to less than 300 Indians (Scarr 1983, p. 437).

The US Forces, impressed by Fijian ability in jungle craft, utilised the FMF for major operations in the Solomon Islands sending a guerilla group to Guadalcanal from 1942-1944[66] (Howlett 1948, p. 38, p. 199). The FMF ceased overseas operations when WWII ended in 1945. About 11,000 men passed through the FMF during WWII with 8,513 at the peak strength in August 1943 with the following racial distribution: Europeans – 1,070; Europeans

---

[64] New Zealand's Lieutenant R. A. Howlett served in Fiji during WWII and wrote the FMF's WWII history.
[65] The chiefs wanted Fijian soldiers to be engaged in operations in Africa or Egypt (Howlett 1948, p. 177).
[66] Fijian soldiers were also sent to Kolombangara and Bougainville, Papua New Guinea (Howlett 1948, pp. 196-208).

in the NZ Expeditionary Force (NZEF) – 808; Fijians – 6,371; Indians – 264 (Howlett 1948, p. 159). WWII participation strengthened the bond between Fijians and Europeans, and further alienated Fiji Indians as their participation was very small.

Fijians were keen to take up opportunities for soldiering overseas. In the 1950s, a Fiji battalion served for four years with the British in Malaya[67] (Fraenkel & Firth 2009, p. 118). During the Malayan Campaign and the two world wars, Fijian units were organised according to the customary chief-warrior hierarchy to guarantee loyalty and dedication (Goiran 2013, p. 62). In 1961, the British Armed Forces were diversifying and enlisted 200 men and 12 women from Fiji[68] (Schieder 2017, p.139). The recruitment enabled Fiji's citizens' opportunities for greener pastures, and escape communal lifestyles with oppressive kinship obligations (Schieder 2017, p. 151). Thus, early on, Fijians were motivated towards soldiering more for reasons of better economic prospects, rather than a desire to serve.

Before independence the British and NZ defence advisers judged internal unrest as the most likely security threat to Fiji and structured the FMF to support the Police in internal security (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 17). During independence preparations, London belatedly tried, but failed, to convince Fijian representatives that they did not need an army. The British did not want a significant defence force in Fiji, fearing for the safety of the Indians[69] (Goiran 2013, p. 62). Yet at independence, Fiji's regular peace time military force was only about 200 (Fraenkel & Firth 2009, p. 118).

The development of Fiji's military in the colonial era occurred on an ad-hoc basis responding mostly to Britain's need to fight wars and depleting afterwards. Chiefs played an active role serving in the armed forces, leading by example for Fijians to enlist for distinction, employment, travel and adventure. Indians demand for equal pay prevented their recruitment during WWII and was a factor in permanently skewing the military's composition towards Fijians. The aristocratic model of the political-military elite applied in precolonial Fiji due to the control of the warriors (*bati*) by the chiefs (*turaga*). This traditional protocol was maintained during the colonial period through the chiefs' strong relationships with military

[67] The British built the current military headquarters, the Queen Elizabeth Barracks (QEB) in Nabua, Fiji, during that period (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p.80).
[68] Schieder scrutinised discourses about Fijians as a 'martial race' and 'natural-born' soldiers responding to calls to duty by their paramount chief and the monarch of the British Empire.
[69] The force remained predominantly Fijian. In 1968, an Indian officer cadet corps produced good officers but did not reach top rank or long service (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 72).

institutions. Control over the military was also shared with civilian-political elites through the colonial rulers.

4.3 Transition to democracy in Fiji – 1970 independence to 1987 coup

Fiji entered the phase of transition to democracy after becoming a sovereign state at independence[70] on 10 October 1970. Key political events from independence till the first coup in 1987 are examined, to shed light on why Fiji failed to consolidate and complete the transition to democracy. The role and development of security forces are also discussed.

The system of government was adapted from the British Westminster system comprising an elected House of Representatives and a nominated Senate. The Governor-General remained the Queen's representative, and in 1973, for the first time, a Fijian high chief Ratu Sir George Cakobau was appointed Governor-General. High Chief Ratu Mara was the elected Prime Minister for 17 years from independence till the 1987 elections. Under the 1970 Constitution, the composition of parliament was race-based: the 52 seats in the House of Representatives included: 12 Fijian, 12 Indian and 3 General Elector communal,[71] and additionally, 10 Fijian, 10 Indian and 5 General Elector national (Lawson 1991, p. 187). The 22 Senate seat nominees comprised: Council of Chiefs 8, Prime Minister 7, Opposition Leader 6, and Council of Rotuma 1 (Lawson 1991). Although the first-past-the-post electoral system was followed which meant the party receiving the majority vote won, in practice, the allocation of communal and open (national) seats meant elections and parliament had starkly polarized racial divisions. The Council of Chiefs' 8 Senate nominees ensured that Fijians would always retain a majority in government. The allocation of equal elected communal seats to Indians and Fijians, although the Indian population was higher, was designed to ensure that Indians could not have a majority decision-making power in government.

[70] Fiji's new flag was raised in front of a crowd of thousands of Fijians, Indians and other ethnic groups conveying an impression of multiracial harmony (Trumbull 1970). Yet, observers openly discussed racial tensions between the two major ethnic groups describing the Fijians as easy-going village-dwellers who feared the growing urban Indian population, and the Indians as thrifty, ambitious and resentful of Fijian land ownership (Trumbull 1970). Such stereotyping accentuated the social and cultural differences between Indians and Fijians, suggesting that it would be difficult for the two races to live together in harmony.

[71] For communal seats, voting was restricted to members from that ethnic group, whereas voting for national seats was open to everyone in that constituency.

4.3.1 Major issues and elections after independence

The key electoral outcomes from Fiji's independence in 1970 till the 1987 coup are appraised to gauge the role of the political society in Fiji's democratisation. Fiji's political elite was polarised by articulating the needs of their disparate ethnic groups. Racially divisive and inflammatory rhetoric were at a peak prior to elections – a trend that has continued from the 1970s until the November 2018 elections. Similar to colonial times, after independence, Fijians sought paramountcy of their interests, Europeans wanted protection of their privileges and Indians wanted parity in political representation (Lal 1986a, p. 75). Issues of major contention were secure land tenure for Indians versus reserving more land for Fijians.

The widening racial gap in education and the imbalance in the civil service were other contentious issues. Indians tended to be more successful in education than the Fijians, despite indigenous Fijians being guaranteed 50% of reserved scholarships as a form of affirmative action (Lal 1986a, pp. 85-86). In addition to discrimination in scholarships, NFP alleged in 1980 that strategic government positions were staffed by Mara's Alliance Party loyalists and Fijians while the civil service exhibited a racial imbalance (Lal 1986a, p. 87). Such bias in appointments can politicise the bureaucracy, making it partisan and thus creating challenges for the changeover to a different government. It undermines the arena of a usable state bureaucracy which along with political society are among Linz and Stepan's five conditions for democratic consolidation.

After the first post-independence elections in 1972, the chiefly status quo was maintained with Ratu Mara remaining as Prime Minister heading an Alliance Party government. Formation of the Fijian Nationalist Party[72] split the Fijian vote, leading to the Alliance's loss in 1977. The NFP's victory was unexpected and they delayed selecting Siddiq Koya for Prime Minister. Before Koya reached Suva, Governor-General Ratu George Cakobau had re-sworn Mara as Prime Minister of a minority government. There is speculation that this event constituted a coup, and that Cakobau re-instated Mara to retain leadership in Fijian hands. Mara won a landslide victory in fresh elections in September 1977. In the next elections in 1982, the NFP formed a coalition with the new Western United Front (WUF) party to increase its chances of getting Fijian votes (Lal 1986a, p. 100). Mara was again victorious in

[72] Alliance parliamentarian Sakeasi Butadroka, known for Fijian nationalism and anti-Indian slogans (Lal 1986a, p. 96), formed the Fijian Nationalist Party which split the Fijian vote. Butadroka was infamous for his 1975 motion to repatriate Indians to India. The motion was unsuccessful and Butadroka was suspended from parliament.

the 1982 elections but the Alliance majority had reduced from 16 to only 4, and the WUF won two seats (Robertson 2017, p. 52).

By 1985, discontent grew about the Alliance's policies on strengthening traditional leadership and increasing the salary of the 17,000-member civil service. Government difficulties were compounded by reduced revenue due to falling sugar prices, troops committed to UN peacekeeping in the Middle East without parliamentary debate, and corruption allegations against Mara (Lal 1992, pp. 252-256). The government imposed a wage freeze and withdrew recognition of the Fiji Trades Unions Congress (FTUC), further antagonising the unions at a time when unemployment and poverty were rising (Robertson 2017, p.56).

Given the level of discontent, it was no surprise that the multiracial Fiji Labour Party (FLP) was created by the FTUC in 1985.[73] The FLP President Bavadra criticised Fijian institutions[74] for poor management, serving the interests of a privileged few, and accumulation of wealth by chiefs[75] (Lawson 1991, p. 241). Bavadra was concerned that peacekeeping could turn the RFMF into "a band of mercenaries" (Bain & Baba 1990, p. 8). He also denounced corruption and called for an independent judiciary, free from political patronage (Lal 1986b, p. 153). In this context, realising they could not defeat the Alliance alone, the FLP went into a coalition with the NFP[76] to contest the 1987 election despite fears of tarnishing its multiracial image (Lal 1992, p. 259; Robertson 2017, p. 59).

The April 1987 election was historic because the parties campaigned on policy issues to win support across ethnic groups. The FLP-NFP coalition won the election with 28 seats while the Alliance received 24 seats (Lal 1992, p. 265). Voting remained predominantly along ethnic lines with the Alliance getting 78.2% of Fijian communal votes and the coalition getting 82.3% of the Indian communal votes (Lal 1992, p. 265). Bavadra became the Prime Minister, the NFP's Harish Sharma was his deputy and Mara became opposition leader. Thus Mara and the Eastern chiefly elite's dominance of government was finally broken 17 years

[73] Its affiliate, Fiji Public Service Association (FPSA) president, Dr Timoci Bavadra, became the FLP President and its secretary Mahendra Chaudhry became FLP secretary (Lawson 1991, p. 234).
[74] Such as the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB).
[75] Bavadra, from Vuda in Western Fiji, was concerned about the dominance of the Eastern chiefs, and argued that Fijians' restriction to communal lifestyles resulted in backwardness (Lawson 1991, pp. 244-245). Ratu Mara was from Lau, located in Eastern Fiji.
[76] The NFP was going through a leadership crisis with defectors joining the Alliance. Notably, a World Bank Report in 1986 found no significant gaps in incomes between Indians and Fijians, and that a larger number of Indians were unemployed and squatters (Robertson 2017, p. 56). This gave credence to the FLP's critique against policies favouring Fijians.

after independence, in an election fought on socioeconomic and class issues rather than ethnicity.

The Coalition victory became the tinder for racial tensions smouldering in Fiji since prior to independence, erupting in the first military coup a month later on 14 May 1987.[77] Fears about possible downsizing of the RFMF, mooted by Bavadra was another plausible reason for the coup (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 97-98). Bavadra's government was assailed by Alliance politicians and supporters who instigated ethno-nationalist *Taukei*[78] protests[79] with marches by thousands of Fijians, using anti-Indian slogans and calling for Fijian political paramountcy. Bavadra's criticisms of chiefs and Fijian institutions, and the coalition partner NFP being an Indian party, enabled ethno-nationalists to portray his government as against Fijian interests and dominated by Indians, thus justifying a coup.

Although Fiji made a promising transition to democracy in 1970 with an ostensibly vibrant multiracial society, it was unable to consolidate democracy. The civil service and traditional Fijian institutions were stacked with Mara's loyalists. This created patron-client relations, including nepotism, which are common governance problems in small island states (see section 2.3). The Fijian status quo flourished under Mara's 17-year rule. Threatened by Bavadra's victory, elements of the traditional elite cohabited with disgruntled politicians and ethno-nationalists to ignite racial fears by linking Bavadra's rule to Indian domination. Their collaboration with experienced military officers led to a coup (see next section). According to Dahl (1998, p. 149), democratic political institutions are less likely to endure in a country with differentiated conflicting subcultures. Exacerbation of the historic mistrust between Fijians and Indians derailed the democratisation process.

4.3.2 Growth of the armed forces till 1987

The development of the armed forces until the first coup of 1987 is now scrutinised to understand how this contributed to the coup. After independence, the military was called the Royal Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) reflecting Fiji's membership of the Commonwealth.

---

[77] See Lal, Norton, Lawson, Robertson, and other academic and literary writings from Fiji for extensive discussions on the pre and post 1987 coup events and the ensuing social and emotional ramifications.

[78] Fijian word meaning owners of the land. See Lal 1992, pp. 271-272 and Robertson 2017, pp. 61-62 for names of key Fijian leaders involved in meetings where such events were discussed and/or planned.

[79] Villagers set up roadblocks in Tavua on 19 April 1987; about 3,000 Fijians in Lautoka signed a petition calling for Fijian political supremacy on April 21; 5000 Fijians marched in Suva on April 24 calling for removal of the "Indian-dominated" Bavadra government; and a similar march was held in Lautoka on April 25 (Lal & Pretes 2008, p. 180).

Similar to pre-independence, internal unrest was perceived as the most likely security threat to Fiji (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 17). From the 1970s to 1980s, Fiji developed defence relations with Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, India and, to a lesser extent, Malaysia, Israel and others, nevertheless, sharing a stronger bond with the ANZUS alliance (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 30).

The regular force grew from 200 to 400 in 1970, further growing to 800 in 1978 (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 97). Government developed the military for nation building and established a Trade Training School, a Rural Development Unit of RFMF Engineers, and a Naval Squadron. The annual expenditure of the RFMF grew from $0.51 million in 1971 to $3.33 million in 1977 (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 83). A rumoured military take-over to prevent formation of an Indo-Fijian government after the NFP won the 1977 election (Ratuva 2011, p. 101), was averted when the Governor General re-appointed Mara to lead a minority government. Mara's victory in the second 1977 election retained the *turaga-bati* (chief-warrior) symbiosis in the view of the military.

Fiji became a major contributor to international peacekeeping when an opportunity opened in 1978 with the formation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Alliance government's decision to commit troops to the UNIFIL without parliamentary debate epitomised the *turaga-bati* relationship because two high chiefs played instrumental roles – Mara and Minister of Home Affairs Ratu Penaia Ganilau (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 44). The short-term UN peacekeeping commitment envisaged for six to twelve months, became long-term, resulting in the force growing to 1,300 in 1978, to 2,200 by 1986. It almost trebled to 6000 in 1987 post-coup.[80] Peacekeeping became the RFMF's most demanding role with annual expenditure[81] growing from $8million in 1979 to $16.52 million by 1986[82] (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p.84-86).

The increased size and conflict-zone experience of the predominantly Fijian military made them a threat to Fiji's democracy and to Indian political rights, as feared by British officials

[80] Success in the UNIFIL earned Fiji invitations to keep the peace in Sinai, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Kuwait, Iraq, Namibia, Somalia, Rwanda and Angola (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p.11).

[81] Of the $105 million spent by the RFMF over 1979-1986, $87.4 million (92%) went to salaries and allowances, $15.2 million to operating expenses and $2.5 million to capital expenses (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 85).

[82] The government's expenditure was not recovered as the UN only remunerated the peacekeepers. See section 4.5.4 for former PM Qarase's revelation that the Fiji government did not gain financially from peacekeeping.

during the independence negotiations.[83] Internal unrest was adequately managed by the small defence forces of a few hundred soldiers during colonial times, and did not merit an increase in the size of the military post-independence. It defies the norm for SIDS who tend to have small or no armed forces (see section 2.1). The chiefs' continued service in senior positions in the armed forces after independence (Baledrokadroka 2012b) and encouragement of Fijians to enlist bore fruit with the lucrative peacekeeping opportunity. Chiefs unofficially nurtured a *turaga-bati* patron-client relationship by increasing Fijian employment in the military. By contrast, Bavadra's one-month Prime-Ministership was too short to establish close relations and trust with the military hierarchy.

4.4 Fiji: 1987 - first coup

Three impacts of the 1987 coup are now examined: the coup's influence on politics, impact of authoritarianism on the armed forces, and challenges faced by the civil society, including the exercise of key civil and political rights. This analysis will shed light on how the military controlled or influenced key political decisions and actions during and after the 1987 coup. The political elite, civil society, traditional leaders, business community,[84] rule of law, and state bureaucracy were all adversely affected by the coup. The ways in which the 1987 coup and post-coup regime dislodged democracy from Fiji will be analysed with reference to the theories of Linz and Stepan (1996) and Dahl (1998).

4.4.1 1987-1992: the coup and the civil/military coalition

The 1987 coup disrupted Fiji's transition to democracy and made Fiji regress into authoritarianism. To investigate how authoritarian regimes developed in Fiji, the causes and effects of the coup from 1987-92 on society, politics, government, and the military's involvement, are discussed.

The coup occurred when military officers led by Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka[85] entered parliament on 14 May 1987 and removed Bavadra's government. Consequently, Fiji

[83] See section 4.2.5.
[84] Certain prominent (some Indian) businesses allegedly supported the post-coup regime after each coup in Fiji, while others had to remain uncritical of the regime – or apolitical – in order to survive. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyse the role of businesses before, during and after Fiji's coups.
[85] See next section for Rabuka's career history and motivations.

was expelled from the Commonwealth and the military's name changed to the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF). Rabuka revealed in his biography that he did not inform soldiers they were going to raid Parliament until less than an hour beforehand (Dean & Ritova 1988, p. 12), which corroborates the view that prominent iTaukei planned the coup, whereas soldiers executed it.

When asked whether he was advised to carry out the coup and subsequent political changes or if they were his idea, Rabuka denied they were his initiatives and affirmed they resulted from:

> "…a cooperation of the most prominent[86] and powerful people in Fiji," (2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

The transition to democracy can stall due to military intervention (Przeworski 1991, p. 51). In 1987 Fiji failed to satisfy Dahl's essential condition of democracy that the military and police must be under the control of, and defer to, democratically elected officials for democratic political institutions to develop or endure. The coup demonstrated the failure of democratic consolidation in Fiji as risks that emerged during the lead up to independence persisted. These risks include the military's lack of subservience to the elected Bavadra government, a lack of respect for democratic electoral outcomes, and prejudice against Indians. The dissatisfied Fijian political elites who manipulated the military rejected democracy. They also inculcated a taste for political power among members of the armed forces, paving the way for future coups.

Some indigenous Fijians rationalise Rabuka's coup as a noble action that deserved political support. Parliamentarian Semesa Karavaki believes Rabuka's coup was honourable and makes him worthy of being a political leader:

> "Rabuka did the coup to guarantee the iTaukei people about the security of their ownership of land, and to stop the iTaukei people from killing the other people of different race because they had fear towards other races, of security of their land being taken away. To me I saw that as a very honourable reason for stability of this place," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

Rabuka's coup was thus vindicated as a noble action that deserved political support.

[86] See Lal 1992, pp. 271-272 and Robertson 2017, pp. 61-62 for the names of chiefs and Fijian leaders involved. See also Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 97.

Rabuka executed a second coup in 1987 to cement his power and flex the military's muscles as a political actor. On 1 October 1987 Rabuka announced that the constitution had been revoked and declared Fiji a Republic. Then on 6 October Rabuka opined that "the military option was the best" with a total takeover by the military on a long-term basis, but he did not want to be labelled a dictator (Dean & Ritova 1988, pp. 13-16). He reinstalled Mara as Prime Minister of an unelected interim government from December 1987 to June 1992. Four senior military personnel – including Rabuka, gained cabinet appointments, rule by decrees was instigated, the state undermined judicial independence and media freedom, and all political activity was suppressed including trade union rights (Baba & Bain 1990, p. 189). The regime type was a civil-military coalition as its appointment and existence required the military's approval. It was not an autocracy or a dictatorship as Rabuka did not entrench power in his own hands, and major decisions were being made in liaison with Fijian civilian political leaders. Nevertheless, Fiji's parliament, civil service and traditional institutions compromised democratic values in the aftermath of the coup by acquiescing to the post-coup status quo.

The main attempted justification for the 1987 coups was indigenous fear of Indian domination. However, such fear was unfounded for two reasons. Firstly, although the Indian population had surpassed that of Fijians in 1966 thereafter Indian numbers began decreasing due to declining births whereas the Fijian demographic share was increasing due to higher births[87] (FIBoS 2008). Secondly, 87% of land was reserved for Fiijians under the Native Land Trust Act (NLTA) – an entrenched legislation that was very difficult to change. In addition chiefs dominated the Senate and the military was 99% Fijian. This reality did not deter politicians and public commentators from stoking the flames of racial fears.

In interviews with the researcher, Fiji's longest serving former Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, Jioji Kotobalavu,[88] and former journalist Dr Shailendra Singh,[89] questioned why this vital information about declining Indo-Fijian population was not publicised.

[87] While in 1966, Fiji's population comprised 42.4% Fijians and 50.5% Indians, in 1976 the Fijians increased to 44.4% and Indians decreased to 49.8% (FIBoS 2008, see Table 4.3). By 1986, Fijians had increased to 46% and Indians had decreased to 48.7% (see Table 4.3).

[88] Interview with Jioji Kotobalavu, 1 August 2016, Samabula, Fiji.

[89] Dr Singh, a senior journalism educator at USP, was interviewed at USP, Laucala Bay, Fiji.

Dr Singh states that instead of reporting the decreasing Indo-Fijian birth-rate, the media portrayed Indians as a threat:

> "What was reported at that time by the Fiji Times, which was a pro-white newspaper, was that Indo-Fijian population was a major threat and they were going to dominate indigenous Fijians by deed of numbers… Land and demographic issues were sensationalised and misreported.[90] It contributed to arousing fears amongst the indigenous population… That might have contributed to ethno-nationalism," (Singh 2016, pers. comm., 29 July).

To further entrench paramountcy of Fijian rights and remove the possibility of Indians gaining political power, the constitution was reviewed in 1989.[91] During the 1989 review, Rabuka and the military Chief of Staff Jioji Konrote expressed the army's desire to have a 'guardian' political role through an action-oriented 15-year programme (Baledrokadroka 2012b, pp. 110-111). This implied unelected military rule for 15 years. It indicates that the military's subservience to the chiefs was mere lip-service and their deference to civilian rule was a façade as they continued asserting dominance.

The resultant 1990 Constitution[92] provided justification for the abrogation of the 1970 Constitution by stating (p. 12) that the latter did not give adequate protection to indigenous Fijian interests and thus had to be replaced. Section 94 (3) of the 1990 Constitution gave the RFMF overall responsibility "to ensure at all times the security, defence and wellbeing of Fiji and its peoples". It gave paramountcy to indigenous Fijians by explicitly recognising their right to govern themselves, noting the special role of Christianity, and acknowledging the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (Great Council of Chiefs). It discriminated against Indo-Fijians by giving 37 seats to Fijians in the House of Representatives, 27 to Indians, 5 to General Electors and 1 to Rotumans; and 24 Senate seats to Fijian chiefs, 1 to Rotumans and 9 to other communities (Lawson 1996, p. 65). These provisions ensured Fijian political domination and a prominent role for chiefs. They also diminished respect for non-Christians, paving the way for misuse of the church by ethno-nationalists (see section 4.4.3). By elevating the military's role, the 1990 Constitution gave legitimacy to the 1987 coups.

---

[90] These issues were examined in Dr Singh's PhD thesis: (2015) *Rethinking journalism for supporting social cohesion and democracy: case study of media performance in Fiji,* University of Queensland, Australia.

[91] Bavadra described the draft constitution as "an authoritarian Constitution designed to protect the interests of a corrupt elite" (Baba & Bain 1990, p. 344). Bavadra predicted that constitution would turn Fiji into an undemocratic aristocracy where Fijians would discriminate against Fijians (Baba & Bain 1990).

[92] Government of the Republic of Fiji Decree No. 22, Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji (Promulgation) Decree 1990. The Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) endorsed the 1990 Constitution prior to its promulgation on 25 July, but a provision in the original draft to make the army commander an *ex officio* member of cabinet was not retained (Lawson 1991, p. 289).

Rabuka justifies giving prominence to Fijian rights in the 1990 Constitution[93] as necessary:

> "…because of the hardline feelings of the chiefs at the time, it was not possible to introduce an all-race embracing constitution to take Fiji back to pre-coup times," (Rabuka 2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

Rabuka's coup was applauded by the *Taukei* Movement[94] triggering racist actions towards Indians. Deposed Bavadra-government members[95] and FLP supporters were detained without trial, while ordinary citizens – particularly Indo-Fijians – were terrorised by soldiers who inflicted torture and humiliation[96] (Bain & Baba 1990, p. 185). Bavadra died from cancer in November 1989. His funeral was attended by about 60,000 people (Fiji Labour Party). Fear of violence and discrimination led to mass emigration of Indo-Fijians.[97] Of the 66,000 of Fiji's most qualified people who permanently migrated between 1987-1994, 90% were Indo-Fijians (Firth, Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, p. 11). Emigration and anti-Indian violence confirm that the 1987 coup and subsequent military action caused significant damage to trust and harmony in Fiji's multiracial society and polity.

The execution of a coup and establishment of an unelected regime manipulated by the military made Fiji an anomaly as it defied the norm of SIDS who lack resources for such an enterprise. The rule of law was undermined as the unarmed police and judiciary were powerless against the coup. Democracy was unable to survive the crisis of the 1987 coup because the military was not controlled by elected officials and a substantial element of the citizenry did not show preference for democracy, as stipulated in Dahl's (1998) conditions of democracy. A significant portion of the iTaukei population acquiesced to the coup, including chiefs, political leaders, state bureaucracy, religious organisations and the security forces. This indicates they did not regard democratic institutions as the sole means to resolve political crisis and social issues. Democracy was not consolidated as conflicts were not processed through democratic institutions and relevant political forces were not upholding

[93] Fiji's 1990 Constitution was among few in the world that legally denied rights to one ethnic group – the Indians.
[94] See writings of Asesela Ravuvu, 1987 and 1991.
[95] Bavadra was incarcerated with his cabinet ministers for seven days after the first coup; and was again detained with supporters after the second coup (Baba & Bain 1990, pp. xiv-xv).
[96] Sporadic violence against Indo-Fijians and coup protesters included the abduction and torture of Dr Anirudh Singh by five soldiers in 1990 after he protest-burned a copy of the 1990 Constitution (*RNZ* 2007; Singh 2007). Other incidents included Indian houses being demolished in rural areas and widespread day-time arson attacks on Indian properties in Suva.
[97] Jioji Kotobalavu, who re-joined the government as Mara's Permanent Secretary after the 1987 upheaval, aptly described the discrimination in Fiji's government, recalling: "Senior Fijian officer Dr Jona Senilagakali (the army's medical doctor) told many very competent Indian officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to go," (Kotobalavu 2016, pers. comm., 1 August).

democracy (Przeworski 1991, p. 51). As this reoccurred after the 2006 coup, it is highly unlikely democracy will be consolidated in Fiji anytime soon.

4.4.2 Authoritarianism and the armed forces in Fiji - military ideology and training

The military plays a fundamental role in coups and authoritarian regimes. The ensuing analysis of the military's ideology, training and involvement in coups illustrates why they participated in coups, the impact of coups on soldiers, and how their utilisation by chiefs and politicians compromised their role in a democracy.

At independence, Fiji's military transitioned to Janowitz's (1975) democratic model of political-military elites whereby civilian political elites exercise control over the military. After the 1987 coup, Fiji regressed to Janowitz's (1975, p. 59) garrison-state model where military groups wield unprecedented political and administrative power and tend to make alliances with civil political factions. A full transition to the democratic model was not made after independence as, for many personnel, the military's primary allegiance was to the high chiefs holding civilian political elite positions. Problematic were the cultural values of the *turaga-bati* (chief-warrior) relationship (Baledrokadroka 2012b), and the self-importance the soldiers seemingly acquired by valourising their contribution to the two world wars and later peacekeeping. Instead of democratic consolidation in the military, aristocratic manipulation of military power confounded notions of democratic accountability.

The Fiji military's predominantly iTaukei composition meant it was viewed as a defender of iTaukei interests, and easily supported the coup purporting to safeguard Fijian paramountcy. Parliamentarian Semesa Karavaki claims that after independence:

> "Our leaders left our military to safeguard the interests of the iTaukei people... Now they (military) are being used for other reasons," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

The soldiers' traditional linkages to paramount chiefs[98] were critical in executing the 1987 coup (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 42). For Rabuka, chiefs had been ridiculed by the FLP/NFP coalition and their victory meant control of Fiji by an "immigrant race" (Dean & Ritova

[98] Two high chiefs, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau and Ratu Epeli Ganilau, were RFMF commanders after independence. Nailatikau led the first peacekeeping battalion to Lebanon in 1978 (RFMF 2016), and was Fiji's President from 2009–2015. Rabuka was quoted in the iTaukei language, as acting the role of *bati* to his Cakaudrove chief, Governor-General Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 47).

1998, pp. 34-35). It was important for Rabuka to carry out the coup to return the country to chiefly rule. But Ratu Mara always publicly maintained he had no hand in the coup and Ratu Penaia Ganilau condemned it. However, both chiefs acquiesced to Rabuka's coup – Ratu Mara by accepting a leadership role in the civil-military coalition government, and Ratu Ganilau by accepting the position of President[99] of Fiji in December 1987. Therefore, even if they had no hand in the coup, the two were its chiefly elite beneficiaries.

Rabuka was influenced by research for his Master's thesis at the Madras University, India, in which he explored how, in the post-coup period in third world countries, the military can develop or destroy a nation[100] (Dean & Ritova 1998, p. 28). Contrary to popular perception, the two most senior military officers were against mounting a coup including then RFMF Commander Ratu Epeli Nailatikau and Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel Jim Sanday (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 99). Nailatikau was overseas when the military's third in command, Lieutenant Colonel Rabuka, executed Fiji's first coup. Afterwards, Rabuka became the army commander and his rank was elevated to Major General. Through the 1987 coup Rabuka achieved his career ambitions.[101]

In an interview with the author, Rabuka correlated coups to iTaukei history, describing Fiji's coup culture as natural for Fijians because:

> "… our society was a warrior society where a warrior becomes chief by his victory over an existing chief," (Rabuka 2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

This belief was reiterated by a former RFMF soldier[102] who felt Fijians were partial to a coup-conflict mentality due to their:

> "… treacherous history making, how the chiefs undo each other, war fares and battles. Tradition and culture are based on that history. When you come again to a conflict kind of environment in a coup, to a Fijian you are not coming into a new domain. He and his ancestors have been part of this kind of mentality for quite some time," (2016, pers. comm., 17 August).

[99] The Governor-General position was removed after Fiji became a republic following the two 1987 coups.
[100] After thesis completion, Rabuka was appointed Chief of Operations, UNIFIL, Lebanon, and in June 1980, he was appointed Commanding Officer of the Fiji Infantry Regiment there (Dean & Ritova 1998, p. 29).
[101] Rabuka's biography extolls his achievements as a soldier and his disappointment at slow promotion in the RFMF. Rabuka joined the army for the adventure of going to war and the possibility of overseas training. He was from the warrior tribe in his village (Dean & Ritova 1988, p. 22).
[102] Interviewed in Suva, Fiji.

The soldiers' traditional loyalty in the *turaga-bati* concept posed a danger to soldiers' democratic responsibilities. To have allegiance to any other person or body is against democratic values which require soldiers to have a professional, apolitical attitude and where coups and treason are regarded as the ultimate violation of a soldier's ethical responsibility.[103] Feaver (2003, p. 68) uses the term 'shirk' to describe military officers abandoning their professional values or responsibilities, and where soldiers' actions "undermine the ability of the civilians to make future decisions". A coup is an extremely serious violation as it undermines the citizenry's ability to collectively choose and change their government through democratic elections. Leaders controlling the military remain the biggest threat to democracy in Fiji because the security forces defer to them rather than to the legitimate elected leaders.

Fijian soldiers know coups are acts of treason that seriously violate a soldier's ethics, but still support a coup for various reasons. Rabuka admits that people he removed were hurt, carrying the scars for the rest of their life. Rabuka benefitted from coups, but said the decision to take part in coups is a:

> "…very difficult one for soldiers. It's their career, bread and butter issue. They go along with it, some with total agreement, some having no other choice… The military provides employment to young people as there aren't enough industries in Fiji to absorb them…. Soldiers probably carry out coups because of loyalty to their commander, the force of the commander giving orders, and for support[104] of the people… In 1987, some of my officers resigned and came back after things stabilised… Coups give soldiers the wrong idea that they have the right to impose militarism on civilian government," (2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

Retired Colonel Sakiusa Raivoce, on peacekeeping duties in Lebanon during the 1987 coup, recollects that:

> "…some of us were excited, some shocked whether the coup was good or bad. But as a soldier, I had to toe the line and follow orders… whatever your commander says you do it; soldiers cannot question commander's orders," (2016, pers. comm., 16 August).

Rabuka commanded the soldiers' loyalty as he was the RFMF's Staff Officer for Operations and Training (Robertson 2017, p. 62). Former soldiers also revealed in interviews that they

[103] See CMR section 3.3.1. This includes imbued values to serve and protect the elected civilian government, and regard them as the only legitimate authority vested with the electorate's permission to make national decisions.
[104] The general population who are in favour of soldiers carrying out a coup.

participated in coups because their work requires them to obey the commander's orders and they remain in the army for employment.

In Fiji, military training is aligned to democratic norms. There is no evidence to indicate that the soldiers received formal training or used oaths other than those aligned to Western democratic values.[105] Overseas training is prime incentive for Fijians to enlist and tends to be at prestigious defence colleges in the UK, US, Australia, NZ or India.[106] Despite receiving training from defence academies in democratic nations, it is concerning that some Fijian soldiers were unable to distinguish whether participation in a coup was good or bad. Soldiers participated in coups without consideration for its legitimacy because they were focused on following orders. This implies that the professional values of soldiers in a democracy may not hold much meaning for some soldiers. Furthermore, democratic training to inculcate values of apolitical soldiery is not sufficient to elicit an ingrained, unshakeable commitment to democratic institutions in soldiers.

Baledrokadroka argues the conflict zone experience that Fiji's military acquired during their participation in UN peacekeeping operations contributed skills for mounting coups (2012a, p. 105). Yet, Rabuka disagrees that such skills were acquired during peacekeeping:

> "There's no special skill required. The basic skills that we acquire here in local training are used in peacekeeping and when there's a military takeover, with checkpoints, movement control, crowd control, and updating information all the time. Those are basic military skills," (Rabuka 2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

Although Rabuka disagrees that peacekeeping participation has been conducive to coups in Fiji, he chose an RFMF captain [107] with outstanding performance in the Lebanon and Sinai peacekeeping units to train 60 men to carry out the 1987 coup. The 'elite 60' consisted of very experienced soldiers including hardened Middle East veterans (Dean & Ritova 1988, pp. 38-42). It therefore appears that the training soldiers acquired through peacekeeping was indeed vital for executing the 1987 coup.

---

[105] A former soldier describes the military as being even more professional during the colonial era, whereas over the past decades he believes the force became indisciplined – exemplified by cases of brutality and torture after coups. For example, the torture of Dr Anirudh Singh discussed in the previous section.

[106] Emphasised by former RFMF soldiers interviewed for this thesis.

[107] The outstanding soldier's identity was kept secret in Rabuka's biography, where he is called Captain X.

Fiji's military's transitioned to Janowitz's democratic model of political-military elite relations at independence. However, their accountability was unofficially confounded by traditional chief-warrior conceptions. After the 1987 coup, Fiji regressed to the garrison-state model. The ease with which the bulk of Fiji's military switches from the democratic to the garrison-state model is a cause for concern as it suggests that Western training has not equipped soldiers with requisite knowledge of what constitutes professional soldierly values in a democracy. The belief that they must unquestioningly follow a superior officer's orders leaves Fiji's military open to manipulation by political and military elites for future coups.

4.4.3 Fiji – civil society challenges after the first coup in 1987

Fiji's colonial history showed strong advocacy for civil and political rights by farmers' associations, workers' unions and political leaders. After independence, trade unions and political leaders continued to be vocal on contentious social and political issues.[108] Civil society's reaction to the 1987 coup is now explored in relation to their key role as an actor in democratisation. Civil society was divided over the coup with prominent groups – such as the Methodist church of Fiji – supporting ethno-nationalists. Thus, while the vocal progressive civil society members were able to raise awareness about the wrongs of the coup, widespread division or apathy meant they were not effective in challenging the regime and shifting the power balance for re-democratisation.[109]

Segments of civil and political society protested against the coup. This included agitation by academics, women's rights advocates, lawyers, rights-based non-government organisations (NGOs), the FLP and NFP political parties, and educated middle-class professionals. The deposed coalition government of the FLP and NFP had strong support from the trade unions and cane farmers' associations. These unions advocated for a return to democratic rule and appealed to peak union organisations in Western countries to pressure the post-coup Fiji regime. Union leaders were largely partisan since the NFP had a history of advocating for the rights of Indian cane farmers, and the FLP virtually grew out of the labour movement (see section 4.3.1). Activists engaged in anti-coup demonstrations and decried racial discrimination against Indo-Fijians.[110]

---

[108] The civil society organisations (CSOs) with largest memberships are religious organisations, followed by trade unions, educational groups and sports organisations[108] (Khan, Shah & Siwatibau 2007).

[109] See Linz & Stepan 1996 for civil society's role in democratisation.

[110] The researcher grew up witnessing such events and learning about them in early adulthood. Women's rights CSOs that commenced in the 1980s produced prominent feminists such as the late Peni Moore, Shamima Ali and Imrana Jalal who fought against racism, and

Some protesters were arrested, detained and/or beaten up by the security forces (see section 4.4.1). Prominent academic Prof Vijay Naidu and lawyer Richard Naidu were beaten by the military; Vijay Naidu suffered fractured ribs after being kicked by soldiers (Vijay Naidu 2016, pers. comm., 20 July). Repression by authorities created a fear amongst citizens that the situation could worsen in Fiji, and triggered a mass emigration of Indo-Fijians.

Judicial and media independence were curtailed. The Fiji Times engaged in self-censorship while the Fiji Sun stopped operations temporarily. The freedoms of assembly, expression and movement were undermined and the Sunday Decree imposed to force people not to work on Sundays (Baba & Bain 1990, pp. 183-184). The majority of Indo-Fijians are non-Christians and thus, the Sunday ban not only restricted wage-earning activities, it discriminated against other religions. The military also harassed those with political beliefs antithetical to those of the regime.

One example of the military's harassment is the case of the family of Roshika Deo, a feminist and independent candidate in Fiji's 2014 elections. Roshika, an Indo-Fijian, vividly recalls as a young child the military invading their house in Narere after the 1987 coup because her father was a member of Bavadra's party:

> "I was six years old then and still remember the military invading our house. I was on the steps and my teenage cousin was feeding our two dogs. The soldiers came and kicked the dogs. They hit my teenage cousin and uncle with the gun. They put the gun to my uncle's head. At home were my five-year old sister and my two brothers who were less than three years old. My parents were in Australia when the 1987 coup happened. My maternal aunt and grandparents were staying and looking after us... They ransacked our place. It was a really terrible moment. The soldiers were pointing guns at us. We were all crying and my *nani*[111] was shielding me… My parents still live with fear every day from the coup," (2016, pers. comm., 9 August).

However, coup leader Rabuka claimed not to be aware of civil society members being victimised, stating that:

> "If it's true, it's really unjustified because they were just doing their work for the public. For them to be personally abused for something they are doing for the public, is unfair. My own professional view of

advocated for democracy and violence against women, as well as individual professionals such as anti-nuclear activist, the late Amelia Rokotuivuna. See also Bhim 2010.

[111] Maternal grandmother.

soldiers and policemen is that we are there to look after people. We are not there to ill-treat anybody" (2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

This statement by Rabuka is ironic because his coup involved ill-treatment of elected leaders by Fiji's armed forces.

Following the coup, in an attempt to silence opposition, soldiers were sent to the regional University of the South Pacific (USP) campus in Suva to clamp down on vocal academics. To counter it, the then British expatriate USP Vice Chancellor Geoffrey Caston used his diplomatic skills to maintain the academic independence of the institution by telling soldiers he had been assured by coup leader Rabuka that the university would not be interfered with (*The Times* 2018). Caston genuinely valued democracy and human rights. He gave refuge to Vijay Naidu when he and other USP academics were being hunted by soldiers (Narsey 2016).

Rabuka's coup was condoned by the *Taukei* Movement and many prominent Methodist Church pastors (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 47; Delaibatiki 2014). The Methodist Church was misused by some prominent members to propagate ethno-nationalism and anti-Indian sentiments. Yet Rev Akuila Yabaki, then communications secretary at the Methodist Church, took a public stance that the 1987 coup was racist. He spoke out against racial discrimination and Fijian domination and consequently lost his job (Rev Akuila Yabaki 2016, pers. comm., 21 July). At the time, the Methodist Church President Rev Josateki Koroi did all he could to prevent the church's resources being used to support the goals of the coup and opposed the Sunday Observance Decree imposed by Rabuka (Robertson 2017, pp. 104-105). Methodist youths were involved in vandalising and burning some Hindu temples and mosques. Koroi was removed from his position in February 1989 by the church's secretary general Rev Manasa Lasaro who, supported by the church's divisional superintendents, suspended the church's constitution (Robertson 2017, p. 105). Thus, indigenous Fijian religious leaders, academics and activists who spoke out against discrimination towards Indo-Fijians were marginalised and regarded as traitors by those Fijians believing in paramountcy of their rights.

The 1987 coup severely damaged Fiji's economy.[112] Some businesses collapsed while others had to be apolitical or show support to the regime to survive, illustrating that even the

[112] See publications by Wadan Narsey, Biman Chand Prasad, Satish Chand, Prasad & Narayan 2007, Prasad & Kumar 2004, and others, about the economic impacts of Fiji's coups.

economic sector – another arena of Linz and Stepan's democratic consolidation theory – is manipulated by an authoritarian regime. The negative effect on the private sector further disillusioned the broader civil society, to which they also belong.[113]

Current SODELPA[114] Member of Parliament Viliame Gavoka, an hotelier in 1987, describes the impact of the coup on the occupancy of a prominent resort:

> "…occupancy dropped from 80% to 8% within days… This resort is on a 100-acre property. It became like a graveyard," (2016, pers. comm., 2 August).

To conclude, despite victimisation, a vocal rights-based civil society protested against coups, violence and racism, advocating for a return to democracy and related human rights. However, the wider civil society was divided because of political allegiance, mistrust between different races which worsened after the coup, and misuse of the Methodist church, Fiji's biggest religious denomination. Division amongst civil society meant it was unable to effectively challenge the post-1987 coup civil-military coalition rule.

4.4.4 Fiji - competitive authoritarian regime 1992-99

The coup-leader Rabuka acquired a veneer of legitimacy in the period 1992-1999, when he led a competitive authoritarian government. Rabuka resigned from the military in 1991 to become Deputy Prime Minister. He then became Prime Minister after the chiefs-sponsored Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) party he led won the 1992 elections (Lal & Pretes 2008, p. 181). Competition was unfair in the 1992 elections because, under the rules of the 1990 Constitution, only Rabuka's SVT party with majority iTaukei members stood a chance of winning. The allocation of 37 seats to Fijians in parliament, which was 10 more than the 27 seats allocated to Indians, was designed to ensure electoral victory for a Fijian-dominated party. It was extremely unlikely for parties without an iTaukei majority to win. Rabuka's rule is classified as competitive authoritarian[115] because despite being a period of authoritarian rule, elections were allowed. It was neither an autocracy nor a dictatorship as Rabuka did not entrench power solely in his own hands but carried out decisions in consultation with others. Rabuka's style of leadership was 'charismatic', not personalist.

---

[113] Indo-Fijian academics from various disciplines have written accounts of the grief caused by the 1987 coup including: Brij V. Lal, Vijay Naidu, Satendra Nandan, Prof Subramani, Som Prakash, Victor Lal, Biman Chand Prasad and Ganesh Chand. Many emigrated.

[114] Social Democratic Liberal Party, which is a Fijian ethno-nationalist party.

[115] See section 3.2.2 for definition of competitive authoritarian.

The chiefs, by accepting a coup leader, legitimised Rabuka's actions in the eyes of grassroots Fijians. Rabuka professed to carry out the coup to safeguard chiefly honour, but upstaged high chief Mara and also Ratu Nailatikau by taking up the roles of both Prime Minister and RFMF commander. Chiefs who spoke out against coups – such as Ratu Meli Vesikula, a former *Taukei* spokesman who reformed into a democracy advocate, and the late former Vice-President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi – were marginalised. Fijian supporters of the regime permanently skewed Fiji's democratisation process by marginalising coup critics and portraying Rabuka's illegal coup actions as heroic.

Under the post-1992 regime various government programs gave preferential treatment to iTaukei including government appointments, scholarships, business assistance and bank loans to boost their success. Government discrimination drove further emigration and by 1996, the Indian population had declined to 43.7%, whereas Fijians had increased to 50.8% (FIBoS 2008). Some affirmative action projects post-1987 coup failed because of mismanagement or corruption by the iTaukei elite incurring state losses of over $300 million (Ratuva 2014, p. 148). Furthermore, affirmative action benefitted middle-class Fijians rather than the poor (Puamau 2001, pp. 116-117). In this way, affirmative action programs served the needs of Fijian elites and thus maintained the status quo. Lowering bank lending criteria for Fijians, Rotumans and select businesses resulted in Fiji's biggest financial scandal in the mid-1990s, the collapse of the National Bank of Fiji (NBF), due to bad debts of over $220 million[116] (Grynberg, Munro & White 2002, p. xiii). Thus, nepotism and patronage which are common traits in SIDS, as well as in authoritarian regimes, were widespread under Rabuka's rule.

In 1996, due in part to international pressure, Rabuka initiated an independent review of the 1990 Constitution. The vocal opposition against the coup and racial discrimination by rights-based civil society in Fiji may have played a role in Rabuka, as an elected prime minister, realising that the post-coup government had wronged the Indo-Fijians and thus initiating the review. The constitution review was overseen by SVT leader Rabuka and then Leader of the Opposition NFP's Jai Ram Reddy. The Commission[117] recommended 45 open and 25 communal seats in a 70-seat House of Representatives, anticipating that communal seats

[116] A culture of mismanagement was widespread within the Fiji Housing Authority, Fiji Development Bank, Fiji Broadcasting Commission, Fiji Public Service Credit Union, Public Trustee's Office, Methodist Church, Customs Department, Companies Office and the Registrar-General's department (Grynberg, Munro & White 2002, p. xvii).

[117] The independent chairperson of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission was Sir Paul Reeves. In line with Fiji's ethnically polarised history, the government-nominated member was Tomasi Vakatora (Fijian) and the opposition-nominated member was Dr Brij Lal (Indian).

would be gradually phased out (Reeves 1998, p. 226). Instead, Fiji's parliament inverted the rolls to 46 communal and 25 open seats in a 71-seat House of Representatives (Reeves 1998). Other features of the Westminster parliamentary system were retained. The preferential voting system was adopted. Civil society played a key role in the review process that resulted in Fiji's internationally-acclaimed 1997 Constitution, which had provisions for power-sharing and creation of independent institutions such as the Fiji Human Rights Commission.

Despite divisions amongst civil society, it was sufficiently vocal to engender a gradual shift in the ideology and public policy of Rabuka and his post-1992 elected competitive authoritarian government. Fiji was also under pressure from international actors to return to democracy (Firth & Fraenkel 2007, p. xxi). Fiji wanted to restore close relations with ANZUS nations which had become strained following the 1987 coup. The review and replacement of the racist 1990 constitution was greatly influenced by recognition of the need for aid, trade and security relations with western democratic nations. The net result was that Rabuka mellowed towards democracy and initiated a constitution review process in which Fiji's civil society and political society played complementary roles to produce better outcomes in line with Linz and Stepan's theory. It was during this consultative process that Rabuka's persona transformed from a charismatic authoritarian leader to more of a populist leader.

Based on the success of the constitution review, a coalition was formed between SVT, NFP and the United Generals Party (UGP).[118] However, the indigenous Fijian voters were disenchanted with Rabuka's new populist multi-racial rhetoric. No doubt the financial scandals and mismanagement contributed to the coalition's stunning electoral defeat. They lost the 1999 elections with: SVT – 38% Fijian votes and 21% open votes - only 8 seats; NFP – 32% Indian votes and 14.4% open votes - no seats; and UGP – with 49% general votes and 1.3% open votes - 2 seats (Lal 2000, p. 37). The NFP leader Reddy left Fiji after this humiliating loss.[119]

The elections were won by the People's Coalition comprising FLP, the Fijian Association Party (FAP) – comprised of many former FLP supporters, and the Party of National Unity

[118] UGP comprised of Europeans, Part-Europeans, Chinese, and other minority ethnic groups.
[119] The NFP, Fiji's oldest political party, had been unable to fathom that Indians still felt deep mistrust and anger towards Rabuka, blaming him for their sufferings after the 1987 coup. It paid the ultimate price by losing much of the Indo-Fijian votes.

(PANU) – which, contrary to its name, was a Fijian ethno-nationalist party. The FLP won 37 of the 71 parliamentary seats – 65.6% Indian votes, 33.3% open votes and 2% Fijian votes; FAP won 11 seats –18% Fijian votes and 10.8% open votes; and PANU won 4 seats – 9.6% Fijian votes and 2.7% open votes (Lal 2000, p. 37). Mahendra Chaudhry thus became Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister. But history repeated itself a year later when, once again, an FLP-dominated government was removed in a violent coup.

Rabuka's competitive authoritarian rule had features of authoritarian regimes, such as gifting, a patronage system, and laws and institutions designed in the regime's favour. Rabuka nurtured loyalists in the military and civil service, recognising their mutual dependency for survival. He re-affirmed the Great Council of Chiefs and favoured the Fijian middle class, who benefitted through affirmative action policies. Fiji's return to transition to democracy through the 1997 constitution process aligns with the tendency of SIDS to democratise to obtain western aid which requires good governance and democracy (see section 2.4). Another potential benefit is the safe 'sphere of influence' of democratic powers for geopolitical security.

4.5 Fiji – 2000 – second coup

The sanguinity of Fiji's return to democracy was shattered through the violent civilian putsch attempt in 2000. That event, the ensuing civil-military coalition regime from 2000-2001, and the post-2001 elections government, are examined to comprehend the motives behind the 2000 coup, its characteristics and effects. As coups often trigger democratic reversals, the developments in the armed forces from the 1990s-2006 are analysed to provide some insights as to how authoritarian regimes develop. The challenges encountered by civil society, and attempts at Civil-Military Relations (CMR) reform are also discussed.

4.5.1 The 2000 coup

The 2000 coup in Fiji removed Prime Minister Chaudhry from power. The regime type during Chaudhry's one-year rule is classified as in transition to democracy. It was not a consolidated democracy because the essential conditions necessary for democracy stipulated by Dahl, and Linz and Stepan, had not been accomplished. Notably, there were risks that iTaukei ethno-nationalists and/or politicians could influence the military to overthrow the

government; and the 1987 coup demonstrated that some people did not believe in obtaining political change via democratic processes. In addition to the Fijian ethnonationalist dimension, select policies of Chaudhry are examined to help determine personal motivations and vested interests behind the 2000 coup.

A prime factor that led to the downfall of the Chaudhry government was the iTaukei's innate fear that their land ownership was imperiled. SODELPA parliamentarian, Semesa Karavaki,[120] explains that land ownership and leadership of Fiji, are viewed by the iTaukei as God-given rights and therefore, ethno-nationalism will always have a role in Fiji's politics:

> "The iTaukei are Christians and believe in proprietorship being a divine arrangement for us. Being the indigenous, they believe God gave them the right to own the place… They believe their right to share what God had given them with others. The past disturbance in the country (1987 and 2000 coups)… their God given right had been unilaterally decided for them by someone who probably had no right to do so," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

To appease ethno-nationalists, Chaudhry had given two-thirds of cabinet appointments to Fijians and pledged to strengthen affirmative action programmes for Fijians (Ratuva 2014, p. 144). However, ethno-nationalists were rankled by policies such as the proposed investigation into public institutions under the past government, assistance of $28,000 to Indian cane farmers displaced due to non-renewal of land leases versus $10,000 to new Fijian cane farmers, and the establishment of a Land Use Commission (Ratuva 2014, p. 144). These policies were viewed as detrimental to iTaukei interests, while land utilisation schemes were seen as beneficial to other races.

Ethno-nationalist politicians convinced a significant number of iTaukei that their land ownership was imperiled by the Chaudhry government (Kurer 2001, p. 315). The NLTB did not want to make more land available for lease to Indians. These concerns were exacerbated by the media which sensationalised the FLP's proposed land use reforms.

Dr Shailendra Singh, who currently heads the USP's journalism programme, argues that Fiji's media's were accused of being culpable for creating a climate conducive to the 2000 coup:

[120] The author interviewed Karavaki at the opposition chambers at Parliament House, Suva.

> "A number of empirical stories showed that the manner in which the media portrayed the Chaudhry government played a part. Some people claim the media demonised the Chaudhry government along ethnic lines. That may have emboldened people who were plotting the 2000 coup to go ahead with their plans... the reason for the coup culture is greedy politicians who lose power, they want to come back to power, and also corrupt businesses. Another reason is indigenous Fijian concerns and fears about the loss of their culture, and also the loss of their land," (Singh 2016, pers. comm., 29 July).

A massive iTaukei protest march, organised by ethno-nationalist politicians, occurred on 19 May 2000, attracting 10,000 people (Lal & Pretes 2008, p. 183). Chaudhry authorised the march to proceed despite being advised not to. The incensed mob looted and burned shops in Suva city,[121] and were led by iTaukei political leaders to Parliament House. Police Commissioner Isikia Savua, a former military officer, did not instruct police officers to stop the rioting nor did he request the military to curtail the mayhem. The 'security' forces only turned up after Suva was already in ruins (Moala 2018).

In sync with the march, Chaudhry's FLP-coalition government was deposed in a violent coup at Parliament House, by seven members of the RFMF's elite Counter-Revolutionary Warfare (CRW) unit.[122] George Speight, also known as Ilikini Naitini, was under investigation for mismanagement of the Fiji Hardwood Corporation. Speight joined the coup at the final stages, but became the spokesman of the coup-makers.[123] In effect, the marchers became a human-shield for the coup-makers.

As during the 1987 coup, local and international media gave prominent coverage to coup leaders. This made the charismatic coup-makers appear like heroes.[124] By becoming their mouthpiece, much of the media unwittingly promoted the ethno-nationalist agenda as well as anti-Indian propaganda (Prasad & Singh 2008).

---

[121] The author experienced these events as her home was a 10-minute walk from the Suva city, and her workplace at USP was a 5-minute drive from the Parliament House.

[122] They carried out the 'civilian' coup with the support of former British SAS member Ilisoni Ligairi. The CRW was tasked with countering terrorist operations and internal surveillance (Parliament of Fiji 1997). Instead, they ended up a pawns in a political powerplay.

[123] The 2000 coup has been extensively written about by academics such as Brij V. Lal, Steven Ratuva, Jon Fraenkel, Stewart Firth, and others. Political, social, economic and financial analysis has been provided by several scholars.

[124] For instance, the news article by USP journalism students on 26 May 2000 titled, 'The day I was kissed by a coup leader' (viewed 16 June 2020, http://www.pireport.org/articles/2000/05/25/day-i-was-kissed-coup-leader). However, having witnessed the senseless looting and destruction of Suva city from the *Fiji Daily Post* office, editor Jale Moala was one Fijian who decided Speight would be covered as a terrorist and not a hero (Moala 2018).

The then Editor of the *Fiji Times* Netani Rika[125] admits that critical reporting was missing and shares how journalists were stage-managed by Speight:

> "George Speight was clever. He manipulated the media to keep them moving to the next topic before they made a decision how their coverage will be. …you get caught up in trying to beat everybody else to the next development in the story… without fully examining the person's claims or looking for the balancing or opposing view to give that critical analysis," (Rika 2016, pers. comm., 27 July).

Chaudhry and members of his cabinet were held hostage for 56 days in the parliament complex. There was violence against Indo-Fijian homes and farms in areas such as Muaniweni, Dawasamu and Dreketi with many fleeing in fear for their lives. An unsuccessful violent mutiny at the RFMF's Queen Elizabeth Barracks on 2 November 2000 by soldiers who supported the coup[126] claimed the lives of a few soldiers. This account of the violent events of 2000 demonstrates that the failure to address issues hampering the consolidation of democracy in Fiji, led to a dramatic democratic reversal as a result of another coup.

To conclude, the 2000 coup occurred because threats to democracy had persisted. Fiji did not meet Dahl's (1998) conditions for democracy as the elected government did not have full control over the military and the police. This enabled the collusion of civilians and select soldiers to stage a coup, and a failure of the police or military to prevent it. A vocal, activist element in the indigenous population did not believe in the sanctity of democratic ideals. Despite legislative protection of their natural resources and virtual monopoly of the military, the iTaukei's insecurity over being controlled by other races remained unresolved.

4.5.2 Fiji - civil/military coalition 2000-2001 and the 2001 elections

The upheaval wrought by the 2000 coup resulted in military rule and a civil-military coalition, as well as a changeover in government after the 2001 elections, which are briefly analysed below to understand the impacts of the 2000 coup.

Following a 10-day period of no government till 29 May, an interim military regime ruled for two months till July 2000. In the aftermath of the coup, President Ratu Mara had declared a state of emergency. Army Commander Voreqe[127] Bainimarama returned from Lebanon upon

---

[125] Interviewed in Suva, Fiji.

[126] see section 4.6.4 for impact of the mutiny on the military.

[127] Also known as Frank Bainimarama. It is common for iTaukei to use western nicknames, especially when their employment requires overseas travel.

hearing of the coup. On the request of military officers on 29 May, Mara stepped down, thus enabling Bainimarama to assume executive authority and declare martial law (*Reuters* 2000). Bainimarama was in control and issued a decree to abrogate the 1997 constitution (Bhim 2007, p. 116). The military played a key role in negotiating the Muanikau Accord signed on 9 July 2000 under which coup perpetrators were given amnesty in exchange for release of the hostages and return of weapons (Bhim 2007). All hostages were released by 13 July (Baba,[128] Field & Nabobo-Baba 2005).

The coup was unsuccessful on a personal level for the key perpetrators, including Speight, as they were arrested for violating their immunity provisions and convicted. But its key aims were realised when the military did not restore Chaudhry as the Prime Minister. Instead, banker Laisenia Qarase was made interim Prime Minister of a caretaker government. Qarase's interim government from July 2000 – September 2001 was a civil-military coalition as its appointment was authorised by Bainimarama.

Qarase formed a political party, Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL), including ethno-nationalists and many coup supporters. The SDL party formed a coalition with the Conservative Alliance-Matanitu Vanua (CAMV) Party and won the September 2001 elections in the midst of an agriculture scam where farming implements amounting to over $FJ16 million were distributed by interim ministers in the lead-up to the elections (Ratuva 2014, p. 147). Fijian ethno-nationalists and the chiefly status quo were returned to power. The CAMV largely comprised of chiefs and individuals who played a key role in the 2000 coup. The FLP's Chaudhry narrowly lost the election. The Commonwealth Observer Group found the election's voting and counting processes credible[129] (Commonwealth Secretariat 2006, pp. 51-52). Qarase became the elected Prime Minister. Qarase's second period of rule will not be covered in detail as it was not authoritarian, nor was it installed or sustained by the military.

Multiparty electoral governance thus resumed in Fiji and the coup perpetrators were tried by a judiciary perceived as independent. George Speight was sentenced to death by hanging in 2002; commuted to a life sentence. Jailed coup perpetrators included the former Vice-

---

[128] The co-author Dr Tupeni Baba was Deputy PM in Chaudhry's FLP-Coalition government and was held hostage with Chaudhry and other cabinet members in 2000 at the parliament complex in Veiuto.

[129] The Commonwealth made recommendations to address irregularities and shortcomings, which they found were not significant.

President, chiefs and ministers from Qarase's government.[130] Chiefs received benefits as 'clients' after the 2000 coup, as had happened after the 1987 coup (see section 4.4.2). High chiefs regained their positions as ministers and senators in Qarase's government after completing their sentences. The retention of convicted coup-plotters in government positions bestowed legitimacy on participation in coups.

Although under the Qarase government, the judiciary, media, parliament and civil society were functioning independently as in a democracy, his term is classified as transition to democracy in Table 4.2, similar to Chaudhry's elected government of 1999-2000. This is because Fiji had not met all the conditions for democratic consolidation as per Linz and Stepan and Dahl. In particular, the military was not under the control of civilian elected leaders and made major political decisions. Fiji endured coup-related violence from rebel military members. The military did not return executive power to the elected Prime Minister Chaudhry. Instead, the military interfered in the democratic process by appointing Qarase as Prime Minister who went on to win the 2001 elections. The military's politicised role paved the way for the 2006 coup.

4.5.3 Fiji – civil society challenges after the 2000 coup

Impacts on human rights and civil society from the 2000 coup, and under the Qarase government, are discussed below. The coup shocked the nation. Unlike the controlled military coup of 1987 there was anarchy and destruction.[131] Daily curfews were enforced because of the ensuing mayhem. Some Indo-Fijian academics fled the country fearing victimisation similar to after the 1987 coup, only coming back when things returned to 'normalcy'. Civil society and CSOs advocated for peace such as the women-led Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil initiative (Global Fund for Women).

The humiliation of elected leaders in captivity, and the security forces' ineptness in averting the anarchy, prompted spordic acts of lawlessness. Similar to the 1987 coup, the economy

---

[130] Eight chiefs - including former Vice-President Ratu Jope Seniloli, members of parliament Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu and Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure, and senators Ratu Inoke Takiveikata and Ratu Josefa Dimuri - were convicted between August 2004-April 2005 for offences ranging from unlawful oaths and/or assembly and wrongful confinement (Bhim 2007, pp. 118-119). From the six elected CAMV members, three were convicted, including Speight and two high chiefs. Seven were released on compulsory supervision orders and only Takiveikata remained imprisoned. Controversially, the majority of the high chiefs' convictions for coup-related offences were commuted to compulsory supervision orders, served outside of prison (Bhim 2007, pp. 118-119).

[131] The researcher's home was a 10-minute walk away from the Suva city and her work location – the University of the South Pacific – was a 5-minute drive away from the parliament complex where the parliamentarians were held hostage. As such, she experienced the mayhem and the ensuing impacts on people's daily lives.

suffered drastically after the 2000 coup.[132] Prof Vijay Naidu recounted incidences where Indo-Fijians were harassed by Fijians in Muaniweni.[133] A camp for internally displaced people, the first in Fiji's history, was set up at the Girmit Centre, Lautoka.

> "The 2000 putsch was a form of terrorism because Indo-Fijian farmers, shopkeepers, individual citizens were terrorised, their homes subjected to stoning. People had to leave their farms, homes in fright. You had internally displaced people. In the violence that took place, there was inter-ethnic rape. We went to Muaniweni, Baulevu, to assist people... Then they took people up to the Girmit Centre. All these things were first-hand experiences. It was quite disturbing and traumatic for us. Because it was ethnic-based, being Indo-Fijian had particular negative connotations during this time," (Naidu 2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

The Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) was one CSO that actively sought to uphold the rule of law after the 2000 coup. It was formed in 1991 from the 'Back to Early May Movement' by a group of concerned citizens calling for the re-instatement of the pre-1987 coup government (Citizens' Constitutional Forum). The CCF won the Chandrika Prasad case in March 2001, which restored the 1997 Constitution. In May 2001, the CCF legally challenged the President's failure to recall Parliament in March. They lost the case and were deregistered as a charitable trust by the government[134] (Robertson & Sutherland 2001, p. 48). Thus, CSOs such as the CCF who were critical of the government were victimised by policies such as the creation of laws to hinder their operability.

Qarase's post-2001 elected government posed new challenges for civil society. It espoused paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests and proposed controversial bills such as the 2004 Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity (RTU) Bill through which amnesty could be provided to coup participants and their supporters. The 2006 Qoliqoli Bill sought to extend rights over the *qoliqoli* (traditional fishing grounds) and foreshore to Fijians, which raised concerns for tourism and businesses reliant on the coastline. There were fears that media freedom might be curtailed by the 2006 Broadcast Licensing Bill. NGOs spoke out against racist and hate speech by government ministers in parliament and made a submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2007.[135]

---

[132] There was severe economic downturn, businesses experiencing closure or bankruptcy, and mass migration of the most accomplished citizens. Feminist Roshika Deo recalled her father became nearly bankrupt and she could not complete her overseas studies and had to return to Fiji (Deo 2016, pers. comm., 9 August).

[133] Such incidents also occurred in Dawasamu in central Fiji, and Dreketi in northern Fiji.

[134] Due to changes in laws, the CCF could not re-register as a charitable organisation and instead, had to register as a not-for-profit company.

[135] NGOs Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning Fiji, August 2007.

Protests against controversial bills were spearheaded by an NGO Coalition on Human Rights[136] (NGOCHR) created in 1999. Opponents of the RTU Bill launched a Yellow Ribbon Campaign supported by a wide cross-section of society, while supporters of the RTU Bill launched a Blue Ribbon Campaign supported by Fijian ethno-nationalists. The military also vociferously opposed the RTU Bill, as coup convicts could be freed under it (Bhim 2007, p. 129). Due to the widespread protests, a parliamentary sub-committee was created to take public submissions which led to a review of the Bill in 2005. The revised Bill removed the proposed blanket amnesty for key coup participants and would only have allowed it to those who did not participate in criminal acts (Bhim 2007, pp. 134-135). These bills were shelved after Qarase was removed in the 2006 coup.

The 2000 coup resulted in violation of human rights, particularly for Indo-Fijians. However, democratic institutions were fully functioning after the 2001 elections. Although there was hate speech against Indo-Fijians by government ministers and victimisation of CSOs such as the CCF, the ability to exercise key civil and political rights meant that civil society was able to pressure government to delay and revise controversial bills. Arguably, an independent judiciary, free media, and ability to exercise freedoms of expression, assembly and association, were the key elements that enabled Fiji's civil society to voice concerns and hold the government accountable.

4.5.4 Armed forces development 1990s-2006

The growth of Fiji's armed forces, especially in relation to peacekeeping, is now examined for the period 1990s-2006. Similar to the early period of post-independence, internal unrest was regarded as the main security threat by the state.[137] The RFMF size tripled to 6000 personnel after the 1987 coup (see section 4.3.2), but downsized thereafter to 3,571 by 1996, and 3,250 by 2002.[138] The gradual downsizing indicates the civil-military government's

---

[136] NGOCHR comprised of: Aids Taskforce, CCF, Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA), fem'link Pacific, Fiji Disabled People's Association (FDPA), Fiji Human Rights Commission (FHRC), Fiji I Care, Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC), Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC), Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), Fiji Young Lawyers Association (FYLA), Greenpeace Pacific, National Council for Women in Fiji (NCWF), Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT), Women's Action for Change (WAC), Equal Ground Pasifik, and the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) (Bhim 2010).

[137] Sources of civil unrest included racial problems, labour and union action, political instability and discontent, regional issues, unemployment, land disputes, and economic inequality (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 18).

[138] It reduced to 5,015 in 1988, 4,499 in 1990, 3,899 in 1991, and 3,571 in 1996 (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 96). Since 1997, the largest increase in the RFMF was in 2002 due to the perceived threat of instability by ethno-nationalist supporters of the 2000 coup. From 1997-2001, the size was about 3,400; the highest number of personnel was 3,550 in 2002 which declined to 3,250 from 2004-2006 (Ratuva 2011, pp. 98-99).

acknowledgment that over 6000 soldiers was too big relative to Fiji's small populace.[139] The RFMF size had stabilized to less than 3,500 by 2006, but this figure is still too high per capita for the SIDS nation of Fiji (see section 2.2) with a population of about 800,000.

Over the 30 years after 1978, Fiji soldiers brought home an estimated US$300 million from overseas peacekeeping (Fraenkel & Firth 2009, p. 119). From 1978-2004, around 31,500 RFMF personnel participated in peacekeeping missions with nearly 19,000 participating in UNIFIL, Lebanon from 1978-2002[140] (Firth, Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, p. 83). After the 1987 coup, the UN continued to recruit Fijian soldiers for peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping and coups have been the main driving forces to increase the size of Fiji's military; however, more commercial-type recruitments commenced in the new millennium. After the 2003 US invasion of Iraq there was a dramatic increase in international recruitment of security personnel. From 2003 Fijians earned high incomes by working as escorts, guards and drivers for private security companies in war zones (Fraenkel & Firth 2009, p. 119). These included former soldiers, serving soldiers (who had to resign) and non-soldiers recruited by companies in Iraq (Ratuva 2011, p. 100). Fijian soldiers and young men taking up privatised non-combatant security work raises questions over the kind of professional values created when soldiery is taken up for travel, adventure, and financial gain. FLP leader Bavadra's observation in 1985 that Fiji's soldiers could become a band of mercenaries has indeed started to ring true (see section 4.3.1).

The RFMF's politicised internal security role is against peacekeeping norms and the protection of human rights. Baledrokadroka (2012b, p. 46) asserts that peacekeeping's influence on the military's corporate behaviour led to coups and warns that the Fiji military's involvement in domestic politics will continue unless stricter deterrent measures are adopted by the UN and the international community.[141] Peacekeeping also provided the necessary training and experience for internal control during coups in Fiji (Ratuva 2011, p. 100).

[139] See section 2.1 for discussion on SIDS military size and its relevance to coups.
[140] They also served in Sinai, Croatia, Somalia, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, Iraq, Timor Leste, Bougainville and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) (Firth, Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, pp. 1-5).
[141] The new 'mediator' role that Fiji's military acquired through peacekeeping encouraged coups and is inconsistent with the western definition of military professionalism (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 45).

The inability of Fiji's elected civilian leaders to control the military means the army continued to be a threat to democracy as per Dahl's and Przeworski's and Linz and Stepan's theories. The recruitment for peacekeeping and private security jobs, notably in post-2003 Iraq, are worrying trends with regards to the professional values of soldiery.

> "The very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity," (Feaver 1999, p. 214).

The above civil-military problematique identified by Feaver applies to Fiji, as its large military poses the biggest threat to its security because instead of being a protector of elected government, it has become a usurper.

4.5.5 Fiji - Attempts at CMR reforms

Fiji has not undergone Civil Military Relations (CMR) reform, but studies pertinent to it are examined below. In developing countries, CMR reforms in post-coup situations can involve democratisation, strategies to wipe out rogue elements in the military and remedy treasonous, unprofessional and criminal behaviour amongst soldiers. CMR reforms thus endeavour to elicit the military's accountability to civilian government, and prevent them from engaging in illegal or illegitimate undertakings. A review of the security sector occurred after each coup in Fiji.[142] The 1997 review by the Rabuka government and the 2004/2005 review by the Qarase government are now examined.

The first post-independence review of Fiji's defence needs recommended creation of oversight bodies in the 1997 Defence White Paper.[143] During each of the coups in Fiji, the President and the Minister were ineffective in commanding the military. The paper found that the post-independence arrangement in the Royal Fiji Military Forces Act (Cap 81) (1985) that, "the Forces shall be under the supreme command of the Governor General and, through the Minister, under the command of the Commander"; had not had a happy history and was impractical (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 29). To subordinate the armed forces to the government, the white paper suggested transferring command of the RFMF from the President (who had succeeded the governor-general in this role post-1987 coup) to the defence minister who should not concurrently hold the Prime Minister portfolio (Parliament

---

[142] After the 2006 coup, the government did not commission a review of the security sector, however, the sector's role was examined during the Charter process, discussed in section 4.6.6.

[143] It recommended forming a Fiji Defence Council comprising the army commander and minister of defence with relevant staff to improve direct communication; a Cabinet Defence Committee comprising of ministers to deliberate on military operations; and a Parliamentary Defence Committee for sharing defence knowledge with political parties (Parliament of Fiji 1997, pp. 38-41). This was additional to the National Security Council established via decree in 1990 to provide intelligence advice on external threats.

of Fiji 1997, pp. 38-41). But this change was not implemented and the President remained the commander-in-chief under Fiji's 1997 Constitution.

That defence paper claimed that the Fiji government gained from peacekeeping with soldiers and their families, personally benefitting (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 59). It was not an attempt at CMR reform but glorified the RFMF's achievements[144] to justify retaining the military's strength. It recommended a future force size of 2,941 which included peacekeeping commitments, and identified that a battalion of 750 men was the smallest force size suitable for Fiji's defence against external threat (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 101, p. 34). It highlighted the need for a command structure to hold the military accountable. However, changes were not made to the size of the military or command structure, since Rabuka's government, comprised of coup supporters, lacked the political will to reform the military.

Rabuka defended retaining a large military for employment:

> "Increasing the military size meets our peacekeeping commitment. It provides employment to young people. We don't have industries in Fiji to absorb them. Government can put in place rural development projects that can use more of our soldiers. In fact, the big increase in military in Fiji was before peacekeeping. It was for regional development. I agree having so many people militarily trained is an unexpected result," (2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

The 1997 defence white paper did not make any recommendations on how to inculcate democratic values in the military to prevent coups. Nor did it recommend any penalties for soldiers who participate in such events. It created new defence committees to deal with outside threats, provide oversight and assistance to the military, and share information with the opposition. But it did not create a specific body or policy to prevent soldiers being used for internal political violence. The Rabuka government did not take significant action to depoliticise the soldiers, some of whom attempted a takeover in May 2000, and a mutiny in November 2000.

The second defence review,[145] commissioned by the Qarase government in September 2003, found no external military threat to Fiji's sovereignty, but pinpointed the greatest single threat to Fiji's security was from internal ethnic conflict, and weak, divided government (Firth,

[144] The 1997 paper boasted: "on a population basis no other nation can approach Fiji's peacekeeping performance. The RFMF has completed some five and a half million man/days of peacekeeping and, by maintaining 1100 men in the peacekeeping field for some 17 years has exceeded by far the expectations of international observers" (Parliament of Fiji 1997, p. 21).

[145] The review chair was Australian R.W. Lowry, and members were Professor S. Firth, and government representative J. Vitusagavulu.

Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, p. xi). It observed that the Fiji Police Force (FPF) had been run down over the previous 15 years as the RFMF regularly seized police functions; that Fiji does not need a military for defence; and maintaining public order was a police function (Firth, Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, p. 36, p. 65). It further found peacekeeping to be a liability to Fiji and that only 40% of the defence budget was financed by peacekeeping reimbursements over a 10-year average (1993-2002). Qarase[146] described peacekeeping as a waste of money as Fiji was contributing about $100 million per annum to the cost of mounting missions.[147] This was confirmed in the latest budget as, apart from the RFMF's annual expenditure, additional funds are allocated for peacekeeping, which amounted to $77.5million in 2019[148] (*FBC News* 2020c).

The independent review recommended that either the RFMF should be disbanded; or a symbolic RFMF of 200 retained; or the military retained as a police backstop with an infantry of 800 men and 200 for other functions; or peacekeeping with limited commitments retained (Firth, Lowry & Vitusagavulu 2004, pp. 69-70). Noting that strong provincial loyalties caused divisions and rebellion in the ranks, it counselled the RFMF to ensure effective inculcation of institutional loyalty and an apolitical outlook. To rebuild a professional military ethos, the review recommended reasserting civilian control over the RFMF; and reconstituting the FPF to assume full responsibility for maintaining order and internal security.

The then Prime Minister Qarase revealed that a follow-up draft 2005 defence white paper advocated:

> "…a reduction in military personnel to 1,600 sufficient to retain peacekeeping, and ultimately to reduce RFMF to 500 personnel so there would be no army but a battalion of engineers for rural development. The recommendations were well received by senior professional soldiers who believed in democracy, but the white paper was shelved because Bainimarama was against it," (2016, pers. comm., 19 July).

The intent to slash the military size by 50% and reassert civilian control over the military in the 2005 draft paper were designed to ensure that there was "no excuse for the military to enter domestic politics" (*RNZ* 2006). The RFMF rejected recommendations to halve the force

[146] Interview with former Fiji PM Laisenia Qarase, 19 July 2016, Suva, Fiji.
[147] Annual expenditure on the RFMF. Soldiers are trained and employed in the RFMF by the government. For 2019, the RFMF was allocated $95.9 million in Fiji's national budget, and for 2020/2021, they were allocated $81million due to COVID-19 impacts (*FBC News* 2020b). The short stints of peacekeeping provide lucrative remuneration for the soldiers, but not to the Fiji government.
[148] For 2020/2021, the peacekeeping allocation was reduced to $57.5million due to impacts of COVID-19.

size, and to reduce its commander's term from five to three years to prevent the army being associated with the persona of the commander (Firth & Fraenkel 2009, pp. 126-127). Qarase deserves commendation as he was the only Prime Minister who actively tried to find a solution to end Fiji's coup culture by providing an enabling environment for an independent judiciary to convict the 2000 coup-makers (see section 4.5.2) which saw members of his own government jailed, and for initiating Fiji's defence review. Ironically, he was removed in the 2006 coup, in part to thwart implementation of the 2005 paper which included downsizing the military (Tarte 2010, p. 68).

The recommendations of the 2004 review and 2005 defence white paper need to be reconsidered for implementation by future Fiji governments to enable de-politicisation of the RFMF and rebuilding a small, professional military that is accountable and subordinate to civilian rule. To date elected civilian leaders in Fiji since 1987 have lacked the ability to control the military and to prevent military coups, meaning that the RFMF continued to be a threat to democracy as per Dahl's, Przeworski's, and Linz and Stepan's theories. Erk and Veenendaal (2014, pp. 141-143) found small island nations had common problems of nepotism and conflict of interest.[149] This could pose difficulties for apolitical oversight of the military by one minister. As presidents and ministers have been ineffective in controlling Fiji's military, it is therefore recommended that the military should be accountable to a parliamentary sub-committee with balanced political party representation. Spreading civilian oversight of the military in this way is likely to create a notion in the military that they are responsible to the nation, and not to one leader or their commander.

4.6 Fiji – 2006: third coup

The lengthiest phase of military rule post-independence was engendered by the 2006 coup, which made Fiji's return to democracy a forlorn aspiration. It produced a hybrid personal/military rule from 2006-2014, examined below. Increased authoritarianism after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution, armed forces development till 2006, developments in the military post-2006 coup, and impacts of the 2000 and 2006 coups on the military, are also discussed. The 2006 coup divided political and civil society in a profound way as some felt it was a 'good' coup while committed democrats maintained no coup can be good. The rift in

[149] See Chapter 2, section 2.3.

civil society meant it lacked sufficient strength to effectively fight for a return to democracy. The challenges encountered by civil society during personal/military rule and under electoral autocratic rule following the 2014 elections, are scrutinised below. Broad-based exercises for nation-building are assessed for reconciliation opportunities.

4.6.1 The coup and personal/military rule 2006-2014

The key actions by the protagonists of the 2006 coup, and Bainimarama's personalist/military rule from 2006-2014 are now critiqued. This was an era of unelected rule by decree that lasted for eight years, aided by the participation of some prominent politicians, chiefs, academics and members of civil society.[150]

After issuing several explicit threats, the military ousted Qarase's government in a coup on 5 December 2006. Qarase had remained as Prime Minister after the SDL won the May 2006 elections, in part due to a merger with the CAMV.[151] The 2006 coup was unprecedented for Fiji because the military removed a Fijian ethno-nationalist government from power. It was also different as Bainimarama targeted iTaukei ethno-nationalist chiefs, politicians and institutions for a 'clean-up' against racism and corruption, thus receiving support from many Indo-Fijians who felt discriminated against after previous coups which resulted in policies favouring the iTaukei.

SODELPA MP Semesa Karavaki was the Supervisor of Elections in 2006 and believes the military mounted a takeover because they could not tolerate the SDL's victory:

> "The military was expecting SDL to lose. They were very vocal; they said they will be present in every polling station. I said to them you are not welcome, only the police will be used. They were directly coming, intervening into the (election) process. They were trying to intimidate the people to do what the military wanted… But there was a resounding, overwhelming support by the people towards the SDL party. The agitation and disturbance started immediately after the election results were declared," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

Karavaki was terminated from his job for asking the military to respect the election results:

> "When I saw the military had attempted to take over the government, I left my office to go to the PM's residence where the military was trying to enter. I spoke to the soldiers and said look, the people of Fiji

[150] Various factors leading to the coup are discussed in: Firth, S Fraenkel, J & Lal, BV (eds) 2009, *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra.
[151] CAMV merged with SDL for the 2006 elections, as the high expenditure on coup-related court cases depleted its finances. Qarase had formed a power-sharing cabinet with the opposition FLP to fulfil that requirement in the 1997 Constitution.

> had given their choice and it must prevail. Because I did that, I was the first civil servant to be fired, straight after that day when I spoke. December 5 (2006), the Commander mentioned in his press release that night that I had been removed. The soldiers came to my house the following day to retrieve all the government's property that was with me. I was removed because I stood for the principles of democracy as confirmed by the will of the people in the election," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

The Police Commissioner at the time, Andrew Hughes, had been trying to get Bainimarama arrested to face charges of sedition and treasonable conduct during the 2000 crisis, which Bainimarama thwarted by carrying out the coup (*RNZ* 2018). Subsequently, Bainimarama appointed himself as acting president. The Great Council of Chiefs acquiesced to the coup-makers both by asking Qarase to resign so an interim government could be formed, and by supporting investigation of corruption allegations against the ousted government (*ABC* 2006). Bainimarama justified the coup by claiming to eradicate racism while also touting it as an anti-corruption and 'good governance' coup. Other unstated reasons could be Bainimarama's desire to avoid arrest by the police, and to avoid possible downsizing of the military.[152]

A day after the coup, Bainimarama proclaimed a state of emergency which gave wide-ranging powers to the military (Bhim 2011, p. 1). This state of emergency remained until April 2009. Bainimarama appointed the RFMF's Dr Jona Senilagakali as Prime Minister for a month. In January 2007, Bainimarama returned executive authority to President Iloilo who appointed Bainimarama as interim Prime Minister. Surprisingly, Chaudhry, who was removed in two coups, accepted the Finance Minister position in Bainimarama's interim regime (*ABC* 2007). The FLP's Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi was made youth, sports and employment minister. The FLP's support gave Bainimarama's regime credibility and encouraged Indo-Fijians to trust him. Chaudhry and Vayeshnoi resigned in 2008 but the Indo-Fijian support for Bainimarama has largely continued to date.

The military engaged in various acts to intimidate vocal critics - including taking them to the army camp.[153] In particular, attempts were made to intimidate the media, unions and civil society. As army commander Bainimarama had a strong hold over the military itself which he had kept by purging non-loyalists since the 2000 coup. Bainimarama had already been openly intimidating the Qarase government in the lead-up to the 2006 coup, by making them change

[152] The threat of Indian demographic and electoral dominance could no longer be used to justify coups because by 2007, the Indo-Fijian population had declined to 37.5% while Fijians had increased to 56.8% (FIBoS 2008).
[153] See Firth, Fraenkel & Lal 2009; Bhim 2010; Bhim 2011.

chief executive officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs. He publicly opposed key government decisions and the military even campaigned against Qarase's SDL party during the 2006 elections (see Ratuva 2007).

After the 2006 coup, not only did Bainimarama control the military, his control was all pervasive whereby appointments and dismissals in all public bodies were made at his whim. A calculated militarisation of Fiji's government and statutory bodies occurred, with key portfolios headed by military officers including police, immigration and prisons (see section 4.6.2). This period is classified as personal/military rule due to the military's extended powers and interference in society and Bainimarama's personal control over institutions and public life.

During this period, Bainimarama also expelled some prominent expatriates (see section 4.6.5) including the June 2007 expulsion of New Zealand High Commissioner Michael Green[154] (*Fijilive* 2007). This, coupled with Bainimarama's aggressive rebuke of Australian and New Zealand leaders who expressed concern about the removal of democracy in Fiji, displayed a lack of fear of western democratic powers and the consequences of alienating them. Faced with pressure from Western countries to return to democracy, the Bainimarama regime formed closer relations with states such as China and Indonesia, which were known to violate human rights. Since the 2006 coup, China has been involved in major infrastructure projects in Fiji, such as roads, Public Rental Board housing blocks, and the Navua Hospital. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Fiji in November 2014 and unlike India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had emphasised the strong bond between two democracies when he visited Fiji a week earlier, Xi Jinping did not acknowledge democracy (Fox 2014).

Any misguided hopes that this may indeed be a good governance 'coup to end all coups' as claimed by Bainimarama, were dashed when the 1997 Constitution was abrogated on 10 April 2009, a day after the Fiji Court of Appeal found that the President did not have the power to dismiss the Qarase government in 2006. The ruling effectively declared Bainimarama's regime illegal[155] (Bhim 2011, p. 3). Bainimarama and Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, his right-hand man appointed in January 2007, thus reneged on an

---

[154] Michael Green's residence was next to Bainimarama's.
[155] The CCF played the role of *amicus curiae* in this constitutional case (Citizens' Constitutional Forum 2013). The judgement presented a missed opportunity for the Bainimarama regime to return to electoral rule by implementing the Charter's proposals to end the coup culture.

assurance to go back to elections within two years[156] of the coup. Fiji's case confirms the theories of Dahl, Przeworski, and Linz and Stepan, who warned that where civilian control of the military did not exist or was weak, it would be difficult for democracy to endure.

4.6.2 Increased authoritarianism after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution

Reppression and militarisation intensified after the abrogation of Fiji's 1997 constitution. Authoritarianism was implemented through promulgation of repressive decrees to curtail the powers of the judiciary and key civil and political rights (Bhim 2011, pp. 3-13). The repercussions of these decrees relative to Linz and Stepan's (1996) five conditions of democracy, are assessed below.

The 2006 coup is regarded by some Fiji citizens as the worst[157] as there was repression for eight years. The promulgated Public Emergency Regulations prohibited meetings and gatherings without permits and gave wide-ranging powers to the security forces to enter and search buildings and to arrest or detain people without charging them. Further decrees aimed to control professional bodies such as the Fiji Law Society and civil society organisations. Police officers censored stories in newsrooms and after the promulgation of the Media Decree 2010 media engaged in self-censorship (see section 4.6.5). The regime restricted the freedoms of opinion, expression, assembly, movement, employment, and the right to a fair trial, and entrenched the RFMF's hold on Fiji government institutions and society. The decrees truncated the operability of three essential arenas of democracy: the political society, the civil society, and the rule of law (Linz & Stepan 1996). They had a strangulating effect on efforts to practice democracy.

According to Rabuka, there was dictatorial domination post-coup:

> The new generation grew up under a climate of oppressive leadership. The government and military oppressed *iTaukei* more than other races," (2016, pers. comm., 20 July).

Current Opposition parliamentarian Viliame Gavoka feels the worst part of the 2006 coup was how the regime controlled the country:

---

156 Under the Milbrook Declaration of the Cotonou Agreement, countries where governments were removed in a coup have an opportunity to return to elected rule within two years to avoid international repercussions.

157 A few people interviewed by the author in July-August 2016 in Fiji, claimed 2006 coup was the worst.

"All of a sudden, the regime was telling newspapers what to write, what to say on TV. I couldn't handle how the media became so controlled through the media decree (2016, pers. comm., 2 August).

Civil society representative Jone Dakuvula believes people still have fear due to repression by the government:

"They don't express themselves freely. Government is very restricting. The public service is cowed through reforms. It is no longer an independent professional public service. It is very politicised. The minister has a say on who is employed in that ministry. That encourages corruption and nepotism," (2016, pers. comm., 9 August).

Following the abrogation, there was further militarisation of the government to maintain control over key ministries and to reward and retain loyalist soldiers through promotions or penalisation of dissenting, principled or ambivalent soldiers through persecution or prosecution for alleged crimes (Bhim 2011, p. 15). By November 2010, 67% of ministries had military personnel in senior positions; 32 serving military personnel were appointed to cabinet and civil service; 16 military appointments were made to statutory boards and government or quasi government institutions; and 55% of the national budget was under the authority of a military officer (Yabaki 2010). These included: Prime Minister, President, four ministers, five permanent secretaries and four divisional commissioners.[158] This meant that Fiji no longer had an autonomous state bureaucracy, which is another of Linz and Stepan's essential conditions of democracy.

Between 2000-2006, Bainimarama had intimidated government ministers and secretaries responsible for the RFMF, forcing reshuffles, and had purged those soldiers he considered disloyal (Firth & Fraenkel 2009, pp. 125-126). Post-2006 coup, the purging of soldiers[159] and public servants continued by removing those who could be a threat to Bainimarama. Powerful ministries and decision-making were entrenched in the hands of Bainimarama and Sayed-Khaiyum. These recurrent reshuffling of civil service and military portfolios held by soldiers, suggest that Bainimarama and his advisors may be wary of soldiers becoming too powerful, and posing a challenge to Bainimarama's rule (Bhim 2011, pp. 14-16). Such actions resonate

[158] Other military appointments include the head of the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption, the police commissioner, the commissioner of prisons, ambassadorial positions, the immigration director and even the chairman of the Fiji Rugby Union board (Bhim 2011, pp. 14-15). Only 8 of the 21 ministries had no known senior military presence; and actual militarisation was possibly greater (Yabaki 2010).

[159] Senior soldiers forced to leave the RFMF because of differences with the commander include: Ratu Tevita Mara (former PM's son who escaped on a boat to Tonga to evade arrest), Pita Driti (convicted for inciting mutiny), Filipo Tarakinikini (overseas employment), Dr Lesi Korovavala (forced resignation from government), and Jone Baledrokadroka (dismissed for insubordination, received asylum in Australia).

with ‘personalist’ leaders who promote low skilled individuals, and have frequent rotations and purges to prevent individuals from becoming powerful (Frantz & Ezrow 2011). Rewarding loyalist soldiers with lucrative employment, retaining substantial expenditure on the military, and purging dissenters was essential to the survival of Bainimarama’s post-coup regime.

Fiji regressed to Geddes’ (1999) authoritarian personal/military rule after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution. Its civil-military relations deteriorated to Janowitz’s authoritarian-personal control found in regimes that are based on individual and traditional power. Post-coup governments in Fiji featured laws and institutions designed in the regime’s favour, and a patronage system whereby loyalists in the military and civil service were rewarded. Bainimarama’s constant purging and reshuffling of the military and civil-service post-2000, post-2006 and post-2009 led to weaker military-elite relations.

4.6.3 Developments in the military post-2006 coup

Fiji’s soldiers have continued playing the protagonist role in staging coups that inevitably trigger protracted democratic reversals. The military ethos, growth trends and overseas engagements of Fiji’s military since the 2006 coup are now scrutinised to further comprehend the military’s propensity to engage in coups.

After the 2006 coup, the RFMF size increased only modestly till 2018. From 3,250 personnel in 2006[160] (see section 4.5.3), the RFMF size declined slightly to 3,150 from 2007-2008 (Ratuva 2011, p. 99). However, by 2014, the armed forces employment increased to 3,503 personnel, which comprised 22.14% of 15,822 people employed in the public administration, defence and compulsory social security sector (FBoS 2015). In 2018, the RFMF regular forces comprised 3,596 personnel, whereas the territorial forces or reservists comprised more than 4,425 personnel (Boyle 2019). Despite a modest increase, Fiji’s military is large and takes a disproportionate share of government revenue as it comprises over 20% of the public service.

A comparison with the SIDS nations Mauritius and Comoros, located in the Indian Ocean, affirms that Fiji’s army is too big. Comoros, with a population of 800,000 has survived coups

[160] The coup in 2006 did not cause a major increase in the military because reservists boosted the numbers (Ratuva 2011, p. 99).

and bloody conflicts (see section 2.2). While their population size is similar to Fiji, they have an army of only 500, and their conflicts have been resolved through assistance from the African Union. This translates to 1 soldier per 1,600 residents in Comoros. Mauritius, with a population of 1.3million has not suffered any coup attempts nor political violence. Although their population is one-third bigger than Fiji, they have no military, only a paramilitary of 3,000 (see Table 2.1). This translates to 1 paramilitary personnel per 433 residents in Mauritius. Fiji's military size of 3,500 translates to 1 soldier per 257 residents. This means Fiji's regular military is almost double the per capita size of the Mauritius paramilitary, and about six times the size of the Comoros army. As such, Fiji's maintenance of a large army, supplemented by reservist forces, is an anomaly for a SIDS nation with limited resources.

International prospects remain the main drawcard for soldiers to enlist. The increased salary soldiers get whilst serving on overseas contracts makes it a lucrative vocation for the iTaukei.[161] Military employment provided an opportunity for Fijians to migrate to the United Kingdom. In 2011, 2,240 Fiji citizens were employed with the British forces, while the total number of Fijian nationals in the United Kingdom was 5,800 (Scheider 2017, p. 152). Fijian recruitment by private security companies for contracts in Iraq has continued. An estimated 7,495 Fijians worked offshore as private security personnel from 2006-2011 and experienced exploitation, including adverse physical and psychological consequences (Kanemasu & Molnar 2017, p. 158).

The risks to safety and mental health have not deterred Fijians because they benefit financially from overseas engagements. In 2013, the RFMF sent a battalion to the Golan Heights in Syria (RFMF 2016). The Syrian terrorist group Al-Nusra held 45 Fijian UN peacekeepers hostage in 2014 in the Golan Heights; they were relased after two weeks (Bhim 2015). In June 2016, Fiji soldiers were pulled out of peacekeeping responsibilities in the Middle East due to escalating violence. Yet such incidents have not dissuaded Fijian soldiers from overseas service. Recently, the RFMF (2018) deployed 826 soldiers[162] to various peacekeeping missions. Varying levels of force are authorised in different peacekeeping missions, which can potentially turn into an active combat situation. The potentially violent

[161] Brigadier General Mosese Tikoitoga described soldiering as a "good business" that prevented (iTaukei) people from engaging in trouble-making (Fraenkel & Firth 2009, p. 119). Tikoitoga was appointed the RFMF Commander in the lead-up to the 2014 elections.
[162] This figure is taken from the RFMF website.

situations endured by peacekeepers builds their conflict zone capacity and can teach them about executing raids or takeovers.

Participation in peacekeeping, training in western democratic countries, or serving in the British army, has not inculcated law abiding peace values in soldiers as they have been aggressors in Fiji coups. Post-2006 coup, New Zealand's Prime Minister Helen Clark lobbied against the use of Fiji's coup-tainted soldiers for UN peacekeeping. But after the departure of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UN decided to continue utilising them as NZ could not replace the shortfall in personnel to the UN Mission in Iraq (*SMH* 2007). Fijian service to the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon ended after 40 years on 22 December 2018 (UN Peacekeeping 2018). Nevertheless, the RFMF remains active in smaller peacekeeping missions to Syria, Sudan, Sinai and Iraq (RFMF 2020).

The continued use of Fiji's soldiers by the UN shows a failure of Western nations to sanction Fiji's soldiers to deter them from carrying out coups. UN service also provides continuing justification for a much larger army in Fiji. In 2018, Australia committed to redeveloping the Blackrock facility in Nadi, Fiji, into a regional hub for police and peacekeeper training and pre-deployment preparation (Naigulevu 2018). In January 2019, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison visited Fiji and recognised its contribution to regional security. Fiji's daily media reported commitments made by Australia, NZ and the US in 2018 and 2019 to train RFMF soldiers, which re-affirms these countries as key players in Pacific geopolitics. Military aid and a failure to prohibit soldiers who participated in coups from involvement in UN missions, means the UN and western democratic countries are facilitating a large army in Fiji, and instead of deterring, are training, soldiers who are potential coup-makers.

It is concerning that these democratic nations agreed to train Fijian soldiers without making them commit to ending participation in coups and related treasonous acts. But their actions sidelined China, who became an influential geopolitical actor in Fiji after the 2006 coup as reflected in Bainimarama's 'Look North' policy. During the first state visit by a Chinese leader to Fiji in November 2014, President Xi Jinping met with leaders of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia, Cook Islands and Niue (Fox 2014). Western powers, concerned about China's growing influence in the Pacific through aid for infrastructure, regained Fiji's allegiance by supporting their security sector.

Despite claiming to eradicate racism, the Bainimarama government has made little effort to turn the RFMF into a multi-racial institution by recruiting a significant number of Indians. This perpetuates a longstanding unspoken reluctance to include Indo-Fijians in the security forces. The army remains 98% iTaukei.[163] Whilst the RFMF's mission to, '…provide the security and defence for the well-being of Fiji and all Fijians' - is in English on its website,[164] the RFMF motto is in the iTaukei language - '*Na Dina, Dodonu, Savasava*'[165] – illustrating that the force is an iTaukei institution. The lack of a genuine effort to make the RFMF multiracial, and to bring it under civilian control, remains unaddressed.

To conclude, substantive soldiering and conflict zone experience for Fijian soldiers continues through service in international peacekeeping missions or private security jobs in the Middle East. Although the RFMF size only increased by a few hundred to 3,500 post-2006 coup, this is still too big for a SIDS nation as it is almost double and six times the per capita size of the Mauritius paramilitary, and Comoros army, respectively. The continued utilisation of Fijian soldiers by the UN and training by western democratic nations means they are aiding soldiers who are past or potential coup-makers.

4.6.4 Impact of the 2000 and 2006 coups on the military

The 2000 putsch had profound impacts on the RFMF because the civilian coup, executed by rebel members of its CRW unit, caused division within the RFMF and these unresolved issues led to both the mutiny later in 2000 and the 2006 coup.[166] Their implications for political-military relations and democracy, are explored below.

The military ethos has appeared confused since the 1987 coup because although the RFMF transitioned to Janowitz's (1975) democratic model of political-military elite after independence, it regressed to Janowitz's garrison-state model after the 1987 coup. When Bainimarama assumed executive authority following the 2000 coup, Fiji again assumed some features of the garrison-state model whereby military groups wield unprecedented political and administrative power (Janowitz, 1975, p. 59). The RFMF endeavoured to return to the

---

[163] The British colonisers made no concerted effort to recruit Indo-Fijians (refer section 4.2.5). Indo-Fijians enlisting may also be deterred by the RFMF's Fijian dominance which resulted in its culture, ethos, language and diet becoming Fijian and Christian prayers (Parliament of Fiji 1997, pp. 58-73). Middle East was regarded as biblical, or holy lands to the majority of Fijians who are Christians.
[164] Viewed 7 November 2018, <http://www.rfmf.mil.fj/>
[165] In conversational iTaukei language, it translates as: Honesty, Integrity, and Righteousness.
[166] see previous section.

democratic model after the 2000 coup. However, Bainimarama's constant warnings towards, and intimidation of, the Qarase government (see Ratuva 2007) reveal the military was exceeding its limits and did not return to the democratic model. The garrison-state model applies post-2006 coup as the RFMF personnel controlled society through their excessive powers under the 2006 state of emergency and the 2009 public emergency regulations (PER).

SODELPA MP Semesa Karavaki believes the military's complicity, in particular that of Bainimarama, needs to be exposed for a resolution to the 2000 crisis:

> "It seems the military was not integral in trying to prevent it but had an integral part in execution. I say this because I was present in one of the military officers' meetings when the present PM wanted to give the governance of this country over to those who had taken over parliament, only to be opposed by some of the senior military officers… That event in 2000 was not fully resolved or exposed," (2016, pers. comm., 28 July).

In 2000, under Bainimarama, the RFMF purportedly 'saved' Fiji from the brink of chaos, however, if the RFMF had not trained CRW soldiers, there would not have been a coup. Moreover, the ambivalence of the RFMF leadership towards the coup protagonists delayed their ability to take united action, and prolonged the hostage crisis.[167] The renunciation that "we support the goals (of George Speight's coup) but not the method" was reiterated by several indigenous politicians and the RFMF senior command (Baledrokadroka 2012b, p. 49). The indecisiveness within the security forces incapacitated their ability to stop the mayhem on May 19 2000 and thus failed to prevent the trashing of Suva (Moala 2018).

The coup was dangerous because it exposed divisions within the RFMF. An unsuccessful mutiny occurred at Sukunaivalu Barracks, Labasa, in July 2000. Chiefs incited the violent mutiny on November 2, 2000 at the Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Nabua, which resulted in the death of three loyalist soldiers and five rebel CRW soldiers, and where Bainimarama narrowly escaped an attempt on his life (see section 4.5.2). Military trials led to 159 soldiers being sentenced for mutiny and coup-related offences by April 2005 (Bhim 2007, pp. 126-127).

Soldiers have benefitted through appointments to powerful positions after coups. A former soldier confirms this motivation for soldiers to take part in coups:

[167] Baledrokadroka (2012b, p. 49) described the military's response to the 2000 coup as ambivalent: "…military rations were supplied to the CRW hostage takers and personnel were rotated in 'protecting the hostages'."

> "The incentive for taking part in Fiji's coups was soldiers assisting became prominent members of the next government. They know the country's depository of power is with them and by flexing muscles, they'll become tomorrow's government… The coup culture in Fiji is a power game, soldiers get involved because they want benefits. In 1987, very influential politicians made inroads into the military mentality unknowingly awakening one giant, who can use the military might to carry out their own views… In 2000, soldiers developed their mentality about how coups can undo power, how they can be the country's powerbase… After the 2006 coup, the military instead of sitting in RFMF, have trickled into the Westminster system and are fully participating in it through militarisation of Fiji's bureaucracy and elections. The military knows it's a force to reckon with in the way forward for Fiji's future," (2016, pers. comm., 17 August).

Participation in coups can reward soldiers and, conversely, refusing to support coups can result in victimisation. For instance, after the 2006 coup, former RFMF soldier Colonel Sakiusa Raivoce recalls people were punished if they did not toe the government line:

> "I was locked up by the police and by the military. In 2010, I was taken up to camp. There was attempted arson in my house. I didn't like what happened in the 2006 coup and was speaking against government. I stood my ground saying it's wrong. They couldn't charge me because I committed no crime," (2016, pers. comm., 16 August).

Former Prime Minister Qarase, whose family members faced victimisation after the 2006 coup, says a simple reason for the coup culture in Fiji is:

> "… a greed for power and wealth by a small group of people who commit treason and become well-off. It's easy for soldiers to commit treason because they are the only people with guns in Fiji and they are well looked after with privileges and pay increases for aiding coups… Peacekeeping contributes to the coup mentality because soldiers go to coup-prone countries and operate in dictatorships. They get used to such environments which help them support such activities in Fiji," (2016, pers. comm., 19 July).

Qarase stated that he had forgiven the coup-makers who removed him, but believes they should be prosecuted and face the full brunt of the law. Post-2006 coup, ministers in Qarase's government refused to resign and supporters gathered outside his Suva private residence where he was under house arrest by the military. Qarase reflected that his resignation two weeks after the coup was:

> "… a very difficult choice for me. Lots of people were gathering at my residence[168] and it was very tense that whole day. The same thing was going to happen the following day. … The media was available to me that whole day. I could have asked people to come down and march in the streets… Soldiers who came in to try and disperse the crowd were very angry… If I had stayed back, violence

[168] Qarase's private residence at Moti Street, Suva, Fiji.

> would have erupted. That was the main reason I decided to go to Mavana.[169] Whether that was the right reason or not, is for the historians to decide… In the morning, they were going to remove me to Nukulau[170] and imprison me there," (2016, pers. comm., 19 July).

Qarase said the impact of coups on soldiers is that, "… they have become very arrogant and very wealthy with executive homes and four-wheel drives" (2016, pers. comm., 19 July). Soldiers benefitted from accelerated pay rise and top positions in government.[171]

To conclude, the chiefs' nurturing of soldiers for employment and traditional notions of chief-warrior relations, produced the effects of a patron-client relationship. Clientelism paved the way for soldiers to commit coups. By the 2006 coup, soldiers were acting on their own initiative against the wishes of the chiefs. The military seized and controlled government benefit from lucrative leadership positions. The purging of soldiers post-2000 and post-2006 coups enabled personal control by Bainimarama whereby soldiers were rewarded for personal loyalty while those with questionable loyalty were removed. This loyalty to the army head is undemocratic as it conflicts with loyalty to the elected government. Furthermore, the large size of the RFMF has facilitated its ongoing interference in Fiji's political process. The RFMF's unwillingness to come under the control of an elected government is obstructing the development of democratic political institutions as, according to Dahl (1998, p. 149), without civilian control over the military, the prospects for democracy are dim.

4.6.5 Fiji – civil society challenges post-2006 coup & 2014 elections

The 2006 coup profoundly impacted Fiji's civil society by causing a division, not only amongst CSOs, but also amongst religious bodies, academics and unions.[172] Similar to post-1987, select vocal members of civil society raised awareness about the wrongs of the coup, but the divisions or apathy among the wider civil society[173] meant it was ineffective in challenging the regime to achieve a return to transition to democracy as per Linz and Stepan (1996). The lack of unity and divergence between the civil society and political society are now discussed, because it meant they were unable to act in a complementary manner to become a strong force for a return to democracy.

[169] Qarase's home island in the Lau Group, Fiji.
[170] A small island near Suva, Fiji.
[171] Several people interviewed for this thesis, including former soldiers, civil society members and academics, expressed this.
[172] see Firth & Fraenkel 2009b, p. 8.
[173] The researcher was working for Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF) from January 2007 – February 2011 and was part of this advocacy, and witnessed and experienced the challenges encountered by CSOs.

Rights-based CSOs, academics, progressive politicians, moderate chiefs, lawyers and professionals continued advocating against coups, racism, corruption and human rights abuses post-2006 coup. Vocal civil society members sprang into action to mitigate damages from the coup and encourage talks for reconciliation and a return to parliamentary democracy by negotiating the middle ground between the military, ethno-nationalism and the rule of law. A broad Coalition for Democracy and Peace, created days after the coup, lasted only three weeks.[174] A massive rift appeared in the NGOCHR[175] coalition after the abduction and torture of the director of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) Virisila Buadromo on Christmas eve. Buadromo, her partner, and six pro-democracy activists were illegally detained and assaulted by soldiers at the army camp (Buadromo 2009, pp. 405-406). The NGOCHR's failure to react strongly against this traumatic ordeal created a sense of betrayal amongst its members (Bhim 2010, p. 133). It prevented the NGOCHR from being a unified voice against the coup.

As Virisila attests, she and her family were further victimised after the above incident:

> "The organisations my husband and I worked for were personally targeted by the military. That had a huge impact on me. Because we had the same surname, my family members were being targeted. The impact has not been positive. On a personal level, we lost out so much," (2016, pers. comm., 19 July).

There were some cases of police and army brutality, including torture and a few deaths. Several people, including politicians such as Kenneth Zinck, were taken to the military camp, threatened and intimidated. Zinck and others fled overseas after victimisation including human rights lawyer Imrana Jalal and her husband Sakiusa Tuisolia (Bhim 2011, p. 9). Prominent cases of deportation or expulsion included *Fiji Times* publisher Russell Hunter and historian Dr Brij Lal and his wife Dr Padma Lal. Unlike the 1987 and 2000 coups, there was an exodus of *iTaukei* elites with perceived loyalty to the deposed SDL party.

The government manipulated CSOs following the coup by treating service-providing CSOs favourably and creating hurdles for rights-based advocacy CSOs. A former head of a CSO provided a description of the way CSOs have been treated since the 2006 coup:

---

[174] The researcher witnessed these actions by civil society during her employment with CCF.
[175] See section 4.5.2 for background on the NGO Coalition on Human Rights.

> "Depending on what area you work, if government sees you as value-adding or as a service provider, then it's not a problem. But if you are an advocacy-thinking organisation, a research organisation, they interact with civil society cautiously because of the whole stigma associated since 2006 that CSOs are trouble makers, and they have nothing substantive. There are huge misunderstandings about what civil society is about in Fiji. They are meant to perform a service, and don't publicly criticise government," (2016, pers. comm., 15 July).

There was a split in the trade union movement as this coup claimed to be against racism. A number of trade unions left the FTUC and formed a rival umbrella union, the Fiji Islands Council of Trade Unions (FICTU).[176] A Movement for Democracy, launched in December 2008 by eight NGOs and political parties,[177] failed to gain traction due to its restricted membership.

In 2008, the interim government allowed former citizen John Sami to facilitate the National Council for Building a Better Fiji (NCBBF) which proposed to find solutions through a Charter process.[178] The split amongst CSOs intensified as those seen to be engaging with coup perpetrators in the NCBBF were shunned by the other CSOs (Bhim 2010, p. 135). Division in civil society meant that the national Charter process became a government enterprise instead of its original aim of being a civil society initiative.

A key participant, the CCF's Rev Yabaki, observes that he tarnished his image by actively participating in the Charter process and taking the middle ground in the hope for solutions:

> "We engaged with the unelected government to help them become part of the solution, through the Charter process. We thought that was a solution to racism in this country. I made enemies out of that within civil society," (2016, pers. comm., 21 July).

The constitution abrogation in April 2009, resulted in Fiji's regression to a full-scale personal/military dictatorship whereby decrees drastically repressed freedoms of expression, media and assembly. Rights-based CSOs found it impossible to utilise the media to voice concerns, hold the government accountable and advocate for the rule of law and human rights.[179] The regime started censoring news by sending police officers to check all news

---

[176] Realising divisions had weakened their ability to negotiate workers' rights, the FTUC and FICTU merged prior to the 2018 elections.
[177] It included the FWRM, FICTU, NFP, United People's Party, the deposed government's party SDL, the PCRC (Pacific Concerns Resource Centre), the FTA (Fijian Teachers Association), and the National Council for Women Fiji (NCWF). See Bhim 2010, p. 136.
[178] The author witnessed this event. In January 2007, Sami approached the CCF to design a national forum to build a roadmap for democracy and development. The CCF lacked resources to coordinate such a forum. Other NGOs were reluctant. Instead, the interim government provided the logistics for Sami's idea.
[179] The author witnessed these effects as an employee of CCF from January 2007-February 2011.

items and remove critical stories, so no criticism against the government could be published (Bhim 2011, p. 11). The public were instead inundated with news stories praising the government. CSOs required permits[180] from the police to conduct community educational workshops.

CSOs felt constrained after the 2009 abrogation. Shamima Ali, the coordinator of the FWCC stated that CSOs had to refrain from criticising government:

> "If you don't make political statements or cry out for human rights, if you don't criticise government, you are ok. But members of the NGOCHR have been under the microscope because they are very outspoken. If we want things done, you have to be nice. That means no criticism. No speaking out too loudly against the government. NGOs are self-censoring what they say. There is suppression of activism. There is negotiating with government to get things done. I don't think NGOs have been under so much duress as they have been in the last 10 years or so. …. If you want things done, you have to call the top person. The ordinary civil servants are so scared of losing their jobs and being demoted because they don't have recourse to a tribunal," (2016, pers. comm., 23 July).

CSOs had to engage in self-censorship to be allowed to operate. This is revealed by Roshika Deo who agrees with Shamima's view saying that there was a very hostile relationship between CSOs and the government but it was improving for some organisations:

> "These CSOs to counter hostilities, have started self-censoring themselves. They've also started acquiescing to government by limiting their work, by limiting what they say, by putting in internal policies that limit their work," (2016, pers. comm., 9 August).

Not only were CSOs restricted in their advocacy, after the 2014 elections, parliament was not considered open to views of CSOs. Jone Dakuvula from Pacific Dialogue believes public discourse and parliament were not democratic:

> "CSOs are operating under a climate of fear and feel restricted. They try to play safe. They don't make much criticism in the media against the government. The Attorney General has powers to restrict or strike out CSOs who are registered as a not-for-profit company. Parliament is a sham. You make submissions and it has no impact on the government," (2016, pers. comm., 9 August).

The business community also suffered. Mick Beddoes,[181] the parliamentary opposition leader in 2006, incurred losses in business after each coup, and told the author:

---

[180] Witnessed by the author.
[181] In 2006, Beddoes belonged to the United Peoples Party (UPP), which was considered the party of the general voters (Europeans, Part-Europeans, Chinese, and other ethnic groups).

> "My family and I lost thousands of dollars with each coup, never to be recovered. There's no right to receive compensation for any loss. It destroys what you done. I've had to stop and shut down businesses, consolidate and build them up again only to have another coup. And I'm only a very small part of the equation. Economist Wadan Narsey says the loss to people is about $9 billion. I think it's more than that because every family suffers," (2016, pers. comm., 23 August).

Unlike in 1987, after the 2006 coup the regional University of the South Pacific caved in to pressures by the Fiji government. Reputable long-serving economist Professor Wadan Narsey, who had worked at USP for 30 years, was forced to resign in August 2011 due to his articles critical of the government. He was not defended by the Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra. Chandra instead deferred to the government which is a major source of funding for USP. Such actions created fear of reprisals amongst academics critical of the regime, leading to self-censorship.[182] Although Indo-Fijian academics[183] had been at the forefront of protesting against earlier coups and racism, the 2006 coup divided their allegiance. Some outspoken academics felt compelled to take safer jobs overseas.

Former Prime Minister Qarase, under whose government there were frequent robust protests and vocal criticisms, as well as policy engagements by CSOs through parliamentary consultations, described the constrained post-2006 coup situation of civil society:

> "They have a bit of freedom, but again like everybody else, it's very limited. Depending on the leader, they do make their voices heard, like the women's rights CSO, they have a very strong leader. There is CCF that's very active too. But when they say too much against the government, the government will find a way of trying to silence them," (2016, pers. comm., 19 July).

The restricted environment in which CSOs had to conduct their work meant some compromised with the government. Chief Executive Officer of the Citizens' Constitutional Forum in 2016, Bulutani Matai, was thankful they were acknowledged by the government:

> "To be honest, we had our fair share with the government. Despite the restricted spaces for our media and advocacy work, civil society in Fiji is glad to be still recognised by certain government ministries we work closely with, which is a plus for our work. Organisations such as CCF have to ensure we are mindful of what we going to say," (2016, pers. comm., 29 July).

A leader of a CSO[184] recalled the difficulties they encountered with the government:

[182] These are the researcher's observations as an employee of the FNU from 2011-2015, and draws on the experiences of colleagues.
[183] See post-1987 coup section for examples of Indo-Fijian academics who protested against coups. Chandra and the Fiji National University (FNU) Vice Chancellor Dr Ganesh Chand were perceived as Bainimarama's supporters (Lal 2016, p. 71).
[184] The interview was conducted in Suva, Fiji.

> "We had to seek government's approval for activities due to restrictions under the Public Order Act… The state only chooses to interact with those CSOs they perceive as allies. That is very problematic because CSOs aligning to the government are not necessarily holding the government to account. Some of the more critical CSOs have been excluded, ostracised. Government doesn't want to engage with them… CSOs have an important role to play in elections. Then came the electoral decree which placed a lot of restrictions on the work of civil society related to elections. Imagine the disappointment of civil society when it was told they couldn't do much work related to elections because they were being funded by foreign governments," (2016, pers. comm., 4 August).

The media was under strain after the 2006 coup. The interim government withdrew advertising from the daily newspaper *Fiji Times*, which was critical of the regime. Instead, they shifted advertising to the *Fiji Sun* newspaper, which published pro-government stories. The then editor of the *Fiji Times*, Netani Rika, described the period after the 2006 coup, including arbitrary detention and physical assaults, as the most difficult time for journalists[185] since 1970. It grew worse after the 2009 constitution abrogation when the regime started censoring news.

Rika stated they objected to stories being removed and questioned the censors:

> "The censors changed from day to day. Sometimes at night when there was a lack of censors from Ministry of Information, they would send police officers. Any story on police, allegation of police brutality, they take it out. If its anti-government, it will be removed. There was that incident where they removed the stories and we published blank pages. By then, we had done enough to damage our relationship with them (regime). They took me and the publisher Rex Gardner for contempt of court, we paid $10,000 in damages. Then they expelled Gardner from the country. I was sentenced to three months' jail suspended for two years. In the end their solution was to force the sale of the company," (2016, pers. comm., 27 July).

The 2010 Media Industry Development Decree required 90% ownership by Fiji citizens. This forced the sale of the Fiji Times – a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Limited – to the local Motibhai Group (Bhim 2011, p. 12). Government pressure led to Rika being dismissed.[186]

---

[185] Rika highlighted the following incidents that affected journalists after coups: "In 1988, the chief reporter of the Fiji *Times* was detained at the Central Police Station for 24 hours over an article – Mesake Koroi. Editor Vijendra Kumar was detained by the military over one story that came on I think *AAP*. But compared to 2006, those incidents were mild. In 2006, we experienced attempted burning, stoning, detention at the military camp, and ridicule in public, Sitiveni Moce (news photographer) bashed in front of the Centenary Church, later died as a result of the injuries," (Rika 2016, pers. comm., 27 July).

[186] Rika recounted that, after the constitution abrogation, the *Fiji Times* made a policy to refer to government members as interim ministers. Attorney General Sayed-Khaiyum demanded Rika apologise for not calling them Ministers. Dallas Swinston (new publisher) informed him the government would not give them advertising if Rika remained employed at the *Fiji Times*. As a result, Rika was forced to leave the *Fiji Times*. Later, Sophie Foster and Ilaitia Turagabeci were also forced to leave (Rika 2016, pers. comm., 27 July).

The repression experienced post-2009 abrogation is summed up in table 4.4 below which shows that even after the 2014 elections, key rights and freedoms were repressed in Fiji.

Fiji - Perceptions	**July-August 2016**
Free Media	Curtailed
Freedom of Expression	Curtailed
Fairness/Independence of Judiciary and Courts	No
Freedom of Assembly & Association	Need permits, restricted.
Civil society	Restricted but easing after 2014
Freedom of Opposition Members of Parliament (MPs)	Many suspensions and convictions of opposition MPs
Corruption	Exists but not endemic or rampant

Table 4.4 Fiji: Perception of Rights, Freedoms and Corruption

Note: This table draws on responses by 24 public actors interviewed in 2016 in Fiji.

In Fiji, the 2006 coup resulted in eight years of unelected rule, of which 2009-2014 were considered by some interviewees to be the most repressive in Fiji's history. Freedoms of media, expression and assembly were largely constrained. There was a perception that the judiciary and courts were not independent and were being manipulated by the government. Most interviewees were reluctant to publicly comment on the judiciary for fear of reprisals from the government. Civil society was perceived to be restricted in carrying out its activities, and opposition parliamentarians were under strain due to suspensions and convictions of MPs. However, corruption was not perceived to be rampant or a major problem as there have been successful prosecutions in Fiji.[187] The restrictions after the 2014 elections meant that Fiji did not return to democracy as key rights and freedoms remained curtailed. Therefore, the regime type after the 2014 elections is classified as an electoral authoritarian or an electoral autocracy.

Civil society was divided in its advocacy for a return to democracy due to differences of opinion and in support for regime-driven versus civil society driven initiatives. This division

[187] It is difficult to assess Fiji's levels of corruption as Fiji has not been included in the list of 180 countries ranked by Transparency International. See Corruptions Perception Index 2018, https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018, viewed 31 January 2019.

meant CSOs were advocating for democracy in an isolated manner, rather than as a vibrant heterogeneous collectivity. It led to the failure of the Movement for Democracy. Fear of reprisals and curtailments of key freedoms further weakened the ability of CSOs to hold government accountable or agitate for a return to democracy. Divergent views on the 2006 coup split CSOs, academics, politicians, and even religious and professional bodies. Segments of the grassroots population showed disinterest in supporting activities for strengthening democracy and government accountability (Bhim 2010). This context paved the way for the coup-makers' political party FijiFirst to win the 2014 and 2018 elections.

4.6.6 Reconciliation opportunities post-2006 coup

The 2007 Charter process and the 2012 Constitution process are briefly assessed, as both provided opportunities for reconciliation and nation building. Significant recommendations were produced in the resulting 2008 Charter[188] despite a cross-section of civil society and political society boycotting the process. For CMR reforms, the Charter proposed establishment of a National Security Council (NSC) to allow for greater public accountability in response to national security threats; and realigning the role of the military to place greater emphasis on human security. It proposed creation of formal measures for clear accountability of the military to civilian governments; and the military remaining politically neutral at all times. Furthermore, it recommended improving the racial balance of the RFMF by annually increasing the minority composition from years 2010 to 2014 (Ministry of National Planning 2009, pp. 10-34). These recommendations came to nought because even after the 2014 elections, the elected Bainimarama regime operated as an electoral autocracy, the militarisation of public bodies was not reversed and the racial composition of the military remained unchanged. The regime, however, selectively implemented the Charter's sections on non-racism, economy, infrastructure and social services.

As stipulated in the Charter's roadmap, in August 2012, a Constitutional Commission chaired by international constitutional expert Prof Yash Ghai, commenced public hearings and taking submissions. The resultant draft - known as the Ghai Constitution – was prepared after widespread consultations throughout the country.[189] However, the military refused to

[188] The NCBBF resulted in the 2008 People's Charter for Change Peace and Progress which provided a comprehensive roadmap for Fiji's development in economic and social arenas, and most importantly, to end the coup culture in Fiji. In December 2009, the Charter was converted to a 'Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014' (Ministry of National Planning 2009).

[189] Those that refused to participate in the Charter process, enthusiastically participated in the 2012 Constitution process because they trusted the capability and neutrality of its chair Prof Ghai (Bhim 2013, p. 174).

participate in this exercise. The Ghai constitution did not include immunity provisions for the 2000 and 2006 coup-makers.[190] But instead of respecting the Ghai constitution as the people's voice, copies were seized by the Fiji police on 22 December 2012, and the final proof copy burnt in Ghai's presence who then had to flee the country for safety (Bhim 2013, p. 179). The end result was that the hybrid personal/military regime did not have a referendum on the Ghai constitution, and rejected it. Without consultation, a new Constitution was promulgated and released to the public on 22 August 2013 (*ABC News* 2013). It entrenched immunity for coup-makers and designated a special role for the military, thus underpinning the military's continued interference in Fiji's politics.[191]

Despite much goodwill and hope, the above national opportunities for reconciliation and nation-building failed; however, a provincial-level reconciliation in 2016 bore fruit. On July 9 2016, a traditional ceremony[192] commenced on Rewa Day at the Syria Park in Nausori. The leaders of Noco district recognised the Indian descendents of the *Syria* shipwreck 134 years ago, who were rescued by the people of Noco (*Fiji Sun* 2016). After more than a century, the Roko Tui Dreketi (chiefly title) Ro Teimumu Kepa declared that all *girmitiyas*[193] in Fiji were Rewans, thus making the *vulagi* (foreigners) finally feel they had a home. This event is significant because ethno-nationalist Fijian support for the coups has largely emanated from the provinces Rewa, Tailevu and Naitasiri.[194]

To conclude, the Charter process showed an inability of civil society and political society to unite in a national reconciliation to find solutions. Conversely, diverse sections of civil society and political society did support the 2012 Constitution process as the Chair Prof Ghai was considered independent. Even this process came to nought when the regime rejected the Ghai draft constitution. Thus the Charter process failed because a segment of civil society and political society did not trust the military-government driven process. This view was vindicated when the 2012 constitution failed because the military government did not accept the recommendations of the independent civilian process. Therefore, both these national level

---

[190] FLP leader Mahendra Chaudhry described the Ghai constitution as better than the 1997 Constitution because it recommended removal of divisive communal voting, it had no immunity provisions, and persons complicit in overthrowing a legitimate government had to take an oath of allegiance to the country and constitution (Swami 2018).

[191] No consultations were held to prepare this new enforced constitution. The Constitution did not have a publication date nor the name of the authority that made it law. Similar to the 1990 Constitution, Section 131 (2) of the 2013 Constitution gave the RFMF overall responsibility "…to ensure at all times the security, defence and well-being of Fiji and all Fijians."

[192] The researcher attended this event. Indigenous Fijians from villages of Rewa entertained in festivities with Indo-Fijians from Rewa.

[193] Denotes Indian indentured labourers in Fiji.

[194] It raises the question whether genuine local reconciliation is more important, than the costly, time-consuming, national events.

attempts at reconciliation failed due to the pervasive influence of the military government. This demonstrates that in addition to civil society, it is essential that the military participates and abides by the outcomes of a national exercise for it to succeed.

4.7 The conduct of elections and elections observation

The events leading up to the two most recent elections in Fiji, and their conduct and observation, are now discussed. Whether the conduct of elections satisfactorily met the principles of democracy is assessed. In the post-Cold war era, it became important for many developing countries to have elections in their countries recognised as legitimate, 'credible' and 'free and fair' because elections are used to measure a country's progress towards democracy necessary for securing western aid (see Section 3.3.2).

Elections play a key role in the transition to democracy process and can promote democratic consolidation or facilitate authoritarian rule. As election observers measure elections against the achievement of democracy and human rights benchmarks, their reports for the last two Fiji elections will be appraised against the 1994 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) criteria (see Section 3.3.2). Following eight years of unelected militarised rule after the 2006 coup, multiparty elections were finally held in 2014, and then in 2018, in such a way as to serve particular interests. To gauge if the elections were authoritarian or democratic, the actions of the executive, judiciary, electoral bodies, security forces and media are evaluated to ascertain if they were manipulated by rulers to control electoral outcomes.

4.7.1 Fiji's authoritarian 2014 general elections

The conduct of Fiji's 2014 elections is scrutinised to assess whether they were democratic or authoritarian (see Bhim 2019[195]). The actions of the executive made people sceptical about the government's commitment to hold elections because enabling legislation was lacking. The regime's version of the Constitution was finally released on 22 August 2013 (*ABC News* 2013). It replaced the Westminster parliamentary system with a unicameral parliament of 50 seats, to be contested under the new multi-member open list system of proportional representation. Ethnic voting and constituencies were eliminated as each voter was entitled to one vote under a single national electoral roll. A *Political Parties (Registration, Conduct,*

195 This section contains extracts from Bhim 2019, which was written and published during the course of this thesis.

Funding and Disclosures) Decree was released on 15 January 2013. The *Electoral Decree's* released on 28 March, coincided with the announcement of the 17 September date for elections (Radio Australia, 29 March 2014), thus completing the requisite set of laws to hold an election.

The repressive decrees promulgated post-2009 constitution abrogation were still in force. This included the Public Order Decree[196] which granted excessive powers to the police and the military to search and detain people and imposed harsh penalties for unauthorised public gatherings. Moreover, the Media Decree 2010[197] still imposed censorship with punitive measures including prosecution of the previous *Fiji Times* editor Netani Rika and the current editor Fred Wesley. The regime also victimised Fiji Television Limited by restricting their operations through issuance of temporary six-month licences from 2012-2014 (Narayan, 19 June 2014). Under regime pressure, the broadcaster sacked senior staff (Singh 2017, pp. 2-3). Such persecution achieved the desired aim of substantially decreasing criticism of the government by the media.

In lieu of an announcement by the electoral office, the release of lavish advertisements by Bainimarama's new FijiFirst party, signalled to other political parties that they could start campaigning. The state-sponsored *Fiji Sun* daily newspaper and the state-owned daily radio and television broadcaster, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (*FBC*), engaged in extensive, favourable reporting on FijiFirst (Bhim 2015).[198] These two state-sponsored media were thus patently partisan. The preferential treatment of FijiFirst by the *Fiji Sun* and *FBC* was in stark contrast with the Media Decree which requires 'fairness' and 'balance'.[199] Calls by civil society for a caretaker government were in vain. Bainimarama and his cabinet members worked as ministers and campaigned for elections (Bhim 2015, pp. 117-118).

---

[196] The Public Order (Amendment) Decree 2012, gave excessive powers to the police to constrain, search, arrest, and detain. It authorised military officers to execute the police's functions. Minor offences now had maximum jail terms of five years or fines of up to $5,000. Gatherings required permits, could be dispersed by the police, and attending without permits could incur maximum penalties of $10,000 fine and/or imprisonment of 10 years. People could be detained for 48 hours without being charged, and a further 14 days when authorised by the Minister (or Prime Minister).

[197] See Section 4.6.5. See Bhim 2011, pp. 11-12 for range of penalties under the Media Decree.

[198] The *FBC* headed by Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, the brother of Attorney General and general-secretary of FijiFirst Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, ran talkback shows in the lead-up to the elections. Representatives from other political parties appeared on it once or twice where they were grilled and portrayed negatively. By comparison, Bainimarama and Sayed-Khaiyum were interviewed respectfully, many times, and spoke at length without interjections (Bhim 2015, pp. 115-116).

[199] The Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA) did not take any action against the *FBC* and *Fiji Sun* for their derogatory reporting of the opposition nor their bias towards FijiFirst.

Those aligned with the previous government, and who were critical of the regime, were persecuted through removal from jobs or subjection to long court trials after being charged with crimes (see Bhim 2011). This, combined with the repressive decrees, deterred some people from contesting the elections. The 12-month convictions of former Prime Ministers Qarase and Chaudhry, made their candidature ineligible under the 2014 Electoral Decree.

The leader's words and actions left the country anxious over the threat of a military takeover as the elections approached. Bainimarama only gave up the army commander position six months prior to elections by announcing in March 2014 that then Colonel Mosese Tikoitoga was the new commander[200] (Vukailagi, 2014). Together they repeatedly linked the 2013 Constitution to the prevention of future coups.[201] No assurances were provided on what actions the RFMF would take if attempts were made to change the 2013 Constitution, as proposed in the manifestos of opposition political parties. A week prior to the 2014 elections, Bainimarama stated on *FBC News* that "Suva will not be allowed to burn as it did in 2000", and "the full brunt of the law and the security forces will descend on any persons who cause trouble before, during or after the elections" (Stolz 2014). These statements created fear among Indo-Fijian voters that if another party won, a coup might occur. It also intimidated supporters of other political parties thus greatly influencing the direction votes were cast (Bhim 2015, p. 113).

Such fear, and a few other factors, increased Indo-Fijian support for Bainimarama. The 2013 Constitution abolished ethnic voting and by making all citizens' votes of equal value, Indo-Fijians had finally been granted the common roll they had called for since 1929 (Lal 2016, p. 68). FLP's Indo-Fijian support had also shifted to Bainimarama when Chaudhry joined that regime in 2007. Soon after Chaudhry had a change of heart and resigned but Indo-Fijian support for him evaporated following his conviction for tax evasion in April 2014, a few months prior to the election[202] (Chand 2014). Bainimarama expressed remorse for previous coups, gave assurances that atrocities (to Indo-Fijians) would not occur again, and reiterated

[200] Bainimarama's military title reverted to Rear Admiral.
[201] The 2013 constitution entrenches immunity for the 2006 coup makers. The new commander, Brigadier General Tikoitoga, stated that political parties should "leave the military alone and it should not be part of their campaign" and that the military's role is to protect the 2013 Constitution (Susu, 2014). His comments hindered campaigns and bred fear amongst aspiring candidates and the public. Bainimarama, in his first interview on *4theRecord* programme on *FBC* television, (Ep 36, 21 July 2014) stated "…2006 was the end of all coups that's why we came up with the clean-up campaign …. And if you follow the 2013 Constitution there will be no coups".
[202] The Attorney General Sayed-Khaiyum absolved Chaudhry when his tax arrears were revealed in 2008. After Chaudhry resigned from the position of finance minister in August 2008, FICAC 'independently' prosecuted that tax evasion. Chaudhry was charged in 2010 and convicted in 2014. Chaudhry refused to give up FLP's helm, even though he could not contest. This decision, and continuous reminders by FBC's *For the Record* programme of Chaudhry's tax evasion, had a great impact on FLP's disastrous loss in the 2014 elections.

that all citizens would be treated equally in Fiji (Lal 2016, p. 64). Hindu and Muslim religious organisations empathised with Bainimarama, while prominent Indian businesses publicly backed him and gave donations (Lal 2016, pp. 70-73). This combination of factors significantly bolstered Indian support for Bainimarama.

The Fiji Electoral Commission (FEC) struggled to enforce its authority as its decisions continued to be over-ruled by the Supervisor of Elections Mohammed Saneem[203] (Loga 2014). All court actions taken by party candidates resulted in decisions favouring the Fiji Elections Office (FEO) and, coincidentally, favouring the FijiFirst, raising serious questions about the independence of these institutions (Bhim 2015, p. 120).

The new electoral system favoured FijiFirst because their leading candidates were in power for eight years and were well-known in Fiji. Ratuva (2016, p. 35) attributes FijiFirst's victory to the 'rock star' phenomenon of visibility, familiarity and relevance, successfully utilised by Bainimarama to channel votes for the party. Also useful were FijiFirst's presidential campaign style, 'cargo cult' politics (promising development), and pro-poor manifesto (Ratuva 2016, p. 35). The system was unfair because other political parties were denied freedom of expression in the media for many years and because it was difficult for opposition candidates to campaign throughout the country due to resource limitations (Bhim 2015, p. 119). Party agents had trouble monitoring the vote casting and counting process as a voter could vote for any of the 248 candidates at any polling station, and because no party symbols were allowed on the ballot paper, which could also make voters confused.

The new electoral system allowed leading candidates to redistribute their votes. Several candidates with less than 1000 votes from FijiFirst became ministers[204] as the 202,459 votes received by Bainimarama were redistributed. FijiFirst received 59.2% votes and got 32 out of 50 parliamentary seats; SODELPA received 28.2% votes and got 15 seats; NFP received 5.5% votes and got 3 seats (Narayan 22 September 2014). SODELPA's Ro Teimumu Kepa, a high chief, became the new leader of the opposition. NFP made a limited comeback with leader Prof Biman Prasad and Tupou Draunidalo winning their seats. However, the electoral

[203] Formerly employed under Attorney General Sayed-Khaiyum.

[204] For instance, Rosy Akbar with 990 votes was appointed Minister for Women, Jose Usamate with 939 votes became Minister for Employment, Iliesa Delana with 906 votes became assistant minister for Youth and Sports, Faiyaz Koya with 875 votes was appointed Minister for Tourism, Veena Bhatnagar with 874 votes became Assistant Minister for Health. (Voting results: Fijian Elections office website, viewed 6 July 2020, <https://www.feo.org.fj/media-centre/publications-2/past-elections-reports/2014-general-elections/2014-general-elections-results/>)

system with its 5% threshold requirement, wiped out independents and new parties.[205] No seats were won by a shattered FLP, the multiracial People's Democratic Party formed by FLP defectors and new politicians, two other new parties and the two Independents.

Party	**Votes**
FijiFirst	293,714
Social Democratic Liberal Party	139,857
National Federation Party	27,066
People's Democratic Party	15,864
Fiji Labour Party	11,670
One Fiji Party	5,839
Fiji United Freedom Party	1,072
Independent – Roshika Deo	1,055
Independent – Umesh Chand	226

Table 4.5 Fiji 2014 elections results
(Source: Fijian Elections Office 2014, p. 22)

FijiFirst had a landslide victory in the elections declared 'free and fair' by the FEC Chairman Chen Bunn Young despite complaints by five political parties (Swami 2014). However, this judgement belied the preferential and biased coverage by *Fiji Sun* and *FBC*, the perceived threat of instability and violence by the military if another party won, and the lack of independent statutory bodies with powers of oversight (Bhim 2015). Furthermore, the circumstances of constrained political opposition and freedom of expression during Bainimarama's eight years of militarised rule by decree, favoured the FijiFirst, who were described as "the product of military power" by Ratuva and Lawson[206] (2016, p. 2).

Surprisingly then, two groups that analysed the elections classified them as credible. The Multinational Observer Group[207] (MOG) said so a day after polling (Narayan & Turaga 2014). The MOG classified the election 'free' because it found the elections represented the

[205] Under Section 104 (3) of the Electoral Decree, the votes of any parties or individuals that were less than 5% of total votes were disregarded.
[206] For a detailed analysis of the elections, see the book: Ratuva S & Lawson, S (eds), *The People Have Spoken: The 2014 Elections in Fiji*, ANU Press, The Australian National University, Australia.
[207] The MOG, co-led by Australia, Indonesia and India, was invited to monitor the elections by the Fiji government. The MOG comprised 92 election observers from: Australia, Canada, EU, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Melanesian Spearhead Group, NZ, Korea, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, UK, and USA (MOG 2014, p. 50).

will of the people, voters were free to cast their votes and political parties were free to campaign (MOG 2014, p. 4). Yet, MOG did note major qualifications that: civil society was restricted, especially under the electoral decree; harsh penalties limited media reporting; education of polling agents and voters was restricted; and non-partisan domestic observers were not approved (MOG 2014). After their request for domestic observation was rejected by the Minister for Elections, 10 CSOs engaged in a Concerned Citizens for Credible Elections (CCCE) project and prepared a Voter Perception Based Election Report. Despite discovering a number of inaccuracies, CCCE also found the 2014 elections to be credible. The CCCE (2014) observed political party campaigning, advertising, media reporting of parties and manifestos and posed a wide range of questions to voters after polling day. It is a concern that the government and the FEO have not responded to issues raised in their comprehensive report.

Although the MOG and CCCE labeled it as a 'credible' election and the FEC declared it 'free and fair', an analysis using the 1994 IPU Criteria demonstrates that the elections were neither free nor fair (Bhim 2015, p. 121). The MOG and CCCE's declaration that the election was credible concurs with criteria by IDEA, the EU, and the Commonwealth, and one criterion of the IPU, which focus on the processes of casting and counting of votes (see section 3.3.2). But the election fails to satisfy three IPU criteria: free and fair elections; candidature, party and campaign rights and responsibilities; and rights and responsibilities of states.[208] The 2014 Fiji election thus cannot be deemed 'free and fair' as limitation of freedoms and state media bias did not allow a fair chance to all parties and candidates to compete on a level platform with FijiFirst (Bhim 2015, p. 121).

Fiji's actions post-2014 elections reveal the regime wanted to resume its close relations with western countries to benefit from aid.[209] Fiji's re-admittance to the Commonwealth after the 2014 election showed western nations' recognition of its return to democratisation. The rewards stemming from the 2014 election were apparent in the swift allocation of AU$15million of aid by Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, in the wake of destruction by the category 5 Cyclone Winston in February 2016 (*ABC* 2016). Moreover, Fiji's

[208] The elections only satisfied IPU's Criterion 2. Voting and Elections Rights, which deals with the polling and counting processes (Bhim 2015, p. 121).
[209] Fiji, along with Pacific nations, relies on Australia and New Zealand for development and disaster aid, assistance to monitor EEZs and rescue people at sea, and also work with ANZ and Interpol to prevent transnational crime.

Presidency of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP23)[210] from November 2017–2018 was generously supported by European nations.[211]

Fiji's return to multiparty elections in 2014 resonates with the tendency of small island states to adopt multi-party elections (see section 2.4). However, the election of 2014 in Fiji was authoritarian because the executive and the judiciary were able to interfere in its conduct and influence the process in the lead-up to ensure the incumbents would win. Bainimarama and his replacement army commander intimidated the public with reminders about previous coups. The executive controlled judicial appointments, electoral laws, elections office, security forces, and state-owned media. This meant the playing field was in favour of the incumbents. Declaration of the election as credible legitimised Bainimarama's autocratic regime. The 2014 elections moved Fiji in the direction of democracy, but was limited insofar as it allowed Bainimarama's personalist/military dictatorship to transition to an electoral autocratic government.

4.7.2 Fiji's competitive 2018 election under an electoral autocracy

The 2018 Fiji election was held under Bainimarama's electoral autocratic government. The optimism upon Fiji's return to parliamentary rule in September 2014 turned to pessimism as the government continued to behave like a dictatorship rather than a democracy. Key government portfolios remained under Bainimarama, Sayed-Khaiyum[212] and military appointments, meaning they retained a significant amount of control, although Bainimarama's personal control seemed looser as some portfolios were redistributed to other ministers. This, combined with the retention of the post-2009 repressive decrees suggests that, despite having multiparty elections, Fiji fell short of democracy which requires the exercise of civil and political rights including freedom of expression and media, independent judiciary, apolitical security forces, and a fully-functioning opposition to hold the government accountable. Hence, the regime type after the 2014 elections in Fiji was an electoral autocracy.

[210] The 23rd annual Conference of the Parties to the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Fiji issued some warnings about climate change and started a 'Talanoa' (dialogue), but achieved little else (Wuppertal Institut 2018, p. 4).

[211] Fiji admonished Australia but was uncritical of Western European donor nations. Smaller Pacific islands felt Fiji had neglected their interests. Although there were no significant gains for small island states, Fiji procured climate change aid for itself during this period.

[212] Post-2006 coup and 2014 elections, Bainimarama, at various times held the portfolios of Defence, Home Affairs, *iTaukei* Affairs, Lands and Mineral Resources, Disaster Management, Finance, the Charter process, National Development and Statistics, Sugar Industry, Information, Strategic Planning and Public Service. Sayed-Khaiyum has mainly held the portfolios of Attorney General, Economy, Finance, Information, and Elections, and also the portfolios of Tourism, Public Enterprise, Civil Service, and Education.

Militarisation of governance continued in the lead-up to the 2018 general election. The former RFMF chief of staff, Jioji Konrote,[213] who in 1989 had expressed the military's desire for a long-term guardian political role, was the first Rotuman to become President in November 2015, after being elected by parliamentarians (Narayan 2015). In June 2016, Rear Admiral Viliame Naupoto,[214] who was Minister for Youth and Sports in 2012, was appointed Commander of the RFMF. After the South African Police Commissioner, Ben Groenewald, resigned in November 2015 citing interference in policing by the military, the RFMF land force commander Colonel Sitiveni Qiliho replaced him (*ABC* 2015). The new appointments ensured military control over strategic portfolios.

The government made it difficult for the opposition to play an effective role in parliament. In response to the discomfort caused by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman Prof Biman Prasad's critical scrutiny of the Auditor General's reports for 2006-2014, the government changed the Parliamentary Standing Orders in 2016 so the position could be taken by any parliamentarian rather than the opposition (Naikoso & Narayan 2016). Subsequently, Prasad resigned from the committee and government whip Ashneel Sudhakar became the new chair. This created serious doubts about proper scrutiny of government finances.

Another concern was the arbitrary suspension of three opposition MPs:[215] SODELPA's Ratu Isoa Tikoca for listing Muslim officials in senior government positions;[216] NFP President Ro Tupou Draunidalo for calling a government MP a fool – both suspended in 2016 until the end of their terms; and SODELPA's Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu suspended for two years in 2015 for allegedly using an offensive word against the speaker outside parliament[217] (Round 2016). Conversely, Attorney General Saiyed-Khaiyum was not reprimanded for a Darth Vader impersonation in parliament in 2015.[218] Mocking of opposition MPs by government members went unsanctioned by FijiFirst Speaker Dr Jiko Luveni. Alarmingly, major bills were rushed

[213] Prior to this, Konrote was Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment. Previous presidents were chosen by the Great Council of Chiefs.
[214] Naupoto held various senior government positions post-2006 coup, including Permanent Secretary for Fisheries and Forests.
[215] The Inter-Parliamentary Union expressed concern at the suspensions and recommended lifting them. They found Tikoca's words fell within his right to freedom of expression (IPU 2016).
[216] Tikoca stated the names of 13 Muslim senior appointments (IPU 2016). A large number of Muslims were appointed to senior government positions after the 2006 coup, including AG Khaiyum's brother Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum as CEO of *FBC* (Narayan 2018a).
[217] Draunidalo resigned from the NFP after her suspension, and was replaced by Parmod Chand in parliament. Lalabalavu returned to parliament after his two-year suspension. Tikoca's suspension lasted until the end of his parliamentary term.
[218] Some people found it derogatory. Ratu Tikoca claimed Sayed-Khaiyum acted like a monkey to refer to natives (Vakasukawaqa 2016).

through parliament without debates. Thus, Fiji's parliament was restricted and not performing its requisite role in a democracy. In addition, there was a general perception amongst the population[219] that government bodies, including the judiciary, security forces, and the Fiji Independent Commission Against Corruption (FICAC) were not independent and were being used to target the opposition. These trends created an atmosphere of mistrust against the government in the lead-up to Fiji's 2018 election.

While the elections were delayed without credible reasons, the government campaigned aggressively with social service announcements and handouts.[220] Konrote dissolved parliament on 30 September 2018 and announced the election would be conducted on 14 November (Krishant & Narayan 2018) (Bolanavanua 2018). This allowed only six weeks for opposition political parties to campaign. Parliament's dissolution had little impact on FijiFirst ministers who continued government activities (such as distribution of new leases by the Tourism Minister Faiyaz Koya) and received free campaign publicity. Allegations of two-man rule were made against Bainimarama and Sayed-Khaiyum by former senior soldier Pio Tikoduadua who joined the NFP. After failing to become FijiFirst's nominee for elections, former supporter Alivereti Nabilivou also derided FijiFirst as being controlled by two people (Fraenkel 2019, p. 4).

The FEC's efforts to assert its authority as an independent body in 2014 resulted in its abrupt dismissal without any reason, then all new members to the Electoral Commission and a new chair Suresh Chandra were appointed in February 2017 in a non-transparent manner (*RNZ* 2017). Leaders of the political parties SODELPA, NFP, FLP, Unity Fiji and Freedom Alliance Party agreed in August 2018 to contest the election despite expressing lack of confidence in the FEC and the Supervisor of Elections (Naqelevuki 2018).

While the state-sponsored newspaper *Fiji Sun*, continued its unashamed advocacy for FijiFirst, media freedom remained curtailed through the 2010 Media Decree and media engaged in self-censorship to avoid penalties. *Fiji Sun* ridiculed the opposition with headlines

---

[219] See Table 4.4, perceptions of rights freedoms and corruption 2016. For instance, Air Terminal Services (ATS) Employees Trust Chairman Jay Dhir Singh was fined $9000 for saying the judiciary is controlled by one minister to intimidate people (Narayan 2018b). Bau chief Ratu Apenisa Cakobau complained that the security forces violated customary laws by arresting him and two others on June 8 2018 in a heavy-handed manner to prevent Cakobau's chiefly installation (Baleilevuka & Narayan 2018).

[220] The government kept deferring the date although the FEO repeatedly announced they were ready to conduct the election. Before announcing the date, President Konrote's term was extended. Welfare handouts were promoted by FijiFirst in 2018 just as was done in 2014 (Fraenkel 2019, p. 6).

such as, 'Beware of fake news', 'Opposition fantasy not facts' and 'No transparency past govts'.[221] Conversely, victimisation of independent media continued with the *Fiji Times* editor Fred Wesley, Publisher Frank Arts, and letter writer to its *iTaukei* language newspaper *Nai Lalakai*, Josaia Waqabaca, charged with inciting communal antagonism in August 2016 for a letter Waqabaca wrote on 27 April 2016 that was critical of Muslims (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions 2016). The charge was changed to sedition a few months later. Just before the election, the three were acquitted after a unanimous non-guilty opinion of assessors (Cava 2018). This raises questions as to whether they should have been charged at all, and if the real purpose of the trial was to intimidate the media.

Similarly, opposition politicians were prosecuted by the courts. These included SODELPA MP Mosese Bulitavu and United Freedom Party President Jagath Karunaratne, and Rabuka, SODELPA's leader for the 2018 elections.[222] But the three were acquitted prior to the election, fueling speculation about judicial manipulation of their prosecution. Such prosecutions created fear of the consequences for criticising the incumbent government, which, combined with the FJ$1000 registration fee required from candidates, deterred some professionals from contesting. It restricted participation in elections to those not dependent on employment, thus favouring elites getting political power.

Bainimarama and Sayed-Khaiyum were over-confident and belligerent during the 2014 election campaign, but in 2018, Bainimarama's confidence seemed rattled by another coup-maker, Rabuka, contesting the election. To absolve himself and malign Rabuka, Bainimarama had the 2000 coup perpetrator Maciu Navakasuasua[223] state at the FijiFirst campaign meeting in Drauniivi, Ra, in November 2018 that Bainimarama had no involvement in the May 2000 coup which was instigated by elite *iTaukei*, corrupt

[221] These front page articles claimed to analyse 'issues affecting voters' by Managing Editor News Jyoti Prabha, whereby opposition parliamentary leaders' criticisms of government were rejected (Prabha 2018). Managing Editor Training Nemani Delaibatiki's (2018) article defended Fiji being a secular state under the 2013 constitution (Delaibatiki 2018). This aligned with Bainimarama's continued defence of the 2013 Constitution, and denigrating of the draft Ghai constitution as racist and involving foreign influence (Swami 2018a).

[222] Bulitavu and Karunaratne were convicted in March 2018 for spray-painting seditious words in August 2011, disqualifying them from contesting elections (Talei 2018b). Their two years and five months sentences were set aside in August 2018 by High Court Judge Justice Vinsent Perera (Savike 2018a). Rabuka, SODELPA's leader for the 2018 elections, acquitted by the Magistrates Court for failing to declare assets, income, and liabilities, was again acquitted after Chief Justice Anthony Gates dismissed FICAC's appeal two days prior to the election on 12 November, during the blackout period (Talei 2018a). AG Sayed-Khaiyum launched cases against pro-FLP lawyers Aman-Ravindra Singh and Rajendra Chaudhry for vociferous online criticism of Bainimarama and Khaiyum. Singh's practising license was suspended in 2019, while Chaudhry was convicted in absentia, after an online safety bill was rushed through parliament in January 2019.

[223] Maciu Navakasuasua was jailed for his role as one of seven gunmen who stormed parliament on May 19 2000. Navakasuasua stated he and other iTaukei were used by elite iTaukei, corrupt businessmen and failed politicians to fulfil their agenda (Cabenatabua 2018). Navakasuasua stated the 2000 coup was planned by the Vanua Tako Lavo Party backed by some soldiers from the CRW unit, and that after the coup, former PM Rabuka came as a negotiator for President Ratu Mara (Cabenatabua 2018). Navakasuasua tried to blame Rabuka for the 2000 mutiny, by stating Rabuka was the first person at the military camp during the mutiny in November 2000.

businessmen and failed politicians (Cabenatabua 2018). Bainimarama conceded that Sayed-Khaiyum was his friend and denied that the country was run by Muslims. However, SODELPA's greatly increased share of votes below indicate that this confession failed to win the trust of the bulk of *iTaukei*.

Bainimarama's fear-mongering campaign, reminding Indo-Fijians of past atrocities post-coups, gave them the majority of the Indo-Fijian votes, which, combined with the advantages of incumbency, enabled Bainimarama to win by a bare majority of 50.02%. Contrary to its non-racist rhetoric, Fraenkel (2019, p. 1) found the FijiFirst gained through orchestrated ethnic polarisation and benefits of incumbency.[224] The results for the six political parties are in Table 4.6 below.

Party	Votes	Percentage
FijiFirst	227241	50.02%
SODELPA	181072	39.85%
NFP	33515	7.38%
Unity Fiji	6896	1.52%
HOPE	2811	0.62%
FLP	2800	0.62%

Table 4.6 Fiji 2018 Elections Results
(Source: Fijian Elections Office 2019, p. 14)

The votes cast were 458,532, which is about 72% of the 637,527 registered voters. The relatively poor turnout was attributed to heavy rain and flooding, which resulted in voting being postponed at 26 polling stations on the last day of polling (*RNZ* 2018b). Bainimarama polled 167,732 (36.92%) votes, while his closest rival Rabuka polled 77,040 (16.96%) votes (Fijian Elections Office 2018).

Similar to 2014, a Multinational Observer Group (MOG) monitored the elections while a domestic observer group was not allowed by the Minister for Elections and civil society participation was thus restricted. The MOG (2018, p. 6) found the 2018 election to be transparent and credible, and it "advanced electoral democracy in Fiji". However, it recommended allowing party identification on ballots, transparency of the FEC, and regulating public officials' conduct during elections. The 2018 MOG reiterated the

[224] See Fraenkel 2019 for detailed discussion of the 2018 Fiji election, as well as ethnic issues.

recommendations by the 2014 MOG to ease restrictions on civil society, review harsh penalties limiting the media's reporting, and allow non-partisan domestic observers, which Bainimarama's government had failed to implement. Civil society, restricted through decrees, played a lesser role than in 2014. CSOs and academics held very few election related public discussions, and could not conduct systematic election education or long-term media advocacy.

The political society, albeit still weak, was stronger than during the 2014 elections and gave the FijiFirst tough competition. Yet the restrictions on civil society and opposition campaigns as well as the advantages of incumbency made it unsurprising that Bainimarama's electoral authoritarian regime again won with a slim majority. An anomaly of 76,750 votes cast in the Eastern Division which had only 26,034 registered voters was among several issues identified by academics and opposition MPs (Tarai 2018). These were dismissed by the FEO. Analysts observed that Bainimarama's victory was achieved through repression of media and dissent by CSOs, including the unions and churches (O'Sullivan 2018). An elections petition case, questioning the results of the 2018 elections, was withdrawn by opposition parties as the judges refused to allow them to present key witnesses[225] (Savike 2018b). These issues did not deter FijiFirst from forming government.

To prevent China's rising influence in the Pacific,[226] Australia and other western powers have strengthened ties with Bainimarama's government after the 2018 elections, turning a blind-eye to authoritarianism in Fiji, and bolstering its military with aid and training (see section 4.6.3). Thus, Fiji's return to democratisation is mutually beneficial as it provides Fiji opportunities to benefit from western aid, technical assistance, and protection of its EEZ by the ANZUS states, while western powers benefit from having Fiji's experienced security forces as an ally for Pacific security and prevent China's expansion of influence in the Pacific. This concurs with scholars' findings that small island states are likely to democratise due to the need for aid, trade and security from larger democratic powers (see section 2.4). The global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 did not severely affect Fijiian health because the

---

[225] The elections petition case turned into a drama as the Attorney General and all ministers locked themselves into the AG's office for 48 hours. This prevented the opposition leaders from being able to serve them the court documents. Judges accepted the opposition had made adequate efforts to serve and approved their request to advertise in the Fiji Times, which would be taken as if the documents had been served (*RNZ* 2018c).

[226] China's growing stronghold in the Pacific has raised geo-political concerns in Australia. Early in 2018, a Chinese Space Surveillance Ship arrived in Suva, Fiji, on the same day as the Australian navy's HMAS Adelaide with US Marines on board sparking speculation in the Australian media that China was spying (Greene 2018).

islands' sea borders and dispersed population allowed quick containment of its spread.[227] However, the country's western division, reliant on tourism, has suffered economically.

Prior to and during the 2018 election, executive control still pervaded the courts, electoral organs, security forces and the media, thus negatively impacting information dissemination and electoral contestation. However, the regime appeared fearful of sanctions if the elections were not classified as credible and reversed the convictions of some opposition politicians in the lead–up to the elections. These acquittals, and the existence of a parliament since 2014 – albeit restricted – allowed for better campaigning and reach of the opposition which created the real possibility of the FijiFirst losing in 2018. Although the 2018 election was competitive as it was freer than the 2014 election, it still was not democratic due to laws restricting rights, state influence on the media and militarisation of government. This means that despite competition, the election cannot be considered totally free. Hence, it was not a democratic election, but a competitive authoritarian election. Similar to 2014, the election only satisfied IPU's criterion on voting and elections rights, which deals with the polling and counting processes. It failed to satisfy the other three IPU criteria: free and fair elections; candidature party and campaign rights and responsibilities; and rights and responsibilities of states. The 2018 Fiji election thus cannot be deemed 'free and fair'. Nevertheless, MOG's recognition that it advanced electoral democracy in Fiji no doubt aided Fiji government in securing western assistance in the form of official development and military aid.

4.8 Conclusion

Authoritarian regimes developed in Fiji post-independence primarily because of a large military that could not be held accountable to elected civilian leaders. The lack of a democratic culture and Fiji being a divided society with mistrust between the two major ethnic groups, indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, were other factors that prevented the consolidation of democracy. Indigenous Fijian politicians were able to influence, and work with, the indigenous-Fijian dominated military to carry out the first coup in 1987. The lack of established democratic culture helped to make the coup possible, as its planning, execution, as well as the post-coup regime, were accepted by a significant portion of the indigenous

[227] As of 11 September 2020, Fiji had six active COVID-19 cases in border quarantine (*FBC News* 2020a). There were a total of 12 COVID-19 cases with two deaths.

Fijian chiefs, political leaders and ordinary citizens. The success of the first coup set a precedent for later coups. Fiji does not fall under the direct geo-political influence of a western democratic power, hence disapproval and sanctions post-coup failed to prevent post-coup regimes from succeeding.

Pre-colonial Fiji was a chiefly-aristocratic society, which was introduced to electoral governance under British colonial autocratic rule. Fiji commenced its transition to democracy at independence in 1970. Political dominance of ethnic Fijians through the chiefs occupying the Senate and appointing the president, about 90% ownership of natural resources, and a majority of personnel in the civil service failed to allay their insecurity and desire for paramountcy. The pre-independence ethnic differences over demographic trends, land, Indian political representation, and Fijian dominance of the security forces, all of which posed risks to democracy, remained unresolved. These issues, combined with a sudden growth in Fiji's military in response to UN peacekeeping recruitment since 1978, provided fertile ground for a coup.

Fiji regressed to military and authoritarian rule inflicted by a cycle of coups post-1987. There was a civil-military coalition regime from the first coup in 1987 till the 1992 election, a competitive authoritarian regime from 1992-1999, a civil-military coalition from the 2000 coup till the 2001 election, a personal-military dictatorship from the 2006 coup till the 2014 elections, and an electoral autocratic government from 2014 to date. The long periods of Rabuka's competitive authoritarian rule, and Bainimarama's personal/military and electoral autocratic rule, make Fiji an anomaly. It defied the norm of SIDS who have a limitation of resources, notably armed forces, to mount coups and maintain post-coup regimes. The regimes survived by utilising a mix of rewards for 'loyalists' in the military and civil service, implicit fear of the security forces, as well as repressive laws restricting opposition under Bainimarama.

Fiji's military has been shuttling between Janowitz's democratic and garrison-state models between non-coup and coup periods. This implies soldiers' western training is not successfully inculcating understanding of professional soldierly values in a democracy. The mindset of unquestioningly following a commander's orders means the Fiji military can be manipulated by political and military elites to mount coups. The UN and western countries failed to prohibit coup-tainted soldiers from participating in UN peacekeeping missions, and

to pressure them to adhere to apolitical professionalism. CMR reforms also were not possible as recommendations from independent reviews to downsize the military were abandoned following the 2006 coup.

Fiji's vibrant civil society and vocal rights-based CSOs protested against coups and racism, and advocated for democratisation. However, the regime's post-coup repression, combined with divisions within civil society, meant it lacked strength to pressure a return to democracy. Rabuka's competitive rule was less restrictive and allowed civil society's participation in the 1997 Constitution process, whereas Bainimarama's personal/military rule repressed civil society. The constitution processes in 2012 and the Charter Process in 2008 were failed opportunities for nation-building. After each coup, many former parliamentarians, politicians, chiefs and other members of the elite joined illegitimate regimes. Segments of diverse groups either accepted coups or did not protest them, and many have voted for political parties led by coup leaders in elections. This indicates a lack of democratic culture amongst a portion of Fiji's citizens who have not viewed democratic institutions as the only means to resolve political crisis and social issues, which, according to Linz and Stepan, Dahl, and Przeworski, is an essential requirement for democratic consolidation.

The resumption of electoral governance also resonates with the greater likelihood of SIDS to adopt democratic rule due to dependence on western donors, and a lack of resources to maintain post-coup regimes. Elements of electoral authoritarianism were present in Fiji's 2014 and 2018 multiparty general elections which confirmed an electoral authoritarian, rather than a democratic government. The observers' pronouncement of the 2014 election as credible lent a degree of legitimacy to Bainimarama's 'new' FijiFirst government, a verdict reissued after the 2018 election. Both elections fell short of the IPU's 1994 criteria, but nonetheless enabled Bainimarama's elected – albeit authoritarian – government, to regain favour with western donors. The Western donors' willingness to assist Fiji was prompted by a need to counter China's rising influence in the Pacific. To genuinely advance the transition to democracy, the military needs to retreat from Fiji's civilian and governmental spheres. The next chapter examines the Maldives, a small island nation in the Indian Ocean, where authoritarianism thrived.

Chapter 5. Maldives

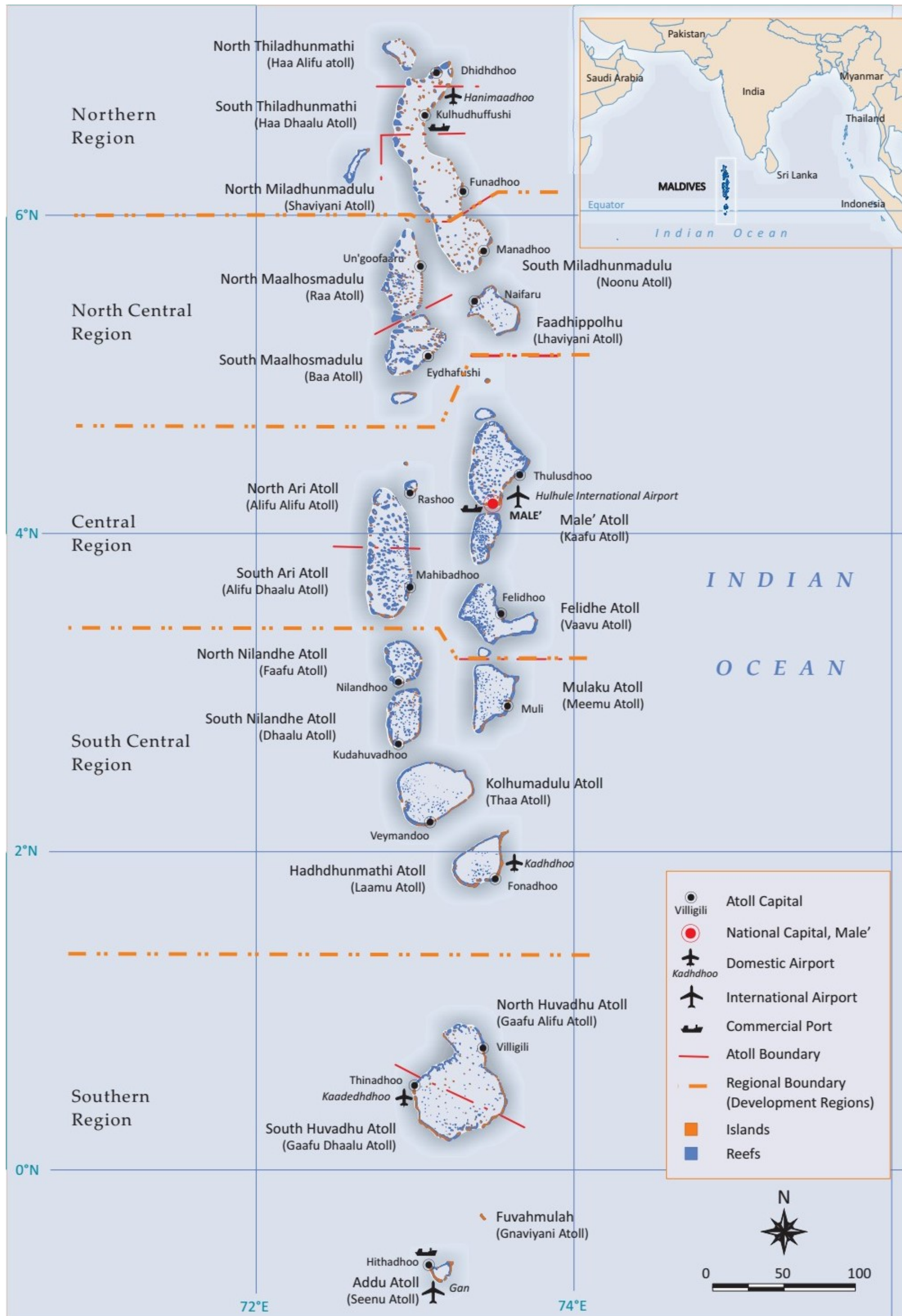


Figure 5.1 Map of the Maldives (Source: Ministry of Planning and National Development 2007).

5.1 Introduction

The Maldives is an intriguing nation that, since independence in 1965, has outgrown its impoverishment[228] to become a middle-income[229] nation. Its success derives from high-end tourism on its 1192 atoll islands, home to picturesque white sands and turquoise lagoons in the Indian Ocean. The Maldives land[230] area is about 300 square kilometres and its EEZ covers about 859,000 square kilometres of sea (Population Reference Bureau 2017). Only three islands' areas are greater than four square kilometres and nine islands are greater than two square kilometres (Ministry of Fisheries 2019). Foreigners cannot acquire citizenship if they are not Muslim, or own land in the Maldives but can lease land for 99 years (*Sun* 2019). The Maldives is a prime destination for European tourists, despite it being a traditional Sunni Muslim country with Islam as the only religion recognised by the state. Their language Dhivehi is written in the script *Tanna* and the country is called *Dhivehi Rajje*. It is regarded as the lowest-lying country in the world as its coral atolls rise an average of just 1.5 metres above sea level. Its success is thus paradoxical due to the risk of being inundated by rising sea levels caused by global warming. To adapt to this existential threat to its people, culture and sovereignty, the Maldives, for the past two decades, has been building a 2-metre high artificial island Hulhumalé, near its capital Malé, which could house the population should their land be submerged.

The Maldives' economic resilience is remarkable because it was a monarchical society where one-man rule continued under British protectorate status and after independence till 2008. The Maldives is an anomaly because it defied the tendency of small island states to be democracies. Brutal dictatorships where torture, arbitrary detentions and prison deaths were common (see sections 5.3.4), thrived there for four decades after independence. To understand how authoritarian regimes developed in the Maldives, periods of rule are classified according to theories of authoritarianism[231] (see Chapter 3), presented in Table 5.1 below. In the precolonial era, the Maldives was a Sultanate with monarchical rule. As a British protectorate, the Maldives retained its monarchy which was combined with colonial

[228] Caused by the sparse vegetation and limited natural resources on atoll islands.
[229] From a low-income country earlier in the 20th century, the Maldives has progressed to a middle-income country (UN-OHRLLS 2013, p. 23) with almost 100% literacy rate.
[230] The 1192 islands are grouped into 20 administrative atolls. In 2014, there were 188 administrative, 109 resort, and 128 industrial and other islands (NBoS 2015, p. 6). The Maldivian Land Act (Attorney General's Office) regulates the sale, transfer and lease of land.
[231] Authoritarianism includes monarchy and aristocracy.

autocratic rule. From 1932, a sultanate ruled with an elected executive. An exception was the brief period as a republic in 1953.

Maldives	Year	Regime Type
Precolonial	Pre-1887	Monarchy-Sultanate
Sultanate-British protectorate	1887-1932	Monarchy-colonial autocracy
Sultanate-British protectorate	1932-1952	Monarchy-colonial restricted electoral autocracy
Republic under President Ameen	Jan-Aug 1953	Colonial restricted electoral rule
Sultanate-British protectorate	1953-1957	Monarchy-colonial restricted electoral autocracy
Pre-independence rule by PM Nasir	1957-1965	Monarchy-colonial restricted electoral autocracy
Post-independence rule by PM Nasir	1965-1968	Monarchy-one-man rule
Republic installed by President Nasir	1968-1978	One-man dictatorship
Post-1978 elections - President Gayoom	1978-2008	One-man personal dictatorship
Post-2008 elections - President Nasheed	2008-2012	Transition to democracy
After 7 Feb 2012 coup - President Waheed	2012-2013	Caretaker government
Post-2013 elections - President Yameen	2013-2018	Electoral autocracy
Post-2018 elections – President Solih	November 2018-	Transition to democracy

Table 5.1 Regime types in the Maldives

The Maldives gained independence in 1965. In 1968, Prime Minister Nasir removed the Sultan from the head of state position, and made the country a republic. Nasir changed his Prime Minister position to President and reigned till 1978 as a one-man dictator unaccountable to any authority. His successor Gayoom amassed even greater control unto himself and ruled as a one-man personal dictator for three decades. Several factors (discussed in section 5.3.5) compelled reforms to usher in a transition to democracy in 2008 with the first democratically elected president Nasheed. Democratisation was abruptly halted with the coup in 2012 when Nasheed was forced to resign by mutinying security forces loyal to the previous dictator. The Maldives reverted to electoral autocratic rule under Yameen following the 2013 elections. However, Yameen's brutal repression led to his loss in the 2018 elections, which returned the country to a transition to democracy. The above periods of rule are examined in this chapter to identify the obstacles to democracy post-independence.

As Table 5.1 shows, political pluralism only came about in the lead-up to the country's first multiparty elections in 2008. The adverse impacts of protracted authoritarianism on the enjoyment of rights (see section 5.5.2), are demonstrated in Table 5.2 below through Freedom House's rankings for key civil and political rights for the Maldives in specific post-independence periods.

Event	Year	Regime Type	Status	Freedom Rating	Civil Liberties	Political Rights	Press Freedom
Independence	1965	One-man personal dictatorship	-	-	-	-	-
Post-1978 elections	1998*	One-man personal dictatorship	Not Free*	5.5*	5*	6*	Not Free** (2002-08)
Post-2008 elections	2010*	Democracy	Partly Free*	3.5*	4*	3*	Partly Free**
After 7 Feb 2012 coup	2013*	No-party regime	Partly Free*	4.5*	4*	5*	Partly Free**
Post-2013 elections	2017*	Electoral autocracy	Partly Free*	5*	5*	5*	Not Free**

Table 5.2 Maldives - Rights and Freedoms Ratings by Freedom House
*Freedom in the World Report for that country and year, by Freedom House; 1=Most Free, 7=Least Free.
**Freedom of Press Report for that country and year, by Freedom House.
- Data not available

The Maldives' status was Not Free in 1998 under one-man personal dictatorship and its press freedom rating from 2002 was also Not Free. During democratic rule in 2008 and 2010, the Maldives' status and press freedom ratings both improved to Partly Free. In 2017, its press freedom ratings downgraded to Not Free due to the crackdown on the media during Yameen's electoral autocratic rule from 2013-2018. Its status in 2017 remained Partly Free indicating that the suppression was not considered worse than during one-man rule. The Partly Free status also shows that instead of achieving democratic consolidation, its transition to democracy had stalled through a reversal to electoral autocracy. This chapter will endeavor to explain why this was the case.

The Maldives' population more than tripled over 50 years from independence in 1965 till 2014. This is shown in the summary of population from the first census in 1911 till 2014, in Table 5.3 below. The total[232] Maldivian population in 2014 was 344,023, which was a significant increase from the 1995 population of 244,814, and the 1974 population of 128,697 (NBoS 2015, p. 29). With the inclusion of the foreign population residing in the Maldives, the 2014 Census recorded a total population of over 407,660 (NBoS 2015, p. 13).

Year									
1911	**1962**	**1967**	**1977**	**1985**	**1990**	**1995**	**2000**	**2006**	**2014**
Maldives Population (Resident and non-resident Maldivians[233])									
72,237	92,744	103,801	142,832	180,088	213,215	244,814	270,101	298,968	344,023

Table 5.3 Maldives Population Trend (Source: NBoS 2015, p. 14)

The main island housing the capital Malé is amongst the top 10 most densely urban populated areas in the world (Environment Department 2015, p. 5). Table 5.4 below reveals that in eight years from 2006-2014, the population on Malé increased by 35,253, compared to the rest of the Maldives which only increased by 16,101. The Maldives' momentous population growth, combined with the overcrowding on Malé and the government's inability to address development problems, created a volatile social situation. It contributed to the charged political environment which gave rise to antagonistic demonstrations against the authoritarian regime in Malé in the new millennium (see section 5.3.5).

Locality	**2006 (Resident Maldivians)**	**2014 (Resident Maldivians)**
Malé	94,128	129,381
Atolls (administrative & non-administrative islands)	192,952	209,053
Total	287,080	338,434

Table 5.4 Malé and Atolls Population Growth Trend (Source: NBoS 2015, p. 32)

[232] Includes resident and non-resident Maldivians. The 15-64 age population of 228,619 comprised 68% of the total 2014 population and represents over two-thirds of the total population. This was an increase of 21% from the 2006 census of 189,443 working age population which comprised 63% of the 2006 total population (NBoS 2015, p. 26).

[233] The Maldivians living temporarily or permanently overseas are still counted in the census as non-resident Maldivians numbering 5,589 in 2014 (NBoS 2015, p. 13). In the Maldives, citizenship is restricted to the descendants of Maldivians. As exceptions, citizenships are granted to Muslim men married to Maldivian women.

The limited land based natural resources added to the strain on the growing population. Tourism and fishing are the Maldives' major income earners that rely on healthy reefs and sea (Ministry of Fisheries 2019). Similar to many small island states, government is a key source of employment and foreign aid is required for development.

5.2 Maldives' pre-independence political history

The Maldives did not undergo extreme political changes after becoming a British protectorate as it was not directly administered by the colonisers. The Maldives' precolonial[234] and colonial history are examined to provide a better understanding of colonial legacies and how these contributed to post-independence political systems and institutions, and authoritarianism there. Key events leading to independence and the development of the armed forces are also discussed.

Limited literature is available on pre-independence Maldives. However, the researcher accessed sufficient texts, including the anthropologist Clarence Maloney's book (first edition, 1980), which was banned in the Maldives during President Gayoom's rule.[235] Select websites had translated writings of a few Maldivian historians, such as the book *'Iyye'* (*Yesterday*) by Maldivian historian Abdul Hakeem Hussain Manik[236] (1997). The biography of former President Gayoom (Ellis 1998) provides some historical accounts. The recent emergence of Maldivian scholars[237] including Azra Naseem, Athaulla A. Rasheed, and Ali Najeeb, provided crucial information and differing viewpoints not necessarily present in Western accounts. Ample room exists for more scholarly research to fill gaps in the historical literature.

---

[234] Prior to independence, only three books provided social and anthropological information about precolonial Maldives: by Frenchman Francois Pyrard - shipwrecked in the Maldives in 1602; by Englishmen Young and Christopher - did marine survey there in 1830; and by H.C.P. Bell, the first Archaeological Commissioner of Sri Lanka: shipwrecked there in 1879, who conducted archaeological excavations (Maloney 2013, p. xviii).

[235] Maloney did fieldwork in the Maldives in the 1970s. The ban was due to his representation of religion, politics, and its cultural and historical narrative being at variance with oral history (Maloney 2013, p. xi).

[236] Manik's book was accessible on the website www.maldivesculture.com. This website ceased in 2018, but hard copies are in the Maldives.

[237] Historical documents in *Dhivehi* are accessible to Maldivians. Research theses by Maldivians provide valuable information, such as the MA theses by former Maldivian soldiers Ashraf (2012), Zubair (2013), and Hassan (2011), and a PhD thesis by Didi (2012). Indian scholars also published about the Maldives: Luithui and Phadnis (1981 and 1985), Kumar (2016), and Behera (2006).

5.2.1 Precolonial Maldives - monarchy-sultanate

The Maldives was settled by migrants from southern India and Sri Lanka nearly 1500 years ago who practiced Buddhism and/or Hinduism prior to conversion to Islam in 1153[238] (Bonofer 2010, p. 437). The regime type in precolonial Maldives was a monarchy in the form of a sultanate. Historically, the transfer of power in the Maldives was not always peaceful, with sultans deposed in coups orchestrated by the monarch's family and other powerful dynasties (Ashraf 2012, p. 19). Consequently, the Maldives history includes 94 monarchs from six different dynasties (Ashraf 2012). Historical records suggest that the Maldives was a consultative monarchy.[239] The Sultan's political and economic hold on the Maldives was sanctioned by Islamic law through the *Qazi* (religious leaders), who also could be dismissed by the Sultan[240] (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, p. 10).

The Maldives did not encounter external interventions until the 15th to 19th centuries, when it suffered attempted conquests. Three Portuguese invasions were repelled.[241] But the Portuguese succeeded in occupying the northern islands and Malé for 15 years from 1558-73 (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, p. 17). On 2 July 1573, the Maldives was liberated through guerilla warfare led by Mohamed Thakurufanu who was made Sultan (Ellis 1998, p. 29). The Maldives then signed a treaty with the Portuguese whereby it paid annual tributes and traded only with the Portuguese to prevent further attacks (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 17-18). Inspired by the Portuguese, the Malabars of India launched several attacks on the Maldives over the period 1609-1690, and in retaliation, the Maldives attacked the Indian coastal territory of Cannonore in 1650 (Ellis 1998, pp. 29-30). The Malabars succeeded in capturing the Sultan in Malé, occupying the Maldives for four months from 1752-1753[242] before being dislodged (*Maldives Independent* 2015a). This history helps explain the deep suspicion of foreigners and why the Maldives maintained a formidable military.

[238] The Girāvaru were the only indigenous people in the Maldives but were reduced to 200 by 1976 (Maloney 2013, p. 274).

[239] The Sultan was assisted by advice from three councils: First Council of the Realm (Raskamuge Is Majlis), Second Council of the Realm (Raskiamuge Dhevana Majlis) and Third Council of the Realm (Raskamuge Thinvana Majlis) (Ashraf 2012, p. 18).

[240] The Sultan's direct descendants were called *Mannipul*; distant relatives had the title Didi. Below these were *Kilegefanu* and *Takurufanu* or great lords, and then *Maniku* (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, p. 12). Competing for power with the monarch's family were the nobles.

[241] The Portuguese arrival in 1498 created alarm in the Maldives. In 1503, they forbade Calicut entrepreneurs from trading with Maldivians. They invaded the Maldives in 1558 for its strategic location and for cowry shells used as currency (Ellis 1998, p. 27). They were encouraged by exiled Maldivian Sultan Hassan IX living in Cochin, India, known as Don Emanuel after his conversion to Christianity by the Portuguese.

[242] The *Portuguese ruled the Maldives from 19 May 1558 to 2 July 1573 and the Malabars occupied the Maldives from 20 December 1752 to 7 April 7 1753 (Maldives Independent 2015a).*

The Maldives established relations with other western nations to deter invasions. From 1645, it sent annual tributes to the Dutch who took over Ceylon from the Portuguese (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, p. 18). In 1796, the Dutch lost Ceylon to the British. Henceforth, from 1798, the Maldives paid annual tributes to Britain. Relations with Britain permitted a survey of the islands in 1834 and formal letters were exchanged by 1887 for the Maldives to be protected by the British (Ellis 1998, pp. 30-31). Thus, the Maldives Government paid ritual annual tribute to the Portuguese, then the Dutch, and then to the British.

Ostensibly, the Maldives voluntarily became a protectorate of Britain, however, historian Manik (1997a) asserts that Sultan Mueenudhin signed the agreement on 16 December 1887 under duress, allegedly to escape death and destruction of the Maldives.[243] The protectorate agreement vested control of the Maldives, its defence and foreign relations in Great Britain, but also ensured non-interference by Britain in the Maldives' internal affairs. Precolonial Maldives was a sultanate that after a series of invasions and occupation from the 15th to 18th centuries, some successful and some not, was compelled to become a British protectorate in the late 19th century.

5.2.2 Colonial Maldives – monarchy and colonial autocracy

During the colonial era in the Maldives, the regime type till 1932 was both a monarchy and colonial autocracy because the Sultan continued to be the supreme ruler during British indirect rule. The monarchy had excessive power over society, and with other politically powerful families controlled internal political affairs[244] (Rasheed 2014, pp. 13-14). The British were only interested in the Maldives for strategic reasons and never administered it directly.[245] All communications went through the British colonial office in Ceylon.

In 1932, the Maldives was compelled by Britain to adopt its first written constitution to stipulate the mechanism for succession to the throne.[246] A People's Assembly (Majlis) of 47

[243] Britain was encouraged to control the Maldives by the Athireege family members who were studying English in Galle, Sri Lanka, and wanted to achieve ruling status (Manik 1997a).
[244] They comprised the ruling class from the 1880s to the mid-1960s. Family-based rule and individualistic struggles for power dominated the political scene. The monarchy issued directives for social obedience and any objections were punished (Rasheed 2014, pp. 13-14).
[245] They were discouraged by the Maldives low land-based resource endowments, dangerous reefs and the fatal Maldives fever. No British missionaries went there and the UK did not intervene in times of conflict or famine. However, in 1905, Britain acquired an agreement for the Maldivians to return half of Britain's property salvaged from shipwrecks. In 1906, Britain set up a post office there (Maloney 2013, pp. 128-129).
[246] In 1931, the acting governor general of Ceylon, Sir Bernard Henry Bourdillon urged the Sultan to adopt a constitution (Ashraf 2012, p. 20).

members, would be elected by literate males. A Legislative Council of 28 members, 21 of whom were elected every 5 years, would include 7 nominated by the Sultan (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, p.21). The prime minister, appointed by the Sultan, would choose other ministers with the Sultan's consent. The constitution did not limit the Sultan's powers.

In the post-1932 constitutional period there was more corruption and a large part of the revenue was reserved for the Sultan's court and the office-bearers[247] (Luthui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 21-23). The 1932 constitution established fines, penalised theft and assault, created a state trading company and regulated foreign trade. These acts angered the common public and influential foreign traders who hitherto had controlled the import of food (Kumar 2016, p. 7). A series of strikes, demanding repeal of the new government's policies, started in mid-1933. The ensuing food insecurity led to a public revolt. The Sultan was accused of willful interference in the administration of justice leading to his dethronement in 1934 and banishment to Colombo (Kumar 2016, p. 8).

The constitution was considered a product of British influence and was changed several times over the next two decades. In June 1934, the constitution was amended, it was reduced from 84 to 80 articles in 1937 and suspended in 1940[248] (Kumar 2016, p. 8). In April 1942, Sultan Hassan Nooradeen[249] sent a 17-article "small constitution" to the Majlis, which handed the powers of the state to the monarchy, the foreign minister, and the Majlis (Kumar 2016, p. 8).

Following Ceylon's independence in 1948, an agreement was signed with Britain giving the Maldives self-government over its domestic affairs. The next Sultan Abdul Majid Didi had ill-health and died on 21 February 1952. His powers were vested in a Regency Council headed by Al-Ameer Mohamed Ameen Dhoshimeyna Kilegefaanu, a descendent of the royal family. Ameen orchestrated the people's Majlis to vote to abolish the monarchy and institute a republican government. A public referendum endorsed the change, ending 836 years of Sultanate rule (Kumar 2016, p. 9). The regime type then became colonial restricted electoral rule. The 1953 constitution provided a bicameral legislature with a Senate and House of

[247] The Government remained a close family preserve. There were power tussles between the sons of the Sultan. Although no minister was authorised to conduct business or trade, this provision was openly contravened in an abuse of privileges (Luthui & Phadnis 1985).
[248] A special Majlis stated "the Constitution and General Provisions were annulled as they [did] not fit the Maldives' situation" (Kumar 2016, p. 8).
[249] Nooradeen - son of Sultan Musir-ud-din who had concluded the 1887 Agreement with the British - was formally placed on the throne in 1938.

Representatives, and the President to be elected by direct vote (Kumar 2016, p. 9). Ameen became the first President of the Maldives serving between January 1, 1953 and August 21, 1953.

Ameen was a colourful figure in Maldivian history and regarded as a hero in current times. In 1948, prior to assuming the presidency, Ameen had obtained an agreement with Britain to stop paying tribute while remaining a protectorate. In January 1953, Britain signed a treaty recognising the new republic and a related pact gave Britain the right to set up military facilities there (Kumar 2016). Ameen is acclaimed for introducing many modern reforms.[250] The first Maldivian woman was elected to the parliament. Women received voting rights in 1952 when Ameen appointed 13 women to the Lower House; but this lasted less than a year, ending with his removal in a coup and a return to the Sultanate (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 26).

Several factors led to discontent against Ameen and his removal including taxation measures, food shortages leading to famine[251] which created suspicion that the President was profiting, and progressive legislation for women (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 26). Ameen was ousted and banished in August 1953 in a bloodless coup by Vice-President Ibrahim Mohamed Didi who became the acting President. Upon returning to Malé to regain power, Ameen was beaten, dying from his injuries in January 1954 (Luithui & Phadnis 1985). Thus, the first attempt at liberalisation in the Maldives ended in disaster with its hero disgraced and beaten to death, and a reversion to monarchical rule.

5.2.3 WWII and the lead-up to independence

Although Maldivians did not serve in WWII, Britain's strategic use of the islands provided leverage to negotiate independence. During WWII, Britain used the southernmost Addu Atoll as a secret refueling base named "Port T" and developed airfield facilities on Gan Island (Luithui & Phadnis 1981, p. 170). In the 1950s, Britain re-established the military airfield on

[250] These included: girls' education in Malé; a power plant; telephones in offices; cultivation methods; establishing the government's M.G. Bodu Stores to control the export of dried fish; health promotion; and writing the first history book of the Maldives in *Dhivehi* (Maloney 2013, p. 200). Ameen undertook progressive steps to liberate women by removing the *"purdah"* system; unveiled women participated in government ceremonies and the high walls around houses to shield women were pulled down (Kumar 2016, p. 10).

[251] Maldivesculture.com revealed that a serious famine occurred in 1951. Other issues were increased prices of imported food after WWII and Ameen's misappropriation of public funds. Ameen's new republican government had a two-week celebration in January 1953 while famine and malnutrition continued which saw the population halve from 80,000 to 40,000. Viewed 17 April 2018.

Gan in the Addu Atoll through the 1953 agreement[252] linked to internal self-rule (see above). A 1956 agreement allowed the UK use of Gan as an airfield and Hittadu island as a radio communication centre for 100 years (Luithui & Phadnis 1981, p. 170). A new agreement[253] signed in 1960 reduced Britain's rights over Addu Atoll to only 30 years.

The 100-year agreement, which had been signed by Prime Minister Ibrahim Faamudheri Kileygefaanu in December 1956 in Sri Lanka without consulting parliament or cabinet, was presented as a fait accompli (Rasheed 2014, p. 18). Ibrahim Nasir,[254] with portfolios of finance and defence, and colleagues objected in a heated parliamentary debate and refused to approve the agreement (Rasheed 2014, p. 19). Nasir was elected Prime Minister in December 1957 when the incumbent, Faamudheri Kileygefaanu, resigned. Nasir played a lead role in opposing the lease of Gan.

The British presence had a profoundly positive effect on Addu atoll residents, who, feeling neglected by the distant capital Malé, made a secession attempt.[255] From 1959 to 1963, Abdulla Afeef led a secessionist movement for the three southern atolls Addu, Huvadhoo and Fuvahmulah, to be a separate state named United Suvadive Republic, with the unofficial support of the British Royal Air Force (RAF) Base on Gan (Ashraf 2012, p. 33) (Maloney 2013, pp. 203-205).

The Maldives' military used lethal force when an expedition led by Nasir brutally crushed the Addu uprising on 4 February 1962.[256] The uprising was doomed once Britain recognised the auhtority of the Malé government over Addu in order to secure the Gan project. Yet Britain transported Afeef and his family to stay in exile in Seychelles in October 1963 (McAteer 2008, pp. 286-287). The final insult of the Maldivians being moved abroad without the

---

252 Interest in the Maldives returned when Sri Lanka ended the British military presence at Trincomalee harbor and Katunayake airport in 1948.

253 According to British High Commissioner to Maldives James Dauris, Britain was required to pay £2000 a year for leasing Gan (Dauris 2015). Inhabitants of Gan were to be resettled at the UK's expense. Britain now had to pay rent to Maldives: $100,000 immediately, and another $750,000 over five years (Luithui & Phadnis 1981, p. 171). The British also paid $25,000 per annum in foreign exchange for 900 local workers.

254 A descendent of a royal family. Cabinet was shocked at the agreement which they feared would make the Maldives a colony for 100 years.

255 Addu is located on the southern tip of the Maldives furthest from the capital. Its residents were prosperous during the British presence on Gan (*Maldives Independent* 2015). The British brought education, healthcare, cinema and higher income (*Maldives Independent* 2015b). The Malé government tried to prevent people from working for the British as they were becoming alienated from Malé (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 30-31). Addu residents protested when the government withheld salaries for nearly two months in 1958 (*Maldives Independent* 2015b).

256 Afeef's supporters were arrested, inhabitants ordered to leave; the island was declared uninhabited and buildings torched (Ashraf 2012, p. 33). This was the second armed expedition to crush the uprising. The first one was in July 1959.

British notifying the Malé government made Nasir determined to demand independence (Mohamed 2019).

The outrage caused by the 1956 agreement and the related uprising created national unity and protests against British rule which helped Nasir negotiate an agreement for independence. In a public referendum, the majority voted against the agreement for leasing Gan, and Britain accepted this decision (Rasheed 2014, p. 19). Britain was pressured to grant complete independence to the Maldives as a condition for continuing the facilities on Gan. The Maldives became independent on 26 July 1965.

Just prior to independence, the constitution was changed again in 1964 by Nasir. The Sultan became a figurehead with all executive power vested in the Prime Minister (Behera 2006, p. 30). However, as Prime Ministers were from monarchical families, constitutional changes did not herald any significant change in the power elite because the Sultan's descendants and nobles continued to rule (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 35).

The regime type in precolonial Maldives was monarchical as the mode of accessing and maintaining power was through hereditary succession or lineage. Monarchical authoritarian rule remained intact during the colonial era because although the Maldives was a British protectorate, it was self-administered. The Maldives moved from monarchy and colonial autocracy to monarchy and colonial restricted electoral autocracy via one-man rule after 1953 because the Sultan remained the constitutional head while the Prime Minister attained more administrative power. Families of monarchs, lords and nobles, continued to hold power in the Maldives as they occupied parliament and successive prime ministerial positions.

5.2.4 Development of the armed forces in pre-independence Maldives

The early military[257] in the Maldives grew in order to defend against imperial threats, pirates, and to wage wars with kingdoms on the Indian coast. The Maldives was vulnerable due to its location at the intersection of the east-west trade routes (Ashraf 2012, p. 27). A strong military was maintained from the 15th to mid-19th centuries with a land component

[257] It is difficult to get accurate figures for the size of the Maldives armed forces due to a lack of precise published data, more so for the precolonial and colonial era. Concrete figures are only provided where it is from a credible source.

comprising three regiments (gunners, martial arts and sword),[258] and a naval component comprising wooden ships fitted with cannons[259] (Ashraf 2012, p. 29).

The citizen-soldiers in the earlier military organisation were paid mostly by sustenance and some senior appointments rewarded with islands (Maldivesculture.com[260]). Soldiers' prestige increased due to their crucial role in defending the country from invasions from the 15th to 19th centuries. Government looked after the soldiers well and from 1917-1922, spending on chiefs and military was half of total government expenditure (Maldivesculture.com). Government's safeguarding of the formidable military's welfare ensured they stayed out of politics[261] (Ashraf 2012, p. 32).

The benefits ensured the military would maintain the status quo and leave political infighting to the monarch. The royal family was able to strictly control the military through the councils which comprised of their relatives and friends (Ashraf 2012, p. 20). Janowitz's (1975) aristocratic model of political-military elite applied in precolonial Maldives as monarchical families controlled leadership positions in the military. There was a traditional symbiotic relationship between the soldiers and the monarchy.

After the Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887, the military was largely used for internal security. Then the Sultan began to establish a small western-style military in 1892 in the form of an eight-member security unit (Ashraf 2012, p. 22). The unit called *Sifain* took part in a public ceremony on 20 April 1892 as part of the king's procession (Maldives Royal Family) and remained the preserve of the gentry during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Nooreddine Iskander. *Sifain* headquarters was called *Sifainge*. *Sifain* had ceremonial military roles until the late 1950s, when they began to undertake many other duties including policing and grew in size (Maldives Royal Family[262]). The Commander of the Army carried out the

---

[258] In the precolonial era, the security forces, armed with spears and swords, were known as *Hagubeykalun* (MoDNS 2012, p.18). Land militiamen were called *hangun* and naval militiamen were called *kalaaseen* (Maldives Royal Family). *Maldives National Security Service*, Maldives Royal Family Official Website: Majid's Pages, viewed 5 October 2018, <http://www.maldivesroyalfamily.com/maldives_nss.shtml>

[259] In the 1620s, Sultan Mukarram Muhammed Imad-ul-deen surrounded Malé with a 20-foot high fortified wall, with gun forts and bastions. The military built a fort system around Malé so they could attack ships entering and within the harbour (Ashraf 2012, p. 31).

[260] Maldivesculture.com had translations of writings by Maldivian historians. Viewed 17 April 2018.

[261] Ashraf (2012, p. 32) explains in his MA thesis: "The military was well taken care of by whoever was in power and was extremely busy defending the country from external threats and therefore did not have time or motivation to engage in domestic politics".

[262] In October 1907, the army repelled attacks by Maldivians Mohamed and Ibrahim Didi who landed with armed Indian mercenaries on northern islands in Maldives. Later in December 1909, they again repelled Mohamed and Ibrahim Didi's armed Indian expedition from Karachi, which had resulted in occupation of the Maldivian atoll Bandos. Maldivesculture.com, viewed 17 April 2018.

orders of the Sultan (MoDNS 2012, p.18). An Office of Peace and Security, created under the 1932 constitution, operated under the Minister for Security. This office processed all personal and professional requests by officers (MoDNS 2012, p. 19).

Instances when the army was deployed through this office to maintain peace during several major periods of unrest from 1932-1940 included: quelling the November 1933 motorboat rebellion[263] by ministers against the king; in 1934 when Sultan Mohamed Shamsudheen III was impeached from his rule; ensuring security in Malé during WWII and the resultant food shortages and instability till 1953; and providing security to the Sultan (MoDNS 2012, pp. 19-21).

As the Maldives did not have a police force, from the 1940s, the army was deployed for police affairs and security of jails. In the 1960s, there were about 300 army personnel (MoDNS 2012, pp. 19-20). The above information contradicts Zubair's (2013, p. 35-36) claim that there were no permanently organised military forces in the Maldives during the colonial era, except for ad hoc fighting squads, raised in response to threats. Ashraf (2012, p. 32) claims that for 60 years from 1892, *Sifain* had fewer than 50 soldiers. Arguably, the army's key role in maintaining internal security led to their increase in size to 300 by the 1960s.

The Maldives' military transformed from a formidable force that repelled foreign invasions in the precolonial era, to a domestic security force during colonialism. The Maldives' history has a special place for soldiers who had mutually beneficial relations with the monarchy. The monarch maintained patron-client relations with the military by providing well for them, which ensured loyalty and discouraged the military's interference in politics. Soldiers remained subservient to monarchical authority, which later translated to governmental authority, as the monarchy and elite families remained in control during colonial rule. The aristocratic model of political-military elite applied in precolonial Maldives, which remained intact during Britain's indirect colonial rule because the same elite continued to occupy government leadership.

[263] Maldives culture.com, viewed 17 April 2018.

5.3 Maldives post-independence authoritarianism 1965-2008

The Maldives remained under authoritarian rule at independence in 1965. Key political events and trends from independence till the commencement of the transition to democracy in 2008 are now examined. These will show how authoritarianism continued in the Maldives post-independence and provide understanding as to why the transition to democracy did not commence earlier despite the Maldives having a parliament and elections. The role and development of security forces, characteristics of authoritarian regimes, and challenges faced by the civil society under authoritarianism are examined in the sub-sections below on Nasir's one-man rule from 1965-1978 and Gayoom's one-man personal dictatorship from 1978-2008.

5.3.1 Nasir – one-man dictatorship from independence till 1978

In the Maldives, monarchical/one-man authoritarian rule persisted after independence on July 26 1965 with the Prime Minister Ibrahim Nasir having wide-ranging powers of oversight, appointments and authority over all state institutions. Independence did not empower ordinary citizens as elite families maintained their hold on political power, private business and society. Women again received the right to vote, after a fleeting opportunity in 1952-53, but universal suffrage did not bring democracy as the country lacked political pluralism due to the non-existence of political parties. It was a homogeneous society comprising of one ethnic group, and one religion, Islam,[264] where freethinkers were not tolerated.

The Maldives again became a Republic in November 1968 whereby the monarch's[265] position was replaced with the president and the prime minister position was scrapped. Nonetheless, the Majlis still chose a candidate from elite monarchical families to become the president for a five-year term, with people allowed to vote 'yes' or 'no' in a poll akin to a referendum.[266] The 1968 Constitution provided for a Citizens' Majlis comprised of 48 members, two each elected from 19 atolls, two from Malé, and eight nominated by the president (Luthui & Phadnis, 1985, p. 39). The election of Majlis members had features of

---

[264] The Presidential oath in the 1968 Constitution required swearing by Allah and respecting Islam - the Maldives' state religion, to which executives and legislators must adhere. The words of the oath are: "I swear by Allah that I shall respect the religion of Islam, the Constitution of Maldives and the Rights of citizens', and I shall not be unfaithful to any one of them," (Luithui and Phadnis 1985, p. 38).
[265] This in effect meant the Sultan was deposed (*BBC News* 2015a). It can thus be viewed as a coup-type event. Previously, the Sultanate was only ineffective for eight months in 1953 when Maldives first became a Republic.
[266] Interviews by author with Maldivian former senior officials and politicians, October-December 2017.

competitive elections as several candidates could contest for a parliamentary seat. But the competition was not free as the President controlled the rules and nominated one-sixth of the members.

The President had unlimited use of power which included appointing cabinet and government positions, banishing political dissidents to outer islands, approving laws, granting amnesty, conferring titles, and proclaiming temporary orders (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 38-41). The President's powers were greater than the Sultan's pre-independence powers, as they were not subject to oversight by either a monarch, a colonial official, parliament nor the judiciary. Nasir ruled as a one-man dictator from 1968-78 after receiving over 90% votes in the 1968 and 1973 referendums (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 38-41).

Despite the limited literature on Nasir's rule, it appears the purpose of the changeover to a Republic was simply to increase the powers of the president by removing the pre-existing checks by a monarch. Nasir rescinded the prime minister[267] position replacing it with four vice-presidents (Luithui & Phadnis 1985). While some liberties, including for women, remained post-independence,[268] administrative powers became restricted as slowly, by 1975, all decentralisation was removed and atoll chiefs became unelected with all appointments made by the President's Office.[269] Thus, by the late 1970s, Nasir's growing insecurity towards rivals led him to concentrate more power in his own hands. This meant that even political elites risked their safety if they displeased the President. His successor, Gayoom[270] was banished to Makunudhoo Island for four years in May 1973 merely for discussing politics, but returned five months later due to an amnesty from Nasir after his re-election (Ellis 1998, pp. 82-88). This implies Nasir did not want any official to become popular as it could potentially pose a threat to his leadership. Britain's colonial oversight and a Sultan had checked Nasir's powers till 1968 when all major decisions were consultative and justified by

[267] For instance, although by the 1970s Nasir re-established the post of Prime Minister and appointed a close friend Ahmad Zaki to it, when Zaki's popularity increased amongst *Majlis* members, he dismissed Zaki and banished him (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 40-41). This event could be equated to a coup.

[268] Some Maldivians believe more personal freedoms were enjoyed under Nasir and remember him as liberal. They refer to individual liberties prior to independence including commoners being allowed to wear sandals and use umbrellas, women allowed to visit shops and introduction of wages for government employees on atolls (*Maldives Independent* 2015a).

[269] By 1975, the elected atoll committees were replaced with appointed ones controlled by the President's Office, and the ministries for external affairs, communication, trade, finance, fisheries and education were abolished and became departments under the President's office (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, pp. 40-41).

[270] See also Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 42.

referendums. After independence, Nasir, already an autocrat, could not tolerate any opposition and became a dictator.[271]

Despite brutal aspects of Nasir's rule, he is credited as having brought positive developments to the Maldives. The President's Office describes Nasir as an independence hero who opened the Maldives to the world, built the first international airport, started the tourism industry, modernised fisheries, introduced English school curriculum, launched national television and radio, and made the Maldives the first SIDS nation to attain UN membership. The influx of tourists from 1972 (Ellis 1998, p. 80) replaced the earnings lost when Britain closed the RAF Gan base in 1976.[272]

Nasir did not seek re-election as the President in 1978 due to ill health. He refused his nomination by the Majlis. In the next round, four names were nominated from whom Maumoon Abdul Gayoom received the majority vote from 27 Majlis members (Ellis 1998, pp. 108-112). The sole candidate, Gayoom, subsequently received 92.96% votes in the referendum to become President on 11 November 1978 (Ellis 1998, pp. 108-112). Nasir had endorsed Gayoom's nomination for President, but after Gayoom's election he left to settle in Singapore. One reason could be that having created the absolute powers of the President, he did not want to risk being subject to them himself under Gayoom.[273]

The above discussion shows that deficiencies of democracy manifest in pre-independence authoritarian Maldives continued to exist under Nasir's post-independence one-man rule. Deficiencies existed because Linz and Stepan's (1996) five conditions for democracy were not met. These include: a free and lively civil society; autonomous political society; rule of law; rational-legal state bureaucracy; and an institutionalised economic society. Civil society organisations were non-existent in the Maldives; a political society existed but it was not

[271] Arguably, the impact of brutally crushing a secessionist uprising may have made him more autocratic. Some Maldivians feel Nasir had no choice but to use brutal force to crush the uprising, as that was expected of his position.
[272] This followed Britain's decision to withdraw all permanently stationed forces "East of Suez" (Mohamed 2019). Britain suffered huge losses in WWII and decided to relinquish expensive overseas bases (*Maldives Independent* 2015b). Revenue became necessary to fund developments for the Maldives population which increased by 40,000 over ten years from 103,801 in 1967 to 142,832 in 1977 (NBoS 2015, p. 14).
[273] After Nasir's departure, people became aware of the massive wealth Nasir had amassed and how he had manipulated the law to enable himself, his relatives and close associates, to buy tourist resorts (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 43). Nasir died in exile in Singapore in 2008; his body was brought back to Maldives and given a state funeral by then President Mohamed Nasheed (*Maldives Independent* 2015c).

autonomous as political pluralism was not allowed; and the rule of law, state bureaucracy and economic society were compromised as they were subject to the President's powers.

Although the Maldives' political system gave regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, (as per Lipset's prerequisite (1959, p. 71)), it was not a democracy because the President was chosen by the parliament and the general population only endorsed their choice in a referendum. The public were disallowed from influencing societal decision-making because they were unable to choose between alternative contenders for political office (Lipset 1959, p.71). There was choice in electing Majlis members; however, this choice was restricted as no parties were allowed and the elected official would have to defer to the President, and not act as an opposition party. Post-independence Maldives under Nasir was thus a dictatorship.

5.3.2 Gayoom – one-man personal rule from 1978-2008

Authoritarianism was perpetuated in the Maldives under Nasir's successor Gayoom who was the President from 1978-2008. His rule as a one-man personal dictator for 30 years is analysed below. In 2004, Gayoom was the longest-serving head of government in Asia (NDI 2004, p. 7). Gayoom promoted 'moderate'[274] Islam to safeguard tourism and introduced policies to nurture his image as the supreme authority on Islam in the Maldives (Hassan 2011, p. 28-29). He was descended from a noble (Ellis 1998, p. 18) and studied Islam at the Al Azhar[275] University in Egypt.

The Maldivians interviewed had varying views of Gayoom's rule compared to his predecessor Nasir. According to the former Elections Commission Chairman Fuwad Thowfeek:[276]

> "…people felt the first ten years of Gayoom were much better than Nasir's time, but the second and third decades were similar to Nasir's time of very tight control of the government and restricted freedom," (2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

[274] Gayoom's biography reveals that he revived the spirit of Islam in Maldives but also discouraged religious extremism (Ellis 1998, p. 117).
[275] He completed an MA there in 1966 (Ellis 1998, p. 67).
[276] Interviewed in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Thowfeek was with the Department of Statistics in Maldives for three decades. In 2008, he joined the Maldives Elections Commission becoming its Chairman a year later.

Another former Elections Commissioner[277] found that both Nasir and Gayoom were equally repressive politically, yet, Gayoom displayed more benevolence:

> "Gayoom was a benevolent dictator, doing enough for the people in terms of economy and welfare. Only political, civil liberties were restricted" (2017, pers. comm., 6 November).

Although Gayoom's biography claims that he was a consultative leader who transformed the Maldives into a democracy (Ellis 1998, p. 122), in reality, not much changed. In 1980, the legislature, executive and judiciary, were under the President who also appointed the chief justice, atoll chiefs (*khatibs*) and atoll *kazi* (religious head) (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 106). However, Gayoom did open the proceedings of the Majlis to the public and for reporting. Moreover, a 1979 law gave legislators immunity for expressing opinions that did not contravene Islamic principles (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 43). Gayoom adopted an open leadership style by holding public meetings, mass prayers, press conferences and travelling around the country (Luithui & Phadnis 1985, p. 43-47). Gayoom no doubt gained legitimacy, and the public's approval, by portraying himself as a benevolent populist leader, which contributed to the longevity of his rule.

This openness was not genuine because Gayoom was not in favour of freedom of expression. Action was taken against those critical of the government. This included closing the newspapers *Sangu* and *Hukuru* in 1990.[278] The government attracted controversy by allegedly locking up over a dozen intellectuals "who might criticise a government" during the fifth South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) summit hosted by the Maldives in November 1990 (Ellis 1998, p. 217). The culture of the "sultan's men" continued as individuals in the government were accountable to the ruler[279] (NDI 2004, p. 17). Thus, although Gayoom was a leader who kept in personal touch with the people, he was not open to criticism which meant the ruler was not accountable to anyone.

---

[277] Interviewed in Maldives.
[278] The newspaper *Sangu,* registered in December 1989, was closed in May 1990 for "articles inciting public against the government", and *Hukuru* newspaper, registered in March 1990, was closed in August 1990 because the owner was under arrest (Ellis 1998, p. 213).
[279] Rasheed (2013, p. 163) describes the president's control as similar to the traditional monarchical system based on 'command of the sovereign', whereby it was a normal practice to obey and follow the ruler.

Former parliamentarian Hamid A. Ghafoor[280] used the term "iron fist in a velvet glove" to describe Gayoom's rule, because his public relations made him appear "sophisticated", but in reality, people were being tortured:

> "There were about 120 unaccounted people, mostly disappeared while detained in prison. The President controlled all appointments to government. Clubs were always infiltrated by state functionaries... To enter politics or parliament, you had to come through government, be a favoured person in the inner circle," (2017, pers. comm., 8 December).

Dr Azra Naseem,[281] a Maldivian academic researching on Islamic radicalisation in the Maldives at Dublin City University, Ireland, revealed the contradictions in Gayoom's rule:

> "People felt Gayoom's rule was peaceful and good as they were used to being ruled from top-down. But people had to beg to Gayoom for certain things. Most families in Malé would have written Gayoom a letter, as it was the norm to request his help for things such as education assistance, money for medicine or overseas treatment, and to get land or divide land… Many families in Malé wrote to beg Gayoom to release their child or sibling from jail as heroin addiction was common in the late 1990s…My mother wrote for money for my father's treatment. I also wrote and got funding for journalism studies in Ireland," (2018, pers. comm., 2 February).

Although it could be argued that people writing personally to the President epitomises a ruler taking interest in their subjects, in reality, it signifies authoritarian personal control as it allows the ruler to endorse or reject the needs of the people. It thus makes people dependent on the ruler's approval and unwilling to oppose him.

Human rights advocate, Ahmed Tholal,[282] confirmed that the President's discretion applied over a wide range of matters, including:

> "…permits for house construction; commuting sentences or releasing arrested relatives so they wouldn't end up in prison where there was rampant torture. If it's political arrest, they had to ask for the President's forgiveness. There was a lot of patronage, cronyism, and corruption as who government favoured was entirely at the President's discretion. The pre-2008 era perception was a false façade of peacefulness; people couldn't protest. There was so much suppression, authoritarianism, and no avenue for people to adjudicate these concerns because the judiciary, parliament and executive were the President. There was no separation of powers," (2017, pers. comm., 8 November).

[280] Ghafoor is also a former civil servant, being a teacher and Director of Sports during Gayoom's rule. He joined the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in 2006 and was the party's spokesman, as well as a parliamentarian. In 2017, he was living in exile in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
[281] Dr Naseem runs a website 'Dhivehi Sitee' which looks at Maldivian politics.
[282] Interviewed in the Maldives. Tholal was Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM) from 2010-2015. Since 2016, he has been the senior project coordinator of the human rights project with Transparency Maldives.

This manner of the President dominating society by directly dispensing services as well as controlling the legislature and judiciary, is a feature of Geddes' (1999) authoritarian personal rule.

Furthermore, the atoll chiefs did the President's bidding, as he appointed them. Ghafoor recalled one election during the Gayoom era when his wife - a teacher, was on an island during the Presidential elections in which Gayoom was the only candidate, and went to vote:

> "An island chief was sitting next to the voting box making sure you voted correctly with a standard tick. If anybody voted against by putting a cross, they won't let you put it in the box. In more tense situations, they would change it… There were no rules. For example, in another election, my wife told me the *Khatib*[283] openly said: 'please make a tick, you can't put anything else'," (2017, pers. comm., 8 December).

Additionally, the Majlis elections were not considered free from government influence and were described by one Maldivian as an "informal system that enables the government to get its person elected" (NDI 2004, p. 27). Maldivians revealed that the Minister of Atolls Development surveyed atolls prior to elections to pressure certain people to run as candidates and discourage others[284] (NDI 2004, p. 27). The Maldives Election Commission (MEC) was heavily influenced by the President's office which reviewed its decisions.

Gayoom had suffered the brutality of Nasir's dictatorship and had promised, upon his election in 1978, to make constitutional reforms to usher in a democratic government (Ellis 1998, p. 151). His failure to introduce democracy sooner indicates his desire for power was stronger than his moral obligation to fulfill his promise.[285] The constitutional review finally commenced in 1980. It took 17 years for a non-independent special committee nominated by Gayoom to produce an undemocratic 1997 Constitution (Rasheed 2013, pp. 143-146). Gayoom served five consecutive terms as President without facing democratic, or even competitive authoritarian, elections.

---

[283] Government-appointed island chief.

[284] Atoll and island chiefs administered elections and transported ballot boxes to the MEC. Maldivians reported the chiefs were present to ensure elections go "according to plan" (NDI 2004, p. 28). Appointed by the President, the chiefs' acts of impropriety on election day included: stuffing ballot boxes, review of citizens' ballots to ensure there are no "mistakes," and use of undue influence (NDI 2004, p. 28).

[285] Gayoom justified his long rule by claiming that the *Majlis* advised he would need more than one term to improve the country for democracy's introduction (Ellis 1998, p. 149-50). The *Majlis* concurred as elections were managed by the president's appointees, making it highly unlikely for an opponent of Gayoom to enter parliament. The excessive authority of rulers and weak provisions to limit abuse of power under the 1968 Constitution, were utilised by Gayoom to delay constitutional review and maintain the status quo (Rasheed 2013, pp. 143-146).

The 1997 constitution brought no significant changes as the president still had excessive powers and control over the executive, legislature and judiciary. It did not provide for multiparty[286] elections as Gayoom purported it would create conflict in the Maldives, and did not include democratic measures for accountability and transparency, such as media freedom (Rasheed 2013, pp. 147-150). Gayoom maintained control partly by appointing relatives, and people with special connections to him, to key ministerial and bureaucratic positions (Rasheed 2013, p. 187). Until 2003, power was so centralised the President concurrently held the portfolios of the commander in chief, the minister of finance, minister of defence, supreme authority for judicial review and power to appoint eight of the 52-member legislature (Ashraf 2012, p. 24). In addition, the President appointed atoll chiefs, ministers, the attorney general, as well as the parliament's speaker and secretary-general[287] (NDI 2004, p. 7). These wide-ranging powers of appointment gave the President administrative control over the Maldives. Furthermore, competition in Majlis elections was restricted because voters going against the government-backed candidate could find difficulty in obtaining government services such as medical attention, loans, scholarships and licenses (NDI 2004, p. 28). This restricted competition under the 1997 constitution enabled the journalist, and Gayoom's critic, Mohamed Nasheed's election to the Majlis in 1999. However, six months later, Nasheed was sentenced to two-and-half years' banishment for unspecified reasons (Nuttin, Schulz & Vuylsteke 2006, p. 8).

Notwithstanding the atmosphere of political repression, the Maldives progressed to an upper-middle income country under Gayoom[288] (UN-OHRLLS 2013, p. 23). The country experienced substantial economic growth and literacy rates rose to over 95% (NDI 2004, p. 2). The population doubled during Gayoom's rule from 142,832 in 1977 to 298,968 in 2006 (NBoS 2015, p. 14). These developments encouraged popular support for Gayoom amongst some segments of the population, but also created discontent amongst those who remained disadvantaged (see section 5.3.5). Gayoom maintained strong relations with India,[289] but also fostered friendship with China. Gayoom visited China in 1984 and 2006. Chinese projects in

[286] In August 1982, Gayoom explained in a telling interview that the Maldives did not need political parties (Ellis 1998, p. 149-50, p. 45).
[287] Government also controlled many employment and educational opportunities. Atoll and island chiefs, in turn, controlled services through patronage making it difficult for the opposition to compete (NDI 2004, p. 17). Charitable giving by wealthy candidates was the only way for opposing candidates to compete against the advantages of incumbency the government had through use of state resources (NDI 2004, p. 33).
[288] This was a significant improvement from being one of the 20 poorest countries in the world when Gayoom took power (Ellis 1998, p. 121).
[289] India - a non-aligned power during the Cold War – was the 'friendly neighbour' patrolling the Indian Ocean.

the Maldives commenced in 1985. These amounted to a value of $46.37 million by 2001, including buildings and infrastructure (Kumar 2016, pp. 71-72).

It is discernible from the literature and interviewees disclosures that Gayoom's one-man personal dictatorship had features typical of authoritarian regimes: gifting, dependency on the dictator for services, rewards for 'loyalists', laws and institutions designed in the dictator's favour, and a patronage system. Gayoom nurtured loyalist elites, recognising their mutual dependency for survival and enrichment. Subsequent sections will show how he kept in personal touch with the security services, which, combined with widespread patronage, as well as repression of critics and opponents, maintained his autocracy for three decades.

5.3.3 Maldives - development of the armed forces under post-independence authoritarianism

The Maldivian armed forces grew tremendously after independence. Major issues that impacted the armed forces from 1965 till 2008 are now assessed to elucidate their role under authoritarianism. Janowitz's monarchical model of political-military elite relations applied in precolonial and pre-independence Maldives. When the Maldives became a republic in 1968, the political-military relationship changed somewhat under Nasir, and later, Gayoom. Instead of the monarch, soldiers were subservient to the President and swore an oath of allegiance to him.[290] This rendered explicit that their loyalty was to the President who had the power to deploy them for any activity. Janowitz's civil-military relations category of authoritarian-personal control (1975, p. 138) applies to post-independence authoritarian regimes under Nasir and Gayoom as they were based on personal and traditional power, which, Janowitz stated, is likely to be found in nations just beginning the process of modernisation. Nasir was a descendent of a monarch and Gayoom was descendent from a noble; therefore, the armed forces' loyalty to these rulers were derived from the Maldives' traditional system of loyalty to monarchical and elite families.

Governments took a keen interest in the military, maintaining it with almost an open budget, and the enormous benefits reached a peak under Gayoom (Zubair 2013, p. 2). Historically, soldiers were highly respected in the Maldives for defending the country from invasions, and

[290] Interview with former senior MNDF officer, 20 November 2017, Malé, Maldives.

providing assistance during emergencies and reconstruction work.[291] However, the army was repressive during Nasir's and Gayoom's eras and was feared.[292]

After independence in the 1970s, the *Sifain* militia was renamed the National Security Guard (NSG) and later the National Security Service (NSS)[293] (Maldives Royal Family). President Nasir kept the military as a domestic security force, coupling it with the police force (Ashraf 2012). The police became a separate branch within the security force on 13 March 1972 (Zubair 2013, p. 36). Gayoom, after becoming President in 1978, embarked on modernising the NSS initially with assistance from the illiberal states of Iraq, Libya and Kuwait. Later training was provided by the USA, UK, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, New Zealand and the Philippines (Ellis 1998, p. 124). The military was used for policing and, by the autocratic leaders Nasir and Gayoom, to curb political opponents. Stories of brutality in prisons run by the armed forces, were only hearsay previously, but became public with freedom of expression in the new millennium (Zubair 2013, p. 37-38). Zubair[294] refers to a recent book by Ahmed Shafeeq which documented 111 prison deaths under Gayoom. Nasheed, later destined to be president, was jailed several times under Gayoom (see next section).

Three attempted coups occurred during Gayoom's reign. Following one attempt in 1980 by supporters of the previous President, who hired a group of ex-British SAS mercenaries, Gayoom started developing the police and the military as separate units within the NSS. He changed the Ministry of Public Safety to its current name, the Ministry of Defense and National Security (Ashraf 2012, p. 38). Gayoom kept the portfolio of the Minister of Defense ensuring personal control (Ashraf 2012, p. 39). In 1983, Ahmed Naseem[295] recruited some former Royal Marines to topple the regime (Zubair 2013, p. 23), but the attempt was unsuccessful.

[291] Attested to in interviews with several key actors in Maldivian public life. Interview with former member of a human-rights institution, 6 November 2017, Malé, Maldives.
[292] This view was expressed by a few well-known Maldivians in interviews.
[293] Maldives.culture.com, viewed 18 May 2018.
[294] Zubair and Ashraf are Maldivian soldiers whose MA theses were cited from earlier in the chapter.
[295] A former Foreign Minister, and cousin of former President Mohamed Nasheed.

The deadliest coup attempt was the 3 November 1988 attack[296] by the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam[297] (PLOTE) defeated with Indian navy assistance (Ashraf 2012, p. 34). It was led by the Maldivians Abdulla Luthufee[298] and Ahmed Nasir who travelled from Sri Lanka with PLOTE to attack the Maldives (Zubair 2013, p. 23). The coup makers attempted to capture the NSS Headquarters, the nation's only security installation. After a gunfight lasting 18 hours, they took two dozen civilian hostages and hijacked a merchant ship anchored off Malé. They were captured on the high seas with the help of the Indian military (Ashraf 2012, p. 34). Nineteen Maldivians died in this attempted coup and its leader Luthufee was sentenced to death by the Maldivian court, which was commuted to life imprisonment (Junayd 2019).

The 1988 failed invasion triggered a reorganisation of the NSS, to prepare against potential future attacks. With British help, soldiers received training in infantry and war fighting, an infantry training school was opened in Girifushi, and soldiers received training in other countries through defence cooperation. After 1988, military personnel, equipment and capabilities grew exponentially (Ashraf 2012, p. 34). It was difficult to establish the size of the Maldives armed forces as that information has always been classified.[299] However, the estimated size from the years 2000 to 2013 is discussed in section 5.4.5.

It is evident that Janowitz's civil-military relations category of authoritarian-personal control applied under Nasir's and Gayoom's rule where, under the Republic, instead of the monarch, the soldiers' allegiance was to the President who directly controlled the armed forces. From a domestic security force under colonialism, the Maldives' armed forces grew exponentially under Gayoom into a large, professional force following several coup attempts by opponents with external assistance. Soldiers' prior subservience to monarchical authority transferred to the President, yet traditional elite families remained in control post-independence.

5.3.4 Maldives – civil society challenges under one-man rule

Rights-based organisations and trade unions were non-existent in the Maldives at independence. Advocacy against the repressive dictatorship was a risky exercise for the

[296] In Maldives, this attack is regarded as a terrorist invasion or a terrorist attack.
[297] A Tamil resistance group in Sri Lanka.
[298] Luthufee was serving life imprisonment but was on the run after escaping in 2010. He surrendered at Maldives embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka in May 2019 (Junayd 2019).
[299] This was revealed by senior Maldivian officials interviewed between October 2017-May 2018.

general population who comprise the civil society, and challenges they encountered are examined below. Maldivian society was culturally, ethnically and religiously homogeneous, had no independence or labour movements, and lacked historical experience of ideologically based mass organising (NDI 2004, p. 16). There was a lack of CSOs advocating for civil and political rights and a leading role was played by politicians and professionals. The agitation for democracy from the late 1990s and the commencement of the democratisation process in the early to mid-2000s saw a handful of rights-based CSOs emerge.

The 40 odd years of authoritarian rule from independence in 1965 till the commencement of reforms for democratisation was a period when officially sanctioned torture and ill treatment by the security services was widespread and systematic[300] (Torture Victims' Association Maldives 2012, p. 1). Any form of dissent was punished. A parastatal organisation's employee discloses the severe controls imposed under Gayoom's rule:

> "Any form of dissenting was punished and normally resulted in being imprisoned with no charges being forwarded. Dissent of all forms such as drawing satire cartoons, newspaper articles or even the act of saying "I want to see another president than Gayoom" could land you in trouble. There were travel restrictions for those who spoke out and their whereabouts were monitored," (2018, pers. comm., 28 May).

The new millennium brought the internet which, combined with overseas travel and education, increased Maldivians' awareness of democracy and enjoyment of political rights in other nations.[301] From the late 1990s, there was organised domestic opposition to Gayoom's rule. Agitation for rights intensified and could not be deterred through arbitrary arrests. Past imprisonment did not dissuade Nasheed[302] from using the media to criticise the government and expose corruption and torture (Didi 2012, p. 71). Nasheed, declared a 'prisoner of conscience' by Amnesty International in 1991, and granted refugee status by Britain in 2004, was instrumental in bringing democracy to the Maldives (The President's Office (a)).

[300] The torture and long periods of arbitrary detention of political and ordinary prisoners had significant impacts on survivors. Successive governments were ineffective in providing justice to the victims (Torture Victims' Association Maldives 2012).
[301] Perception of several Maldivians interviewed.
[302] Nasheed was jailed and tortured several times after founding the newspaper *Sangu* in 1989 (see section 5.3.2), and even jailed after winning a *Majlis* seat in 1999 (The President's Office (a)). See also: Khan 2018; Mishra 2019.

Gayoom clung to his authoritarian rule, despite these agitations. A senior human rights professional believes Gayoom failed to take up opportunities for peaceful democratisation sooner, because of his desire to hold onto power:

> "Gayoom and his supporters somehow believed the infallibility of the regime and lacked accountability. Gayoom was a very grandiose person, a person who has such self-admiration...[303] He was highly educated but chose not to be receptive of democratic ideals until he was forced to. When there was popular uprising, he didn't talk about democracy. Only when he was completely cornered, and he was given no choice but to introduce political reforms around 2004, that is when he started," (2017, pers. comm., 6 November).

By the mid-2000s, internal and external pressure led to the creation of CSOs and political parties. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami provided an opportunity for Western donors to make demands on the government to improve its human rights record since rebuilding depended on external donor assistance (Didi 2012, pp. 92-93). Two new CSOs emerged that were regarded as independently advocating for human rights:[304] the Maldivian Democratic Network (MDN) and Transparency Maldives (TM). Several other CSOs that appeared by 2004 avoided criticising the government as they did not want to jeopardise receiving government funding (NDI 2004, p.19).

CSOs critical of the government went through tough times. Member of Parliament Ali Hussain believes CSOs faced challenges because of their erroneous portrayal as anti-Islam:

> "CSOs are treated very unfairly as forces created by the western un-Islamic countries. Their voices are not being heard. I've seen in government they are considered as evil. They are being portrayed as *Laadheeni* (against Islam). For that reason, we have very few actively working CSOs," (2017, pers. comm., 16 November).

As Islam is the Maldives' state religion, critics of government faced challenges as Maldivians were accustomed to lives regulated by Islam and promotion of freedom was associated with western values. Ireland-based Maldivian academic, Dr Azra Naseem believes that such regulation limited freedom to think in the Maldives:

---

[303] Gayoom was further described as, "He is very high in narcissistic self-importance. He built his regime around his personality as a sort of cult trying to make people believe that everything Gayoom has done, said or thought about, is always right," (2017, pers. comm., 6 November).

[304] The Law Society of the Maldives was one organisation that engaged in political reform and recommended in its submission to the President to have a new article in the constitution on the right to form and join political parties (NDI 2004, p.19). See also: Khan 2018; Mishra 2019.

> "You have to conform, be a Muslim, follow rules. Anybody who does not follow the prescribed rules and regulations is considered an outlaw, a misfit or an apostate," (2018, pers. comm., 2 February).

To conclude, post-independence CSO development in the Maldives was curtailed by punishment of dissent by the government and because they were characterised as anti-Islam. Absence of rights-based CSOs meant that agitation for democracy was largely carried out by individuals in the Maldives who were later joined by the wider civil and political society.

5.3.5 The push for democratisation

Several factors compelled the Maldives government to implement democratisation reforms from 2003 to 2008, which are now scrutinised. Although the country experienced economic growth under Gayoom, it did not close the gap between the rich and the poor. Authoritarianism and unequal benefits from tourism increased the wealth of the elites and resulted in development problems in areas of health, education, and local productivity (Rasheed 2013, pp. 170-173). Social problems such as drug abuse and crimes worsened. In the 2000s, unable to address development problems, the government started losing public confidence and was facing international pressure for violation of basic human rights (Rasheed 2013, p. 174).

Human rights in the Maldives were put under the international spotlight when Evan Naseem, arrested for drug possession, died in prison in September 2003 after being beaten during police interrogation (Rasheed 2013, p. 176). To draw attention to the prevalence of human rights abuse, torture and unexplained disappearances under Gayoom's rule, Naseem's mother defiantly displayed her 19-year old son's brutalised body in the Republic Square in Malé, igniting riots (Robinson 2015, p. 2). Naseem's death sparked prison riots in which authorities killed three inmates and injured 17 (Robinson 2015, p. 2).

These riots, combined with the international donors favouring democracy, growing internal dissent from educated and empowered Maldivians, and exposure to global issues through the internet, compelled Gayoom to finally initiate changes for democracy. However, Gayoom's commitment to democratisation did not seem genuine because his government refused registration of the Maldives' first political party, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), founded in 2001. Also, because of the absence of legislation for political parties, the MDP registered in Sri Lanka in 2003, and relocated their headquarters there to operate in exile

(NDI 2004, p. 8). Nevertheless, the desire for authentic democratic reform was widespread and existed not only in Malé but also in the atolls[305] (NDI 2004, p.19).

The reforms to introduce pluralistic democracy were announced in Gayoom's speech on 9 June 2004 and Independence Day address on 26 July 2004 (NDI 2004, p. 3). It aimed at conducting multiparty elections by 2008. There was greater scrutiny from international organisations and a European Union (EU) delegation visited the Maldives followed by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Amnesty International, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the US Embassy (NDI 2004, p. 24). These international organisations took an active role in advancing democratisation by providing advice and assistance to the Maldives. But actual changes to legislation for democratisation had not yet commenced.

Throughout 2004, there was increasing political unrest and several protest demonstrations (NDI 2004, pp. 9-10) resulting in curfews and declarations of state of emergency. Mass public protests, sometimes involving violence by the protestors and crackdown by the security forces, characterised the struggle for democracy in the Maldives. One example was the protest demonstration at the Jumhooree Maidhaan on August 12 and 13 2004, where demands were made for the President to resign, two police officers were stabbed and over 185 individuals arrested[306] (NDI 2004, p. 9). The NSS' violent crackdown on mostly unarmed civilians on 13 August is known as Black Friday, following which Gayoom declared a state of emergency (Nuttin, Schulz & Vuylsteke 2006, p. 8). The protests were compounded by a volatile atmosphere in Malé where, by 2006, the population had increased to 94,128, amounting to one-third of the Maldives population[307] (NBoS 2015). As Malé is one of the most densely populated areas in the world (NBoS 2015), it provides fertile ground for social instability.

In addition to internal and external pressure, Gayoom's authoritarian control was further shaken by devastation from the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004, which made the Maldives dependent on aid to rebuild. As Ghafoor notes:

[305] Many people signed the MDP's request for registration not because they supported that party, but because it was pressuring the government for reform (NDI 2004, p. 20). This indicates that the Maldivians largely supported the MDP because they desired democracy.
[306] The protests were also influenced by the perception that government remained in the hands of the 'old guard' which created deep frustration among youth (NDI 2004, p. 15).
[307] The Maldives' population doubled to 298,968 from 1977 to 2006 (see section 5.1.1).

> "…the tsunami was like the English saying: 'the feather that broke the camel's back'. The political dissent was at a peak at that time. Then the tsunami hit…" (2017, pers. comm., 8 December).

The tsunami[308] caused damage of US$400 million and killed 108 people (Robinson 2015, p. xiii). Subsequent aid conditionality facilitated further democratic reforms for political liberalisation.

Reforms proceeded gradually with occasional set-backs. A 2005 presidential decree allowed political parties to be established (Rasheed 2013, pp. 175-177). The MDP's founder Nasheed returned from exile in April 2005. The party received the Maldives government's recognition in June 2005 (Nuttin, Schulz & Vuylsteke 2006, p. 8). Yet Nasheed was arrested again in August 2005, resulting in an outbreak of violent unrest which culminated in a protest march by about 1,200 MDP supporters on 2 October (Nuttin, Schulz & Vuylsteke 2006, p. 11). Nasheed was charged with terrorism which was later dropped. Such incidents created cynicism, amongst Maldivians and international organisations alike, about Gayoom's sincerity towards implementing democracy reforms.

Nevertheless, during this period the government did create independent oversight institutions and allowed civil society to be more active (The Government of Maldives 2006). A Human Rights Commission of Maldives (HRCM) was set up in December 2003. It was made independent in 2005 to measure up to international human rights standards. The Commissioner of Elections position was made less dependent on the President by requiring parliament's approval for appointments and dismissals (GOM 2006, p.6). In 2004, the Maldives Police Force was created as a separate organisation from the army to improve standards to democratic policing.[309] In November 2005, the President announced the establishment of a Judicial Service Commission for appointments and dismissals of judges and strengthening the independence of the judiciary (GOM 2006, p. 4). In February 2006, those convicted for sedition and defamation were pardoned (GOM 2006, p.8). Assistance for the reforms was received from the EU, the OHCHR and the Commonwealth.

Democratisation brought new freedoms but threats emerged against it in the form of Islamic fundamentalism. The bombing of Sultan Park in Malé in September 2007 was viewed as anti-

[308] Vilufushi island was worst struck by the tsunami with 19 deaths in a population of about 2,200, almost all buildings were destroyed and residents lived in refugee camps for four years on the nearby island Buruni (Chesshyre 2015, pp 110-111). Residents finally returned in 2009 to live in 250 new earthquake resistant homes constructed by the British Red Cross (Chesshyre 2015, p. 113).

[309] Prison reform included a code of conduct for wardens and inmates, and a Jail Oversight Committee (GOM 2006, p. 7).

democratisation. Suspects included Maldivian youth with a connection to radical Islamic terror groups in Pakistan[310] (Didi 2012, p. 207). Another concern was intolerance by Maldivian Muslims towards other religions which made Maldivians who do not want to be Muslims afraid to practice freedom of religion (Didi 2012, p. 207).

Democratisation was prominent in the Maldives 2008 constitution which featured civil rights, separation of powers and mechanisms for accountability and transparency.[311] A presidential system was retained as 60% of the public voted for it in an August 2007 referendum (Kumar 2016, p. 13). The new constitution required the president and legislature (Majlis) to be elected every 5 years with the president having a two-term limit. As before, two members from each of the 20 administrative atolls and Malé could be elected to the Majlis. An innovation was that highly populated atolls could elect an additional member per 5000 people.[312] However, the Constitution was only ratified on 7 August 2008, creating problems for the presidential election in October (Commonwealth Secretariat 2008, p. 14).

Development problems due to unequal distribution of wealth, internal pressure for democracy, protests against torture after Naseem's death and ensuing unrest, as well as aid conditionality, led to political liberalisation. Civil society and political society worked together to campaign for democratisation, which culminated in the Maldives' first multiparty elections in 2008.

5.4 Maldives transition to democracy 2008-2012

The Maldives' transition to democracy commenced with its milestone multiparty Presidential elections in 2008, but stalled with the forced resignation of President Nasheed in February 2012. Competitive elections heralded a change in the elite status quo. It meant that Maldives met a fundamental benchmark for measuring democracy 43 years after independence. The results of the 2008 Presidential elections, the 2009 Majlis elections, and the key events leading to the coup-type event of 2012, are now examined. The roles of the political society and the judiciary are critiqued, as well as the caretaker regime of Nasheed's successor,

[310] A Maldivian, Ibrahim Fauzee, was arrested in an al-Qaeda hideout in Pakistan by US Forces in 2004, bringing international attention to the Maldives' involvement in terrorism (Hassan 2011, p. 51).
[311] The constitution provided for an independent judiciary, basic rights and freedoms (with the qualification that freedom of expression must not violate Islam), and independent commissions (Kumar 2016, p. 14).
[312] The increased seat allocations for higher populated atolls provided for a bigger *Majlis* and Malé could now elect at least 18 members.

President Waheed, to reveal why democracy was not consolidated post-2008. A subsection on military ideology analyses the armed forces' actions during Nasheed's rule, and its role in the 2012 coup.

5.4.1 The 2008 and 2009 elections

The Maldives 2008 Presidential election was historic because, for the first time, there were political parties and there was more than one Presidential candidate. The election was contested by six candidates on 8 October. They received the following votes: Gayoom of Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) – 40.63%; MDP's Nasheed – 25.09%; Independent candidate Dr Hassan Saeed – 16.78%; Gasim Ibrahim of Jumhooree Party (JP) – 15.32%; Umar Naseer of Islamic Democratic Party (IDP) – 1.4%; and Ibrahim Ismail of Social Liberal Party (SLP) – 0.78% (Commonwealth Secretariat 2008, p. 21).

As no candidate secured a majority of votes in the first round (over 50%), a second round of the Presidential election was held on 28 October. Political parties with differing ideologies formed a coalition in order to change the government. The parties JP (also known as Republican Party), SLP, and an Independent candidate Saeed, formed an alliance with the MDP and endorsed its candidate Nasheed who won the second round receiving 54.21% votes, while Gayoom received 45.79% (Commonwealth Secretariat 2008, pp. 36-42). The coalition of parties and the voting outcome demonstrates that the wider civil society and political society worked together to achieve the common goal of changing the government. Thus, the Maldives first multi-party election in 2008 was a victory for democracy as it enabled a peaceful change of government and elected President Nasheed, who had been jailed many times and tortured by the Gayoom regime (Didi 2012, p. 149). Gayoom's 30 year autocracy finally ended.

The Commonwealth Secretariat (2008) found many aspects of the elections were credible. It noted, however, that the government delayed implementing key reforms. The adoption of the constitution in August 2008 and its requirement for elections to be conducted by 10 October resulted in a severe contraction of time periods for various electoral processes. The election campaign commenced only 10 days prior to the election. Transparency Maldives (TM 2008) observed that laws and regulations were created to accommodate deadlines rather than quality

election administration. TM and the Commonwealth both observed an improvement in the second round of the elections where many issues raised by them were addressed.[313]

The People's Majlis elections were conducted seven months later on 9 May 2009. Of the 77 seats, the MDP with 30.81% votes got 26 seats; Gayoom's DRP with 24.62% votes got 28 seats; Independents with 30% votes got 13 seats; the new People's Alliance (PA) led party by Gayoom's half-brother Abdulla Yameen with 4.99% votes got 7 seats; the new Dhivehi Qaumee Party (DQP) led by Dr Saeed with 3.52% votes got 2 seats; JP with 4.22% votes got 1 seat; and 6 other parties won no seats, including the Gaumee Itthihaad Party (GIP) (Kumar 2016, p. 18). GIP's Mohamed Waheed Hassan Manik (known as Waheed) became the Vice President. The lack of a coalition in the Majlis elections meant MDP did not get the majority of seats in parliament. Again, the Commonwealth found many aspects of the elections to be credible.[314]

The political and civil society worked together to bring about a change in leadership. A new President of the Maldives was elected through a broad coalition of political parties. However, the coalition was not retained for the parliamentary election as the parties did not share common ideologies. The result was victory for the former dictator Gayoom's party, DRP, in the Majlis elections, which created challenges for democratisation.

5.4.2 The 2012 coup

The challenges encountered by the new President Nasheed and the events leading to the 2012 coup are now scrutinised. Nasheed's leadership was contested by the beneficiaries of authoritarian rule, who dominated the government and private sector and obstructed democratic reforms. Nasheed acquired global attention as the Maldives' first democratically elected President and received a panoply of international awards for democratisation, human

[313] For instance, the election commissioners were appointed on 4 September, the Elections Act was enacted on 15 September, and the Supreme Court assumed office on 18 September. The campaign commenced on 28 September – just 10 days prior to the elections (Commonwealth Secretariat 2008). The Commonwealth and the domestic observation report by TM (2008) noted the following key forms of preparation were compromised: electoral officials' training, voter education and registration, as well as voter list verifications.
[314] However, they noted the Majlis' failure to enact necessary legislations in a timely manner meant the constitution's requirement for the Majlis elections to be held by 15 February 2009 was not met (Commonwealth Secretariat 2009). The Commonwealth (2009) noted that CSOs such as TM played an active educational and monitoring role in the 2008 Presidential elections but had a less active role in the 2009 Majlis elections.

rights and environmental protection.[315] Nasheed had close relations with India, viewing it as an ally for democracy.[316]

The leadership changeover as a result of Nasheed's victory brought the Maldives into transition to democracy, but did not greatly change the status quo. Elite families and powerful businessmen continued to wield great influence. Nasheed himself hailed from a merchant family background (Mishra 2019) and had tertiary education in England. The JP leader Gasim was a business tycoon and related to Gayoom's wife, while the PA leader Yameen was Gayoom's half-brother.[317] Most political parties owed some loyalty to Gayoom as they benefitted from his patronage through assistance to their business, education or jobs (see section 5.3.2). Hence, Nasheed's global accolades were insufficient to obtain the cooperation of opposition parties.

The vestiges of dictatorship, including persistent support for the previous dictator, adversely affected Nasheed's government. The MDP lacked a parliamentary majority as the former dictator Gayoom's party DRP held the most Majlis seats. This created challenges for democratic rule. Nasheed and his governing coalition found it difficult to pass bills which in turn led to resignations and reappointments of government ministers (Bonofer 2010). Dramatic switches in political allegiance by parties, including the departure of the JP and the DQP from the initial coalition (Bonofer 2010) stymied effective governance. The MDP's coalition 'partner', the Adhaalath Party (AP) - a Muslim nationalist party, organised mass rallies to portray the MDP as focused on destroying Islam in the Maldives (Musthaq 2014, p. 168) (Hassan 2011, pp. 32-34). In a similar vein, the JP leader Qasim called for *jihad* against the MDP and the DQP accused Nasheed's government of undermining Islam (Musthaq 2014, p. 169).

[315] Nasheed's global support was no doubt boosted by the MDP's pledges to improve the lives of the poor by introducing: old-age pensions, allowances for single mothers, universal health care, and taxing tourism more to raise revenue (Musthaq 2014, p. 169). Nasheed's fight against climate change gained international recognition through actions such as conducting an underwater cabinet meeting in October 2009 (Robinson 2015, p. xiv). He won the 2009 Anna Lindh Prize for promoting human rights, democracy and environmental protection. He was declared a 'Hero of the Environment' in September 2009. He won the United Nations' 'Champions of the Earth' environment award in April 2010; and Newsweek listed him amongst the 'world's ten best leaders' in August 2010 (The President's Office (a)).

[316] Chinese influence appeared to decrease after the 2008 democratic elections, nevertheless Nasheed signed a loan agreement in 2009 with the China National Machinery & Export & Equipment Corporation for construction of 4,000 housing units (Kumar 2016, p.73).

[317] These elite relationships were conveyed in interviews with several Maldivians.

The Maldives' fledgling democracy was thus hindered by the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. Prevailing social conditions, and newfound freedoms of expression and association, provided opportunity for infiltration by radical elements into the Maldives[318] (Hassan 2011, p. v). Nasheed, being a democrat, was unwilling to restrict social movements. This allowed a spread of puritanical Islam aligned to Arab Wahhabi and Salafi ideologies, which had gained a foothold after the human suffering caused by the 2004 tsunami (Naseem 2015, p. 117). Over 2009-2013, there were reports of Maldivians joining al-Qaeda and fighting alongside terrorists in Pakistan (Hassan 2011; Naseem 2015). Other challenges faced by Nasheed's government included: inheriting a large budget deficit[319] and high debts, and the global financial crisis which caused a decline in tourism revenue (Commonwealth 2009; Kumar 2016).

Gayoom had not secured immunity for alleged past misdeeds and agitated against Nasheed's government with his loyalists (Kumar 2016). In July 2009, Gayoom was summoned by the Presidential Commission which was investigating alleged embezzlement and other corruption (Bonofer 2010). As a consequence, in January 2010, 72-year old Gayoom announced his retirement from politics (Bonofer 2010). Yet later he formed the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM) in 2011. Support for him remained strong among opposition parties who undermined the MDP and prevented the government from implementing or passing legislation.

Nasheed's government encountered the most difficulty in restructuring the judiciary, armed forces and police to advance democratisation. The previous dictator utilised these state organs to quash opposition and they were stacked with his loyalists (Naseem 2015, p. 101; Musthaq 2014, p. 167).

---

[318] Factors that led to the rise of Islamic radicalism include manipulation of Islamic ideals by politicians and disruption from rapid modernisation (Hassan 2011, p. v). Wahhabi organisations such as Jamiyathul-Salaf (JS) and the Islamic Foundation of Maldives (IFM) spread across the Maldives and contributed to increased rates of head coverings on women and of female circumcision (Hassan 2011, pp. 59-61).

[319] An International Monetary Fund (IMF) report found the Maldives had one of the highest ratio of public sector employees to total population in 2009, and had the highest central government wage bill compared to 17 other countries considered to have large governments (IMF 2010, p. 3). The debts arose from increased spending by Gayoom after the 2004 tsunami and the higher wage bill generated by public sector reforms which pushed public expenditure to 63% of GDP by 2008 (IMF 2010, p. 3). The IMF approved financial assistance of US$92.5million to Nasheed's government in 2009, to deal with "fallout from the global crisis" (IMF 2009).

Nasheed affirmed that:

> "These powerful judges provided protection for the former president, his family members and political allies, many of whom are accused of corruption, embezzlement and human rights crimes," Nasheed (2012).

The Judicial Services Commission (JSC) appointed under the 2008 Constitution had the mandate for judicial reform. However, it appeared that the JSC's prime motivation was to retain the unqualified incumbent judges and safeguard the previous dictator, as documented in the book by whistleblower Aishath Velezinee[320] (2012), the President's nominee to the JSC from 2009-2011. Velezinee's criticisms of the JSC for failing to follow lawful procedures and her opposition to the reappointment of 191 judges, many of whom had questionable competency,[321] led to her being stabbed on 3 January 2011 (ICJ 2011). Velezinee recovered after hospitalisation. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ 2011) expressed concern about the rule of law in the Maldives as it viewed the stabbing as politically motivated.

The Criminal Court's Chief Judge Abdulla Mohamed[322] kept shielding the opposition.[323] Finally, the military detained Judge Abdulla on 16 January 2012 for deliberately holding up cases involving the opposition; barring media from corruption trials; arbitrarily releasing suspects detained for serious crimes; and maintaining suspicious ties with relatives of dangerous convicts (Robinson 2015, p. 193). This involved 14 cases of obstruction of justice, including shielding former regime officials from corruption and human rights cases

[320] Velezinee has worked in the government, civil society, international organisations, and also as a magazine editor.

[321] Velezinee documents JSC meetings focused on protecting personal interests and not judicial integrity (Robinson 2015, pp. 175-206). The JSC was not in favour of an independent judiciary and did not screen approximately 200 judges by 2010 to verify if they met qualifications required under Article 285 of the 2008 constitution (Velezinee 2012, pp. 19-28). The Majlis amended laws in December 2010 to give a hefty retirement package to Judge Mujthaz Fahmy, found guilty of embezzling state funds in 1996 (Velezinee 2012, p. 60) (Naseem 2010). President Nasheed's objection to the judges' standards was described by the JSC as meddling with the judiciary (Velezinee 2012, pp. 32-36). On 27 July 2010, the JSC finally agreed to remove judges with criminal convictions, but the next day the JSC decided Judge Abdulla Mohamed could remain on the bench despite having a criminal record (Velezinee 2012, pp. 44-45).

[322] Judge Abdulla remained on the bench despite the JSC finding him guilty of ethical misconduct in November 2011, after he made political statements in the media (*Minivan News* 2015).

[323] The DQP party was trying to unite opposition parties to overthrow Nasheed's government for being "un-Islamic" and destroying Islam. It instigated the December 2011 "defend Islam" rally (Robinson 2015, pp. 190-191). The DQP's deputy leader Dr Mohamed Jameel was arrested several times for inciting religious hatred. However, Judge Abdulla prevented Jameel's prosecution by ruling the arrests unlawful (Robinson 2015, p. 192). Police summoned Judge Abdulla for questioning (Naish 2012) but the High Court quashed the summons (*Minivan news* 2015). In February 2011, Judge Abdulla released a murder suspect who committed another murder (Robinson 2015, p. 193).

(*Minivan*[324] *news* 2015). Under duress, Nasheed denied ordering the arrest of the judge,[325] but he would have been in his rights to do so to uphold the rule of law.

Old guard politicians did not allow Judge Abdulla to be tried for his crimes and instead incited protests and a mutiny by the armed forces to pressure Nasheed to step down. Opposition leaders had led protests for 22 consecutive nights in January 2012 to free Judge Abdulla[326] (Velezinee 2012 p. 67). The demonstrations turned volatile on 6 February 2012, with pro-government and anti-government factions (Zubair 2013, p. 45). Mutinying police became part of the protests and were joined by nearly 100 soldiers (Zubair 2013, p. 45). In the early morning of 7 February 2012, a faction of police loyal to Gayoom's PPM destroyed the MDP office, joined by Gayoom's loyalist army officers (Zubair 2013, p. 47). Nasheed, who had been sheltering inside the military headquarters, was given an ultimatum to quit by the mutinying forces, which he agreed to in return for his family's safety (Robinson 2015, p. 13). In a televised press conference, Nasheed stated he was stepping down because he did not want to rule by force which would harm citizens (Nelson 2012). He believed there would have been bloodshed if he had not resigned. (Robinson 2015, p. 13). The next day, Nasheed stated he was forced to resign "at gunpoint" by police and army officers in a coup (*BBC News* 2012).

A former senior MNDF officer reaffirmed Nasheed's explanation:[327]

> "Nasheed resigned because he did not want to use force to sustain his Presidency and didn't want any bloodshed. He didn't want to use force against the police to control them with the military," (2017, pers. comm., 20 November).

The pressure from the mutinying police and soldiers and the preceding weeks of demonstrations by Gayoom's supporters qualify this event as a coup for many Maldivians. Nasheed's resignation was not the will of the people, but was forced by factions of the

[324] The word 'minivan' means independent in *Dhivehi*, the Maldivian language.
[325] Nasheed stated this after being sentenced to 13 years imprisonment in 2015 for ordering the arrest of Judge Abdulla and while facing terrorism charges (Minivan news 2015). The reactions to Nasheed's actions reveal the contradictions in the Maldives 2008 Constitution – under which the defence minister oversees the military, and the 2008 Armed Forces Act – under which the President has authority to use the military. This is discussed in Section 5.4.3 on CMR reforms.
[326] Velezinee (2012, p. 2) writes that despite a criminal conviction, Judge Abdulla was not removed from the bench by the JSC, and the Majlis failed to hold him accountable. This left only the President with authority to take action in the interests of national security. Velezinee (p. 76) asserts the judges' acts were part of the conspiracy to remove Nasheed, influenced by Gayoom. Velezinee was vindicated after the coup.
[327] Interviews with former senior Maldivian security personnel and former MDP parliamentarians from October-December 2017 reveal that Nasheed resigned to prevent bloodshed by the security forces.

security forces loyal to the previous dictator. This is evident in the brutal police crackdown on thousands of MDP protesters in Malé the next day that injured dozens, including Nasheed[328] (*BBC News* 2012; *Minivan News* 2012). These police officers used force on unarmed civilians without authorisation (Naish 2012b). They thus acted in a partisan manner and not in accordance with police regulations.

Former Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmed Naseem believes the 2012 coup occurred because it is difficult to get rid of a dictatorship as:

> "…its roots had penetrated society so much. Very often people who serve dictators have a lot of wealth, and are affluent. It's very difficult to get away from their grip," (2017, pers. comm., 17 December).

Former Assistant Police Commissioner Abdulla Phairoosch believes that democratisation happened too fast:

> "What many countries achieved in over 50 years, we tried to achieve overnight. The current constitution was ratified in August 2008. That same year you had multiparty elections. You had to create an independent judiciary and independent institutions[329] …The President declared tomorrow we will have this (democracy) system. That change can happen but doesn't mean the system will be moulded to practice in a sustainable manner," (2018, pers. comm., 15 February).

The Maldives' democratisation was fraught with trials and confusions. Institutions accepted changes in laws to democratise in name only, but the inculcation of democratic principles, including the paramountcy of the rule of law as sacred, was not realised. Nasheed's government began a transition to democracy, but was unable to consolidate it due to numerous challenges. These included inheriting a financial crisis, longstanding vested interests, loyalty to the dictator in the security forces, growth of Islamic fundamentalist movements, and their portrayal of Nasheed's MDP government as anti-Islam. All of the above led to Nasheed's own coalition partners conspiring against him, and his premature removal from power in February 2012.

Democracy could not be consolidated in the Maldives as beneficiaries of the previous dictator Gayoom still substantially influenced: political society, the rule of law, state bureaucracy, and

---

[328] The police violence was documented by the Human Rights Commission of Maldives (Naish 2012b). It was condemned by Amnesty International (*Minivan News* 2012). Police brutality on 8 February can be viewed on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZb-d6Ulu3s

[329] Phairoosch said most magistrates did not have Western legal education, only a Diploma in Sharia Law (2018, pers. comm., 15 February).

economic society (Linz & Stepan 1996, p. 7). These four arenas were stacked with Gayoom's loyalists and undermined the Nasheed government's efforts to implement democratic reform. The rule of law was compromised by the inability to implement judicial reform. The judiciary was utilised as an instrument to shield the beneficiaries of the previous regime, and worked against Nasheed's government, leading to his forced resignation. It also failed to meet Przeworski's (1991, p. 51) condition that conflicts have to be processed through democratic institutions. Juxtaposed against Dahl's (1998, pp. 157-158) requirement, democracy did not survive the crisis posed by Judge Abdulla's arrest because the country lacked a democratic culture. Not all citizens believed that democracy was the only means of changing government leadership.

5.4.3 Maldives - CMR reforms for democratisation 2004-2012

The Maldives' military had operated under authoritarian modes with the dual functions of defending the nation and enforcing the dictator's agenda post-independence. The autocratic nation had to undergo civil-military relations (CMR) reforms to display to the international community that they were democratising. This involved changes to the laws governing the functions of the armed forces, which are examined now. In particular, two aspects that have been problematic for democratisation are discussed: failure to separate the military and the police, and the president's control over the security forces.

The military and police formally separated in 2004, however in practice, a clear separation of duties did not occur for a number of reasons. As part of democratic reform, the Maldives Police Force was established as a separate organisation from the defence force on 1 September 2004 (The Government of Maldives 2006). The National Security Service was renamed the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) on 21 April 2006 (Zubair 2013, p. 36). In 2008, an Armed Forces Act was created to govern the military (Ashraf 2012, p. 40). A Police Bill tabled in parliament in February 2006 (Zubair 2013) was not legislated as the Police Act until 2008 under Gayoom. This meant that the military and the police did not have clearly demarcated roles until 2008, when the laws guiding their work were approved.

Former Assistant Police Commissioner Abdulla Phairoosch explains that the police officers did not receive proper training to operate in a democratic setting:

> "In 2003, we were undergoing paramilitary training, and after that to become a police officer we may be given a special training that has nothing about democratic policing, or values or even basic human

> rights. But Gayoom in the 2004 presidential address, declared that policing will be an independent civilian body. The number of people who were in the police was around 300. So just imagine by September he said he's going to have a new police force. How can you create a democratic police force during that time? You just can't embed all those values, teach them and create a system in such a short time," (2018, pers. comm., 15 February).

The reforms needed to be combined with training programmes on the responsibilities of the military and the police in a democracy. But even if such education had occurred, there is no guarantee that the security forces would have been obedient to civilian authority, which, according to Frazer (1995, p. 40) only occurs if they accept the legitimacy of civilian rule. Further, professionalism in soldiers also cannot guarantee military compliance if the civilian government collapses (Perlmutter 1977, p. 281). This means that democratic training in professional values is not sufficient, and that soldiers' compliance with civilian elected rule can only be guaranteed if they believe in democracy.

As part of the CMR reform for democratisation, although the laws changed to separate police and the army, nothing much changed on the ground as the tasks between the two organisations remained inter-mingled. As the police lacked resources for law enforcement, the military was used frequently for crowd control, particularly during political rallies (Ashraf 2012, p. 60). The laws allowed for such utilisation of the military.[330] Ashraf notes that the 2008 constitution emphasised separating the military and the police; however, the military continued to be drawn on heavily for law enforcement. Use of the military for policing blurred the lines between the two, especially given that the police were all former military officers.

The MNDF performed the functions expected of police – such as locking the Supreme Court or parliament and arresting people, but refusing to appear when demanded by the court (Zubair 2013, p. 44), because traditionally, soldiers were not accountable for their actions. There may not have been enough tasks to keep the MNDF occupied or they implemented select police tasks as a norm. Conversely, the police rarely did police functions like traffic control, anti-littering and community policing.[331] The police behaved in a politicised manner

---

[330] The military could be used for internal security operations under Clause 22 of the 2008 Armed Forces Act, if requested by police or other law enforcement agencies (Ashraf 2012). Similarly, the police under its 2008 act can request military assistance for maintaining law and order. Ashraf (2012, pp. 61-61) recommends amending laws to make military assistance for law enforcement an exception rather than the norm.

[331] In interviews with the author, Maldivians highlighted that police were hardly seen implementing such policing tasks.

by not arresting Judge Abdulla (see section 5.4.2), who was obstructing justice to shield loyalists of the former dictator from prosecution. The police then acted in a partisan manner by mutinying against Nasheed, demanding his resignation, and violently clamping down on MDP protesters on 8 February 2012 (see section 5.4.2). To prevent a recurrence of illegal, insubordinate actions by the security forces, the roles and tasks of the military and the police need to be carefully delineated. A clear separation is needed between the two institutions and utilisation of the military for policing needs to cease.[332]

The police's actions could be a result of incomplete democratisation as reforms were ongoing in 2012, and due to confusion over their allegiance. For instance, under the 2008 Armed Forces Act, the army's commander in chief was the president although they swore allegiance to the constitution. In contrast, under the 2008 Police Act, the police had to adhere to the nation's constitution and laws to maintain order. This required upholding the office of the elected president, however, allegiance to the President Nasheed was not rendered explicit. It appears that in this vacuum, the police retained their loyalty to their former President Gayoom. This ambiguity arose because although a separate police force was created in 2004, no legislation to separate their role was created. From 2004 till 2008, the police operated in the same manner as pre-2004, with loyalty to the president similar to when they were part of the military. The retention of loyalty to the former President Gayoom was not conducive for democracy because, as forewarned by Dahl (1998, p. 148), democratic political institutions are unlikely to survive "unless the military and police are under the full control of democratically elected officials". Lack of adherence to the new apolitical professional norms meant that a section of the police was prejudiced against the Nasheed government and, therefore, instead of protecting the elected government, they mutinied and pressured Nasheed to resign so the previous dictator's cohort could regain authority. Such politicised activities can only be stopped if the police understand their role is limited to community policing, law education, and law enforcement tasks.

To move away from the authoritarian legacy of personal control of the armed forces by the ruler, the 2008 Armed Forces Act provided for the creation of a National Security Council

[332] Parliament, courts and political events are in the civilian domain of the police. The military needs to be in these areas only in ceremonial escort or national guard duties. As recommended by Zubair (2013, p. 67), political and civil society need to avoid politicising the military.

(NSC) to formally advise the president.[333] But the President still had significant control over the security forces as he could appoint and dismiss the chief of the defence force and the commissioner of the police. Later, President Yameen misused this authority to manipulate the armed forces (see section 5.5.1).

A solution to reduce the President's control over the security forces already exists in the Maldives 2008 Constitution[334] Section 239 (b) provision that the security services shall be subject to the authority of the People's Majlis. Section 241 provides for a multiparty committee of the Majlis to exercise continuing oversight over the operations of the security forces. This feature of the Constitution can minimise personal control of the military. To prevent misuse of the armed forces and police by future presidents, the appointment and dismissal of heads of these organisations also need to be made either by an independent commission, or by a parliamentary committee with balanced representation. This would decrease the nepotistic and personalistic tendencies that are a common feature of small island nations (see section 2.3). Under the Maldives 2008 Constitution, the Defence Minister has oversight of the MNDF. The 2008 Armed Forces Act contradicts the Constitution by granting authority to the President to utilise the military.[335] The law needs to be reformed to prevent direct use of the MNDF by the President.

The Maldives commenced CMR reforms for democratisation in 2004 by separating the police and the military. However, the constitution and laws governing the police and armed forces were not created until 2008. This gave rise to the confused scenario post-2008 of the security forces lacking a clear understanding of their demarcated roles. The security forces appeared to have difficulty transitioning from personal allegiance to an authoritarian ruler, to the impersonal professionalism required in a democracy. The above recommendations, if implemented, may alleviate some of the problems in the Maldives security forces, and possibly prevent recurrence of the 2012 event. Further training is recommended on the roles and allegiances of the military and police in a democracy. Most importantly, soldiers need to believe in the merits of democracy.

---

333 The NSC is comprised of the Commander in Chief (President), Vice President, the Ministers of: Defence; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; and Atolls Development, Attorney General and the Chief of Defence Force.

334 The English version of the Maldives 2008 Constitution was authorised by the Ministry of Legal Reform, Information and Arts.

335 This led to the confused scenario prior to February 2012 when Zubair, Ashraf and Phairoosch all claimed that President Nasheed gave wrongful orders to the military, whereas the government maintained that the President was authorised to use the military (see previous section). Such as the arrest of Judge Abdulla by the military. Zubair and Ashraf, former members of the MNDF, made these claims in their MA thesis, while Phairoosch made this claim in the interview to the author.

5.4.4 Maldives – caretaker government 2012-2013

The period of transition after the 2012 coup, when the leadership was still in flux in a caretaker government, is now scrutinised. This will provide further understanding of why, instead of returning to democracy, a reversion to authoritarianism occurred in the Maldives.

Vice President Waheed was sworn in as the new President within an hour of Nasheed's 'resignation' (Naseem 2015, p. 102). Waheed's GIP party had a few thousand supporters (Robinson 2015, p. 208). The next day, the Adhaalath Party called on people to stand up against Nasheed and for the Maldivian Muslims to accept Waheed as a just ruler. Extremists also destroyed Buddhist relics at the museum (Kumar 2016, p. 40). Waheed, a Stanford graduate and former UN bureaucrat, was perceived as a supporter of electoral democracy, but did the opposite by calling Nasheed's resignation "an act willed by Allah" (Musthaq 2014, p. 169). Waheed had been unhappy because the MDP government consulted him less after he criticised Nasheed on the opposition's *VTV*, and later the government terminated the coalition agreement with the GIP (Robinson 2015, pp. 211-212). Waheed's prior knowledge of the 2012 coup and collusion with Gayoom's camp became evident as he gave post-coup government appointments to Gayoom supporters and his offspring (Robinson 2015, p. 16).

Nasheed alleged that Waheed had a hand in his forced resignation (Nasheed 2012). In response to media reports about his role in Nasheed's resignation, Waheed authorised a Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI) via presidential decree (CoNI 2012, p. 1). Although it included advisors from the Commonwealth and the UN,[336] the inquiry declared that there was no coup on 7 February 2012:

> "The change of President in the Republic of Maldives on 7 February 2012 was legal and constitutional… The resignation of President Nasheed was voluntary and of his own free will. It was not caused by any illegal coercion or intimidation," (CoNI 2012, p. 2).

The CoNI's findings disappointed democracy advocates.[337] Maldivians had witnessed an MNDF faction's treasonous behavior and a failure to defend civilians against violence, which had influenced Nasheed's decision to resign (Zubair 2013, pp. 49-50). The pictures of

[336] The CoNI comprised three members appointed by Waheed, one by Nasheed, one Singaporean judge, and two independent advisors from the UN and Commonwealth who were a retired judge from New Zealand and a legal advisor from Canada (CoNI 2012, p. 6).
[337] View of former senior human rights official interviewed by the researcher (2017, pers. comm., 6 November).

Nasheed being manhandled by Maldives security forces on the internet[338] conveyed that Nasheed had been betrayed by the armed forces and was compelled to resign. Therefore, Nasheed's resignation was not an act of free will but a coerced removal from power, thus it was a coup.

The CoNI's findings failed to reassure the international community about the Maldives' commitment to democracy. The international community was unconvinced that the judiciary was impartial,[339] with the UK Bar Association expressing concern that the purpose of arrests and court trials against Nasheed appeared to be a desire by "those in power to exclude Nasheed from standing in the 2013 elections" (Robinson 2015, p. 199). The lack of independence and impartiality on the part of the JSC and the judiciary had been noted by the UN Human Rights Committee (2012). A report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Gabrielle Knaul, found that the JSC was politicised, judicial appointments were non-transparent, and the Maldives' judicial system was in crisis[340] (Robinson 2015, p. 203). Due to international pressure – particularly from India, the US, UK and UN - the Maldivian caretaker government agreed not to arrest Nasheed again and to allow him to contest elections which they claimed would be credible and inclusive[341] (Robinson 2015, p. 201).

Waheed lacked the legitimacy of an elected leader and was pressured by the international community to hold elections ahead of schedule. The police and the Supreme Court obstructed the work of the Maldives Elections Commission in 2013 which delayed election dates to favour political parties supported by Gayoom (see section 5.6.1). Waheed, having realised his lack of popularity after losing the first round of the 2013 Presidential elections in September by receiving only 5.13% votes, controversially extended his tenure to 16 November 2013 (Robinson 2015, pp. 260-261). Prior to the run-off election in November, Waheed departed on a state visit to Singapore; he did not return and was later appointed Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the National University of Singapore (Robinson 2015). Abdulla Yameen, from the

---

[338] Some pictures of Nasheed being manhandled by security forces, can be viewed on this google images link: https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GCEU_enFJ836FJ836&q=Mohamed+Nasheed+attacked+by+Maldives+police+soldiers&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjj-ZOL75LkAhUR73MBHREIAwYQsAR6BAgHEAE&biw=1600&bih=789 (viewed 21 August 2019).
[339] Judge Abdulla, freed by Waheed and reinstated to the judiciary, issued an arrest warrant for Nasheed, however, due to diplomatic pressure, the police did not execute the arrest (Robinson 2015, pp. 197-198).
[340] Knaul visited Malé in February 2013, and expressed concern why Nasheed was being prosecuted for one alleged misdemeanor whereas his predecessor had not been tried for several years of alleged human rights violations (Robinson 2015, p. 202).
[341] Nasheed took shelter in the Indian High Commission in February 2013 to avert arrest (Kumar 2016, p. 44).

autocratic old guard and half-brother of former President Gayoom, was elected President by a bare majority of 51% in controversial polls.

Waheed's tenure as President shows that democracy in Maldives could not be consolidated because elite partners supported the past dictator and were not committed to democratisation. Just as the rule of law can only be upheld by abiding by the law, similarly, it is only possible to consolidate democracy if decisions are made and implemented democratically. Waheed, instead of advocating democracy, prepared the ground for authoritarianism. Elites thus play a critical role in the transition to democracy as they control political leadership. They can use their power to advance democratisation, or they can lead the general populace astray by misconstruing the practices of democracy. Waheed, by supporting the vested interests of the elite beneficiaries of the previous dictatorship, undermined the transition to democracy. Doorenspleet (2006, p. 4) highlights that the democratisation process is dominated by the actions of political elites and mass mobilisation does not play a significant role. Przeworski (1991) emphasises that whether the outcome of the transition process was a democratic or non-democratic regime was dependent on the alliances between the political actors. In the Maldives, the opposition political leaders were beneficiaries of the previous dictatorship and thus undermined Nasheed's leadership. The result under Waheed was a reversal of the gains of democracy.

5.4.5 Impacts of democratisation and the 2012 coup on the armed forces

The security forces in the Maldives behaved in a partisan manner in the events leading up to and during the 2012 coup. The impact of democratisation on the security forces and also the nature of the MNDF military ideology are discussed to ascertain the reasons for their actions. It has not been possible to obtain official data on the size of the MNDF and Maldivian officials[342] claimed that this information was classified. However, former MNDF Captain Zubair[343] asserted that troop strength never exceeded 4,000 soldiers (2013, p. 35). NationMaster also estimated that in 2000 the Maldives military had 5,000 personnel (see Table 2.1). Senior Maldivian officials[344] estimate it was about 4000-5000 personnel. This was

342 Interviewed between October 2017-May 2018.
343 Ahmed Zubair made this comment in his MA thesis.
344 Interviewed between October 2017-May 2018.

a tremendous growth of more than 15 times its size of about 300 soldiers in the 1960s around the time of independence. Since there was no separate police force in 2000, the estimate of 4,000-5,000 personnel may denote the combined total for the military and police, which is still very high for a small island country. A few Maldivians interviewed[345] believe that the MNDF's size may be too big, but that the dispersed geographical nature of the Maldives with 1,192 atolls may necessitate such a large force. Yet many SIDS with similar geography have foregone having a military.

The MNDF underwent a formal change in civil-military relations in 2008. Previously, Janowitz's civil-military relations category of authoritarian-personal control applied whereby instead of the monarch, the soldiers' fidelity was to the president. Following the creation of the 2008 Armed Forces Act, soldiers swore an oath to the 2008 Maldives constitution.[346] But the president still had direct authority over the armed forces. The actual transition to democracy commenced in 2008 when the soldiers had to adapt to Janowitz's (1975) democratic model of political-military elite relations in which civilian political elites have control over the military. This represented a change in philosophy from the past when soldiers pledged allegiance to the president. From 2008 under the new President Nasheed, soldiers were expected to adopt values of impersonal professionalism as opposed to their personal loyalty to the previous dictator Gayoom.

Additionally, soldiers had never operated in a multiparty environment and with the advent of political parties, they were exploring changed loyalties and behaviour towards parties. Soldiers became open to politicisation and susceptible to partisanship. A former senior human rights official observed that soldiers became more political:

> "In Maldives' long history of security forces, soldiers were less involved in the government. The new 2008 constitution gave soldiers the right of voting, suffrage. That indicated they could become involved in politics… We have realised that after 2008, the military and police were more active in politics," (2017, pers. comm., 6 November).

The military was viewed as a political force and soldiers started supporting political parties prior to the 2008 elections. The two major political parties made efforts to get the military's

---

345 Maldivians interviewed between October 2017-May 2018.

346 A former senior member of the MNDF confirmed this. Prior to the 2008 Armed Forces Act, the military took executive orders directly from the President through Act no 1/68 under which the President could create ministries (Ashraf 2012, p. 34). The military continued its post-independence role of operating the prisons.

support through votes and acceptance by the high ranking officers (Zubair 2013, p. 3). Two factions became established in the military, those supporting Gayoom and those supporting a change through Nasheed (Zubair 2013, p. 41). Thus, from having a singular loyalty to the President in the past, soldiers' loyalties split in 2008.

That soldiers were having divided loyalties indicates that the military officers lacked an appreciation of democracy. According to former Assistant Police Commissioner Abdulla Phairoosch:[347]

> "…senior (Maldives) military personnel didn't realise democratic values and how to operate in a democracy and think they have to do what the head of state or the commander in chief commands – a problem that's happened under the past and current Presidents who gave wrong orders which were followed," (Phairoosch 2018, pers. comm., 15 February).

Phairoosch's observation illustrates that soldiers were operating with the mind-set of loyalty to a person, as opposed to the impersonal, professional values expected of soldiers in a democracy. This implies soldiers were vulnerable to their loyalties to an influential person. Such loyalty had been cultivated by Gayoom, as revealed by a former Elections Commissioner:

> "President Nasheed distanced himself from the military but Gayoom was very close to the defence top brass, meeting them regularly, having a very good rapport and personal touch with every single member," (2017, pers. comm., 1 November).

The impersonal attitude of President Nasheed towards soldiers may have alienated them, especially since soldiers were accustomed to a personal interest from their previous ruler Gayoom. Furthermore, soldiers felt undervalued due to a reduction in benefits:

> "Nasheed's government cut food and medical benefits to the military making some unhappy. They were not explained that the cuts were necessary because of the world financial crisis and the bad financial situation of Maldives," (Thowfeek 2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

In addition, to decrease government costs, the number of soldiers living inside the MNDF premises was reduced to the necessary few[348] (Zubair 2013, p. 48). The resultant increased cost of living for soldiers contributed to discontent which they directed against Nasheed.[349]

[347] Phairoosch was with the Maldives Police for 19 years. In 2018, he was pursuing PhD studies.
[348] Since the cost of living was high in Malé, this created a challenge for most soldiers who came from outer islands (Zubair 2013).
[349] See section 5.4.2. Former MDP spokesman Ghafoor stated another reason for the 2012 coup was that Nasheed's MDP government had introduced income tax which the rich did not like (2017, pers., comm., 8 December).

Zubair, Ashraf and Phairoosch attribute Nasheed's downfall partly to what they term as 'wrongful' use of the military to order arrests.[350] This may have escalated the volatile security situation of February 2012. Such actions may have decreased Nasheed's popularity in the MNDF (Zubair 2013, p. 44). This research finds Ashraf and Zubair possibly correct with regards to the 2008 constitution which provides the Defence Minister oversight of the MNDF, but incorrect under the 2008 Armed Forces Act which provides direct authority to the President to utilise the military (see section 5.4.3).

The politicised behaviour of the army and police in February 2012 shocked many Maldivians:

> "The police and army behaved in a partisan manner in 2012. Armed forces' involvement in the February 2012 coup and their crackdown on protests[351] left a continued bitter taste among Maldivians," (2017, Ghafoor, pers., comm., 8 December).

Some Maldivians lost respect for the police and army after the February 2012 events, because they became regarded as partisan, and mistrusted:

> "We observed on TV the police and military were encouraged to take part in political rallies. But people never thought the government would be toppled because it's never happened before. Everyone was shocked for a few days at the extent the military and police were involved in toppling a democratically elected government," (2017, former senior human rights official, pers., comm., 6 November).

The then Executive Director of Transparency Maldives, Mariyam Shiuna, agrees that the MNDF was politicised:

> "Trust in the MNDF institution is gradually eroding due to the general perception that it is politicised and that it works in the interest of politicians instead of the people… There was impunity for police brutality on 8 February 2012. Public trust has declined and the military is now more involved in civilian politics and operate in complete secrecy and impunity," (2018, Shiuna, pers., comm., 20 May).

That view was reiterated by Majlis member Ali Hussain:

---

[350] Other actions by Nasheed's government include utilising the military to padlock the Supreme Court and to arrest Gayoom's half-brother Yameen and Judge Abdulla (see previous section). The arrests were justified on national security grounds with the government asserting they were within the President's powers under the 2008 Constitution and the Armed Forces Act (Ashraf 2012, p. 59) (Zubair 2013, p. 44). However, former soldiers Ashraf and Zubair argue these were wrongful uses of the military with the courts finding the arrests unconstitutional and illegal. But the courts were found biased by international visits (see section 5.4.4). Ashraf and Zubair were probably unaware of how the judiciary and opposition leaders conspired to remove Nasheed since this information only became public recently.

[351] See section 5.4.2 regarding violent police crackdown on MDP protestors on 8 February 2012.

> "The public perception about the security forces is not good because the MNDF failed to protect a democratically-elected government," (2017, Hussain, pers., comm., 16 November).

A few months after the 2012 coup, the MNDF, followed by the police, formed co-operative societies to invest in business (Naahee 2012). These were worrying developments as it suggests that the security forces had diverged from their role as a professional service organisation, to one focused on self-benefits.

Shiuna and Hussain stated that other reported benefits included housing schemes for security forces and opening up space for the military to engage in commercial activities via the military company.

> "Certain islands were given to MNDF to sell or lease to other people and benefits were increased for health insurance and food," (2017, Hussain, pers., comm., 16 November).

Phairoosch disagrees that the police benefitted greatly after the 2012 events, saying that the only benefits were promotions to officers, but he admits that some officers might have been promoted as a reward for loyalty. An example of this is the promotion of 300 MNDF soldiers one day before President Waheed's term expired in 2013 (Robinson 2013a).

Soldiers expressed concern about being misused or made to follow illegal orders, in a letter about the Supreme Court delaying the 2013 elections, and in an appeal signed by 73 soldiers not to obey illegal orders in 2013 (Robinson 2013a). The MNDF responded by penalising the dissenting soldiers for inciting 'upheaval and chaos', then suspending two officers and removing a senior Brigadier General from his position (Naahee 2013).[352] These points confirm that under Waheed, principled soldiers not loyal to him were persecuted while loyalists were rewarded.

Changes in political-military elite relations in the Maldives show that its armed forces had difficulty adapting to the new democratic norms of apolitical and professional values. The democratic model of political-military elites was markedly different from the past when soldiers pledged fidelity to the President. Nasheed's unexplained cuts to various benefits to the military and his failure to nurture patron-client relationships – unlike Gayoom - fostered discontent. Many soldiers retained personal loyalty to Gayoom due to the close relations developed during his 30-year rule. This loyalty probably influenced police (comprised of

[352] Another Brigadier General Ibrahim Mohamed Didi, who served the military for 32 years, and was instrumental in defending Maldives during the 1988 coup terrorist attack, resigned prematurely in July 2012, when alongside President Nasheed, he was charged for detaining Judge Abdulla (Robinson 2012).

former soldiers) and soldiers to act against Nasheed during the 2012 mutiny. Under democratic ideals, such action by the armed forces is wrong. The armed forces were not under the control of democratically elected leaders. Nasheed's ambivalence towards the military need not have affected their duty to protect the democratically-elected President. Nasheed should have been able to count on the soldiers' loyalty. Instead, Gayoom's influence over the armed forces derailed democracy.

5.5 Electoral authoritarianism 2013-2018

The Maldives' gains from democratisation suffered a further setback in the period 2013-2018. It reverted to electoral authoritarianism under President Yameen. The following sub-sections examine Yameen's rule, challenges faced by civil society, and developments in the armed forces to elucidate why the transition to democracy process was disrupted in 2012 and effectively suspended until 2018.

5.5.1 Yameen's electoral autocratic rule

The electoral autocratic rule of President Yameen from 2013-2018 is now assessed, during which the country regressed into authoritarianism. Similar to the Presidential elections (discussed later in section 5.6.1), Yameen's party PPM – created by Gayoom by in 2011 - won the 2014 Majlis elections through a coalition with the Jumhooree party and the Maldives Development Alliance (MDA). The regime type was an electoral autocracy because although Yameen came into power through multi-party elections deemed credible by international observers, Yameen was not a democratic ruler. Yameen's government used its majority to manipulate parliament in various ways to pass legislation. It controlled parliament by eliminating opposition leaders through detentions, convictions, fines or threats of jailing[353] (Naseem 2015, p. 104). Yameen's regime fitted Levitsky and Way's definition of competitive authoritarianism where regimes fall short of both democracy and full-scale authoritarianism (Naseem 2015, p. 102).

[353] The PPM engaged in "bribery, extortion, patronage and a whole range of other mechanisms of co-optation" to pass legislation leaving little leeway for the Majlis to stop the Maldives' backsliding into authoritarianism (Naseem 2015, pp. 105-106).

Yameen's government utilised the judiciary to weaken the opposition. Nasheed was jailed for 13 years under anti-terror laws for ordering the arrest of Judge Abdulla[354] (*BBC News* 2015b). Several other opposition members were prosecuted under Yameen.[355] In 2016, the Adhaalath Party leader Sheikh Imran Abdulla was jailed for 12 years for allegedly inciting violence during the 2015 May-day protests[356] (*Maldives Independent* 2017a). Yameen's former coalition partner Gasim had joined the opposition, and, while hospitalised for medical treatment in August 2017, was jailed in absentia to over 3 years for attempted bribery[357] (*Maldives Independent* 2017a). Gasim's conviction was regarded as part of actions to victimise the opposition which had gained a majority in parliament the previous month, due to defections from the ruling party (*Maldives Independent* 2017a). Former President Gayoom and his son Faris Maumoon were also being persecuted after defecting to the opposition. Faris was convicted for bribery in June 2018 (Shaahunaz 2018a). Thus, although Yameen became President through the support of Gayoom and Gasim, he did not nurture them as clients and persecuted them after they left his coalition.

To avoid persecution and, indeed, prosecution, many high-profile Maldivians were living in self-exile. Those self-exiled in Sri Lanka included:[358] former elections commission chair Fuwad Thowfeek, senior MDP members Ahmed Naseem and Hamid Ghafoor, and independent MP Ahmed Mahloof[359] who was jailed under Yameen.[360] To avoid incarceration, after leaving the Maldives for medical treatment, Nasheed received political asylum in the UK and Gasim in Germany (Shaahunaz 2018c). Former Vice President Mohamed Jameel of the PPM party and the JP's new President Ali Waheed also moved abroad (Shaahunaz 2018c). Controversially, the Majlis amended laws in June 2018 to bar people living in asylum overseas and/or with foreign citizenry to stand in elections for 10

[354] Nasheed, arrested in February 2015, was not allowed a lawyer, and sentenced on 13 March 2015 (Robinson 2015, p. 297). The rushed trial was viewed as neither free nor fair by the Maldivian Democracy Network (*Minivan News* 2015b). In October 2015, the UN recognised Nasheed's arrest as arbitrary and called for his release, without success (Robinson 2015, p. 297).

[355] Other opposition figures jailed under Yameen include two former defence ministers, a ruling party (PPM) lawmaker, a former vice-president, a senior military officer, and a magistrate; 13 other opposition MPs were on trial (*Maldives Independent* 2017a).

[356] The May-day protests will be detailed in the next section.

[357] Additionally, Gasim's Villa Group resorts were raided and the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) threatened to penalise them claiming that the group owed US$5.1 million in taxes (*Maldives Independent* 2018c).

[358] The researcher became aware of these additional people in exile after interviewing high-profile Maldivians living in Sri Lanka.

[359] In February 2018, Mahloof had returned to Maldives and agreed to be interviewed online by the researcher. But the interview did not eventuate as, soon afterwards, he was placed under house arrest. Mahloof was freed in September 2018 following Yameen's electoral defeat.

[360] Former Auditor General Niyaz Ibrahim, who was dismissed in 2014, fled to Sri Lanka in 2016, as he received death threats after exposing the Maldives biggest corruption scandal in the *Al Jazeera* documentary 'Stealing Paradise' (Shaahunaz 2018b). Dr Azra Naseem was self-exiled in Ireland as a police summons was issued for her and two other liberal bloggers (*Maldives Independent* 2017e). The summons for unspecified charges, warned the bloggers of a trial in absentia.

years (Shaahunaz 2018c). Yameen was defiant in the face of international concern. When warned of possible suspension by the Commonwealth, which had questioned the Maldives on freedom of speech, political prisoners and judicial independence, the Maldives withdrew from the Commonwealth in October 2016[361] (*BBC News* 2016).

Yameen forged closer links with the undemocratic nations Saudi Arabia and China (Naseem 2015). Faced with pressure from Western countries, the Commonwealth, the European Union and India to adhere to democratic values and remedy human rights infringements, the Maldives snubbed its long-time ally India as it wooed China.[362] China's President Xi Jinping visited the Maldives in September 2014 acquiring their support for China's maritime "Silk Road" and signing nine agreements with Yameen for infrastructure works (Kumar 2016, p. 81). Aid from Saudi Arabia and China was viewed by critics as encouraging authoritarianism in the Maldives and detrimental for Indian Ocean security[363] (Saberin 2018). Over 2015-2016, Saudi Arabia pledged US$50 million to build flats for soldiers and police, provided a US$80 million loan for development projects, and a US$20 million grant for budget support[364] (*Maldives Independent* 2016d). In February 2018 when Yameen imposed a state of emergency, Saudi Arabia and the UAE announced a $160 million grant for the Maldives (Saberin 2018). These nations' continuing assistance to Yameen's government demonstrates their indifference to democratic values.

Corruption was already rife in the Maldives and the *Al Jazeera* (2016) documentary, 'Stealing Paradise' linked Yameen to the largest corruption scandal in the country's history involving theft, bribery and money laundering. The President's ministers and aides plotted to launder about $1.5 billion through Singaporean, Malaysian and Indonesian businesses in

---

361 The Inter-Parliamentary Union expressed concern on the manhandling of parliamentarians by police and soldiers and loss of seats by seven former ruling party parliamentarians who crossed the floor (IPU 2017b). The IPU committee on human rights for parliamentarians sent a mission to Maldives in 2016 to investigate cases of opposition parliamentarians' detentions, prosecutions, violence and murder (IPU 2017a). The IPU linked 33 court cases pending against 21 opposition parliamentarians as "part of a deliberate attempt to silence the opposition" (IPU 2017b). The IPU (2018) called for the withdrawal of charges against MPs, fair trial for detained MPs, and reinstatement of 12 MPs.

362 India assisted the Maldives under Yameen and flew in 100 tonnes of fresh water in 2014 to alleviate a water crisis (Bosley 2014). Three days later, China donated $500,000 to alleviate the crisis (*The Economic Times* 2014). Yameen wooed China despite findings from the Centre for Global Development that the Maldives was among eight countries at risk from debt distress due to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) financing (Hurley et al, 2018).

363 Both nations already had military outposts in Djibouti. According to former President Nasheed, they wanted to have a military base in Maldives to safeguard trade routes (Dorsey 2017).

364 They signed an agreement in 2015 to maintain the Maldives as a 100% Muslim nation (*Maldives Independent* 2016d). Yameen reciprocated Saudi Arabia by severing ties with Iran in 2016 and Qatar in 2017 after Saudi Arabia severed ties with them (*Maldives Independent* 2017d).

corrupt dealings where Yameen received up to $1 million cash[365] (Jordan 2016). Sources in the documentary revealed a corrupt judiciary with senior judges receiving money, luxury flats and having regular meetings with President Yameen who allegedly determined Nasheed's 13-year terrorism conviction (Jordan 2016).

Under Yameen, features of autocracy returned, including the President's discretionary powers, and Islamic fundamentalism[366] increased in part via teaching in schools. According to human rights advocate Tholal,

> "…the situation of suppression, authoritarianism, and no avenue for people to adjudicate these concerns under Gayoom because of lack of separation of powers between the judiciary, parliament and the executive, had unfortunately returned to Maldives under Yameen. The situation now is if you fall out of favour with the President (Yameen), then you can end up in prison because right now, the separation of powers is non-existent", (2017, pers. comm., 8 November).

A major problem was fear of job loss by people who went against Yameen due to their dependency on the state which is one of the Maldives' biggest employers. About one-tenth of the Maldives' workforce were in the public and defence sector. Malé's dependency was higher as one sixth of its residents were state employees.[367] In 2015, the employees of three major state-owned companies[368] were suspended or dismissed for supporting opposition activities (Hameed 2015).

Yameen's government pressured government employees to support his party. Thowfeek, sacked in 2014 from the position of head of the Maldives Elections Commission (see section 5.6.1) for criticising the government, disclosed:

> "People holding civil service or senior positions in government companies told me they were informed to become a member of the ruling party PPM or resign[369]… When people stop following what Yameen wants them to do, that person is taken to jail and framed for anything…[370] I heard (2017) all people

[365] Bags of cash were allegedly delivered to Yameen, his wife, senior judges, politicians and officials (Jordon 2016). Vice President Ahmed Adeeb of PPM party – later jailed for plotting to assassinate Yameen – was linked to ordering arson attacks on a TV station and a government office to target former auditor-general Niyaz Ibrahim (Jordan 2016).
[366] This information was shared by several Maldivians in interviews to the author.
[367] The public administration and defence sector employed around 22,000 people in 2014, which was one-tenth of the Maldives' total employed population of 205,570 (NBoS 2014). Malé had a higher dependency on state employment as out of its 81,673 employed, about one sixth - 13,190 - were in public administration and defence sector (NBoS 2014).
[368] Three companies on water, electricity and ports.
[369] During the researcher's field trip to Maldives from October-November 2017, a former Maldivian civil servant divulged that he resigned from his government job to avoid becoming a member of Yameen's party.
[370] Thowfeek stated these included the cases against Colonel Nazim, the first Vice-President Mohamed Jameel Ahmed, the second Vice-President Adeeb, and the Prosecutor General.

> belonging to independent institutions, civil service and government companies are required to attend PPM functions which have a strict attendance register," (2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

The situation worsened in 2018 as the election approached. Similar to Waheed's time, the judiciary had been providing anti-opposition verdicts under Yameen's rule. However, on 1 February 2018 the Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling, ordered the immediate release of nine high-profile prisoners - including Nasheed and former Vice President Ahmed Adeeb – until fair trials could be conducted, and the reinstatement of 12 Majlis members previously stripped of their seats[371] (*Maldives Independent* 2018). Yameen defied the court ruling and imposed a 15-day state of emergency on 5 February. Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Justice Ali Hameed were arrested. Gayoom[372] was also arrested and charged with bribing lawmakers and plotting to overthrow the government[373] (*Maldives Independent* 2018l). These trends reveal that Gayoom's loyalists in the judiciary turned against Yameen after he started persecuting Gayoom. The Supreme Court decision was not independent but favourable to Gayoom. The judiciary had been passing pro-Yameen judgements until this decision. This demonstrates that the Maldives judiciary was not impartial as some elements were instruments of the previous dictator Gayoom, while others were doing the bidding of Yameen.

The above events demonstrate that Yameen's rule was autocratic and his actions resonated with dictatorships or autocracies. Yameen utilised the parliament, security forces, judiciary and "independent" institutions to serve his own interests and prosecute political rivals. Under Yameen, the anti-opposition court verdicts were predictable and appeared pre-determined. It did not meet Przeworski's (1991) condition of democracy where results of conflicts should not be pre-determined. Despite winning multiparty elections, Yameen's government was an electoral autocracy. Yameen gained power through Gayoom's patronage. But Gayoom still engaged in politics despite announcing his retirement. Gayoom's loyalists in business (see Khandekar 2018), the judiciary, state bureaucracy and armed forces transferred their loyalties to Yameen. But this loyalty became divided when Yameen started to persecute Gayoom and

[371] The 12 seats had given the opposition a majority in parliament, which could have been used to impeach the President.

[372] In June 2018, Gayoom was jailed for 19 months by judges perceived to be acting in favour of Yameen, for failing to cooperate with police investigating his role in 'plotting to overthrow the government' (*Associated Press* 2018). The two Supreme Court judges Abdulla Saeed and Ali Hameed, deemed to be his loyalists, were given the same sentences in trials criticised for lack of fairness (*Associated Press* 2018).

[373] Also, Raajje TV stopped broadcasting. Observers described these events as a leader's coup as soldiers sealed off parliamentary buildings and arrested parliamentarians trying to enter (Ray 2018). The military stormed the Supreme Court while police barricaded roads leading to it (Aneez & Junayd 2018). China, the US and India issued travel advisories against Maldives (Aneez & Junayd 2018).

his supporters. Arguably, Yameen's desire for total autocratic political control was leading him to undermine Linz and Stepan's (1996) five arenas for democracy - political society, civil society, rule of law (judiciary), state bureaucracy, and the economic sector. Out of these, the bureaucracy, the armed forces, and the judiciary, were populated with Gayoom's loyalists. The political and economic sectors had divided allegiances between Yameen, Gayoom and the reformist opposition. Thus, another reason for Yameen's persecution in all sectors was to wipe out those with allegiance to Gayoom and replace them with those loyal only to him. Yameen failed to nurture the patron-client relations under Gayoom that had brought him to power. The resulting decline in support led to his loss in the September 2018 elections. Thus, the key to an autocrat's survival is nurturing of patron-client relations.

5.5.2 Maldives – civil society challenges under electoral autocracy

The civil society experienced trying times under the electoral authoritarian regime of President Yameen from 2013-2018. Civil and political rights were curtailed, laws were passed against media freedom, and professionals and the media were subjected to removal of licences, prosecution and excessive fines. These are among the impacts of authoritarian rule examined below.

Similar to Gayoom's time, under Yameen CSOs faced severe restrictions. CSOs were targeted by politicians portraying them as anti-Islam and accusing them of promoting atheism and western values. This created an unsafe atmosphere for those advocating for fundamental rights such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The Maldivian Democratic Network (MDN) and Transparency Maldives (TM) remained the key CSOs speaking out against human rights violations. Other CSOs with democracy and civic education mandates had a low profile as educational organisations. CSOs on socio-economic issues kept away from civil and political rights issues, although they advocated on environmental or health issues.

CSOs that were outspoken and critical were perceived by the government as supporting opposition parties.[374] Former MDP MP, Hamid Ghafoor, elaborated that CSOs were under constant government scrutiny:

---

[374] This was the view of a former senior government official (2017, pers. comm., 14 December), and former chair of the Maldives Elections Commission, Fuwad Thowfeek (2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

> "It's always been totally restricted to the extent that, for example, foreign funds for CSOs cannot move without intense government scrutiny. By law, CSOs are being restricted daily now," (2017, pers. comm., 8 December).

Additionally, CSOs are regarded as expensive to maintain:

> "We hardly had CSOs because people can't afford them. The very few who are active were being intimidated and threatened. For example, TM is very active but the government sees it as an organisation that supports the opposition," (Former elections commissioner 2017, pers. comm., 1 November).

The executive director of TM, Mariyam Shiuna stated that the government threatened to sanction some CSOs:

> "If you are a governance-focused or watchdog CSO, state reprisals are expected. We have seen this in the past with TM and two other CSOs that were threatened to be sanctioned if we continued to criticise the judiciary's role in the 2013 elections," (2018, pers. comm., 20 May).

Challenges of finance and government reprisals have resulted in there being very few CSOs critical of the government.

The situation for civil society worsened in 2015. Over 10,000 people protested in Malé on 27 February 2015 and called for Yameen's resignation in a rally organised by the MDP and Jumhooree parties[375] (*Minivan News* 2015c). Nasheed's conviction triggered the largest anti-government protest in the Maldives known as the May Day protests. Over 25,000 people took part in the protests on 1 May 2015 in Malé; nearly 200 protestors were detained and six convicted of aiding and abetting assault (*Maldives Independent* 2018a). The police were accused of brutality and torture. Government severely restricted freedom of assembly[376] in the aftermath of the mass protests.

Academics at national tertiary institutions refrained from making public comments on politics with a view to self-preservation. Nevertheless, Yameen's government interfered with academic freedom when it amended the law governing the state-funded Maldives National University (MNU) to authorise the President to appoint nine of the 13 members in the

---

[375] Protesters demanded release of political prisoners, withdrawal of politically-motivated charges, justice for murdered lawmaker Dr Afrasheem Ali and disappeared journalist Ahmed Rilwan, and pay rises before tax hikes (*Minivan News* 2015c).

[376] This information was emphasised by an interviewee.

governing council, including the vice-chancellor[377] (Rasheed 2015). The government victimised lawyers by suspending the licenses of dissenters. In September 2017, the Maldives Supreme Court indefinitely suspended 54 lawyers who petitioned for independence and reform of the judiciary[378] (Transparency International 2017).

Opposition parliamentarian Ali Hussain, already on suspension, was one of the 56 lawyers who had signed the petition:

> "I always criticised the judicial system… My practising licence has been cancelled for more than a year by the Supreme Court and I wasn't even given a notice… I heard of the cancellation of my licence through media… Yeah, I'm one of the 56 (who signed the petition) … Even before that, me and another friend were given suspension," (2017, pers. comm., 16 November).

Following the approval of an anti-defamation act in August 2016, further restrictions were meted out to civil society.[379] The opposition MDP's *Rajje TV* was fined three times in 2017 including one fine of MVR1 million[380] and another fine of MVR500,000[381] (*Maldives Independent* 2017c). Jumhooree Party's *Villa Television* and *VFM* were fined MVR400,000[382] while *Sangu TV* was fined MVR100,000[383] (*Maldives Independent* 2018b). The law forced some journalists to practice self-censorship to avoid penalties.

Journalists critical of the government and of Islamic extremism were persecuted. A human rights defender, Yameen Rasheed, who was a prominent blogger and social media commentator in the Maldives, was stabbed to death on 23 April 2017[384] (*Asian Tribune* 2018). The former editor of *Haveeru* newspaper, Ismail Khilath Rasheed was stabbed in 2012 and journalist Zaheena Rasheed, was forced to leave the country after featuring in the *Al Jazeera* documentary 'Stealing Paradise' (Human Rights Watch 2018). These unpunished crimes under Yameen, were investigated following his 2018 electoral loss. Under new

---

377 The incumbent vice-chancellor Dr Hassan Hameed resigned in protest (Rasheed 2015).
378 The suspension received criticism from Transparency International (2017) and the International Commission of Jurists.
379 The Maldives' first private TV station *DhiTV*, together with its radio station *DhiFM plus* and *Dhivehi online* ceased operating after the law's approval because it was "no longer safe to practice journalism" (*Maldives Independent* 2016a). Under it, broadcasting regulators could fine media organisations up to MVR2 million (Maldivian rufiyaa) (about US$125,885) which, if unpaid, could result in closure of media outlets or conviction of six months (*Maldives Independent* 2016a). Conversion rate: 1 US$ = 15.3974 MVR; 1 MVR = 0.0649459 US$ (https://www.xe.com/ , 31 July 2020).
380 About US$64,944.
381 About US$32,473.
382 About US$25,978.
383 About US$6,495.
384 More than a year later his murderers still had not been charged. Rasheed was a vocal critic of militant Islamic extremism and religious intolerance and was advocating for justice for his friend, journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, missing since August 2014 (*Asian Tribune* 2018).

President Solih, a presidential commission on deaths and disappearances revealed that these attacks and the murder of journalist Ahmed Rilwan Abdulla, were by a local extremist group linked to al-Qaeda[385] (*Maldives Independent* 2019). The Yameen government's clamp down on dissenters and cover-up of this terrorist group's activities, implies they wanted to gain politically by generating anti-Islam sentiment against the opposition. Yameen's government wanted to instill fear amongst nonconformists by portraying them as anti-Islam, and benefit politically by portraying themselves as protectors of Islam.

The Human Rights Commission Maldives (HRCM) did not respond to reports of harassment and intimidation. The HRCM was no longer independent because Yameen appointed his own supporters to it and other "independent" institutions.[386] The former Vice-Chair of the HRCM, Ahmed Tholal,[387] stated the HRCM had been silent about everything:

> "We've had quite a challenging period during these past few years. The government was very vocally against TM, were very outspoken criticising the work of civil society. They threatened CSOs with dissolution, criminal cases or prosecution. We faced physical threats and intimidation by non-state actors supported or empowered by the state with their impunity. The civic space in the country was quite fragile, quite limited. Civil society was unable to function as they should because of the intimidation by the government. But despite that, we still voiced concerns," (2017, pers. comm., 8 November).

Advocates of religious freedom were victimised. Ms Shahindha Ismail, the Executive Director of the MDN, was harassed in early 2018 for making statements on freedom of religion.[388] The MDN believed the government's criminal investigation of Shahindha's Twitter post was a politically motivated attempt to silence her and other human rights defenders in the Maldives (MDN 2018). Police took no action against the threats of death and beheading that Shahinda received after the tweet (*Avas* 2018). Such inaction by police encouraged intolerance of Maldivians who were nonconformists or not Muslim.

---

385 Known as Rilwan. The commission found that the fatal attacks on Rilwan, Yameen and Ismail, and of assassinated lawmaker Dr Afrasheem Ali in August 2012, were by the same extremist group who had disagreements with the reformists on social media (*Maldives Independent* 2019). The crimes were covered up by former Vice-President Adeeb, who engaged with the judiciary to free the suspects, and their acts were condoned by President Yameen (*Maldives Independent* 2019).

386 A few Maldivians interviewed had this view.

387 Tholal was TM's senior human rights project coordinator in 2017.

388 Shahindha had been questioned by police on 1 April 2018 for her twitter comment that "various religions existed in the world because Allah allowed them" in response to President Yameen's statement that his government would not allow any religion in the country except Islam (*Avas* 2018). On 3 April 2018, the MDN called on the Maldivian government to end "targeted harassment" of Shahindha and "to stop abusing Islam to target her legitimate work to defend human rights". The MDN is another CSO that endured harassment from the government:

"MDN was harassed by police after the death of Yameen Rasheed. Whenever they make a statement supporting democracy, they are labelled anti-Islamic," (Dr Azra Naseem[388] 2018, pers. comm., 2 February).

Increased aid from Saudi Arabia contributed to re-Islamisation as Islamic extremist rhetoric was allowed to flourish unchecked via teaching of Islam through mediums such as the national radio. This contributed to regression of women's rights.[389] Maldivian academic Dr Azra Naseem observed that women seemed more repressed under Yameen than in the precolonial era:

> "Twenty years ago, we were a more equal society. The recently set-up Islamic university was funded by Saudi Arabia. Lecturers come from Saudi Arabia to teach Maldivian students… They tried to change women's place in society to one where women are inferior to men and should be at home looking after the children… There's a regression; freedoms that we used to have are being taken away… A particular brand of conservative Islam, Wahhabism and Salafi, from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, had a major impact on women… A lot of women chose to wear black *niqaabs* influenced by the radicals. On some islands, you will find women wearing head to toe black clothes, going to the sea in them," (2018, pers. comm., 2 February).

Gayoom had ensured that moderate Islam was followed during his rule. In contrast, conservative and extremist Islam was promoted freely under Yameen[390] because he wanted to portray support for the democratic MDP party as anti-Islam.

The repression experienced under Yameen's rule is summarised in Table 5.5 (below) which shows that after the 2013 elections, key rights and freedoms were considered severely curtailed in the Maldives. Freedoms of media and expression were regarded as severely curtailed. In 2017, Freedom House downgraded the Maldives press freedom rating to Not Free (see Table 5.2). There was a perception that independence and fairness of the judiciary and courts were non-existent as these were controlled by the government. Freedom of assembly and association were difficult to exercise and not allowed at all on Malé. Several interviewees chose not to be identified fearing victimisation from the government. Civil society was perceived to be facing severe constraints in its operations. Freedom for opposition parliamentarians to do their work was perceived to be non-existent due to parliamentarians being locked out of parliament, manhandled by security forces, as well as being detained, arrested and convicted.

[389] Prominent Maldivians expressed concern about the extremist Islamic rhetoric on radio in interviews to the author.
[390] See section 5.6.2 on how PPM portrayed MDP's Nasheed as anti-Islam in the lead-up to the 2018 elections.

Maldives - Perceptions	October 2017 - May 2018
Free Media	Severely curtailed
Freedom of Expression	Severely curtailed
Fairness/Independence of Judiciary	None.
Freedom of Assembly & Association	Curtailed. Not allowed on Malé
Civil society	Severe constraints.
Freedom of Opposition Members of Parliament (MPs)	None – MPs removed from Parliament, locked out of parliament, arrested, jailed.
Corruption	Very high or endemic (Maldivians regard themselves as one of the most corrupt countries)

Table 5.5 Maldives: Perception of Rights, Freedoms and Corruption under Yameen
Note: the perceptions in this table are responses of 15 prominent Maldivians from politics, public sector, academic, and CSOs, interviewed between October 2017-May 2018.

Corruption was considered to be rampant and endemic with interviewees viewing the Maldives as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In the 2017 Corruption Perception Index, the Maldives scored 33%, which means its public sector corruption levels is closer to countries ranked as highly corrupt[391] (Transparency International 2018). The restriction of the above key rights and freedoms, which are essential elements in a democracy, indicates that the Maldives did not continue transitioning to democracy after the 2013 elections. Instead, it regressed into an electoral authoritarian regime.

As reiterated by interviewees, civil and political rights were severely curtailed under Yameen including freedom of religion and thought, assembly and justice. Laws were passed against media freedom, and professionals were subjected to removal of licences, media were excessively fined, and businesses victimised. Islamic fundamentalism burgeoned under Yameen. Crimes by Islamic extremists, including murder of critics, were condoned by the regime to instill fear in nonconformists. Civil society had flourished under Nasheed but was repressed under Yameen's autocracy.

[391] The Maldives scored 33 out of 100, whereby 0 is for 'Highly corrupt', and 100 is the score for 'Very clean'. The Maldives score was closer to highly corrupt. Furthermore, its public sector ranked 112 out of 180 countries, where the rank 1 is for the cleanest country, and the rank 180 is for the most corrupt country (Transparency International 2018). Again, the Maldives rank was towards the most corrupt end of the spectrum.

5.5.3 Maldives - developments in the armed forces post-2013

The security forces were instrumental in implementing Yameen's autocracy. This necessitates an examination of developments in the armed forces from 2013-2018. In 2017, the MNDF consisted of: the coast guard, ground forces, support services and special forces.[392] It has been difficult to obtain official data on the size of the MNDF prior to 2014 because that information was classified. However, the Maldives census employment statistics revealed a combined figure of 4,139 for the MNDF/Maldives Police Services (MPS) in 2014 (NBoS 2014). That figure aligns with the estimate by senior Maldivians that the armed forces in recent years comprised 4,000-5,000 personnel. It means the security forces accounted for approximately one-fifth of the Maldives Public Administration and Defence sector which employed 21,780 people in 2014 (NBoS 2014). In Armed Forces occupations, 2,404 Maldivians were employed in 2014 (NBoS 2014). Therefore, the police would have numbered 1,735 personnel and was about three-quarter the size of the MNDF. These are worrying statistics because it means that the Maldives military size is too big relative to other SIDS since it occupies more than one-tenth of their public sector (see section 2.2).

Similar to Fiji (see section 4.6.3) the Maldives' military is too large in comparison with Mauritius and Comoros. Comoros has twice the population of the Maldives but has an army of only 500 (see section 2.2). Mauritius population is triple that of the Maldives, but they have a paramilitary of only 3,000 (see Table 2.1). The Maldives' military size of 2,404 translates to 1 soldier per 143 residents. This means the Maldives' military per capita size is bigger than Fiji's military which has 1 soldier per 257 residents. It is triple the per capita size of the Mauritius paramilitary, and about 11 times the per capita size of the Comoros army.[393] Like Fiji, the Maldives' substantial defence forces are an anomaly for a SIDS nation with limited resources.

Under Yameen, the military reverted to Janowitz's civil-military relations category of authoritarian-personal control (1975, p. 138). This demonstrates that the transition to Janowitz's (1975) democratic model of political-military elite relations during Nasheed's time was unsuccessful. Following Yameen's inauguration as President, principled soldiers not loyal to him were purged through dismissals and prosecutions. For instance, nine MNDF

[392] Interview with former senior MNDF officer, 20 November 2017, Malé, Maldives. The purpose of the special forces is classified.
[393] See section 4.6.3. Comoros per capita military translated to 1 soldier per 1,600 residents, and Mauritius per capita military translated to 1 paramilitary personnel per 433 residents.

officers were dismissed from November-December 2013 for allegedly violating the MNDF's regulations and "sowing discord in the military"[394] (Rasheed 2013a). However, soldiers who mutinied against President Nasheed in February 2012 remained unpunished and were promoted (Rasheed 2013a). Mohamed Nazim, who had pressured President Nasheed to resign, was reappointed as Minister of Defence (Rasheed 2013a). Conversely, Lieutenant Colonel Zubair Ahmed (President Nasheed's uncle), who served the MNDF for 34 years, was forced to retire after Yameen's election (Rasheed 2013b). In short, Yameen controlled the armed forces to execute his own agenda and soldiers had to do the President's bidding to retain their jobs.

Yameen experienced an assassination attempt in September 2015 when there was an explosion on his speedboat.[395] This led to the arrest of several soldiers and three were jailed on terror charges (*Maldives Independent* 2016b). Vice-President Ahmed Adeeb, from Yameen's own PPM party, was also jailed on terror charges (*Maldives Independent* 2016c). In August 2016, eight soldiers were detained for conspiring to overthrow Yameen, and four of them were fired[396] (*Maldives Independent* 2016c). Following this incident, the MNDF barred soldiers from meeting politicians, ministers or foreigners without permission. Additionally, conspiracies by Gayoom's supporters in the PPM and other parties, as well as the armed forces to remove Yameen, heightened his fear and resulted in greater purging of the security forces and public service.

Although the armed forces were a key instrument utilised by Yameen to restrict opposition, they were not treated well. Yameen abused the President's authority under the 2008 Armed Forces Act by using the military and police to lockdown parliament, forcibly remove opposition MPs, lock the courts and hamper opposition protests.[397] The President hired and fired people in senior positions at whim in the judiciary, government and 'independent' institutions. Yameen took similar actions against members of the police and the army. In February 2015, Yameen, without providing any reason, removed Brigadier General Ahmed Mohamed as vice chief of the defence force and replaced him with Brigadier General Ahmed

394 The MNDF had amended its regulations to punish soldiers who "incited upheaval and chaos" (Rasheed 2013b).
395 Yameen was unharmed but his wife Lady Fathimath Ibrahim was hospitalised.
396 Seven soldiers from the MNDF's Special Protection Group (SPG) were detained in March 2018, four were dismissed (*RajjeMV* 2018).
397 When MPs were going to vote to impeach the speaker, Abdulla Maseeh, over allegations of corruption and rights abuses, soldiers locked parliament on Yameen's orders and dragged out opposition parliamentarians trying to enter it (Rasheed 2017).

Shahid[398] (*Minivan News* 2015d). Assistant police commissioner Phairoosch[399] was dismissed from his position in October 2017 for a Twitter comment about 'halal' actions. Following the February 2018 Supreme Court judgement ordering the release of nine high-profile political prisoners,[400] police commissioner Ahmed Areef and acting police commissioner Ahmed Saudhee were dismissed within a week without any reasons (*Associated Press* 2018b). Assistant police commissioner Abdul Mannan Yoosuf was dismissed in May 2018 for attempting to implement the February court ruling (*VNews* 2018). Despite the insecurity caused by such dismissals, people still remain employed in the security forces because it is considered a good occupation with a good salary and because of lack of better employment opportunities.[401] This trend of hiring, firing and reshuffling high level security forces personnel continued in the lead up to the 2018 elections. It demonstrates Yameen's attempts to control the security forces and utilise them against the opposition.

A new challenge emerged when Maldivians started joining Islamist extremist groups in Syria in 2004. A few returnees were arrested over the past decade for alleged terror attacks planned for Malé (see section 5.3.5). A 'Maldivian Training Video'[402] posted on YouTube in 2018 by Bilad al Sham[403] Media, showed a Maldivian training with combatants with guns, purportedly in a Middle Eastern country. The group used mosques in Malé to recruit Maldivians to fight in Syria (*Maldives Independent* 2019). A US-based security report found more than 200 Maldivians were fighting in Syria and Iraq, while Yameen's Defence Minister Adam Shareef said 61 Maldivians had gone to Syria (*Maldives Independent* 2018d). In short, Islamic terror groups' activities continued unabated under Yameen's government.

Yameen took no actions against Maldivians' involvement in Islamic terror groups, and instead, forged closer ties with authoritarian countries in the Middle East. The Maldives is among 34 nations that joined a Saudi-led Islamic alliance in December 2015 to combat terrorist organisations (*Maldives Independent* 2016d). Saudi Arabia's aid to the MNDF

---

398 This followed the dismissal of Defence Minister Colonel (retired) Mohamed Nazim the previous month on dangerous weapons charges.
399 Also known as Fairoosh. This was shared by Phairoosch in an interview with the researcher. It was also reported in the Maldivian media (*Maldives Times* 2017). Phairoosch felt his dismissal was unjustified and applied for a review.
400 See section 5.5.1.
401 This was shared with the researcher during interviews with a former senior MNDF officer and Phairoosch.
402 'Training video featuring the Maldivian Mujahideen in Bilad al-Sham, 19 January 2018, viewed 8 June 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sc8cYYidBk>.
403 Bilad al-Sham is the region now known as Syria. Bilad Al Sham is also a media group operated by Maldivians fighting in Syria with the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra front (*Maldives Independent* 2019). The group murdered journalist Rilwan in 2014 (see previous section) and were responsible for the 2007 Sultan Park bombing in Malé.

included military exercises in Saudi Arabia. In 2017 the Maldives allegedly supported the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, and defended Saudi Arabia when it was blacklisted by the UN for injuring or killing hundreds of children during battles in Yemen (*Maldives Independent* 2017f).

Former Elections Commission chair Thowfeek found military training by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia worrying:

> "The earlier military training by countries like India and Sri Lanka was good. We are not keen on soldiers being trained in countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan because of their poor democratic performance… MNDF personnel were fighting with Saudi Arabian forces against Yemen. Maldives was a neutral nation but after receiving Saudi aid, has cut ties with Yemen, Qatar and Iran. Increased aid from China is also worrying," (Thowfeek 2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

Parliamentarian Ali Hussain believes such training could adversely affect soldiers' understanding and appreciation of democracy:

> "If the training is by a country that doesn't believe in a democratic system or where there is no sustained civil government, it greatly impacts the mentality of the forces. They may not consider the government or the people's decision as superior or they would not consider that civilian governments should have control over the military forces," (Hussain 2017, pers. comm., 16 November).

Relationships with India turned sour when India expressed concern after Yameen extended the public emergency in the Maldives in February 2018 (Saberin 2018). In retaliation, the Maldives refused to participate in Indian naval exercises. The Maldives told India to withdraw two military helicopters gifted to the MNDF for emergency operations, and Indian personnel (*Reuters* 2018). Nonetheless, over 120 MNDF personnel underwent training at Indian military institutions from 2017-2018 (Government of India 2018). The Maldives' stronger relations with China created concerns about negative effects on India-funded Indian Ocean security programs to protect the EEZ (*Reuters* 2018).

Some Maldivians interviewed in 2017 expressed concern that a thorough investigation of the armed forces and those involved in the 2012 coup-type event still had not occurred,[404] even though it was recommended in the 2012 CoNI report. This increases the likelihood for a rebellion, mutiny or coup-like event to occur again in the Maldives.

[404] Interview with a former senior human rights official.

Under Yameen the Maldives' military reverted to Janowitz's authoritarian-personal control. Yameen did not curb Islamic extremism and strengthened military ties with authoritarian nations Saudi Arabia and China. Yameen's engagement in personal control of the military, police and state apparatus by constant hiring, firing, persecution and conviction eroded trust in his ability to look after his workforce – leading to his loyalists taking a stand for democracy after Yameen's 2018 election loss (see next section). Yameen, as a patron, failed to adequately nurture his clients – the security forces. This, combined with his brutal autocratic control, alienated too many constituents and led to his downfall in the 2018 elections.

5.6 The conduct of elections and elections observation

Since the end of the Cold War, elections have been monitored to gauge a country's progress towards democratisation. Elections play a vital role in moving a country towards democratic consolidation or reverting to authoritarianism. Many developing countries find it necessary to have their elections pronounced as 'credible' by observers to obtain western aid (see section 3.2.2). As such, the conduct and observation of the three most recent elections in the Maldives are now assessed as to whether they satisfactorily met the principles of democracy.

The first multiparty elections in 2008 resulted in slightly more than three years of fledgling democracy under President Nasheed before his forced resignation in 2012. The Maldives' second multiparty Presidential elections, held from September-November 2013, were manipulated to serve particular interests (see Bhim 2019[405]). Elements of electoral authoritarianism were present in this, the 2014 *Majlis* elections and the September 2018 Presidential elections in the Maldives. The behaviour of the rulers towards the executive, judiciary, electoral bodies, security forces and media, will be analysed for possible manipulation to influence electoral outcomes, and to assess if the elections were authoritarian or democratic.

[405] This section contains extracts from Bhim 2019, written during the course of this thesis.

5.6.1 Maldives 2013 presidential & 2014 parliamentary elections

The conduct of the 2013 Presidential and the 2014 Majlis elections are now discussed. Following Nasheed's resignation in 2012, the MDP backed by India and the Commonwealth demanded early presidential elections, leading to caretaker President Waheed's call for elections in July 2013, rather than the scheduled October 2013 (LBO 2012). Elections were then deferred to 7 September. During campaigning, vote buying was endemic[406] in the Maldives. A study by Transparency Maldives (TM) found that voters accepted bribes because they did not believe candidates would deliver on election promises (Robinson 2015, pp. 267-268). The Commonwealth[407] and the European Union were the leading international observers while TM was the sole local CSO monitoring the elections. The elections were well scrutinised by 2,306 national observers, 1,736 local monitors, and 1,408 candidate representatives (Commonwealth 2013, p. 27).

Despite the anti-Islam propaganda against Nasheed (see section 5.4.2), he won the majority of votes in the 7 September elections. Nasheed representing the MDP party won 45.45% votes; Yameen representing the PPM party got 25.35% votes; Qasim Ibrahim of Jumhooree Gulhun party got 24.07% votes; and Waheed, standing as an Independent, got 5.13% votes (Commonwealth 2013, p. 27). The election was orderly and peaceful with a voter turnout of 88.44% (Robinson 2015, p. 272). Local and international observers from the Commonwealth, United Nations, European Union, and India, declared the election free and fair (*Reuters* 2013). The EU observer team praised the Maldives Elections Commission (MEC) for fostering "transparent, inclusive and credible electoral processes" (*BBC News* 2014).

The atmosphere became volatile after the election results were announced. Devastated by their poor showing, Qasim and Jumhooree Party supporters held rallies and filed a case alleging a rigged vote (Robinson 2015, p. 274). On 7 October, the Supreme Court annulled the results of the September elections which had been declared free and fair by the international and local observers, and called for a fresh poll by 20 October (*Reuters* 2013). Next, a group of masked men, after stabbing a security officer, set fire to the MDP-aligned *RaajjeTV* station, which was giving live coverage to the MDP's protests against the

[406] Several prominent Maldivians shared this view in interviews to the researcher.
[407] The Commonwealth sent the following number of observers to the 2013 Presidential elections: 23 observers, comprising 10 teams to the 7 September elections; 12 observers comprising 6 teams to the 9 November elections; and 10 observers comprising 5 teams to the 16 November elections (Commonwealth 2013, pp. 56-68).

annulment[408] (Robinson 2013). Police did not provide protection to the station despite its CEO reporting that it might be attacked (Robinson 2013).

The MEC experienced difficulty in re-running the elections. The police were obstructing the MEC from transporting voter materials. Shortly before commencement of the scheduled poll on 19 October, the MEC announced it was unable to continue polling as the police were stopping staff from leaving the building with election materials (Commonwealth 2013, pp. 37-38). The head of the MEC, Fuwad Thowfeek, confirms they could not conduct elections that day as the police prevented their officials from coming out of the Secretariat to go to the polling stations:

> "… It came to a stage where the police felt as if they were the leaders of this operation and even the head of the MEC needed authorisation from the police commissioner to enter the security room," (2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

The MEC encountered a tough time in maintaining a balanced approach, and stand up to the police, judiciary and other government institutions in order to hold the elections in a free and fair manner. Thowfeek revealed that the Supreme Court gave a guideline that:

> "… the (elections) officers should sit within the limited compound and they cannot have phones. So even if any illegal things happened, the elections officials didn't have the capacity to inform the head office and take any action," (2017, pers. comm., 23 November).

The fresh poll was finally held on 9 November 2013. Nasheed again won a majority 46.93% votes; Yameen got 29.72% votes; and Qasim got 23.34% votes (Commonwealth 2013, p. 44). Jumhooree and its coalition partners decided to support PPM's Yameen. In the 16 November 2013 run-off election, Yameen won 51.39% votes, while Nasheed got 48.61% votes (Commonwealth 2013, p. 51). Interference in the democratic process by police and the Supreme Court led to votes being cast three times in a span of nine weeks from September to November 2013 (Musthaq 2014). The former dictator Gayoom's successor Yameen was elected by a bare majority of 51%.

The PPM and Jumhooree parties' delaying tactics worked as from 23 September to 10 November 2013, the Supreme Court ruled seven times to delay the elections, including a

---

[408] Despite extensive CCTV footage, the attackers were not convicted, however in contrast, three *RaajjeTV* journalists were convicted in 2017 for obstructing police duty (*Maldives Independent* 2017b).

ruling to annul the 7 September results, and issuing a 16-point guideline for the next elections; three orders to defer official election dates; and an order to recompile the voter register and voter registration (Commonwealth 2013, pp. x-xi). The rulings favoured the Jumhooree and PPM parties because, by deferring elections, they were given extra time to find ways to swing the electorate to win. Whereas the MEC had announced the constitutionally-compliant dates for elections in September, to bring in a new government before expiry of the current government's term on 11 November. Holding the elections on the dates announced by the MEC could have resulted in Nasheed retaining majority votes. The police suppressed pro-democracy protests against the Supreme Court and law enforcement agencies' unlawful interventions; these extra-legal judicial interventions in the electoral process were a major factor in bringing President Yameen to power (Naseem 2015, p. 103).

Thowfeek openly criticised the Supreme Court after it annulled the September presidential election. Subsequently, on 9 March 2014, just two weeks before the parliamentary elections, the Maldives Supreme Court gave six-month jail sentences to all four election commissioners, suspended for three years, for "disobeying orders" and disrespecting the court by not following election guidelines (*BBC News* 2014). Thowfeek and his deputy were sacked. The four MEC members were brought to trial under new rules that allowed the Supreme Court to initiate proceedings, prosecute and pass judgement (*BBC News* 2014).

The 22 March 2014 Majlis elections were won by the Progressive Coalition comprising of the PPM, Jumhooree and the Maldives Development Alliance (MDA). The MDP, receiving 41.2% votes got only 26 Majlis seats, whereas the PPM winning 28.2% votes got 33 seats; Jumhooree with 13.2% votes got 15 seats; the MDA with 4.2% votes got five seats; Adhaalath Party with 2.6% votes got one seat; Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) with 0.3% votes got no seats; and Independents with 10.3% votes got five seats[409] (Commonwealth 2014, p. 35).

The European Union (EU) Observer Mission (2014, p. 1) noted that interference through the Supreme Court's action against the MEC members created uncertainty over the elections, and doubt about advancing democracy. Both the EU and the Commonwealth noted that the Supreme Court's actions undermined the separation of powers specified in the constitution,

---

[409] The anomaly in the allocation of seats can be attributed to the ratio of the seats to the population, which would amount to more seats allocated to less densely populated outer islands, and less seats allocated to the more densely populated capital Malé.

and reported widespread vote-buying, excessive campaign expenditure and lack of effective regulation of campaign financing.[410] Private TV stations devoted coverage to their chosen party and candidates;[411] however, the public service broadcaster *MBC* gave majority airtime to the PPM (46%) covering government programmes announced in the run-up to the elections, representing a clear imbalance (EU 2014, p. 7).

The 2013 elections were authoritarian as the police obstructed the work of the independent Elections Commission and the judiciary interfered by issuing numerous judgements to nullify or delay election dates, which favoured the PPM and Jumhooree parties and worked against Nasheed's MDP. Gayoom and Gasim's support meant that a significant portion of elites and business tycoons rallied behind Yameen making it possible for him to win and impose his tyrannical rule. The international observers played a crucial role in monitoring the elections and expressing concerns at the discrepancies. International organisations - the Commonwealth and EU – had been actively engaged with the Maldives since democratisation commenced in 2004. They provided technical advice, detailed reports and observations, were a voice of reason, and a source of support for the Maldives' civil society. This did not eliminate the electoral discrepancies, but they constituted a significant record of how the elections were interfered with, leading to a reversion to authoritarianism.

5.6.2 Maldives 2018 presidential elections

The conduct of the 2018 presidential election is now examined. Yameen's control over the Maldives was synonymous with a personal dictatorship and filled the country with fear.[412] The media was constrained by the 2016 defamation act[413] while civil society was apprehensive due to unpunished actions by Islamic extremists. Amidst this atmosphere of a manipulated judiciary, besieged opposition and unjust governmental actions, it appeared doubtful if elections would be held, if they would be free and fair, or if vote-rigging might occur.

---

[410] The EU said that the Supreme Court's action was contrary to the provisions of the Constitution regulating dismissal of Commission members, violated principles of the separation of powers and raised serious concerns about safeguarding the independence of the Elections Commission. For its part, the Commonwealth reiterated that the dismissals brought a level of anxiety and self-censorship among some independent institutions and civil society which had a detrimental effect on their performance (The Commonwealth 2014, p. 10).
[411] such as *RaajjeTV* to the MDP, and *VTV* to the government coalition of PPM and JP.
[412] The author visited Maldives from 24 October - 21 November 2017. She observed fear amongst people to discuss the political situation.
[413] see section 5.5.2.

Yameen's loyalist Ahmed Shareef was appointed chair of the MEC earlier in 2018, creating concern about the credibility of the elections (*Maldives Independent* 2018e). Shareef was the former secretary-general of Yameen's party. In June, Shareef announced holding early polls on 23 September 2018.[414] Cracking down on opponents demonstrated Yameen's insecurity about losing power. Nevertheless, Yameen seemed confident about an election victory, especially since his key adversaries, Nasheed and Gasim, were living in exile abroad, while Gayoom and Gayoom's son Faris Maumoon were behind bars. Shareef stated that observers from eight countries, the EU and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation would be invited (*Maldives Independent* 2018e).

In the lead-up to the elections, several actions were taken to weaken the opposition. There was hate speech against Nasheed by Yameen's ministers. Nasheed was portrayed as anti-Islam,[415] or *Laadheeni.*[416] PPM supporters threatened to behead Nasheed and other opposition figures if they returned to the Maldives (*Maldives Independent* 2018h). Yameen admitted during the campaign that he was responsible for stripping seats from parliamentarians and excluding Nasheed and Gasim from contesting.[417] There were continuous terminations and rearranging of senior military and police positions. The armed forces and judiciary acted against opposition groups with parliamentarians detained and parliament locked down. Civil servants and independent institutions' members were forced to sign up for membership of Yameen's party to retain their jobs (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2).

Elite families and businesses retain political and economic power in the Maldives[418] and influence elections. The tourism industry is highly politicised as big businesses fund both the PPM and MDP parties and instruct employees who to vote for (Khandekar 2018). Gasim, Siyam and the Champa brothers established their empires under Gayoom's patronage[419] (Khandekar 2018). The elite beneficiaries of Gayoom supported Yameen in the 2013 elections. These businesses declared their support for Yameen's economic policy in August 2018, however, Siyam resigned from Yameen's party after the EU announced sanctions

[414] Yameen's term as President was due to finish on 16 November 2018.
[415] The researcher observed a Maldivian Minister making such comments about Nasheed on state television in Malé in November 2017. The Minister's *Dhivehi* words were translated into English captions.
[416] In interviews with the researcher, MP Ali Hussain and former MDP parliamentarian Ghafoor confirmed that Nasheed was being portrayed as very *Laadheeni*, or anti-Islam.
[417] See *Maldives Independent* news articles from August-September 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com).
[418] This was the view of several prominent Maldivians interviewed by the author.
[419] At least 26 resorts were owned by the tycoons Gasim; Ahmed Siyam of the ruling coalition; Mohamed Umar Manik; and 'Champa' Hussain Afeef (Khandekar 2018).

(Khandekar 2018). Gasim had defected to the opposition and was in asylum overseas. Business support for Yameen thus decreased in the 2018 elections.

India, the EU and the Commonwealth's reminders to respect democracy and release political prisoners were met with belligerence by Yameen who felt bolstered by Saudi Arabia's military aid and China's infrastructure aid. The US$200 million China-Maldives friendship bridge opened three weeks before the election on 1 September 2018 with multiple Yameen cutouts lining the bridge.[420] Yameen tried to win the public's support through concessions prior to the elections.[421] The media[422] reported that the government waived fines for fishermen, tenants, motorists and for water bills. Tax violations by small businesses were also waived. Yameen inaugurated projects for the harbor, sewerage, water supply, roads, housing and shore protection. These projects, combined with China's bridge, portrayed Yameen as a provider of development.

The international organisations appeared to lack confidence about the election's credibility. As the Maldives withdrew from the Commonwealth in 2016,[423] the Commonwealth did not send observers to the 2018 elections while the EU and UN declined the MEC's invitation to send observers (*Maldives Independent* 2018k). However, the MEC approved 38 delegates from 11 international organisations to observe the elections – including the Asian Network for Free Elections, the Foreign Correspondents Association of Sri Lanka, and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (which had links to Yameen's PPM).[424] Many with accreditation had problems receiving a visa, probably due to inefficient coordination by the MEC. Despite poor planning, the MEC's efforts to ensure the presence of foreign international observers in sufficient numbers demonstrates that the Maldives found it important to have their elections monitored for credibility.

---

[420] There were six days of activities to launch the bridge. A few stories high cut-out of President Yameen was erected next to the bridge (*Maldives Independent* 2018f). Several weddings were even held there. The cut-outs attracted controversy on Twitter as the previous month, Yameen had ordered a resort to remove 'human-form' sculptures viewed as un-Islamic (*Maldives Independent* 2018f). Maldivians twittered fears of the increased debt to China from infrastructure projects.

[421] Yameen allegedly received bribes, but the police displayed bias towards Yameen by taking no action when the Financial Intelligence Unit reported that Yameen received $1.5 million cash into his private bank account prior to the elections (Rasheed 2018).

[422] See *Maldives Independent* news articles from August-September 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com).

[423] See section 5.5.1.

[424] Also approved were 26 media representatives from 14 outlets – including The Wire, AFP, Le Figaro, WION, Strategic News International and New York Times (*Maldives Independent* 2018g).

Four opposition parties – the MDP, JP, Adhaalath Party, and a breakaway faction of PPM led by Gayoom - formed a broad coalition but could not agree on a candidate.[425] Finally, one month before the elections, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih was announced as the MDP's presidential candidate. Solih pledged to legislate income tax, combat corruption, implement decentralisation, seek justice for sacked workers, reform the police, try Yameen for crimes and put an end to tyranny and dictatorship.[426] Solih was fielded as the joint opposition candidate.

Despite, or perhaps because of, Yameen's brutal repression of opposition, Solih shockingly defeated Yameen in the first round of the 23 September 2018 presidential election securing 58.3% votes while Yameen received less than 42% (*Aljazeera* 2018b). After Yameen's defeat, political prisoners – including senior officials – were released, suspended MPs were reinstated, Gasim's bribery conviction and Nasheed's 13-year terrorism conviction were quashed, PPM's speaker of parliament was voted out, and the former president's appointees sacked.[427]

In the absence of the EU and the Commonwealth, Transparency Maldives (2019) played a lead role in election monitoring and deployed about 400 domestic observers. TM noted that opposition parties and candidates did not enjoy requisite freedoms and were prosecuted or persecuted causing widespread disillusionment. TM noted several systematic pre-election issues, despite which citizens came out in force and "used the power of the ballot" resulting in a "fairly transparent and peaceful" election day. Independent observers, international journalists, and a vigilant public out on the streets in huge numbers lent credibility to the elections. Civil society ably fulfilled the international observers' role. In a truly participatory democracy with active citizenship, where citizens continuously engage to hold the government accountable and have a large-scale presence to monitor the elections, there is less need for international observers as the people's scrutiny accomplishes this task. This election win was a victory of the civil society and political society working together to oust a dictatorship. It highlighted that without the two arenas working together, it is impossible to dismantle an autocracy, hold free and fair elections, and usher in democracy. The Maldives was back on the path of transition to democracy.

---

[425] See *Maldives Independent* news articles from August-September 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com).
[426] See *Maldives Independent* news articles from August-September 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com).
[427] See *Maldives Independent* news articles from September-November 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com)

In his two-month holdover presidency period Yameen tried to change the election outcome. Yameen lost the elections on 23 September, but his presidential term officially ended on 16 November 2018. Yameen's party staged nightly protests after his defeat, but the judiciary this time respected the election results and rejected Yameen's petition to annul it (*Maldives Times* 2018). Yameen tried to entice the security forces by announcing a new military welfare company *Sifainge Ekuveri Kunfuni* (Military Friendship Company), although two already existed (*Maldives Independent* 2018i). Nonetheless, the security forces, judiciary and the MEC, freed from Yameen's dictatorial clutches, announced that they would respect the election results. The media[428] reported that Yameen's party had harassed *RajjeTV* journalist, threatened MEC members resulting in elections commissioners fleeing the country as well as called for MEC Chair Shareef's arrest and fresh elections. The outgoing regime also tried to sell 400 residential plots which was halted by the Anti-Corruption Commission. These actions indicate Yameen's difficulty in accepting defeat and last-ditch efforts to nurture some clients.

Maldivians were concerned about the dwindling relations with India and Western democratic nations, and the growing debt to China. Solih's victory reflected Maldivians' preference to maintain close ties with India and Western democracies, and to decrease dependency on China. The election ended the Maldives' pro-China stance. At his inauguration on 17 November, Solih embraced Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and renewed the friendship and bilateral cooperation (*Agence France-Presse* 2018). Since Solih's victory, China has stopped issuing aggressive statements against India, regarding the Maldives.

A raft of legislation was introduced after Solih's victory including a bill to protect whistle blowers. New military and police heads were appointed and the defamation act repealed. Yameen was questioned about corruption and money laundering while his bank accounts were frozen. A police reform programme was launched, inquiry commissions formed to probe unsolved murders and judicial reforms proposed. In the 2019 Majlis elections, the MDP won a super majority of 65 of the 87 seats (*Avas* 2019b), providing it with a strong mandate to implement its policies.

[428] See *Maldives Independent* news articles October 2018 (https://maldivesindependent.com)

Solih's presidency undid Yameen's repression but many challenges remain. The President still has significant powers of appointments and dismissals and power remains vested in elites and businesses who make major political decisions.[429] In 2019, the Maldivian Democracy Network[430] (MDN) called for a truth and reconciliation process to deal with atrocities under past administrations. However, in November 2019, Solih's government caved in to protests by religious scholars and dissolved the MDN over their 2016 report that allegedly challenged Islamic principles (*Avas* 2019a). The government felt pressured by the PPM and a group of elite political and religious leaders who are using Islam to incite hatred and violence against Solih, and Speaker of Parliament Nasheed. Thus, democracy in the Maldives is once again threatened by its political, business and religious elites, who had benefitted when Nasheed was forced to resign from the presidency in 2012. Moreover, the Maldives' ocean borders could not deter spread of the global COVID-19 pandemic, as its population density contributed to 9,052 cases by September 2020 (*Avas* 2020a). However, the nation's high dependency on tourism, combined with its high number of recoveries, led it to reopen borders to tourists in mid-July.[431]

The 2018 Maldives elections were authoritarian as Yameen's autocratic government severely restricted the freedom of opposition parties and candidates which prevented them from competing on a level-playing field with the PPM. Nevertheless, a vigilant civil society with voters determined to bring back democracy, aligned with the political society, and toppled Yameen's dictatorship through the power of the ballot. This reaffirms Linz and Stepan, and Doorenspleet's assertion that civil society holds the power to remove a dictatorship. After Yameen's defeat, the judiciary and armed forces, who had been at the president's mercy, refused to back his effort to have the election results nullified, and instead supported the victorious Solih's coalition. Election observers continued to play an important role in 2018 and more than 400 domestic observers monitored the elections thus creating an independent record and ensuring government accountability. The Maldives pulled back from democratic reversal and returned to the path of transition to democracy.

---

[429] Such as to the security forces and independent institutions. A new activist group *Navaanavi* claimed that everything in Maldives was controlled by 1% of powerful people and they protested in December 2018 against the four unelected coalition leaders – including Gasim and Gayoom - making major decisions as advisors to Solih (*Maldives Independent* 2018j).
[430] MDN official facebook page, viewed August 2019.
[431] As of 12 September 2020, the Maldives had 9,052 COVID-19 inflections, but only 1,960 were active cases and 7,055 had recovered (*Avas* 2020a). Since reopening its borders, 11,000 tourists arrived till September (*Avas* 2020b).

5.7 Conclusion

Authoritarian regimes developed in the small island state, the Maldives, due to several factors. The Maldives was a monarchical society in the precolonial and colonial era. It remained an authoritarian regime at independence and did not commence transition to democracy until the 2008 multiparty election. Deficiencies of democracy that existed at independence under Nasir's one-man rule continued under Gayoom because the Maldives lacked political pluralism. Political parties were not allowed, the dictator had full control of political institutions, and the parliament chose the President who was then endorsed in a referendum. The Maldives did not meet the conditions necessary for democracy stipulated by Linz and Stepan, Dahl and Przeworski. The types of authoritarian regimes that emerged at various times after independence in the Maldives are: one-man personal rule and electoral autocracy.

The political-military relations applicable to precolonial Maldives is Janowitz's aristocratic model, which continued under Britain's indirect colonial rule because monarchs retained government leadership. Post-independence, Janowitz's authoritarian-personal control applied under Nasir's and Gayoom's rule as the soldiers' allegiance transferred to the President. Following several coup attempts under Gayoom, the Maldives armed forces grew exponentially. As part of the CMR reforms for democratisation, the police force was separated from the army in 2004, but laws governing the police and the armed forces were not created until 2008. The security forces' personal allegiance to the former dictator Gayoom was a factor in the mutiny and the 2012 coup that ousted President Nasheed. The Maldives' military and police need training on the roles and allegiances in a democracy to prevent a repeat of the 2012 events.

When the Maldives was transitioning to democracy in 2008, the residues of dictatorship hampered the democratically-elected government of Nasheed from completing reforms of institutions to consolidate democracy and Nasheed lost power in the 2012 coup-type event. The Maldives did not succeed in consolidating democracy as substantial population groups did not regard democracy as the means for changing government. Islamic extremist propaganda was utilised to incite hatred against Nasheed by portraying him as pro-Western and anti-Islam. Gayoom loyalist beneficiaries in elite and professional groups abetted the

decline of democracy in the Maldives and supported a reversion to electoral autocratic rule by Yameen following the 2013 elections.

Gayoom's nurturing of loyalists through patronage maintained his dictatorship for three decades. By contrast, Yameen's frequent firing, persecution and even jailing of public officials and politicians led to an erosion of support amongst many erstwhile loyalists. Yameen failed to nurture the clients that enabled his 2013 victory and undermined them while trying to create new clients. Yameen's tyranny against his own loyalists led to electoral defeat in 2018. Thus, patron-client relationships are the building-blocks of a dictatorship sustained through material rewards. Failure to nurture patron-client relations can lead to a decrease in loyal supporters and cause the fall of the dictator.

Civil society and political society worked together to bring democracy to Maldives in 2008, and to return the country to democracy in 2018. Civil society triumphed over Yameen's dictatorship when he lost the September 2018 elections to the opposition coalition. Solih's government needs to implement reforms to consolidate democracy and prevent a reversion to authoritarian rule in future. The paradox of democratisation is that the freedoms it bestows have partly facilitated an influx of fundamentalist Islamic organisations since 2003. Solih's government has a major challenge of dealing with Islamic extremist groups that further took root under Yameen and the Maldivian *jihadists* who fought with the Islamic State that are returning home. Those who hold power are still the elites – albeit with some changes from the authoritarian era. No doubt, the Maldives has a long journey towards consolidating democracy, which is possible if the citizens are not swayed into supporting a return to autocracy. The next chapter will look at an even smaller SIDS in the Indian Ocean, Seychelles, where a post-independence dictatorship prospered due to socialist aid.

Chapter 6. Seychelles

Figure 6.1 Map of Seychelles (Source: Air Seychelles)

6.1 Introduction

Seychelles' short history of about 260 years has seen the uninhabited islands evolve into a Creole nation following French and British colonisation. Located in the western Indian Ocean, Seychelles is close to the African continent. Although Somalia is Seychelles' nearest neighbour,[432] no beneficial relationship exists between the two nations. Rather, Seychelles has had closer ties with Kenya and Mauritius since the colonial era. Seychelles' land area is

[432] The second nearest neighbour is the small island nation Comoros, and the third is Mauritius.

only 455 square kilometres but it has a large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 1.3million square kilometres (*SNA* 2014b). Despite its small population of about 95,000 (see Table 6.3), Seychelles fishing sector has been growing. The legendary Coco-de-mer nut,[433] endemic to Praslin and Curieuse islands, earned Seychelles the name 'Garden of Eden'.[434] Of Seychelles' 116 islands, 43 are mountainous, including its main island Mahé which houses the capital Victoria.[435] This means that, unlike some small atoll nations, Seychelles is not in danger of being submerged by rising seas levels due to global warming. However, the harsh granitic landscape makes Seychelles unsuitable for large-scale agrarian ventures. The idyllic nation was subjected to a brutal one-party socialist dictatorship a year after independence when the 1977 coup occurred. The resumption of multiparty elections in 1993 retained the autocratic status quo through electoral authoritarian governments. The remnants of dictatorship were being removed after the 2016 opposition election victory.

In Seychelles, the majority poor Creole of African descent felt discriminated against by the minority French landowners. This legacy was manipulated by the coup leader France Albert René[436] – ironically himself of French descent – to garner support from African nations by portraying the coup as liberation from white oppression (see section 6.4.1). Under René, Seychelles adopted a Creole identity whereby Seychellois were not discriminated on the grounds of race. Creole became the main language, although English and French were also retained as official languages.[437] Aid from socialist nations catered for free welfare which bolstered living standards, elevating Seychelles to an upper-middle income economy (UN-OHRLLS 2013, p. 23). These factors contributed to the longevity of authoritarian regimes post-independence, which are analysed by categorising the regime types according to theories of authoritarianism[438] for distinct periods of rule, in table 6.1 below.

[433] The Coco-de-mer, the world's largest nut, weighs up to 32kg. Endemic to Praslin and Curieuse islands, it appears similar to the female reproductive body part while the long seed evokes the male reproductive body part. They are among endemic plants at the nature reserve, Vallee De Mai, a UNESCO World Heritage site located on Praslin, Seychelles' second largest island visited by the researcher in October 2016.
[434] For centuries, scholars debated where is the original site of the biblical 'Garden of Eden'. There has been speculation that Praslin could possibly have been the 'Garden of Eden'. See: Richard, H 2016.
[435] Seychelles has over 116 islands scattered across one million square kilometres of sea in the middle of the Western Indian Ocean. The Mahé group has 43 hilly granitic islands; the rest are coral islands rising a little above sea-level (National Bureau of Statistics 2017, p. 3).
[436] René stopped using his first name France following the coup. As a political leader, René preferred using the name Albert René, given that he was trying to promote himself as non-French and as one of the Creoles.
[437] The researcher visited Seychelles from September-October 2016. Creole is the main language of communication. Local TV programmes are in Creole, while shorter news podcasts are in English and French.
[438] See section 3.1.1.

Seychelles	Year	Regime Type
French possession and settlement	1756-1810	French autocracy
France loses war. British colonise Seychelles	1811-1948	British colonial autocracy
British rule	1948-1967	British restricted elected colonial autocracy
Colonial elections with universal suffrage	1967-1976	British multiparty colonial autocracy
June 1976 independence till 1977 coup – President Mancham	1976-1977	Transition to democracy
After 4-5 June 1977 coup - President René	1977-1993	Single-party personal dictatorship
Post-1993 elections - President René	1993-2004	Electoral autocracy
Post-2004 – President Michel	2004-2016	Competitive authoritarian
Post-2016 elections – President Faure	2016-2018	Transition to democracy

Table 6.1 Regime types in Seychelles

Seychelles became a settler colony following possession by France in 1756; thereafter the regime type was French autocracy. In 1811, it became a British colony when France lost the Anglo-French war. Then the regime type was British colonial autocracy. Legislative elections were held from 1948, however, voting was restricted to literate property owners meaning that eligibility was largely restricted to the minority French landowning population. Universal suffrage with vibrant multiparty elections were held from 1967, although the country was still under British colonial autocratic rule.

Seychelles transition to democracy, which began with independence on 29 June 1976, was shattered by the 1977 coup d'état. Coup architect René became President and reigned for the next 16 years as a single-party personal dictator. The ramifications of the Soviet Union’s collapse compelled René to return Seychelles to multiparty elections in 1993. However, René won the Presidential elections and maintained personal control via electoral autocratic regimes. René retired in 2004 and appointed his fellow coup protagonist and deputy, James Michel, as President. Michel’s rule was competitive authoritarian as he did not amass personal control. Michel was the President until 2015. He retired in 2016 and passed the Presidency to his deputy Danny Faure. The opposition victory in the 2016 National Assembly elections effectively returned Seychelles to a transition to democracy.

To gauge the impact of authoritarianism, the rankings by Freedom House for civil and political rights for Seychelles are listed in Table 6.2 below. These were not available for the period of single party rule. However, given that Seychelles had arbitrary killings,

disappearances, lack of press freedom, exiling of opponents and outlawing of opposition political parties, the ranking for this period would certainly have been Not Free.[439] Table 6.2 reveals that Seychelles' status and press freedom ratings were deemed to be Partly Free both during multiparty electoral autocracy and the transition to democracy.

Seychelles	**Year**	**Regime Type**	**Status**	**Freedom Rating**	**Civil Liberties**	**Political Rights**	**Press Freedom**
Independence	1976	Transition to Democracy	-	-	-	-	-
After the 1977 coup	1978	Single-party personal dictatorship	-	-	-	-	-
Post-1993 elections	1999*	Electoral autocracy	Partly Free*	3*	3*	3*	Partly Free** (2002)
Post-2016 elections	2018*	Transition to Democracy	Partly Free*	3*	3*	3*	Partly Free** (2017)

Table 6.2 Rights and freedoms ratings by Freedom House
*Freedom in the World Report for that country and year, by Freedom House; 1=Most Free, 7=Least Free.
**Freedom of Press Report for that country and year, by Freedom House.
- Data not available

This indicates that similar to the electoral autocratic period under René, reforms for democratisation have been ongoing in Seychelles. There are still some challenges in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms. Although the opposition won the National Assembly elections in 2016, the President was from the former dictator's party, meaning that the status quo remained largely intact.

Seychelles' primary sector output is not high. From 2012-2016, the primary sector accounted for only 2% of GDP; the secondary sector accounted for between 11-14% of GDP; whereas the tertiary sector accounted for the highest amount of GDP of between 68-71% (National Bureau of Statistics 2017, p. 24). The major contributors in the tertiary sector were: accommodation and food services; transportation and storage; owner occupied dwellings; wholesale and retail trade; and public administration and defence. Therefore, Seychelles has a

[439] Similar kinds of incidences characterised the Maldives' one-man dictatorship in the 1990s, and Freedom House gave the Maldives a Not Free ranking in 1998 (see the discussion part of Table 5.2).

high reliance on the service sector for economic activity, such as tourism, hospitality and the public service.

As shown in Table 6.3 below, Seychelles population has been growing slowly but steadily post-independence, from 61,786 in 1977 to 78,064 in 1997, and increasing to 94,600 by 2016 (National Bureau of Statistics 2017, pp. 7-8). The majority of the population occupy the three largest islands, Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, while a few other islands are also inhabited.

Year										
1803*	**1862***	**1911****	**1941*****	**1971+**	**1977+**	**1987+**	**1997+**	**2002+**	**2012++**	**2016++**
Seychelles Population										
2121	7,560	22,600	32,000	54,695	61,786	68,499	78,064	81,177	88,300	94,600

Table 6.3 Seychelles population trend
Sources: * Scarr 1999; ** SNA 2014a (*Seychelles News Agency*); *** McAteer 2008; + Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011; ++ National Bureau of Statistics 2017.

About 40% of its population was between the age of 15-44 years from 2012-2016. The relative absence of a youth bulge means that there is not as high a risk of social volatility. Roman Catholicism, brought by the French, remain the predominant religion, while Anglicans, a faith promoted by the British, comprise a smaller proportion (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 47).

6.2 Seychelles' pre-independence political history

Seychelles was inhabited by the French with their slaves, which had a significant bearing on why Seychelles succumbed to authoritarianism post-independence. To ascertain how the ensuing colonial legacies affected its politics and society post-independence, Seychelles' colonial history, key political developments till independence, and the development of the military, are examined.

There is limited literature on precolonial and colonial Seychelles. Only two scholarly authors, McAteer[440] and Scarr, have written on its pre-independence history. This was compensated by utilising autobiographies by former Seychellois Presidents, Mancham and Michel, and

[440] McAteer's three books spanning Seychelles precolonial and colonial history were published in 1991, 2000 and 2008.

René's biography (Shillington 2014), which provide a deep understanding of Seychelles' political history, and were a prime source of first-hand information for the post-1963 period. Feature articles about Seychelles' history in its online news media also were useful. In part due to the nation's small size, notable Seychellois scholars have not emerged. Authoritarian rule post-independence prevented growth of Seychellois academia. Two books[441] on Seychelles' politics were banned under post-1977 coup President René. There is a need for more scholarly research on Seychelles' history and politics to fill gaps in the literature and to provide alternative viewpoints.

6.2.1 Possession by France

The uninhabited islands Seychelles came under the possession of France on 1 November 1756, through an expedition sent by the governor of Isle de France who left behind a large stone carved with the arms of France and the name Isle de Séchelles[442] (McAteer 1991, pp. 29-31). Formal French possession through settlement commenced in the late 18th century due to fears that Britain, aware of the islands location on the shorter route to India, would plot to claim them (McAteer 1991). In 1770, the first group of 28 settlers comprising French and their slaves from Africa and India, arrived in the vessel *Telemaque*, and established their settlement on Sainte Anne Island (*SNA* 2020). The mixed composition of settlers has contributed to the Creole[443] language, culture and cuisine that has become the identity of modern Seychelles.

In 1791, Seychelles became an administrative dependency of Ile de France (McAteer 1991, pp. 132-134) (Scarr 1999, pp. 14-16), quelling the settlers' efforts to declare themselves independent. Small numbers of French settlers with their slaves tried to make a living on the islands used as a port for whalers, transiting ships, and privateers. The total population was about 2,121 by 1803, and 3,467 by 1810, of which the whites were about one-tenth, while the rest were black and persons of colour.[444] France mainly colonised Seychelles for geo-political

441 They are: 'Seychelles - Political Castaways' by Christopher Lee (1976), and 'Seychelles Since 1770' by Deryck Scarr (1999).
442 Named after Vicomte Moreau de Séchelles, Controller of Finance in France. The Governor General of Ile de France (now known as Mauritius) Bertrand Mahé de Labourdonnais, fearing British interest, sent Lazare Picault to map them. Expeditions led by Picault explored the islands in 1742 and 1744 (McAteer 1991, p. 10). However, the French did not establish a colony there, presumably due to high costs and lack of viable income, and they kept the existence of the islands a secret, fearing British occupation (McAteer 1991).
443 In Seychelles, the word Creole denotes a mixture of ethnicities.
444 In 1803, there were 215 whites; 86 free blacks and coloured; and 1,820 slaves. In 1810, whites were 317, free blacks and coloureds 135, and slaves 3,015 (Scarr 1999, p. 53).

reasons to prevent British colonisation. The islands did not develop much during the administration under France.[445]

6.2.2 Seychelles as a British colony

Seychelles became a British colony in 1811 following France's defeat in the Anglo-French war. Key developments in this period are now examined to assess the social impacts of slavery. French settlers with numerous slaves had created a minority of wealthy French landowners, a significant Creole population and a majority poor population of African descent.[446] Britain ended slavery and made a concerted effort to rehabilitate slaves. Slavery was legally abolished in Seychelles by the 1811 British statute,[447] but it continued unofficially with slave numbers increasing to 6,950 by 1815[448] (Scarr 1999, p. 45). The 1833 British Emancipation Act to abolish slavery in all British colonies was enforced in Mauritius and Seychelles in 1835 (McAteer 2000, p. 23). An apprenticeship scheme, that seemed to continue slavery-type conditions, was ended by an Order of Council from London which proclaimed apprentices free from 1 February 1839 – celebrated as Liberation Day in Seychelles (McAteer 2000, p. 41). The end of slavery led to economic stagnation[449] in Seychelles as the French landowners, dependent on slave labour, struggled to find workers.[450]

Over the next few decades, education was largely delivered by church groups with government assistance.[451] Church efforts were not enough and the African children's lack of education became worrying. Africans were grateful to the English for liberating them, but adopted the Creole language and preferred Catholicism and the Catholic education system.[452]

---

445 Settlers' efforts led to cultivation of cotton, copra, sugarcane, coffee and cloves by 1809 (McAteer 1991, p. 250). With political unrest in France, 'troublemakers' were sent to Seychelles, including French prisoners and forcibly exiled high-profile personalities from French colonies.

446 British efforts to make the colony self-sufficient were complicated due to the lack of profitable crops and limited flat arable land. Similar to France, Britain used Seychelles as a place of exile for some famous political undesirables.

447 Slavery was initially abolished in French colonies in 1794, re-established in 1802 and permanently abolished in 1848 (Schmidt, p. 1).

448 This was double the number of slaves in 1810, due to illegal procurement of slaves. Slaves were of four main types: Creoles – born on Seychelles, of mixed parentage; Creole Malgaches – from Madagascar; Africans – the largest group; and a small number of Indians and Malays (McAteer 1991, pp. 255-256). Africans were exploited the most, and unlikely to engage in independent commerce after becoming free.

449 Whaling was booming during this time. McAteer (2000) wrote entertaining episodes of whalers' visits to Seychelles.

450 New labour introduced after the abolition of slavery were the Africans, 'rescued' from slave traders, who disembarked in Seychelles. Upon acquiring freedom, they tended to slip into the ad-hoc work lifestyles of the former slaves who were an unreliable workforce (McAteer 2000).

451 There were no formal schooling or churches under the French nor in the early period of British rule. Despite British administrators' efforts, the Anglican Church did not gain much of a foothold. Catholicism remained the favoured religion for settlers and former slaves (McAteer 2000).

452 McAteer (2000, p. 201) noted in 1902, there were 20 Catholic schools in Seychelles with 2,195 pupils, while 267 attended four Anglican schools. Ten years later, the school population was 2,692, with the main increase at the Catholic schools. Insufficient government funding led to reluctant acceptance of Catholic schools teaching in French. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1876

Overall, Britain made more effort to develop the island nation than France. However, colour discrimination and lack of literacy continued to entrench the poverty of African Creole.

6.2.3 Politics and the emergence of political actors

Seychelles was finally granted the status of Crown Colony in 1903, and was no longer a dependency of Mauritius.[453] The regime type remained a 'colonial autocracy' due to the supreme authority vested in the colonisers. In the early 1900s, more local participation in politics came about, however, there were no elections and Legislative Council members were appointed by colonial authorities. A Planters' Association was formed in 1917 which later became defunct; the Seychelles Taxpayers and Landowners Association was formed in 1939 (McAteer 2008, p. 136). These organisations represented the French elites while Creoles remained unrepresented. Racial prejudice hampered the Creoles attaining success.[454] Post-independence, Presidents René and Michel[455] blamed colour prejudice for Creole poverty and justified the 1977 coup as necessary for social justice.

By 1941, Seychelles population grew to 32,000 (McAteer 2008, p. 162). In 1948, the constitution was amended to allow for election of four of the six unofficial members to the Legislative Council on a limited franchise based on property, income and literacy (McAteer 2008, p. 165). Women also received the narrow right to vote in Seychelles in 1948 (IPU Archive). However, only 2,000 of Seychelles 35,000 inhabitants became eligible to vote. The Taxpayers and Landowners' Association won the elections outright (McAteer 2008, p. 221). Thus, on the political front after WWII, a restricted franchise meant representatives could be chosen by the educated landowning white minority whereas the majority of the poor Creole with limited or no education or property remained largely disenfranchised. This improved slightly when Seychelles' Governor from 1947-1951, Sir Percy Selwyn-Clarke, introduced district council elections in 1949, which were won by the Seychelles Progressive Association (McAteer 2008). Formed in 1948, this association included Creoles as members.

moved to a new school at Forêt Noire - Venn's Town. But the school's numbers kept dropping with only 25 in 1893 (McAteer 2000, pp. 132-147) leading to its closure.

[453] Known as Ile de France prior to British colonisation. See section 6.2.1.

[454] For instance, the coloured barrister Charles Evariste Collet was made acting Attorney General after returning from England with his French wife in 1947 (McAteer 2008, p. 216). By 1951, he was suspended from practising and returned to Europe in 1961 (McAteer 2008, p. 224).

[455] Colour prejudice is revealed in former President James Michel's biography as his mother – a coloured woman - declined to stay with his father – a white man – believing his parents would not accept her (Michel 2011, p. 20). Michel reveals poverty and hardship suffered by his mother and siblings from a later marriage to a coloured man.

Participation in politics flourished in Seychelles in the two decades preceding independence. In 1959, the elected members to the Legislative Council were increased to five representing the districts: North, Central and South Mahé; Victoria and Outlying Islands; and Praslin and La Digue (McAteer 2008, p. 282). The Taxpayers and Landowners won all seats in the May 1960 elections (McAteer 2008). Then two political leaders emerged who led the country to independence: James Mancham and René.[456] Mancham won the Victoria and Outlying Islands seats in the 1963 Legislative Council elections as an independent candidate campaigning for universal adult suffrage (McAteer 2008, p. 291) with support from the Seychelles Islanders United Party (SIUP).

René claims he launched the Seychelles Peoples' United Party (SPUP) in London on 12 November 1962, however, his biography indicates that date is a mistake and that the party was actually launched in 1963 (Shillington 2014, p. 84). The main aims of the SPUP were independence for Seychelles; end poverty, discrimination and injustice and bring development to benefit people equally (Shillington 2014, p. 82). Yet, René's efforts gained no response from the Colonial Secretary as the SPUP was unheard of in Seychelles and René had left the colony two years earlier (Shillington 2014, p. 88). On the trip to return to Seychelles, he met with Guy Sinon, Philibert Loizeau and other Seychellois in Nairobi in May 1964, leaving the formation of an East African Branch of the SPUP to Sinon (Shillington 2014, pp. 90-91). Thus, René created a network of supporters in Africa, which he used post-independence to prepare for the 1977 coup.

The Seychelles Democratic Party (SDP) was created in December 1963 after Mancham returned from Kenya's independence celebrations. The SDP claimed to be Seychelles' first political party as, unlike the SPUP, it was formed in the country with Mancham as its leader and David Joubert[457] as his deputy for 16 years (Mancham 1983, p. 55). The SDP was committed to universal suffrage and integration with Britain. Both the SDP and the SPUP campaigned for universal suffrage and equal rights for everyone in Seychelles, irrespective of colour. The main distinction was that the SPUP sought independence whereas the SDP did not.

---

[456] Both had part-French heritage, but adhered to a Creole identity which enhanced their political legitimacy. They both acquired law degrees in London in the early 1960s and formed their respective political parties which encompassed Creoles who were still suffering discrimination. Mancham returned to Seychelles and ran a successful law firm. This is revealed in the autobiography of Mancham (1983), René's biography (Shillington 2014), and also in McAteer (2008).

[457] Joubert, a Creole, was the headmaster of St Paul's School in Victoria. He had been a sergeant in the British army but returned home after the British Army turned down his application for a commission due to discrimination against blacks (Mancham 1983, p. 53).

Universal suffrage was finally granted in the November 1967 Deverell constitution. The constitution reflected the Constitutional Advisor Sir Colville Deverell's recommendation in 1966 for a single council government (one chamber) in view of Seychelles' small size. The elected seats increased to eight.[458] The subsequent 1967 elections were narrowly won by the SDP (McAteer 2008, p. 309). Despite having elections, Seychelles' colonial status meant it had no say in decisions made by Britain. An American satellite dish was mounted in Victoria in 1963, dominating the mountain landscape, with American officers based there (McAteer 2008, p. 273). This indicates that Seychelles strategic location had attracted the interest of powerful nations in the lead-up to independence.[459]

Following the 1970 Constitution Conference in London, the Governing Council was replaced by a Legislative Council of 15 elected members in the constitution, from whom the Governor would appoint a Chief Minister (McAteer 2008, p. 325). In the November 1970 elections, Mancham's SDP won 53% of the votes taking 10 seats in the assembly. Despite receiving gifts of Range Rovers and other assistance from the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Liberation Committee, René's SPUP lost with 44% of the vote and five seats (Shillington 2014, pp. 144-145). These results were imbalanced as the SPUP should have won more seats in proportion to the votes. The unfair results were attributed to the new two-member constituencies and the constituency boundaries[460] (McAteer 2008, p. 331). Mancham became Chief Minister and was able to persuade the British to build an international airport, which opened in July 1971, with Mancham on board the first flight to land there[461] (Mancham 1983, p. 92). It was built on reclaimed land due to a shortage of flat land on Mahé.

In the 1970s, a series of destabilising activities occurred in Victoria to intimidate colonial officers and SDP supporters. These included marches by trade unions, demonstrations, riots

[458] An additional two from Mahé, and one from Praslin and La Digue – who, with four nominated members and two ex-officio members, comprised the Governing Council headed by the Governor (McAteer 2008, pp. 302-303).

[459] In November 1965, three Seychelles islands – Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches – became part of a new colony called the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), which also included the Chagos archipelago – then a dependency of Mauritius and featuring the island Diego Garcia (McAteer 2008, p. 256). Mancham had used the BIOT developments to pressure Britain to build the airport in Victoria. The US leased Diego Garcia from Britain in 1966 and developed a strategic military base there, vital for supporting its military actions in the Middle East, Africa and Asia (Porter 2019). Britain reneged on earlier plans to transfer Chagos and Agalega islands to Seychelles, instead Chagossians were forced to leave and settle in Mauritius and Seychelles to make way for the military base (McAteer 2008, pp. 265-266). In May 2019, the International Court of Justice ruled the transfer of the Chagos Islands to Britain was illegal and that the islands belonged to Mauritius (Porter 2019). However, Britain in unlikely to abide by this ruling and, after more than 50 years, the US still controls Diego Garcia.

[460] The higher population distribution in certain areas were not reflected proportionately in allocation of seats.

[461] Mancham is recognised as the person who put Seychelles on the world map through use of his charisma and charm to promote Seychelles internationally for development, such as attracting investment for lucrative tourism projects.

and bombings, including of Mancham's office though he was not there at the time. The bombings were linked to René, who, in the SPUP newsletter, made threats there would be violence if their demands for social justice were not met. At the trial over the 1972 bombing of the Reef Hotel, Guy Pool was sentenced to 12 years; René was cross-examined and Harry Bonte was acquitted (McAteer 2008, pp. 361-362). Both Pool and Bonte were SPUP members. René was not charged as the colonial authorities felt he could claim victimisation if charged.

René did secure better pay and work conditions for workers by organising industrial action to pressure government. Alain St Ange[462] documents 14 major strikes and demonstrations prior to independence, mainly relating to workers grievances. René, Guy Sinon and Rifned Jumeau of the Seychelles Peoples' United Party (SPUP) were prominent figures in most pre-independence marches and demonstrations (St Ange 2007, p.7). But René also utilised unions to achieve his political aims.

Despite receiving financial and material assistance from the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) Liberation Committee, the SPUP continued to lose elections fighting on a platform of independence. The SDP, partly due to the charming personality of Mancham and his economic policy, kept winning the majority of seats while campaigning for integration with Britain. After being informed that Britain would not consider integration of Seychelles (Mancham 1983, p. 114), the SDP switched to a platform for independence in the April 1974 elections, and still won with 52.4% votes receiving 13 seats. The SPUP, campaigning primarily on a platform of social and economic development received 47.6% votes but only two seats due to the skewed electoral system (Shillington 2014, pp. 177-178). René found the results unjust and not reflecting the people's will. René decided to seize power by a coup and began clandestine preparations (Shillington 2014, p. 180).

Mancham, under pressure from Britain, acquiesced to a grand coalition government with René as they headed towards independence.[463] René also agreed to the coalition and convinced Mancham to negotiate for a Republican state. In October 1975, Mancham was

[462] Former elected representative of the SPPF, who left and joined the Seychelles National Party.
[463] The independence negotiations led to a restoration of the Aldabra, Farquhar and Desroches islands to Seychelles (McAteer 2008, p. 273). The strategically valuable Chagos archipelago remained with Britain.

sworn in as Prime Minister and René became Minister for Works and Land Development. The Legislative Assembly was renamed the House of Assembly (McAteer 2008, p. 371).

The regime type in Seychelles was a 'colonial autocracy' as supreme authority rested with the Queen's representative – the Governor. Prior to independence, representative government was practiced in Seychelles through robust multiparty elections under universal suffrage granted in 1967. However, that did not make Seychelles a democracy as the Governor still had the final say. The accomplishment of democracy was left for attainment after independence.

6.2.4 Armed forces in pre-independence Seychelles

The rationale for the creation of the armed forces in Seychelles during colonialism is now examined. Seychelles was defenceless in its brief tenure as a French colony, as evidenced in the actions of its longest-serving commandant from 1793-1811, Quéau de Quinssy, who would fly either the French or English flag, depending on which country's ship was approaching during the British-French war.[464] As a British colony, Seychelles was compelled to contribute to the imperial effort in WW1, and sent 791 men to East Africa. Many succumbed to communicable diseases from which they had no immunity. In total 314 died and 11 went missing. This amounted to a loss of over 40% of the total force, while the remainder were sent back home (McAteer 2000, p. 217). It was a terrible trauma for a small country of 22,600 people in 1911 (SNA 2014a).

With the threat of war looming again, the Seychelles Defence Force (SDF) was formed and 60 men were trained before WWII broke out (McAteer 2008, pp. 144-145). The contingents sent to WWII were known as the Seychelles Pioneers. Ultimately the SDF sent 2000 volunteers for WWII with 854 serving in the Middle East and Italy. Nine were killed in enemy action; three from accidents; and 39 from sickness, while several were mentioned for gallant and distinguished services (McAteer 2008, p. 182).

The SDF stopped operating after WWII. Seychelles ceased to benefit from the remittances sent back by Pioneers serving overseas (McAteer 2008, p. 183) and unemployment figures doubled, demonstrating the paucity of work opportunities in small islands. In the post-war

[464] After the resumption of the British-French war, Quinssy would act out a capitulation to the English, allowing their vessels to replenish, and thus the settlers could go about their daily lives without fear of a British attack or plunder (McAteer 1991, p. 139).

period, the British administrators relied on the British and US navies as well as Mauritius for defence.

During the pre-independence period, Seychelles was a settler colony with no standing army. The defence forces in Seychelles were recruited only for the purpose of the two world wars and decommissioned afterwards. For the brief periods that it existed, the defence force was trained and controlled by representatives of the colonial rulers.

6.3 Transition to democracy in Seychelles – 1976 independence to 1977 coup

Seychelles commenced its transition to democracy after attaining independence on 29 June 1976. To shed light on why Seychelles could not continue on the path to consolidate democracy, the issues and deficiencies of democracy post-independence, and the subsequent 1977 coup d'état,[465] are examined. The post-independence political systems and institutions are assessed to understand why parliamentary mechanisms failed to prevent a coup.

At midnight on 28 June 1976, the Union Jack was lowered at a packed stadium in Victoria, and the flag of Seychelles appeared in its place, watched by Governor Allan, Mancham and René, with warships from five countries (USA, France, Iran, India and Australia) in the harbour, but none from Britain[466] (Mancham 1983, pp. 157-158). The elected Prime Minister Mancham's title changed to President Sir James Mancham while the Minister for Works and leader of the opposition party, René, became Prime Minister.[467] Seychelles became a Republic, as was desired by René and agreed to by Mancham. Seychelles' independence day has since been commemorated on 29 June.

6.3.1 Major challenges for democracy after independence

At independence, the government mechanisms were modified for self-rule. As per the constitution agreed upon at the January 1976 Constitutional Conference in London,

[465] Seychellois prefer using the French term coup d'état, rather than coup, due to their French colonial past.
[466] Britain did not want to commit to any significance assistance to Seychelles post-independence.
[467] The Queen was represented by the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester. Members of the Indian and French Navies marched at the independence celebrations the next day (*AP Archive* 2015). The participation by a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, began a tradition of Indian military participation at the Seychelles National Day celebrations (MEA India 2018).

Seychelles post-independence adopted a mixture of French and Westminster forms of government. Although wide-ranging powers were concentrated in President Mancham, these were ineffectual due to limited financial resources. A cabinet, comprising Prime Minister René and ministers, was appointed by the President. The House of Assembly increased to 25 elected members: eight elected from constituencies and the remainder by proportional representation from party lists (McAteer 2008, pp. 372-373). The constitution provided for an independent judiciary and public service commission, but had no provision for a Leader of the Opposition (McAteer 2008, p. 373). In effect, by appointing the opposition's René as Prime Minister, Britain not only divided Mancham's government, but also weakened parliamentary democracy by obliterating the opposition role.

Colonial authorities had controlled executive power, justice and security and a handful of their representatives remained to guide Mancham's government. Due to British pressure, Mancham agreed to maintain the coalition government with his opponent René until the 1979 elections (Mancham 1983, p. 139). Multiparty democracy appeared active in Seychelles at this time, primarily because of passionate verbal altercations between political parties and vibrant trade unions.

In addition to lack of finances, Seychelles was practically defenceless with no army or navy. Mancham (1983, p. 158) made a virtue of Seychelles' vulnerability by adopting a non-aligned foreign policy of "friend to all and an enemy to none". The few British expatriates leading the police were required to train a small paramilitary. Only a handful of Mancham's bodyguards had handguns, some Seychellois had rifles, and about 100 old rifles were stored at the Central Police Station (Shillington 2014, pp. 194-195).

Mancham received tip-offs that René, with ambitions of becoming the President, might be plotting a coup, including one from the CIA that the Russians might be involved (Mancham, 1983, pp. 131-139). To safeguard against such threats, Mancham gained a commitment from the US to subsidise the Seychelles Weekly newspaper and to train a dozen people in small arms (Mancham 1983, pp. 151-152). However, the US did not fulfil its promise to organise Seychelles' intelligence systems and support a para-military unit (Mancham 1983, pp. 190-193), leaving Mancham's government vulnerable to an overthrow.

Mancham's request for a treaty of defence with Britain before independence was refused. Britain's verbal assurance before independence of aid to modernise the police force, set up a para-military unit and an intelligence section, also did not eventuate (Mancham 1983, pp. 131-139). Instead, Britain paid rent of about $1 million[468] over 10 years for the tracking station, provided aid of £10 million pounds for two years, and a further £1.7 million budget support over four years (Mancham 1983, pp. 131-139).

Seychelles was a cash-strapped nation dependent on overseas aid, with basic institutions of democracy that required further development. The state did not have adequate resources to develop a military. Nor did enemies of the President have the financial or material resources to independently mount a coup or to sustain an authoritarian post-coup regime.

6.3.2 Seychelles - 1977 coup d'état

On 4-5 June 1977, the sole putsch in Seychelles' history occurred in the capital Victoria while Mancham and key ministers were attending a Commonwealth meeting in London. Seychelles' fledgling democracy was easily toppled just short of one year after independence. The lack of security forces meant there was very little resistance to the overthrow. René became President after the coup and Mancham went into exile.

René's envy of Mancham and lack of confidence in securing an electoral victory under the flawed system had convinced him that the only way to gain power was through a coup (Shillington 2014, p. 180). The autobiography of René's successor, Michel, confirms that René was the 'architect' of the coup and 'always in charge'. René handpicked an inner circle of nine collaborators he trusted, with Ogilvy Berlouis emerging as second-in-command (Michel 2011, pp. 85-87). René claimed that the coup was necessary because Mancham wanted to postpone elections to remain President forever, and to prevent Seychellois becoming slaves of capitalists[469] (Shillington 2014, p. 210). In his autobiography, Mancham denied these claims.

[468] The rent for the tracking station was given on the condition that Seychelles would allow American aircraft to use the airport during wars.

[469] Both René's and Michel's biographies justify the coup as necessary by portraying Mancham as a globe-trotting gregarious person, trying to earn easy money by promoting Seychelles for tourism. Mancham's (1983) autobiography highlights his promotion of Seychelles as the 'islands of love' to attract high profile foreign visitors and investments, which he felt was the only way to prosperity due to Seychelles' lack of resources. 'Islands of love' alludes to the Coco-de-mer nut, as well as the nation's reputation for having a high rate of illegitimate children and infidelity.

Seychelles did not have an army. To prepare for the coup René went to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania shortly after independence (Shillington 2014, p. 199). René's SPUP supporters received secret military training in socialist Tanzania. As Zanzibar had an island environment, Berlouis, SPUP's permanent representative to the OAU's Liberation Committee, organised military training for Michel and two others there, while a larger group was trained on the uninhabited island Ile aux Récifs in Seychelles (Michel 2011, p. 86).

The coup was executed by an armed group of 30 who took over the armoury, Central Police Station, broadcasting station, Cable & Wireless building, the port and airport control tower, and arrested Commissioner of Police Sommerville (Michel 2011, pp. 87-88). The incapacitated police became powerless to stop the coup. Shot dead were SDP member Davidson Chang-Him, police officer Berard Jeannie who refused to hand over the armoury keys and Francis Rachel mistakenly killed while taking over the police station (*SNA* 2018).

CSO leader, Jules Hoareau, explained his father was sacked from his police job after refusing to put up René's picture:

> "My father, Neville Hoareau, was a policeman in charge of a station in south Mahé. A day after the coup, he was instructed to put a picture of the president on the police station. He refused and was sacked. From there on, it was difficult for him to get a job because he was seen as against the system... He opposed the government. I recall a few times my father being beaten by the state police. I have some very bad memories; even as a child I remember my father expressing his views openly against the system and how he was treated. At that tender age, I realised it was not right," (2016, pers. comm., 20 September).

Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, a socialist, lent further support with Tanzanian troops flying in to police the streets of Seychelles a day after the coup.[470] Nyerere's unofficial backing of the coup made it possible to get training, weapons and army fatigue uniforms from Tanzania (Shillington 2014, p. 199).

In a speech a day after becoming President, René claimed that he had the consent of everyone, his government was for everyone and not just a privileged few, there would be no

[470] Senior Seychellois interviewed by the author from September-October 2016 maintain that Tanzanian soldiers came a day after the coup and guarded Seychelles' streets carrying arms. In his biography, René tries to downplay the role of the Tanzanians by denying they came a day after the coup and emphasizing that "a group of SPUP militants took power" under his inspiration and guidance (Shillington 2014, pp. 215-216). But Michel (2011, p. 89) had already admitted that, following a request from René, Tanzanian soldiers flew in shortly after the coup.

discrimination, and people would have freedom of expression[471] (*Nation* 1977b). The poorly educated Creole lacked understanding of democracy and were thus easily seduced by René's rhetoric to end their discrimination and exploitation. This meant a significant proportion of the population supported the post-coup agenda.[472] René and Michel's biographies claim that the SPUP's agenda was superior to that of Mancham's government as they would develop Seychelles primary sector and industries. Another reason for the coup's success was the western world's apparent indifference to democracy being overthrown. Both democratic and non-democratic nations recognised René's post-coup government. Britain was the first country to recognise it, followed by Tanzania (Michel 2011, p. 89). Russia sent its congratulations three weeks later (*Nation* 1977b).

The coup plotters of Seychelles defied the odds of being in a small island state that lacked resources to carry out a coup, by obtaining military assistance from a large foreign government, Tanzania. Simply having the apparatus of democracy was insufficient for Seychelles to consolidate democracy due to several weaknesses. These included Britain's failure to create an effective security force for Seychelles and their lack of interest in safeguarding Seychelles which made it easy for René to carry out his coup, and impossible for Mancham to safeguard democracy. Seychelles lacked two of Dahl's conditions of democracy: democratic beliefs and political culture; and no strong foreign power hostile to democracy (Dahl 1998, pp. 146-147). Furthermore, Britain's swift recognition of the post-coup regime demonstrated indifference to democracy enduring in Seychelles. But ultimately, democracy did not survive in Seychelles because Seychellois were unable to defend democracy and their elected leader Mancham, meaning that democracy was unable to survive through the crisis from René's well-armed coup.

6.4 Post-1977 coup – socialism and single-party rule

The 1977 coup fundamentally changed Seychelles as it resulted in the imposition of socialism and single party rule, and the creation of an army instilled with the socialist ideology. These, and the ensuing challenges encountered by the civil society, are now examined. This will

[471] June 5 was designated Liberation Day and the national flag was changed. To commemorate the occasion, first-time convicts received amnesty while sentences of other convicts were reduced (*Nation* 1977e).
[472] Prominent Seychellois interviewed by the author claim almost 50% of the population supported the post-coup regime.

shed light on how the post-coup dictator used the military and controlled key political decisions and actions.

6.4.1 René's personal dictatorship from 1977-1992

Seychelles became an authoritarian state after the 1977 coup. The March 1979 constitution[473] established Seychelles as a one-party socialist state to purportedly 'end factional strife' (Hatchard 1993, p. 602; Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19). René did not fulfill his assurances of freedom of expression and consideration of the people's views when making decisions (*Nation*[474] 1977b). All political parties were banned except for the SPUP which became the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF). Controversial actions were taken such as appropriation of large properties mainly belonging to the French landowners, land redistribution, and tourism was nationalised (Michel 2011, p. 111). For ordinary citizens, the coup fuelled fear[475] and instability as it occurred within a year of Seychelles becoming independent and cutting ties with Britain; curfews were imposed and people warned about being shot on sight (O'Gorman 2019, p. 262).

In the first Presidential and People's Assembly elections held from 23-26 June 1979, René's biography claims there was a turnout of over 90% and that the sole Presidential candidate René received 98% of the vote (Shillington 2014, p. 230). In subsequent elections, René ostensibly kept 'winning' landslide victories as the sole presidential candidate. René's government's agenda included the provision of free education, employment and housing for everyone, although in reality, the main beneficiaries were his supporters.[476] The desire for welfare assistance and government employment could be one reason for the substantial voter turnout in the 'elections'.[477] There was a Seychelles People's Assembly but only those belonging to the SPPF party could become its elected members. Thus, parliamentary composition and debate were restricted to one party, the SPPF, which became known as the 'ruling party'.

---

[473] It came into force on 5 June 1979 (Shillington 2014).

[474] The researcher visited the Seychelles National Archive in Victoria, Seychelles, during her field trip in 2016 and was able to access copies of the government newspaper, *Nation*, for the period following the 1977 coup by René.

[475] People were under surveillance and living in fear of another *koudeta* (Creole word for coup d'état) happening (O'Gorman 2019, p. 262).

[476] René commenced a house-building programme, nationalised the bus system and increased wages. During independence day celebrations on 29 June 1977, René announced agricultural and fisheries policies for Seychellois to produce their own food, the same free education for everyone, and controlled tourism to ensure fair pay for workers (Shillington 2014, pp. 216-218).

[477] People were afraid of being penalised if they did not vote because, after the coup, the regime denied government employment to Mancham's supporters and democracy advocates.

René became a personalist dictator by controlling the major government portfolios. He had chosen young Seychellois from humble backgrounds to execute the coup anticipating complete personal loyalty from them, and later gave them specific roles in the party and post-coup regime[478] (Shillington 2014, p. 197). René maintained personal control by being head of state and secretary general of the SPPF, meaning that only those who received his approval could become part of the government. René had powers to appoint the judiciary, was the army's commander-in-chief, and by 1985, he was also the Prime Minister, and Minister of Finance, Planning and Foreign Relations, leading a cabinet of five members (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19).

Under René, opposition was harshly repressed and systematic torture and other human rights abuses were widespread (Baker 2008, p. 280). While regime supporters benefitted through nepotistic appointments, opponents could be jailed without trial or exiled, or murdered (Scarr 1999, p. 199). Two months after the coup, René warned Mancham's former ministers to cease acts of treason and return home within 10 days or stay out forever (*Nation* 1977d). Opponents were forcibly exiled by being disallowed to return home. A restricted judiciary, censored press and military repression resulted in a pervasive climate of fear in Seychelles (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19). Fear was intensified by post-coup disappearances and murders[479] such as the disappearance of SDP supporter Hassan Ali, and the 1985 killing in England of Gérard Hoarau, President of the Seychelles National Movement, for counter-coup activities (Scarr 1999, p. 195).

It is an anomaly for small island states to maintain a dictatorship due to lack of resources for establishing and sustaining it (see section 2.1). René's government overcame this drawback because it received substantial material and technical aid for poverty alleviation from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, such as North Korea and Cuba, at the height of the Cold War. These were distributed as gifts from the government in the form of building materials, roofing, scholarships, money and fuel.[480] The OAU gave substantial funds to René

---

[478] For example: James Michel and Ogilvy Berlouis - see later paragraphs and next section.

[479] Others included: the disappearance of Andrew Pouponneau during the 1982 military rebellion; Simon Denousse and Mike Asher tortured and murdered in 1982; Tony Elizabeth and Michael Hoffman murdered in 1983; disappearance of Jean Guillaume and anti-regime activist Alton Ah-Time in 1984; disappearance of Francis Monchouguy in 1991 after the arrest of his father who was the Chairman of the Democratic Party; and torture and murder of politically outspoken Damandra Eulintin in 2007 (Today in Seychelles 2016, 'Remembrance – The price of freedom', *Today in Seychelles,* 23 June, viewed 3 December 2019, https://www.facebook.com/todayinsey/posts/remembrancethe-price-of-freedomthe-republic-of-seychelles-is-about-to-celebrate-/1020829834621493/ .

[480] Interview with former senior Seychellois officials in 2016.

for ‘poor black Creoles’ liberation’. India also gave assistance having established its first Mission there in 1979[481] (MEA India 2018).

Foreign aid was unable to prevent high deficits in the 1980s. The welfare benefits came at significant cost and by 1988-1989, the state was owed about US$32million from advances to political supporters and state-owned enterprises (Scarr 1999, p. 197). Similar to colonial times, agriculture was largely unsuccessful due to land shortage. In 1985, René admitted to the SPPF’s failures in industrial development. Ironically, René’s government was promoting Mancham’s tourism policy which they had previously ridiculed.[482] Despite, or perhaps because of, these state interventions, by 1989 René admitted they had unsustainable debts which had arisen from high government deficits due to foreign borrowing and revenues below forecasts (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 31).

SPPF supporters proclaim that the coup was necessary to alleviate the Creoles’ disadvantaged condition. James Michel[483] was part of the core group that carried out the coup and benefitted immensely by rising from an information office position to Minister of Education after René’s coup (Michel 2011, p. 108). Michel defends the ‘revolution’:

> “If anyone was to ask me… whether the coup d’état was necessary, I remain convinced that it was. Nor do I believe that this transformation would have happened without the determined leadership of France Albert René… My loyalty to him was based on my own firm belief that our society became very much fairer and more inclusive than it had been before the revolution… Through my own childhood experiences I had soon learnt that our society was dominated by a relatively few wealthy families, who left most of the population in poverty and relative ignorance,” (Michel 2011, p. 110).

However, Ralph Volcere, a candidate in the 2011 Presidential elections, and editor of the newspaper *Seychelles Independent*, was not enthusiastic about the revolution. Due to political victimisation in employment,[484] Volcere lost his government job in customs and immigration because he did not agree with the coup-makers, was detained for six months on political grounds, then exiled for 11 years.

---

[481] India maintained relations with Seychelles. Its first resident High Commissioner was appointed in 1987, while Seychelles opened its resident mission in New Delhi in early 2008 (MEA India 2018).

[482] Farmers opted for other ventures such as tourism, with government assistance for global promotion through the Seychelles Tourism Board created in 1981 (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, pp. 21-25).

[483] James Michel saw his siblings from Creole parentage suffer poverty and discrimination. He endured poverty but suffered less discrimination having been raised by his French father’s relative.

[484] People dismissed from government employment, because they did not support the revolution, were also refused employment elsewhere and were denied benefits received by the SPPF supporters (*Seychelles Nation* 2019b).

In an interview with the author at Anse Royale,[485] Volcere argues that:

> "Colonial Seychelles never had real poverty as we had lots of fruits, an abundance of fish, so people never went hungry… the 11 months of independence as a democratic country was a period of utopia in our history because there was no political strife and tourism was booming," (2016, pers. comm., 16 September).

Robert Ernesta had supported the revolution by joining the Seychelles Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) a year after the coup and later became Chief of Operations in the army. Eventually, Ernesta realised that the revolution created oppression and left the army:[486]

> "It was highly repressive after the coup. Things were better during colonialism as people had freedom to express themselves and could protest liberally," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

But other beneficiaries of the coup defend it, such as the director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ralph Agrippine, who remembers pre-coup Seychelles as an underdeveloped nation where people had no opportunities. A regime supporter, Agrippine received tertiary education in France. Agrippine[487] tries to justify René's coup saying:

> "There were very strong allegations of vote rigging of elections during colonial times. Perhaps René's party didn't win the election, not because they didn't have enough support but the system was so skewed that it stole the power. Since its power was stolen from the polls, it's justifiable that it had to take over the power forcefully… Seychelles had to go through this period of nation building, we sacrificed our civil and political rights in order to build the foundation on social rights. It was a compromise we made as a nation," (2016, pers. comm., 26 September).

Despite receiving benefits, some SPPF supporters became disillusioned. People began to question whether 'the revolution' was necessary, such as key coup-implementer Dr Maxime Ferrari[488] who was the Minister for Lands and Development in René's government. Ferrari resigned in 1984 after René informed him about two murders carried out by the army[489] on René's estate L'Exile (*Seychelles Nation* 2019a). Ferrari subsequently went into voluntary exile. Guy Sinon, an SPUP stalwart, trade unionist and Minister in both Mancham's and René's governments, and Alain St Ange, whose father had been the SPUP vice-president,

---

485 Anse Royale is about a 20 minute drive from the capital Victoria, on the main island Mahé, Seychelles.
486 Interviewed at Anse Royale, Mahé, Seychelles.
487 Interviewed in Mont Fleuri, Mahé, Seychelles.
488 Ferrari's biography bares his disillusionment with René: Ferrari W 1999, *Sunshine and Shadows: A Personal Story*, Minerva Press, London.
489 Ferrari claimed that crimes committed till then by the military and police had been kept from him (*Seychelles Nation* 2019a).

started to speak out against René’s rule in 1991 (St Ange 1991, p. 6). Land redistribution had involved forcible acquisition of land, mainly from the elites,[490] and selling plots to Creoles at a token price; this was misused by political leaders.[491] Further, contrary to René’s rhetoric, not all of Seychelles’ money was hard-earned. René opened a tax haven in the country in 1978 with international criminal Giovanni Mario Ricci and, after that, millions of dollars of ‘dirty money’ were laundered through Seychelles’ offshore industry (Hudson et. al. 2014). Such activities demonstrated that René was misusing his power for self-aggrandisement and was not sincere about the revolution.

René’s dictatorship undermined Linz and Stepan’s (1996) five arenas of democratic consolidation: political society, civil society, economic society, rule of law, and state bureaucracy. Seychelles transitioned to democracy at independence but could not consolidate democracy due to insufficient resources for safeguarding democracy; this left the way open for René to execute his coup with support from Tanzania. René’s single-party personal dictatorship from 1977-1993 was maintained with brutal repression of opposition and aid from socialist countries, which overcame the lack of resources in small island states to sustain dictatorships. René’s rule had features of authoritarian regimes: dependency on the dictator for services, patronage for ‘loyalists’, and laws and institutions controlled by the dictator. This, combined with social welfare services to the ordinary citizens, and repression of dissent, maintained René’s autocracy.

6.4.2 Seychelles – post-coup development of the armed forces

During his reign as a personal dictator, René utilised the army to safeguard the regime from dissenters and to propagate socialism. The army was created in Seychelles to assist in securing the citizens’ compliance with the 1977 coup agenda. This necessitates the analysis below of how the armed forces were created and operationalised for authoritarianism. Developments in the armed forces under single party rule until 1993 are also evaluated.

The SPLA was created on the day of the 1977 coup by its perpetrators. Supporters of the ‘revolution’ and the SPUP were encouraged to enlist. Recruits had to contact their nearest

[490] These largely comprised the descendants of the French planters.

[491] For instance, a senior civil servant revealed that René bought 10 acres of prime land for a paltry 60,000 rupees, some ministers acquired more than one block of land, while other regime supporters obtained prime land as a favour. This was especially problematic since Seychelles’ main islands are granitic and there is a limited amount of flat land (senior civil servant, 2016, pers. comm., 28 September). Interviewed in Victoria, Seychelles.

police station to either join the SPLA full-time, or volunteer to be part of the People's Militia in their spare time (*Nation* 1977c). About 30 Tanzanian military personnel arrived on 22 June to train the SPLA through Nyerere's military aid. The Tanzanians remained there for eight years (Michel 2011, p. 89). The SPLA held its first passing out parade on 11 November 1977 (Shillington 2014, p. 216). Hundreds of young party activists were recruited into the People's Militia to assist in educating villagers about the purpose of the revolution (*Nation* 1977c). President René was the army's commander, while the Minister of State for Internal Affairs Ogilvy Berlouis headed various sections of the army and oversaw its operations (*Nation* 1977c). According to Berlouis, soldiers were expected to "defend our country to the last drop of blood". Berlouis further stated soldiers pledged to deal with any threat in Seychelles, be it external or internal, including protecting the nation from invasions (*Nation* 1977c). Incongruously, Berlouis was very critical of the defenceless status of Seychelles under Mancham.

A former SPLA soldier opined that the soldiers felt they were joining a worthy cause as things seemed to be improving in Seychelles initially after the coup:[492]

> "Literacy was provided, even to uneducated soldiers… The government used the army as a tool to stay in power. Everybody believed in the revolution and to fight the enemies we were told. The mercenary attack (in 1981) boosted the morale of the soldiers that there were real enemies wanting to attack Seychelles," (2016, pers. comm., 12 October).

The SPLA grew from a few dozen soldiers at its inception in 1977 to over 1,000 by the 1990s. Senior Seychellois[493] revealed that the size of Seychelles army was classified and therefore estimates from other sources are provided here. In 1978, it is estimated that the SPLA had less than 400 personnel[494] (Nossiter 1978). However, this was still big in proportion to Seychelles' small population of 61,786 in 1977 (see Table 6.3). The Presidential Security Unit (PSU) was created in 1977 and comprised the best "absolutely trustworthy, faithful" professionals (SPDFb[495]). The Seychelles army numbered 750 men in 1983 (Associated Press 1983). By the 1990s, the SPLA had 1,000 personnel (GlobalSecurity.org). Although the locals seemed afraid of the SPLA, Western observers

[492] Interviewed at Anse Royale, Mahé, Seychelles.
[493] Interviewed from September-October 2016.
[494] Several youth movements also operated under the SPPF including: the Pioneers, the Militants, and the Youth Brigades (Mathiot 2014).
[495] SPDF stands for the Seychelles People's Defence Forces. This website's pages are currently in archive mode.

found that it had minimal capabilities, making it ineffective against a large professional[496] military force (GlobalSecurity.org). This implies that an army too big relative to Seychelles' small population was created for the prime purpose of controlling and suppressing the locals.

Bishop French Chang-Him,[497] designated as an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2017, was interviewed at the Anglican St Paul's Cathedral in Victoria, Seychelles. He noted that after the coup, the army was very much favoured, whereas the police were neglected:

> "…most police stations are still very old and the police are rather demoralised although improvements are happening now. Military received a lot of benefits such as officers sent abroad for training, elevating people to different ranks and physical infrastructure built for them," (2016, pers. comm., 12 October).

The stalwart Deputy Secretary-General of the Parti Lepep (formerly the SPPF party), Peter Sinon, gave an interview whilst on dialysis treatment at the Seychelles Hospital in Mont Fleuri. Sinon affirms that the soldiers were well looked after to ensure they remained in the force and were loyal:

> "When you have soldiers, you have to take care of them. They were given priority for housing with their families. You paid them fairly well. The usual incentives a good manager gives to keep the best of his workers… and promotions were also used for the good ones," (2016, pers. comm.,13 October).

Additionally, soldiers were given gratuity payments after each contract renewal.[498] Thus, the soldiers became like clients benefitting from the patronage of the one-party state.

Robert Ernesta served the Seychelles army for three decades from December 1978-February 2007. Ernesta stated that soldiers swore allegiance to the SPPF party, a lot of people were jailed without judgement and there were disappearances:

> "Government and the security apparatus, they took the population in a very severe and heavy-handed manner. If people did not share the opinions of the government, they were dubbed as enemies of the revolution. Many left the country, many were suppressed, imprisoned, detained, and beaten. It was a nightmare basically. No clear-cut laws differentiated the army and the police because both swore allegiance to the party (SPPF). Anything against party directives was punished. The army was used jointly with police to suppress people not sympathetic to government," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

---

[496] The SPLA refined its mission to include defence of the nation's territorial integrity and to assist the People's Militia in maintaining law and order when necessary (GlobalSecurity.org).
[497] Bishop French Chang-Him was also the elected Archbishop from 1984 till 1995.
[498] Interview with former senior army officer, 11 October 2016, Victoria, Seychelles.

Ralph Volcere, editor of the *Seychelles Independent*, concurs that:

> "The army was used to repress people and keep them quiet and maintain René's power. René was a total dictator and had to find means to control the people. He practically merged police and the army together so he had overall control to use them," (2016, pers. comm., 16 September).

Several coup attempts were made to remove René from power. In 1981, a coup plot by private South African security services' was foiled when weapons were discovered in the bags of mercenaries at the Victoria airport[499] (Brewster & Rai 2011). This coup attempt was made to restore Mancham to power (*BBC News* 2015). After an armed confrontation, they fled from the airport but were overpowered at the Pointe Larue barracks. Nevertheless, the majority escaped to South Africa after hijacking an Air India plane and the few remaining mercenaries were tried and deported within a few years (Michel 2011, pp. 104-105). The following year, soldiers rebelled against bad treatment by their commanding officers. Several lives were lost in the rebellion which was quelled with assistance from Tanzanian troops (Michel 2011, p. 105).

The army was reorganised in the wake of the failed coup. The SPLA was joined with the People's Militia in 1981 to form the Seychelles People's Defence Force (SPDF) (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19). The attempted coup of 1981 provided justification for a stronger SPDF to defend against external threats. It led to a significant increase in defence expenditure from US$13.4 million in 1975 to over US$50 million in 1981 (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19). The SPDF included the Seychelles Coast Guard, the Seychelles Air Force[500] and the Seychelles Defence Academy (SPDFa). A former senior army officer[501] stated that at its peak, the SPDF had more than 1200 soldiers.

The foreign military presence in Seychelles was also bolstered after the coup attempts. Tanzanian military advisors, which had dwindled to a dozen by 1981, were further reinforced by 200 men. But resentment grew against the Tanzanians as Seychellois blamed them for nine deaths during the 1982 mutiny (*Associated Press* 1983). René replaced the Tanzanians

[499] The mercenary Mike Hoare arrived with a group of men on a flight from South Africa claiming to be members of the Ye Ancient Order of Frothblowers for a weekend of binge drinking. They were detected at the airport, assembled the AK-47s hidden in their hand luggage and engaged in confrontation.

[500] Known also as the people's navy, and the people's air force to Seychellois soldiers. In 1987, another youth movement, the Brigad Militer Lazenes, also became an arm of the SPDF (Mathiot).

[501] Interviewed on 11 October 2016, Victoria, Seychelles.

with 55 North Korean military instructors to rebuild the Seychelles army, which raised concerns among western diplomats given that North Korea was a Marxist state (*Associated Press* 1983).

Ralph Volcere confirmed that soldiers from North Korea and also Madagascar briefly came to Seychelles:

> "René brought soldiers from Madagascar and North Korea to ensure there was no counter revolution and to protect himself if local soldiers rebelled," (2016, pers. comm., 16 September).

Robert Ernesta also verified that:

> "…a detachment of Malagasy came here for the security of the regime in '78, '79… North Korean soldiers came, about 50-strong but senior officers… they were security to the President and then they trained our troops. They brought in a lot of arms, technical expertise," (2016, pers. comm.,10 October).

To safeguard against future coup attempts, René also sought security with India. In June 1986, the Indian Navy averted a coup against René and two months later quashed another coup plot due to a tipoff to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by the Soviet Union[502] (Brewster & Rai 2011). René's second-in-command Berlouis was going to seize the government in August 1986, but this coup attempt was averted due to a betrayal by one of the conspirators together with further assistance from Gandhi (Michel 2011, p. 105). In the aftermath, Berlouis resigned, three senior army officers were pensioned off and René himself assumed the defence portfolio (Michel 2011, p. 106). From then on, René retained personal control of the military and remained its head.

A military was created post-coup in Seychelles to implement René's agenda and protect his leadership. René utilised military assistance from large foreign nations to safeguard his rule, and create fear in his opponents. René cultivated the army through lucrative training and remuneration. After a 1986 coup plot by his military head, René became commander of the army and increased its size. René appointed loyalists to crucial security and government positions, in recognition of their mutual dependency for political survival. As René controlled the means of physical coercion, the armed forces (Dahl 1998, p. 149), he was the most significant obstacle to a restoration of democracy in Seychelles.

---

[502] In October, Soviet troops landed to provide additional security to René (Brewster & Rai 2011). In November 1988, Indian paratroopers also thwarted a coup attempt against the Maldivian President Gayoom.

6.4.3 Military ideology, training and use by politicians

To deepen understanding of why people joined the newly-created army in Seychelles post-coup and implemented the undemocratic agenda of René's authoritarian regime, the ideology of the military and their use by political leaders in Seychelles is examined.

Following the creation of the SPLA, René had soldiers and teenagers indoctrinated with socialist philosophies, but failed in brainwashing a significant majority.[503] The type of political-military relations that is applicable to Seychelles is Janowitz's (1975, p. 138) authoritarian-personal control that is based on personal and/or traditional power, in nations starting the process of modernisation.[504] Also applicable to an analysis of Seychelles at this time is Janowitz's (1975, p. 138) classification of authoritarian-mass party control where authoritarian power is rooted in a one-party state, under strong personal leadership.

Post-1977 coup, René propagated socialist ideology to advance the goals of the 'revolution'. They were achieved through swearing allegiance to the SPPF party and instilling socialism by political education from the army and the compulsory National Youth Service (NYS). René's loyalist Minister of State, Michel, was involved in recruiting the 'right people' for the army; he was the army's captain and also its Director of Political Education (Michel 2011, p. 103).

Peter Sinon, Deputy Secretary-General of Parti Lepep, was a member of the voluntary People's Militia and defends the coup. Sinon stated that after the coup, an oath was sworn to defend the revolution:

> "The justifications for the coup were instilled through political education and we were taught to defend the revolution which was about progress, equal opportunities and more opportunities for the country and the individual… As a revolutionary, you are ready to fight till your last drop of blood," (2016, pers. comm.,13 October).

---

[503] See the next section for actions by the regime to suppress opposition, which nevertheless endured.

[504] The political-military elite model relevant to indoctrination is Janowitz's (1975) totalitarian model (see section 3.1.2). However, evidence indicates that Seychelles' state control could not be classified as totalitarian, especially as René introduced socialism to gain aid from socialist nations, and did not have an unequivocal long-term commitment to socialist ideology. A significant portion of the population remained in favour of democracy and were victimised by the government. René adopted multiparty elections and democratic reforms after the USSR's collapse.

A former senior army officer reiterated that during that period, the values taught in the army were related to the socialist one party-system:

> "You were not allowed to talk about other things apart from socialism is good, capitalism is not good. The army was controlled by the ruling SPPF party, and not by the government. All army personnel swore oath of allegiance to the party and not to the government," (2016, pers. comm., 11 October).

From 1986 when the President became the army's head, orders were taken directly from him.[505] As the President also headed the SPPF, swearing an oath to the party implied pledging allegiance to the President.

A military style training was enforced on teenagers through the compulsory NYS[506] to educate the next generation on socialism and create an egalitarian society. Introduced in 1979, the NYS required teenagers to stay at a camp for two years where they were indoctrinated with socialist principles.[507] Children aged over 14 years, from less advantaged backgrounds, were forced to participate in the NYS to continue their secondary education. In contrast, Seychellois who were economically well-off[508] sent their children abroad for better education and to avoid the NYS. The program's tendency to level down to the lowest common denominator and stress non-academic pursuits made academically gifted students suffer (Michel 2011, p. 112). It left profound traumatic impacts on teenagers, including on Michel's teenage son, Jude, who was "driven into a sad state" due to the unnatural experience at the camp and committed suicide in March 1985 (Michel 2011, pp. 184-186). However, Michel did not blame the NYS for his son's death and remained steadfastly loyal to René; believing in the merits of the regime for Seychelles.

The NYS also displaced religion from children's lives. According to a member of the National Assembly, Gervais Henri,[509] (2016, pers. comm, 20 September), the NYS was a continuation of the post-1977 coup actions whereby the church was removed from public life and crucifixes above school blackboards were taken away and replaced by a photo of the

---

505 Interview with former SPLA soldier, 12 October 2016, Anse Royale, Mahe, Seychelles.

506 The programme included political education, practical skills and paramilitary training (Michel 2011, p. 111). Participants wore beige and brown uniforms.

507 Interview with former Seychellois soldiers. They were sent to sites on Mahé - Port Launay and Cap Ternay. Another site on Ste. Anne Island was closed later.

508 René's two children were born after his second marriage in 1993, a few years after NYS was abolished, whereas his first child grew up in London. Thus, none of them participated in NYS.

509 Interviewed in Mont Fleuri, Mahé, Seychelles.

President. Henri, himself, participated in the NYS[510] and blames it for the moral problems[511] afflicting Seychelles over the past decades, claiming that it took away religious values:

> "Young boys and girls aged 15 to 16 were taken away from their families to live for two years with strangers and learn political lessons about why the coup was justified. We were awoken at 4.30am, doing military drills and singing the national anthem, calling each other comrade," (2016, pers. comm., 20 September).

In contrast, possibly due to loyalty to the regime, supporters of the coup did not complain about the NYS in interviews.[512] In fact, some men had fond memories of the NYS as they developed strong friendships and professional networks there, whereas most women found it uprooting, too masculine, and teaching outmoded skills (O'Gorman 2019, pp. 267-269). The NYS was abolished in 1993 when multiparty elections recommenced.

Seychelles' post-coup political-military relations aligned with Janowitz's concepts of authoritarian-personal control and authoritarian-mass party control, as it was a single party socialist state under the rule of the personalist dictator René. The ideology that soldiers subscribed to was defined by loyalty to the socialist 'revolution', epitomised by swearing an oath to the SPPF party. The army was purposely created in Seychelles to maintain René's post-coup regime. The pledging of oaths to the SPPF which René led, and the President's position as the commander of the army, established direct allegiance to René, and enabled personal control by the President to manipulate the army.

6.4.4 Seychelles – civil society challenges under single-party rule

After the 1977 coup, civil society faced many challenges until single-party rule ended in 1993. Seychelles had trade unions and a progressive form of political society prior to independence with both emerging leaders, Mancham and René, advocating for universal suffrage and the ending of discrimination against the poor Creole. René was advocating for democratic freedoms prior to the coup and had pressured colonial governments through protests and strikes. Yet, paradoxically, he banned trade unions, some CSOs, protest demonstrations, as well as independent news media in Seychelles during his single-party personal rule.

[510] Henri recalled that, instead of prayers in the morning, children sang the national anthem. Saints' names in schools were replaced with district names. Henri stated he spent a year at Sainte Anne Island, and another at Cap Ternay.
[511] Henri referred to issues such as drug abuse, a high rate of infidelity and illegitimate children. However, the high rate of illegitimate children was prevalent in Seychelles from colonial times, and cannot be blamed on the NYS.
[512] For instance, Ralph Agrippine and Peter Sinon.

Civil and political freedoms became restricted because the liberal Bill of Rights from the independence constitution was not retained under the post-coup 1979 constitution (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p.19). The only recognised trade union was the government-run National Workers Union (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 78). Apparently, President René did not want union leaders challenging governmental authority as he had done. Nevertheless, individuals such as former politicians and democracy activists still tried to protest. The only CSOs allowed to exist were those regarded as non-political[513] and they were very much under the control of the state (Bishop French Chang-Him 2016, pers. comm., 12 October).

Jules Hoareau,[514] the Chairperson of the National Platform for Civil Society Sector in Seychelles in 2016, disclosed that community-based organisations were set up by the ruling party:

> "After the coup, a lot of CSOs were dismantled and banned. For example, the international youth movement, Scouts, were abolished. It was replaced by another group called the Young Pioneers, which was like a small military group for young people. Groups were set up and funded by the [SPPF] party, all with the party ideology. It was not free and strong civil society sector," (2016, pers. comm., 20 September).

Anglican Reverend Wavel Ramkalawan, founder of the Seychelles National Party (SNP), Leader of the Opposition since 2016 and elected President in October 2020,[515] said that everything changed after the coup:

> "After independence, people were living in harmony, there was no fear. But unfortunately, there was one guy Mr René who thought that he should be President and led his coup. The contrast was from the people feeling free, not seeing any guns, suddenly overnight, Seychellois started living in fear. Because for the first time, a couple of people had been killed through the gun… People were detained for saying something against the new regime. Suddenly, we had an army, and we had Tanzanian soldiers in our country, training our people. Suddenly there was this change in mentality because there were guns everywhere. Just after the coup, firecrackers were banned. People had guns to go hunt bats. These were confiscated… Now there was a curfew from 6pm to 6am… The curfew also applied for the sea, nobody could use their boat, so fishermen were affected," (2016, pers. comm., 30 September).

---

513 Such as service-based groups or charities to assist the needy.
514 Interviewed in Victoria, Seychelles.
515 Interviewed at the Seychelles National Party (SNP) office at Mont Fleuri, Mahé, Seychelles.

Opinion in Seychelles is still divided, with some believing the coup improved people's lives.[516] Judge Bernardin Renaud,[517] whom René appointed as Chairman of the 1993 Constitution Review Commission, does not believe most people were repressed:

> "The post-coup government was repressive for some only… maximum 30% of the population. Because the majority of the people, prior to this, was under the control of a minority of bourgeoisie landowners. But 70% of the people were very happy that they'd been liberated. Repressive was not the actual situation throughout because the majority that were not well educated, accepted René's government," 2016, pers. comm., 5 October).

An alternate view is that most people did not support the regime out of free will. Monica Servina,[518] who was heading the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) in 2016, stated that people supported the ruling party out of fear:

> "Yes, there were people supporting that political party. But others support was through fear because people using guns, violence, people being shot at were alien to us. This fear has been with us for a very long time," (2016, pers. comm., 11 October).

Only one large protest, the '1979 Demonstration', occurred after the coup when 3,000 school students protested against the compulsory NYS (St Ange 2007, pp. 58-63). A week later, the SPPF countered with a pro-government demonstration attended by a few thousand supporters (St Ange 2007, pp. 64-68). The opponents of the regime were intimidated in this manner.

Opponents were victimised and also exiled. Former political party candidates Regis Francourt, Roger Mancienne and Ralph Volcere were amongst those forced to go into exile after persecution from the government.[519] Mancienne was arrested in his workplace at the Ministry of Education in 1979 and imprisoned with 90 others at the Union Vale Prison, allegedly to "psychologically force them to leave the country"[520] (*Seychelles Nation* 2019b). Opponents already overseas were prevented from returning to Seychelles while those in country went into exile to escape such victimisation by the regime.

---

[516] View held by SPPF supporters Peter Sinon and Ralph Aggrippine.
[517] Interviewed at Ile Du Port, Mahé, Seychelles.
[518] Interviewed in Victoria, Seychelles.
[519] These three people confirmed this information in interviews to the author from September-October 2016.
[520] Mancienne was incarcerated for five weeks, was later released but followed and arrested again from time to time. He was dismissed from work, denied employment, and his wife was removed from employment because he did not support the ruling party (*Seychelles Nation* 2019b).

Some dissidents tried to take refuge in the church, as freedom of expression and of the media had become severely curtailed. Bishop French Chang-Him's brother, Davidson Chang-Him,[521] was shot dead during the coup for being a supporter of Mancham's SDP. The Bishop disclosed that the church was constantly surveilled by the state authorities. It was a repressive time when things said in church, especially sermons, was reported to the government:

> "The churches pioneered education in this country, and most state schools had church names. But at the time of the coup, all these (church symbols) were removed.[522] There was a crackdown on faith; people regarded the church as being about the only safe place. They regarded the church as their spokesperson... The church expressed what we felt was happening as people were too scared. At one time, any opposition prints were banned and there was a time when only the church magazines were allowed to be published. The church's moral stance was where things were right, we said they were right, but we opposed things that were not in terms of human rights, freedom, as part of our duty, in sermons for example," (2016, pers. comm., 12 October).

Religion was separated from schooling which led to many quality schools being shut down. Education became free but was of poorer quality than before.

Rev Ramkalawan affirmed that the regime adopted an anti-religion attitude:

> "No religion was allowed at first to NYS camp. Only later one priest was allowed to visit. The chapel at the Regina Mundi Convent was converted into a printing press. The chapels on the outlying islands were used as stores. Certain priests were deported. As a young priest I was banned by the government from giving Sunday services on broadcast radio by then Minister of Information Michel," (2016, pers. comm., 30 September).

Despite these repressive actions emanating from the state, opposition to single party rule, advocacy for democracy and political activism still persevered, including by those in exile.

A degree of liberalisation by the regime in 1991 offered fresh opportunities to protestors. A large demonstration welcomed Mancham home in 1992. Three prominent protest demonstrations were held in 1992: electricity workers strike; the Seychelles Liberal Party's anti-government demonstration; and a march by the Seychelles National Movement against the partisan attitude of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (St Ange 2007, pp. 72-75).

Thus, 15 years of repression, persecution and socialist indoctrination failed to extinguish the desire for the democratic freedoms of expression and assembly enjoyed by the civil society

[521] Davidson Chang-Him was a jeweller.

[522] René had religious photos removed from classrooms and his own portrait placed there. But there is no evidence that René was trying to get rid of religion which remained a central part of Seychelles society. Rather, it appears these activities were aimed at levelling society, promoting socialism, and glorifying René.

prior to the coup. There was severe curtailment of civil and political rights after the 1977 coup and banning of independent CSOs, political parties and unions. Nevertheless, activists persevered with lobbying for a return to democracy amidst repression. Civil society played a concerted role in challenging the regime to liberalise the political sphere (Linz & Stepan 1996).

6.5 Seychelles – resumption of multiparty elections

After 16 years of one-party rule, Seychelles resumed multiparty elections in 1993. Yet the regime created merely a façade of democracy. René continued to exercise authoritarian personal control and his loyalist successor Michel safeguarded the regime's stalwarts, thus prolonging electoral authoritarian rule for 23 more years. To understand how the regime perpetuated authoritarianism within a multiparty framework, the electoral autocratic rule of René from 1993-2004, Michel's competitive authoritarian rule from 2004-2016, and developments in the military are examined. Prior to that, key events in Seychelles' transition back to democracy are discussed. A later section assesses the civil military relations (CMR) reforms for democratisation of the army; and the challenges encountered by civil society under electoral authoritarian rule.

6.5.1 Return to democratisation

Seychelles' transition to democracy resumed after the end of the Cold War. René's autocracy started crumbling with the decline of superpower rivalry in the late 1980s and the USSR's collapse in 1991. His government ceased to receive technical and material aid from socialist countries such as North Korea and Cuba[523]. By 1992, Russia was no longer willing to assist Seychelles (Scarr 1999, p. 200). A financial crisis was looming with Seychelles' foreign reserves down, imports six times greater than exports, and 20% of the population deemed to be below the poverty line by the World Bank (Scarr 1999, pp. 200-201). Western governments would continue providing aid, but, together with the Commonwealth, they wanted Seychelles to return to democracy (Scarr 1999, pp. 200-201). Internal dissent fuelled by the exiled Seychellois was growing; the regime could not ignore the winds of change. In 1991, René announced that the Seychellois people had 'matured and were ready to embrace

[523] Interview with former senior Seychellois officials.

multiparty democracy' (Michel 2011, p. 112). Mancham, along with other political opponents of the regime such as Ferrari, returned from exile.

In June 1991, René announced that the country would adopt a multi-party system, acknowledging the linkage of aid to democratic change by Western donors as well as the new international climate (Michel 2011, p. 112). The Seychelles Constitution was amended in December 1991 to allow other political parties to register and participate in drafting a 'democratic' constitution (Electoral Commission 2016a). The Constitutional Commission comprised representatives from Mancham's rejuvenated Democratic Party (DP) and the ruling party, the SPPF. After a walk-out by the DP, the SPPF speedily prepared an unfair draft constitution which was rejected in the November 1992 referendum. The draft constitution received the support of 53.7% voters, falling short of the requisite two-third majority (Hatchard 1993, pp. 605-606). The draft had retained authoritarian features of the 1979 Constitution, which included: no term limits for the President who could make many appointments outside the public service; independents not allowed to be Presidential or National Assembly (NA) candidates; and only 12 of the 34 NA members to be nominated by the parties (Hatchard 1993, pp. 606-609). It only allowed certain civil and political rights and the President had powers to declare a state of emergency.

Supreme Court Judge Bernadin Renaud[524] had the roles of Electoral Officer and Secretary of the Constitution Commission. Renaud points out one reason why the 1992 draft was rejected was because:

> "…land of private sector had been acquired during the one party state. They (opposition) were fighting for land to be returned and full compensation," (2016, pers. comm., 5 October).

Renaud emphasises two concessions that were made by the regime after the constitution's rejection in the first referendum: the chairmanship of the Constitution Commission and allowing their proceedings to be broadcast. Renaud was appointed as an independent chairperson of the Constitution commission, making it acceptable to all political parties, as the previous chair was from the ruling party.

Renaud reflects on chairing the new round of consultation from January-April 1993:

---

[524] Interviewed at Ile Du Pont, Mahé, Seychelles.

> "The situation in the country was very, very tense from the other parties coming in... I managed to get their trust and got the process to move slowly… The whole thing took a different turn, because the President said we were going to debate the Constitution in full public view, meaning every word was broadcasted on the radio live, for the people of Seychelles to hear… Then we had the final draft. I organised the referendum nationally, the people approved it in June 1993… The 1993 Constitution was a major achievement because it was fully debated. As chairman, I received letters from citizens, people addressed the Constitutional Commission, we invited the Bishop, we had experts from Canada, Germany, France and Mauritius," (2016, pers. comm., 5 October).

The 1993 Constitution was endorsed by 73.6% of the vote in the 18 June 1993 referendum (Hatchard 1993, p. 606). It provided for an elected President, a nominated cabinet, and the National Assembly which was elected two-thirds directly and one-third proportionally (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 32). In effect, there were 22 directly elected seats from the 22 constituencies, and 11 nominated seats[525] (The Commonwealth 2015). It contained the Seychelles Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms and an Industrial Relations Act for formation of independent trade unions (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 32). In addition, the Constitution put term limits on the President, allowed independents to contest, and required the assembly's approval for declaring a state of emergency. It provided for the return of appropriated land or compensation, enabling Mancham to reclaim his family home in Glacis (Shillington 2014, p. 281). The tremendous support for the constitution demonstrated that Seychellois preferred parliamentary democracy rather than one-party rule.

The issues tackled during the transition period till 1993 included: de-linking the SPPF party from the state; acceptance of the voters' registration list; establishment of free and independent media; regulation of political parties' funding; and adoption of a Code of Conduct for political parties (Electoral Commission 2016a). The transition required a restructure and reform of the security forces, including depoliticisation, and resulted in the opposition parties reporting for that period that the army kept a low profile and there were very few incidents of harassment or intimidation (Electoral Commission 2016a). The Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman's Office were established under the 1993 Constitution. Collectively, these reforms meant that Seychelles had returned to multiparty

[525] The persons who take up the proportionally-elected seats tend to be nominated by the parties.

electoral governance. The following sub-sections will show whether, and if so to what extent, the reforms resulted in democracy.

6.5.2 Electoral autocracy 1993-2004

Despite Seychellois expectations that the re-introduction of multiparty elections would bring back democracy, little changed, mainly because René and his party kept winning subsequent polls until 2001. The regime's policies and actions appeared to be similar to those during the dictatorship. For instance, in July 1993, two weeks before the first multiparty Presidential elections post-independence, René had units of soldiers deployed onto the roads at strategic points to bolster the presence of the police, purportedly to prevent violence (Shillington 2014, p. 284). In response, Mancham's DP and other opposition parties claimed that the presence of the army was intimidating voters. The elections were won by René (SPPF) with a comfortable 59.51% of the vote; Mancham (DP) received 36.73% while Phillippe Boulle (United Opposition (UO)) got 3.79% (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33).

The multiparty system at least created the possibility of the SPPF losing power. Further, René realised he may need to retire soon and required a successor. In 1996, René had the Constitution amended to create the position of Vice-President which he gave to his staunch loyalist Michel[526] (Shillington 2014, p. 289). In the 1998 Presidential elections, René again won with 66.69%, an even greater share of the vote; Mancham's share was 13.8%; while the founder of the Seychelles National Party (SNP) Rev Ramkalawan received 19.5% (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33). Ramkalawan, an ordained priest, thus became the leader of the opposition. Mancham left politics to become an international statesman[527] (Michel 2011, p. 113). The 2001 Presidential election was won yet again by René with 54.1% of the vote; Ramkalawan came a close second with 44.95%, while Boulle (as an Independent) attained a mere 0.86% (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33). The SNP took nine out of 25 seats[528] in the National Assembly meaning that René won the Presidency with a reduced majority (St Ange & Georges 2005, p. 186). René attributed his declining popularity to the deteriorating economic circumstances which were compounded by a significant loss of

[526] Michel was from the core group that carried out the coup, and was promoted to Minister of Finance in 1986.
[527] After the DP lost the 1993 and 1998 elections. Mancham became an ambassador for peace, travelling globally as an eminent speaker. He was a President of the Global Peace Organisation of the Universal Peace Federation. Mancham was also an Arbitrator with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and a senior member of the European Council for Peace and Development (ECPD) (Sir James R. Mancham, viewed 26 August 2020, https://www.worldfuturecouncil.org/p/james-r-mancham/).
[528] In 1996, the constituencies increased to 25, which meant there were 25 directly elected NA seats (Electoral Commission 2016).

income when the Americans closed their tracking station in 1996. His impending retirement may also have put off some voters (Shillington 2014, p. 294). René's health was worsening. He resigned on 14 April 2004, passing the presidency to Michel (Shillington 2014, p. 295).

Democratic reforms failed to liberalise political power primarily because the ruling party's hold remained strong across all government institutions. It appears that René only introduced reforms for a return to multiparty elections and parliament because of financial difficulties coupled with pressure from western powers (Baker 2008, p. 280). Baker (2008) found that the National Assembly, media, judiciary, civil service and the security forces were all compromised due to the pervasive influence of the SPPF party, which remained under René's leadership.[529] Corruption and a patronage system also persisted and civil society was weak. Intimidation and harassment by the security forces, as well as preferential treatment of supporters by the ruling party, saw the opposition suffer due to denial of employment in government-funded bodies, difficulty in accessing benefits from social welfare projects such as land and housing, and revocation, delay or denial of business and publishing licenses.[530] Former soldiers revealed that the regime victimised them through law agencies, and attempts to assault or kill them after they left the army.[531] A return to multiparty elections, instead of ushering in democracy, gave a veneer of legitimacy to René's authoritarian rule by converting the regime into an electoral autocracy.

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to a loss of aid needed to sustain René's dictatorship which was maintained through patronage and welfare benefits. An impending financial crisis in Seychelles forced René to embrace multiparty reforms to secure aid from democratic nations. But multiparty elections in 1993 did not bring democracy to Seychelles because René's political party retained control of the government. It undermined Linz and Stepan's (1996) conditions for democracy, which include: an autonomous political society; rule of law; state bureaucracy; and an economic society. René's rule from 1993-2004 was an electoral autocracy due to the continuation of features of authoritarian regimes such as reliance on the dictator for services, returns for 'loyalists', and statutory institutions controlled by the dictator. Notwithstanding multiparty elections, repression of dissent continued, albeit less overtly than prior to 1993.

[529] René remained the leader of SPPF, even after retiring from the Presidency in 2004.
[530] Interviews with opposition politicians.
[531] See section 6.5.5. Interview with former Seychellois soldiers.

6.5.3 Competitive authoritarian 2004-2016

After René stepped down in April 2004, he was succeeded by James Michel who remained President until 2016. Michel was part of the group that executed the 1977 coup. By handing Michel the remaining two years of his term, René allowed Michel to cultivate support from the public for the next election. The 2006 Presidential election was won by Michel with 53.7% of the vote, Ramkalawan received 45.7% while Boulle (Independent) obtained 0.56% (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33). Although René bestowed the Presidency on Michel in 2004, and despite his ill health, he still retained substantial control as President and Secretary-General of the SPPF. René finally decided to relinquish power in 2009 when on 2 June, the SPPF changed its name to Parti Lepep to symbolically break from the René era. Michel was elected president of the party and Seychelles Vice President Danny Faure was appointed Secretary General (Shillington 2014, p. 299). René was given the honorary title of Parti Lepep's founding president.

Michel won two elections under the banner of Parti Lepep with slim majorities, enabling the 1977 coup protagonists to retain their grip on Seychelles until 2016. The 2011 Presidential Elections were won by Michel amidst questions over abusing the advantages of incumbency. These featured alleged misuse of state resources including District Administration offices, a servile state media, an ineffective electoral commissioner, election breaches as well as allegations of bribery and vote buying (Georges 2011). Michel received 55.46% of the vote while Ramkalawan obtained 41.43% (*SNA* 2015). The opposition candidates rejected the election results. The Commonwealth expert team found the electoral process credible, but with areas of concern. The Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma noted some fundamental elements of a democratic environment were met, while others were not. The report recommended the need for a thorough review of electoral legislation, an independent electoral commission, reform of party and campaign expenditure and financial reporting, and the reduction of media licensing costs (The Commonwealth 5 August 2011). These recommendations indicate that pronouncing the elections credible did not mean they were free or fair.

Michel is credited with implementing economic reforms which mitigated Seychelles' financial crisis. The legacy of a single-party socialist state with extensive state intervention

and social welfare system had led to the small nation Seychelles accumulating unsustainable debt through state borrowings in the 1990s and 2000s (Afif, Rojid & Sacerdoti 2013, p. xvii). Seychelles government's desperation to earn money as a counter measure was evidenced through wealthy international fugitives acquiring Seychelles passports which created the impression Seychelles was up for sale (Hudson et. al. 2014). Seychelles had a dubious reputation as a tax haven through which millions[532] of dollars was laundered.[533] Seychelles' offshore industry became more significant as a source of income after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Michel himself was listed as the owner of an offshore entity in the Virgin Islands in 2007 (Hudson et. al. 2014). The financial sector was only cleaned up in recent years due to international pressure upon return to multiparty governance (Hudson et. al. 2014). Although President Michel was René's loyal ally, he rose to the challenge of opening up the Seychelles' economy and adopting macroeconomic reforms in 2008 supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and EU, which brought their debt to sustainable levels by 2011 (Afif, Rojid & Sacerdoti 2013, p. xvii). The policies included a reduction in the size of the public service and a series of financial reforms.

Similar to René, Michel appeared to implement democratic reforms in name only. In reality, Michel retained loyalists from the 1977 coup in the military and civil service.[534] Michel made genuine efforts to reform the country economically, but not politically. Michel used the army for political purposes, similar to René. Although the security forces were reformed, those not supporting the ruling party were penalised (see section 6.5.5). Michel nurtured loyalists such as Jacques Hodoul from the core group that mounted the coup. Hodoul resigned from government before the re-introduction of multiparty elections and formed a party which suffered electoral defeat. In 2005, Michel appointed him as a judge of the Court of Appeal (Michel 2011, p. 108).

Michel's rule was not democratic; it was authoritarian, but not autocratic, because unlike René, he did not retain personal control. Although Seychelles was not a democracy under Michel, the country had opened up to such a degree that sufficient political competition existed to pose the risk of unseating Parti Lepep from power. Therefore, Michel's rule can be classified as competitive authoritarian.

---

532 A 1995 Economic Development Act gave immunity from prosecution and extradition to foreigners investing over $10 million in Seychelles (Hudson et. al. 2014).
533 Such dubious tax havens or offshore industry were also present in a few other small island nations.
534 He also appointed partisan people to statutory bodies. See the next section, and also section 6.5.5 for details.

The advantages of incumbency had made it very difficult to change the government. A former member of the National Assembly, Bernard Georges (2011, p. 7) observed that people in Seychelles preferred to vote for the incumbent: both prior to the coup for SDP's Mancham, and after it for SPPF's René and Michel even after multiparty elections were introduced. The ruling party had so many advantages "…that all other political tendencies might as well abandon any hope of ever being able to unseat the incumbent" (Georges 2011, p. 2). Georges (2011, p. 7) questioned why people voted for the ruling party again in 2011 given their historical record of poor financial management, deficiencies in service delivery, and dubious land sales.

But Seychelles longstanding poor economic performance had slowly eroded support for the SPPF/Parti Lepep. By 2006, the opposition's support had grown to about 46% despite the lavish expenditure of the ruling party during elections and the rewards to its loyalists since 1977 (Georges 2011, p. 8). In fact, the SPPF/Parti Lepep's nepotism, corruption, financial mismanagement and waste of foreign earnings had encouraged support for the SNP (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33). Political and business elites associated with the SPPF allegedly managed the economy poorly, while the professional middle class was neglected (Campling, Confiance & Purvis 2011, p. 33). Seychelles was bitterly divided as opponents of the SPPF had been exiled, persecuted, or marginalised from government jobs, welfare benefits and business licences. Pubic disillusionment was illustrated in the 2015 Presidential elections which Michel won by only 193 votes (see section 6.6.1). Michel retired in 2016 and passed the presidency to Faure.

Gifting and patronage combined with repression sustained René's electoral autocracy until 2004. The distribution of spoils was maintained by his successor Michel who cultivated loyalists, thus acknowledging that their reciprocal relationship was vital for prolonging the regime's rule. Michel's Presidency from 2004-2016 was a competitive authoritarian regime. It was not an autocracy as he did not attempt to concentrate all key decision-making in his own hands. Moreover, he welcomed the deposed President Mancham back into public life. To his credit, unsustainable debts under René were reined in by Michel, whose policies stabilised the economy through a range of reforms.

6.5.4 Seychelles - civil society challenges under electoral authoritarianism 1993-2016

The return of multiparty elections saw a few rights-based CSOs starting to emerge, particularly in the new millennium. However, civil society continued to face some challenges under elected autocratic governments from 1993-2016, which are examined below. The main challenge for Seychelles is that its small population of 95,000 makes it difficult to have an independent rights-based civil society of sufficient size.[535] Previous sections show that in Seychelles, civil society activism was largely instigated by politicians, democracy activists, and professionals.

Roger Mancienne, leader of the Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (the LDS coalition won the election in 2016 and 2020), who was imprisoned for five weeks by the regime in 1979, said that there were no CSOs for many years partly because people believed the socialist state would take care of everything:

> "With the restoration of multiparty democracy, we have seen the creation of civil society groups working in the democratic process. It is still limited, but in the last five years organisations were created that have become involved in electoral observation. This is a good start. Under the repressive system… ordinary citizens were fearful of who they speak to, they were always on their guard as to what opinions they express," (2016, pers. comm., 19 September).

A return to multiparty elections saw the revival of political activism. Eight demonstrations were held between 1993 and 2006, three of which were strikes (St Ange 2007, pp. 77-102). Rev Ramkalawan, the leader of the SNP, became regarded as the 'torch bearer' for expressing people's demands (St Ange 2007, p.7). The government attempted to discourage such protests through the armed para-military police who, in 2006, used batons, guns and teargas to disperse the peaceful demonstration for licences to operate independent radio stations. The actions of the armed forces led to Ramkalawan, and Jean Francois Ferrari, publisher of the *Regar* newspaper, being hospitalised after receiving serious head injuries, and Mancienne was detained by the police (St Ange 2007, p. 98). In defiance, the protestors held another large demonstration the following week to show support for Ramkalawan while he filed a police complaint. Thus, authorities were being made aware that people were willing to go to extreme lengths and incur risks to exercise their freedoms.

---

[535] Linz and Stepan (1996, p. 7-8) regard the civil society as of critical importance in shifting the opposition balance to challenge the regime.

The government controlled the main mediums of communication: the state print and broadcast media. This, and the ruling party's hold over government, created difficulties for the realisation of constitutional rights for people who were critical of the regime. This was the view of several prominent Seychellois, including lawyer and former presidential candidate, Alexia Amesbury:

> "Although the constitution changed, nothing changed in reality as even under multiparty rule, the government's mentality was still of the one-party state… The executive brought in the Public Order Act 2013 which abolished fundamental rights, especially rights to assembly and freedom of expression. It imposed a ban on gathering, playing music. Although we have a constitution that gives these rights, in practice, the executive don't recognise them. We have to fight in court to get constitutional rights recognised and enforced," (2016, pers. comm., 20 September).

Joint legal action by political and civil society finally bore fruit when, in July 2015, the High Court ruled certain sections of the Public Order Act unconstitutional[536] (*SNA* 2015a). But the perception remained that Seychelles had democratised in name only, primarily because people not aligned with the ruling party still faced discrimination when seeking government jobs, services and social benefits, and suffered intimidation and harassment.[537]

Seychelles' small population also poses special challenges for rights-based CSOs whose independence is reliant on donor funding. Few independent CSOs exist and the small population makes recruitment difficult even for non-political volunteering activities.[538] Another challenge is that non-political CSOs receive government grants to allow them to operate, which leaves them unable to criticise the state (Judge Bernardin Renaud, 2016, pers. comm., 5 October). Rev Ramkalawan affirms that:

> "Civil society unfortunately is still very weak… Most CSOs are 'GONGOS' or government NGOs because many are government-funded and therefore could not criticise the government… But a few had managed to ascertain their independence, such as the two CSOs dealing with election observation, ARID and Citizens Democracy Watch Seychelles," (Ramkalawan 2016, pers. comm., 30 September).

Despite the limited scope for CSOs in Seychelles, multiparty elections brought greater freedoms which reduced people's anxieties, and the church ceased to be targeted by the state

---

[536] The first case was brought by the SNP, Seychelles United Party (SUP) and Citizens' Democracy Watch, while the second case was brought by Viral Dhanjee, represented by lawyer Amesbury (*SNA* 2015a).
[537] Revealed by several key Seychellois interviewed.
[538] The view of several key Seychellois interviewed.

(Bishop Chang-Him 2016, pers. comm., 12 October). Additionally, the lifting of some restrictions on the exercise of rights meant people's need to use the church to express their fears had lessened.

Although Seychelles had resumed its transition to democracy in 1993,[539] democratic reforms were still pending in 2011 (Georges 2011). Several prominent Seychellois interviewed in 2016 stated that in reality, statutory bodies such as the Electoral Commission (see section 6.6.1) remained firmly controlled by the ruling party. An Anti-Corruption Commission established in 2016 was viewed with cynicism because it was chaired by Ugandan Judge Duncan Gaswaga, who had served in the Seychelles Supreme Court from 2002-2013 (State House 2016). Senior Seychellois interviewed doubted Gaswaga's impartiality.[540] Following the opposition LDS coalition's victory in the September 2016 national assembly elections, new appointments were made to the Anti-Corruption Commission which began operating in April 2017. A bill for the creation of a Human Rights Commission was passed by the National Assembly in June 2018 (*Seychelles Nation* 2018). The opposition, through its majority in the National Assembly, held the government accountable, meaning these bodies are now being viewed as impartial. Overall, though the democratisation process that commenced in 1993 has been slow for Seychelles, it has been progressing steadily.

Table 6.4, below, presents the perceptions of 20 high-profile persons interviewed between September-October 2016 in Seychelles. Whilst this does not represent a broad cross-section of the population, they are indicative of freedom experienced by the Seychellois people, following the opposition's victory in the 2016 National Assembly elections, meaning that for the first time in 29 years, the ruling party was not controlling parliament. Freedoms promised to people after the multiparty elections in 1993, were gradually bestowed following further reforms for democratisation since 2008. However, the judiciary was still not regarded as being totally independent in 2016, and freedoms of media and expression were not fully enjoyed because the only freely available print and broadcast media were state-owned and still controlled by the ruling party.

[539] A Constitutional Appointments Authority, the Electoral Commission and the Ombudsman's Office had been established under the 1993 Constitution. The Public Order Act was repealed prior to the 2015 elections.
[540] Such as Robert Ernesta. Due to doubts about the effectiveness of the government-appointment commission, Opposition leader Rev Ramkalawan moved a motion to set up a parliamentary anti-corruption committee in 2016.

Seychelles - Perceptions	September-October 2016
Free Media	Exists - but state media was restricted
Freedom of Expression	Exists
Fairness of the Judiciary /Courts	Exists, but some trials are not fair
Freedom of Assembly & Association	Was restricted until July 2015
Civil society	Exists
Freedom of Opposition Members of Parliament (MPs)	Exists
Corruption	Very high (they regard Seychelles as the most corrupt country)

Table 6.4 Seychelles: Perception of rights, freedoms and corruption

Although civil society was considered free by the interviewees, it was restricted by a lack of resources. Moreover, corruption was considered endemic in Seychelles. Nevertheless, Seychellois had a greater enjoyment of the above rights and freedoms, which are essential elements in a democracy. The remnants of single party dictatorship and electoral authoritarianism have been gradually easing out of Seychelles state and society since the 2016 elections.

The pseudo-democracy under electoral authoritarianism allowed the opening of limited spaces for non-elites and opposition to exercise civil and political rights in a constrained manner, which included engaging in protests, speech making and media advocacy. Rights-based advocacy CSOs also started to emerge and became more vocal and articulate. These constrained spaces enabled the creation of alliances and strategies, which ultimately led to the electoral defeat of Parti Lepep in the 2016 Seychelles National Assembly elections. While it is crucial for the civil and political societies to work together for democracy to endure (Linz & Stepan 1996), the case of Seychelles illustrates that such alliances are doubly important in small states.

6.5.5 Armed forces under electoral authoritarianism: 1993-2016

To assess whether Seychelles was indeed democratising after the multiparty elections in 1993, it is essential to analyse the armed forces, particularly because they were created by the 1977 coup protagonists and were utilised by René to safeguard his autocracy. The following section discusses key developments in the armed forces until 2016.

Pertaining to the size of the military, it is difficult to obtain concrete figures as official statistics from the government are unavailable.[541] External sources estimated the military's size to be between 800 to 1000 personnel, which is large relative to the size of Seychelles' small population.[542] According to GlobalSecurity.org,[543] in 2008, the Seychelles People's Defence Force (SPDF) had 800 army personnel, including 300 in the presidential protection unit. Paramilitary forces included a National Guard of 1,000 people and a coast guard estimated at 250 (GlobalSecurity.org). The defenceWeb[544] (2013) had these figures for the SPDF: Army: 1,000, Coast Guard: 200, Air Force: 100, and Paramilitary: 450. The statistics indicate that although reforms for democratisation had commenced, they did not result in drastic reduction of military personnel whose numbers remained similar to the era of dictatorship.

In terms of the military's role and composition, the SPDF created a Military Police unit in 2008 to monitor security personnel, and an elite Special Forces Unit in 2007 (SPDFc). A separate elite force Tazar was added in November 2009 for specialised commando operations; this assisted the Seychelles Coast Guard to combat piracy (SPDFc). The unit monitoring the armed forces reveals the government's attempts at professionalising the armed forces by cracking down on misbehaviour.

The armed forces were being refocused from an internal security agency to dealing with external threats at sea by deployment of the army to assist the Coast Guard. Seychelles defended its maritime territory by capturing Somali pirates (State House 2010). It took the

---

541 Official figures are still not available for force size which has been classified to date. Only aggregate figures are available, such as in 2016, out of 8,906 people employed in the government sector, 4,671 were employed in public administration and defence: the compulsory social security sector (NBoS 2017, p. 13).

542 See next section for comparison of the size of Seychelles army relative to other SIDS.

543 Global.Security.org is the formal name of that organisation. Global.Security.org is not affiliated or connected with the entities known as 'Global' or 'Global Security'.

544 The defenceWeb is a defence news portal that focuses on Africa. The organisation is based in South Africa. The figures were obtained from the defenceWeb's old website.

initiative of combatting piracy in the Indian Ocean through partnerships with NATO and the EU, and continues to receive assistance from European and Asian nations to this end (*SNA* 2016a). Undoubtedly, Somali pirates have posed the greatest security challenge to Seychelles over the past decade, with which the Seychelles coast guard has successfully contended. As Seychelles rarely encounters security threats on their land, it was a prudent move to orient security resources towards the ocean.

Neither René nor Michel showed commitment to reducing the army's size. In fact, in response to citizens' views that the army was too costly and should be shut down, Michel assured soldiers that government had no intention of shutting down the army (State House 2010). In addition to modernisation of the command structure and military procedures, Michel introduced reforms to provide them with good salaries, welfare benefits, pensions and specialised training (State House 2010).

Similar to René, Michel nurtured loyalists in the army. For instance, as Vice-President and President, Michel received briefings from Leopold Payet, who joined the army a year after the coup, and became Chief of Staff after the introduction of multiparty elections (Michel 2011, p. 103). Michel later appointed Brigadier Payet Chief of Defence Forces in 2007. Payet retired in January 2019 after 41 years of service (*SNA* 2018a). Thus, post-coup loyalists were retained in senior military positions, which implies the regime was not sincere about reforming the military into an apolitical, professional force.

According to a former senior army officer, Michel continued nurturing patron-client relations with the army by providing benefits:

> "In addition to high salaries, education and overseas training, soldiers were given gratuity payments after each contract renewal. To get political support, the ruling party made gratuity available to everyone regardless of renewal. From January 2007, it said those leaving the army will get compensation but to get votes, the ruling party said all people who left the army will get it. But this is tough for the economy of the country," (2016, pers. comm., 11 October).

As in authoritarian times, soldiers were expected to show loyalty to the ruling party in exchange for benefits. The former senior army officer said even after democratic reforms, they were expected to support the ruling party:

> "After democratisation reforms, soldiers swore oath to the government, but in their minds, the government in power wanted them to swear oath to the party leadership… A lot of senior officers

> support the party. Some soldiers were victimised because they didn't support the party... When I left the organisation, eight senior officers were sacked because they didn't share the party's views. The army officers had to talk politics favouring the party in power, they can't talk about opposition," (2016, pers. comm., 11 October).

Despite constitutional changes, the SPPF/Parti Lepep still controlled the army because the President was the Minister for Defence and the army's Commander in Chief. Robert Ernesta was the SPDF's Chief of Operations until he left the army in 2007. Ernesta stated the army was used to suppress people even after the multiparty system was introduced:

> "We were expected on the adoption of this present constitution to swear loyalty to it, which is done as a matter of ceremony, but within the defence forces, things never changed. We still had political indoctrination within the forces. The political offices stayed the same. People were still vetted because of their political allegiance. In fact, those who were deemed non sympathisers of the party were thrown out. I recall at one election, they were rounded up, they were taken off active duty, sent to an outpost where they had nothing to do… The army was used for campaigning to sustain district branches of the ruling party, provide security to ruling party leaders at rallies and participate actively in it by using army transport vehicles, everything in uniform. It was the army of the ruling party even after 1993 multiparty," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

Senior soldiers who left the army by choice disclosed in interviews that they endured victimisation from the regime, and a few soldiers faced attempts on their life. A former senior army officer stated:

> "Soldiers were misused till 2016 to do dirty work to harass and kill people, breaking into offices of opposition parties and sabotaging their system… When I left the army, they came after me to humiliate and tarnish my image," (2016, pers. comm., 11 October).

Victimisation was also experienced by Ernesta who voluntarily left the army in 2007 because:

> "…all decisions were based politically. I was sent to assist the Commissioner of Police. They would arrest and detain people for no apparent reason... The army was used as a political tool to ensure that the party's policies were deep-rooted among the masses," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

Ernesta claims the regime tried to have him killed after he left the army:

> "They sent me to Ireland, the Irish Management Institute, to do executive management for a year. The state spent about 1300 Euros per day on me. Once I was there, they wanted to kill me… But I had friends, I was in charge of intelligence training, I had contacts... I escaped to Ghana. From Ghana I crossed the border illegally into Togo. I was arrested whilst moving from Togo back to Ghana. Then I

> flew back to Ireland. It was a difficult period. My daughter, studying at Manchester University, was with me… They poisoned my water... They crashed my vehicle. They never wanted me to come back," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

But Ernesta survived these malicious attacks and returned to Seychelles.

Other soldiers were also disillusioned with their role and left the army:

> "…initially after the coup, things were improving a lot. But gradually, things started degrading until the whole thing just collapsed… Gradually, soldiers got disillusioned and started leaving the SPDF and by 2016, most of the veterans from 1977 had left," (Former SPLA soldier 2016, pers. comm., 12 October).

The continued use of the armed forces for political purposes by the ruling party shows that Janowitz's authoritarian-personal control and authoritarian-mass party control were still being practiced. Laws had changed, however, Seychelles still had not transformed to Janowitz's democratic model of political-military elites' relations, whereby the military's roles are constrained by competitive democratic institutions and civilian supremacy (Janowitz 1975, p. 138). These democratic checks on the military were not working during René's and Michel's rule. René continued having complete personal control and oversight of the military under electoral autocracy. Both René and Michel retained loyalists in key security and government positions and sustained their rule through generous patronage as well as repression of opponents. The army faced difficulty in transforming to Janowitz's democratic model of political-military relations, because even after multiparty reforms, soldiers were expected to be loyal to the ruling party.

6.5.6 Seychelles – Civil Military Relations reforms

The armed forces of Seychelles were subject to reform as part of the democratisation process. The military in particular, went through civil-military relations (CMR) reform, which is discussed below. Of the three countries examined in this thesis, only Seychelles successfully implemented CMR reforms. No official report on the CMR reform process could be obtained,[545] therefore, the following discussion largely relies on information from interviewees, including politicians, former military personnel and public servants.

---

[545] No official report on the Seychelles CMR process is available. The President's office did not reply to the researcher's request for information on any report that may have been prepared about the CMR process.

The transition process to multiparty elections from 1991-1993 necessitated reorganising the law enforcement and security agencies. As part of the security forces' restructure in July 1992, the People's Militia stopped 'street patrols' and transformed into the National Guard to undertake escort duties (Electoral Commission 2016a). Additionally, a professional soldier was appointed Chief of Staff of the SPDF; previously this was a political appointment. Reforms for democratisation included changing the ideology of the armed forces by re-orienting the loyalty of the soldiers towards upholding the rule of law, rather than loyalty to a person. A crucial reform was that the oath of allegiance was no longer to the revolution or the President or the ruling party, but to the 1993 Constitution.

International assistance was received for CMR reforms. Britain, India and France assisted by providing technical exercises and naval training, stated Peter Sinon, Deputy Secretary-General of Parti Lepep (2016, pers. comm.,13 October). Sinon emphasised that reforms were implemented to ensure that soldiers knew they should be apolitical and defend the constitution. Assistance was also received from African multi-national organisations. Tanzania no longer provided military aid, but assisted with prison officers training and support (*SNA* 2018b).

Robert Ernesta, the SPDF Chief of Operations until 2007, was involved in the reforms:

> "We received assistance from the Defence and Security Committee of SADC [Southern African Development Community] through an open academic forum under which they visited SADC's member countries and conducted lectures on CMR. We had civic education within the defence forces… The ultimatum was to get defence services to understand that as protectors of democracy, there are certain modes of conduct vis-à-vis the citizens in their respective states. We had professors from the Institute of Security Studies and other sectors," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

Ernesta found that implementing CMR reforms was challenging:

> "It was difficult to receive the commitment of government and the head of defence services for its implementation within the SPDF… The political authorities were not happy as they could not disassociate the defence forces from the political wing of government. Ultimately, I left in 2007," (2016, pers. comm., 10 October).

There were several reasons why CMR reforms were challenging. Firstly, the President was the Commander in Chief and carried the defence portfolio. Presidents René and Michel were

coup protagonists and retained their loyalists[546] in senior military positions. It was difficult to implement democratisation in Seychelles as the political status quo remained the same as during the single-party era. The view of prominent Seychellois[547] rang true that although the laws had changed, the people in the institutions remained the same, meaning that Seychelles had democratised only on paper. The lack of change in leadership meant that many, albeit not all, soldiers felt that their allegiance was still to the President or the party and not to the constitution. But by 2016, independent institutions had started to perform their requisite roles in a democracy, resulting in members of the SPDF charged for electoral offences in 2016 for campaigning for the ruling party (see section 6.6.1). This meant that, despite challenges, the defence forces had to accept they could no longer exceed their mandated roles in the constitution.

Government statements indicated that reforms of the security sector were underway. For instance, on the SPDF website, reforms were referred to as changes initiated in 2004 to keep up with the changing times, and gradual improvements resulting from a reorganisation carried out in 2006-2007.[548] These statements convey that the reforms were an ongoing public exercise, even if no official reports are available.[549]

To date, CMR reforms have been a qualified success in Seychelles. Seychellois soldiers interviewed estimate that the size of the military was reduced to about 450.[550] This figure correlates with the EU ISS (2016, p. 47) which lists the Seychelles' army capability at 420. But even after downsizing, Seychelles military is too big when compared to Comoros, where the population is eight times greater than Seychelles but the army size is only 500 (see section 2.2). Mauritius population is 13 times greater than Seychelles but they have a paramilitary of only 3,000 (see Table 2.1). The Seychelles' military size of 450 translates to 1 soldier per 206 residents. In per capita terms, it is double the size of the Mauritius paramilitary, and about eight times the size of the Comoros army.[551] This means that although Seychelles' military is

[546] For instance, the post-coup President's loyalist Payet became the Chief of Defence in 2007 and only retired in January 2019 (see previous section).
[547] Interviewed by the researcher.
[548] https://www.spdf.sc/defending-our-nation/, viewed 7 December 2019. The website revealed that in 2019, the SPDF comprised: Special Forces Unit, Seychelles Coast Guard (SCG), Seychelles Air Force (SAF), Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA), Military Police (MP), Seychelles Dog Unit (SDU) and the National Brass Band, which are under the control of the Defence Forces Head Quarters (DFHQ), governed by the Defence Forces Council under the President who remains the Commander-in- Chief.
[549] Similarly, on the Seychelles police website, reforms were alluded to as: "structural revision of the police force aimed at turning it into a more professional, dynamic, efficient force" (Seychelles Police 2016). The police force was also moved to the Internal Affairs Ministry.
[550] In the previous decade, the army comprised 800-1,200 personnel.
[551] See section 4.6.3 where Comoros per capita military translated to 1 soldier per 1,600 residents, and Mauritius per capita military translated to 1 paramilitary personnel per 433 residents.

too big compared to Comoros, it is close to the Fiji military's per capita size which has 1 soldier per 257 residents (see section 4.6.3), and is smaller than the Maldives' military where the size translated to 1 soldier per 143 residents (see section 5.5.3). But it still means that both, Fiji's and Seychelles' military per capita sizes are too large in comparison to Comoros and Mauritius.

CMR values were being implemented in the SPDF but control over the military remained with the President. According to Robert Ernesta, after he left the military in 2007, the military was renamed the Seychelles Defence Force (SDF), removing the word 'people' which denoted socialism and was thus directly linked to the ruling party's ideology. However, in 2019 the military's website referred to itself as the SPDF and, in 2020, Seychelles media still referred to it as the SPDF[552] (Seychelles Nation 2020). This is a concern as the word 'people's' denoted socialism and its omission from the SPDF title had symbolised democratisation.

The reduction of the SPDF size to less than 500 by 2016 under Michel, shows genuine commitment by the government and the then ruling Parti Lepep to multiparty democracy reforms that commenced in 1991. The Seychelles' case resonates with Feaver's (1999, p. 222) rationale that CMR reforms are influenced by aid and advice from influential foreign powers, and the CMR philosophy of professionalism provides solutions to reform the military by requiring soldiers to be apolitical and subservient to the civilian authority. However, Seychelles is a microstate and may find it difficult to avoid nepotistic, personalist appointments. To prevent further abuse of ruling party privilege in controlling employment in government and independent institutions, it is recommended that independent or bipartisan committees be responsible for such appointments. To reduce personal control of the armed forces and police by the President or Minister, a parliamentary sub-committee with balanced representation could be responsible for senior appointments and oversight of the security sector.

---

[552] In 2010, the Seychelles government referred to the SDF as the 'Seychelles People's Defence Forces' (SPDF) (State House 2010). When the author was in Seychelles in 2016, the army was referred to as the SDF. But the revamped website of the SDF still referred to it as the SPDF as late as 2019 (https://www.spdf.sc/, viewed 7 December 2019).

6.6 The conduct of elections and elections observation

Seychelles is among those developing countries that place high importance on having their elections declared as 'free and fair' by international monitors. In the post-Cold War era, such scrutiny is vital because elections are utilised as a benchmark to assess a country's progress towards democracy and to procure western aid (see Chapter 3). The 2015 Presidential and the 2016 National Assembly elections in Seychelles, are analysed to find out whether its conduct and observation satisfied the principles of democracy, and also if the elections contributed towards an authoritarian reversion or a transition to democracy. A sub-section discusses Seychelles' progress towards democratisation since the 2016 election. The observers' reports for these elections are appraised against the 1994 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) criteria, to assess attainment of democracy and human rights thresholds.

The ruling party kept winning multiparty elections in Seychelles after 1993. The 2015 Presidential elections were different, however, due to President Michel's slim and seemingly dubious victory, which is examined below. Also discussed is the historic win of the opposition LDS coalition in the 2016 National Assembly elections, which illustrates how Seychelles' political and civil societies worked together to gradually and painstakingly, ease out authoritarianism (see Bhim 2019[553]). Elements of electoral authoritarianism were present in the 2015 Presidential and 2016 National Assembly elections in Seychelles. As such, the government, judiciary, electoral bodies, armed forces and the media's actions are scrutinised to ascertain to what extent the rulers utilised these sectors to influence the polls in their favour.

6.6.1 Seychelles 2015 presidential and 2016 national assembly elections

The 3-5 December 2015 Presidential Elections resulted in a different outcome to previous elections, because the ruling party candidate did not win an outright majority in the first round. Presidential candidates were: Michel from the ruling Parti Lepep, Ramkalawan of Seychelles National Party, Patrick Pillay of Lalyans Seselwa, David Pierre of Popular Democratic Movement, independent candidate Philippe Boulle, and the first female presidential candidate Alexia Amesbury of Seychelles Party for Social Justice and

[553] This section contains extracts from Bhim 2019, which was written during the course of this thesis.

Democracy. Michel received 47.76% of the vote while Ramkalawan received 33.93% (*Al Jazeera* 2015). As no candidate had received more than 50% of the vote, for the first time in the history of Seychelles, a run-off election was held from 16-18 December 2015. Pillay, Amesbury and Boulle gave their support to Ramkalawan. But Michel had a slim victory with 50.15% of the vote and formed the government, while Ramkalawan obtained 49.85%. Michel only received 193 votes more than Ramkalawan who subsequently challenged the results in court on the basis of irregularities and non-compliance with electoral laws (*SNA* 2016b). The Constitutional Court rejected Ramkalawan's petitions in May 2016 and this ruling was upheld by the Seychelles Court of Appeal in December 2016 (*SNA* 2016b). Thus, Michel remained President of Seychelles with a bare majority.[554]

The Presidential elections were observed by international and local entities. For the second round of the 2015 Presidential Election, the Commonwealth Observer Group expressed concern "with wide allegations of vote buying" in the lead up and during the process of elections. Conversely, the African Union (AU) Observer Mission (2015, p. 3) noted that positive legal reforms resulted in: establishment of a five-member electoral commission, introduction of campaign finance regulations, and changes to voter registration procedures, creating a more level electoral playing field. The repeal of the Public Order Act, which required police permission for public gatherings and rallies, and its replacement with the Public Assembly Act, which only requires the police to be informed, also allowed for a freer and vibrant electoral campaign (AU 2015, p. 6). However, the AU report did question the credibility of the bloated voters' register, and that vague voter identification language allowed excessive discretion to the electoral officer. Observers generally found the elections credible but noted discrepancies.

Subsequently, the National Assembly (NA) elections were held from 8-10 September 2016, where, similar to previous elections, the biased state media was a concern. The NA was only dissolved after the elections. This meant the Ministers continued to occupy their offices and receive media coverage throughout the voting and counting period.[555] The Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) kept giving preferential coverage to Parti Lepep as they

[554] Further, in the May ruling, the Constitutional Court directed that Ramkalawan be investigated and deregistered as a candidate for the National Assembly elections for assuring benefits to the Tamil community in a letter, but following an appeal, the case was dropped in August (*SNA* 2016c). The court's final decision demonstrated it was not biased towards the ruling party.

[555] The researcher's field trip in Seychelles was from 6 September–14 October 2016, which coincided with the NA elections. She was able to observe people's reactions, media coverage, and the atmosphere in Seychelles, as well as interview key political candidates.

constituted the government.[556] The SBC's commentary was very influential as it is the only daily radio and TV broadcaster in Seychelles, with a 10-minute news in French, a 10-minute news in English, and a longer segment in Creole. The ruling party also received preferential coverage through the sole daily newspaper, *Nation*, which was both government owned and oriented. The opposition newspapers were published weekly and had to be purchased, meaning they did not have a wide reach. Nevertheless, social media[557] made up for this inequity in mainstream media access. People utilised the social media platform to express criticisms and complaints without any fear or censorship. However, the use of state media and state resources by the ruling party infringes on the IPU Criteria for elections, meaning that these elections should not be classified as free and fair.

Corruption was another major issue in this and past elections. In interviews with the author, members of the opposition, and even of the ruling party, agreed that corruption, notably nepotism, and vote buying were a problem in Seychelles. People could ask for and receive 'gifts' ranging from money, TV, fridge or washing machine to employment, security fund, social welfare, housing or even a piece of land. People also revealed in interviews that in the 2016 elections, some voters took gifts from the ruling party but voted for the opposition.

Party Lepep Deputy Secretary General Peter Sinon calls gift giving a 'cultural issue' in Seychelles because,

> "…traditionally, we are a socialist party in the business of making lives better and give gifts to enhance living situations," (2016, pers. comm., 13 October).

Although the goods were allegedly provided to enhance people's lives, they created an expectation for gifts among Seychellois. This is explained by Senior Foreign Affairs official Ralph Agrippine:

> "…gifting has been a feature of our political culture and whenever people attend a rally or a meeting, they expect to receive a consumer good," (2016, pers. comm., 26 September).

Examples of vote influencing by the ruling party allegedly include: a government truck delivering a 32-inch TV to the home of a Parti Lepep activist and a case of three high ranking army officials brainwashing the coast guards that if the opposition won the 2015 Presidential

[556] Revealed in interviews to the researcher, who also observed this preferential coverage on the national TV.
[557] Vociferous (sometimes offensive) criticisms of the old regime in 2016 by ordinary Seychellois, can be viewed on Facebook.

race, they would close down the army (Gervais Henri[558] 2016, pers. comm., 20 September). Two of these army officers were convicted on the eve of the 2016 elections, while the military chaplain escaped conviction. In the first case of its kind, the Seychelles Constitutional Court, on 6 September 2016, found four individuals - two high-ranking military officers Major Simon Dine and Colonel Clifford Roseline, a school head-teacher Beryl Botsoie, and businessman James Lesperance - guilty of illegal practices during the 2015 presidential election[559] (*SNA* 2016). The court ordered the removal of their names from the voters' register, thereby disqualifying them from voting for five years. Although the penalties were not harsh, these convictions of ruling party supporters on the eve of the National Assembly elections demonstrated an independent judiciary to the public, and made them realise the ruling party was not infallible. Seychelles also had not had a corruption investigation nor a conviction till then as an Anti-Corruption Commission established in 2016 by former President Michel only started receiving complaints in April 2017.

The opposition formed a coalition of parties, Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS), to contest the 2016 National Assembly elections. History was created as, for the first time since the return to multiparty elections in 1993, the opposition alliance, LDS, won a majority, defeating the ruling party. LDS received 30,444 votes winning 19 seats, while Parti Lepep with 30,218 votes received 14 seats (Electoral Commission 2016, p. 23). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Electoral Observation Mission (2016) noted a lack of confidence in the Electoral Commission of Seychelles (ECS) by the opposition and civil society based upon the manner Commissioners were appointed and their perceived political affiliations. In addition, the voters' register was not updated by removing deceased voters meaning it may have a high number of obsolete entries creating the implausibly high figure of 71,932 registered voters in a population of 93,000. Further, several forms of voter identification created risk of multiple voting; and lastly, election advertisements were only published in the state owned media. ECS noted the impact of several court verdicts on their work, including the Constitutional Court's ruling in Dhanjee vs ECS, that applicants be afforded more time to correct their nomination papers (Electoral Commission 2016, p. 14).[560] But the opposition had won, despite the inequities.

[558] Member of the National Assembly in 2016.
[559] Charges against the military's Chaplain Deacon Louis Agathine, and the Chairman of the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority Captain David Savy, were dropped (*SNA* 2016).
[560] In previous elections, the ECS did not have to contend with numerous court rulings.

Two local entities observed the NA elections: the Association for Rights Information & Democracy (ARID), and the Citizens Democracy Watch. While the observations and concerns of the local entities were similar to their international counterparts, their existence boosted the perception that rights and freedoms were being freely exercised in Seychelles, and that the government was willing to be transparent and accountable.[561]

The opposition's election victory was celebrated with hooting cars hoisting party banners, music, and a victory rally with people saying they had such a celebration after a very long time as people finally felt free.[562] Former President Mancham[563] displayed elation at this result and watched all broadcasts of the new National Assembly sittings, even though he was recovering from a stroke. He passed away in January 2017. Michel announced his decision to retire in the aftermath of this loss and Vice-President Danny Faure was sworn in as President in October 2016. The victory heralded a new era for Seychelles as President Faure had to make decisions in consultation with the opposition.

Electoral authoritarianism was unable to persist in the 2015 and 2016 elections in Seychelles due to social media options, a freer society, independent judiciary and the reluctance of the military to interfere in elections due to their decreased size and role. This does not mean the elections were wholly free and fair as misuse of state resources by the incumbent ruling party infringed the IPU Criteria on elections. The liberal elements of political society combining forces with the emerging independent civil society filled citizens with hope. People voted to remove the regime that dominated politics for almost 40 years, despite receiving 'gifts' from the ruling party. The situation in Seychelles aligns with Linz and Stepan (1996), as well as Doorenspleet's (2006) assertion that civil society can ultimately remove a dictatorship. The jubilant victory celebrations of the LDS filled Seychelles with hopes of freedom and true democracy. The demise of authoritarianism in Seychelles through the withdrawal of the old guard also offers a beacon of light for the other two case studies, Fiji and the Maldives. Instead of wasting resources on a security, clientele and patronage system to safeguard power for the autocrats, the citizens need to unite to make the authoritarian regime give up power

[561] In interviews with the author, political leaders, such as Ramkalawan and Mancienne, found that the local observers were a positive development because their presence was evidence of an emerging independent civil society (see section 6.5.4).

[562] A resident of Bougainville, Mahé, Seychelles, told the researcher that they had restrictions on freedom of expression until then. The spontaneous loud music during the day and night symbolised newfound freedom.

[563] The researcher met and talked with Mancham for over an hour on 27 September 2016 at his residence in Glacis, Seychelles. Mancham felt it was important to talk to the researcher, although he could not give a formal interview as he had not fully recovered from the stroke.

peacefully. This is the lesson that Seychelles, once the world's smallest autocracy, now a budding democracy, holds for autocratic regimes elsewhere.

6.6.2 Seychelles' progress towards democratisation after the 2016 elections

The 2016 election saw the rise of a new era for Seychelles with the demise of an electoral autocracy and the rise of a fledgling democracy. The opposition challenged Michel's decision to 'pass the baton' to Faure, saying that a new Presidential election should be held. Through their majority in the National Assembly, they were able to amend the law and now the President cannot appoint a new president, rather, new elections must be held within 90 days of the office becoming vacant. The LDS held peaceful demonstrations in 2018 and 2019 calling for fresh presidential elections. In 2017, President Faure removed June 5 – 'Liberation Day' (the date of the coup) as a public holiday. As Faure represented the generation after the coup, it was easier for him to initiate change. The National Assembly also established a Committee on Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity chaired by Opposition Leader Ramkalawan, to settle past political divisions since the 1977 coup d'état. It received 265 complaints on the acquisition of land, illegal detention, loss of business and murder (*SNA* 2017). It focused on human rights abuses. Several key people were called to give testimonies, including former President Michel in December 2019.[564] A Land Compensation Tribunal received claims until June 2020, about land misappropriated between 1977 and 1993. Dealing with past acts of injustice and corruption will assist Seychelles in achieving a participatory, accountable and sustainable democracy.[565]

Seychelles has also been progressing on the economic front. Seychelles' unsustainable national debt levels from the 1990s had been improving under Michel (see section 6.5.3). It dropped to 60% of GDP in 2018, which, according to the IMF, was attributable to economic reforms and strong tourism earnings (*SNA* 2018c). Seychelles' ranking in the global corruption index[566] has been continuously improving: from 40 in 2015, it moved up to 28 out

[564] The Committee's work resulted in legislation being enacted in 2018 for the creation of a Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity, which has been receiving testimonies and further complaints.
[565] However, it appears unlikely that past leaders will be prosecuted for atrocities during single party rule because Michel retired in October 2016 and René passed away in February 2019.
[566] See Corruptions Perception Index 2018, https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018, viewed 31 January 2019. Seychelles ranked 28 out of 180 countries with 1 being the least corrupt and 180 being the most corrupt. Maldives ranked 124 and thus is regarded as a highly corrupt country. Fiji was not included in the countries list. The least corrupt country, ranked 1, was Denmark and the most corrupt country, ranked 180, was Somalia.

of 180 countries in 2018. Coincidentally, the country with the worst rating is Seychelles' closest neighbour Somalia. This is a great improvement for Seychelles which was a well-known destination for money laundering during single party rule. In 2020, Seychelles launched further anti-money laundering strategies to comply with the requirements of the EU, which had added Seychelles to their blacklist on harmful tax regimes (*SNA* 2020a).

Seychelles has been utilising its strategic location to maintain defence relations with democratic nations. In November 2018, Seychelles conducted joint training exercises with the French military to combat illicit drug trafficking (*SNA* 2018d) and received grants from the US for cooperation on maritime security and combatting illicit drugs (*SNA* 2018e). Furthermore, India provided a $68 million grant for building a new police station and government offices[567] (*SNA* 2018f). Seychelles has regular military exercises with France and India. Interestingly, Seychelles withdrew its candidate, former tourism minister Alain St Ange, for the post of secretary general of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in May 2017, following unverified demands by the AU (Lawrence 2019). This further demonstrates that Seychelles, being a vulnerable microstate, does not want to antagonise any strong country or international organisation.

Democratisation reforms also gained momentum. A major prosecution was achieved by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2018 when its former official was jailed for eight years (*SNA* 2018g). The Human Rights Commission began operations in March 2019 and received 32 complaints over a year (*SNA* 2020b). But since President Faure is from the former ruling party, key official positions are still retained by loyalists of the previous authoritarian government. This is revealed by Faure's appointment of Colonel Clifford Roseline, a loyalist soldier in René's dictatorship since 1978, as the new chief of the SPDF,[568] who succeeded the loyalist Payet in January 2019 (State House 2018).

---

[567] Seychelles' continued need for the strategic protection of a major power saw Faure sign the deal for a military base on Assumption Island with India, who also gave them a Dornier aircraft and $100 million defence-related credit in July 2018 (Chaudhury 2018). However, the project stalled because the LDS opposition announced it would not ratify it (Saberin 2018a). The opposition had a parliamentary majority and could block projects.

[568] Use of Seychelles Peoples' Defence Forces (SPDF) was remarkable as the name was supposed to have changed to Seychelles Defences Force (SDF) (see section 6.5.6). This appointment raises questions if the army truly reformed or were previous status quo maintained.

Seychelles was not devastated health wise by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, as the ocean safeguarded the small, dispersed population[569] from uncontrolled infection. However, the microstate's revenue suffered due to their high dependency on tourism. To economise, the Presidential and Legislative elections were held together from 22-24 October 2020. Ramkalawan was elected President with 54.9% votes in the 2020 elections, and his LDS coalition also won the majority of seats in the National Assembly (*SNA* 2020c). The opposition is thus controlling executive power for the first time after 43 years since the 1977 coup.

6.7 Conclusion

Authoritarianism developed in Seychelles due to several deficiencies at independence in 1976, which allowed René to plan and execute his coup a year later in 1977. While a prime factor was the lack of an armed force to protect the elected President Mancham's government, support for René's coup is linked to the islands' colonial legacy of being settled by the French with numerous, mainly African, slaves. Following British takeover in 1811, slavery ended during colonial autocratic rule. But stark inequality remained between the minority French landowning group, and the majority Creole, which was manipulated by René to justify and acquire support for his coup from ordinary Seychellois, and African nations. Democracy was easily toppled in Seychelles because a significant proportion of citizens did not believe in it, and supported the post-coup regime. Authoritarian regime types that arose in post-independence Seychelles are: single-party personal dictatorship, and competitive authoritarian rule.

René overcame the lack of capacity in small island nations to carry out coups with Tanzania's military assistance to rapidly create an armed force. René's portrayal of the poverty-stricken Creoles as marginalised, and needing liberation from white oppression, gave a veneer of legitimacy for Tanzania's illicit military training of Seychellois as assistance for liberation, rather than interference in a nation's sovereignty. The political-military relations of Seychelles' army aligned with Janowitz's concepts of authoritarian-personal control and authoritarian-mass party control. The soldiers were instilled with socialist ideology which

569 Less than 20 Seychellois were infected with COVID-19 by August 2020. However, after the borders reopened, visiting seafarers in quarantine saw the infected numbers climb to 136. At the time of writing there had been no COVID-19 deaths. (viewed 29 August 2020, http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/13440/Seychelles+sees++new+cases+of+COVID).

was also indoctrinated amongst teenagers through a compulsory two-year National Youth Service.

The return to multiparty elections in 1993 did not result in democratisation of the armed forces because leadership positions and political-military relations remained unchanged. However, Seychelles' worsening economic situation compelled René's loyalist successor, President Michel, to continue with democratisation reforms to secure IMF assistance. Through CMR reforms, political-military relations have been changing to Janowitz's democratic model whereby soldiers are apolitical and subservient to civilian authority. From the three case studies, Seychelles is the only country that successfully implemented CMR reforms and, by 2016, reduced its military to less than half its peak size.

René's dictatorship was supported through aid from the Soviet Union and other socialist nations. René had personal control over the army, state bodies, and the ruling SPPF party. A patronage system nurturing loyalists, control over state institutions, as well as distribution of social welfare benefits, sustained René's personalist dictatorship till 1993, then his electoral autocracy till 2004, and Michel's competitive authoritarian regime till 2015. Opposition political parties and independent CSOs, including unions, were not allowed under single-party rule. Economic society, rule of law, and bureaucracy were controlled by the state. René's dictatorship was maintained with brutal repression of opposition, and suppression of civil and political rights, including detentions, disappearances, torture, exile and murder. In contrast, under Michel, a slight easing of restrictions allowed freedoms to opposition politicians and civil society, paving the way for a return to transition to democracy.

The collapse of the Soviet Union forced René to return Seychelles to multiparty elections in 1993, to gain favour with new western aid donors. But the regime remained authoritarian, albeit electoral, as the ruling party retained significant control. This meant that Linz and Stepan's (1996) arenas of democracy were still being undermined, including the civil and political societies. But electoral authoritarianism allowed the opposition limited spaces to exercise freedoms in a constrained manner, through protests, legal actions and media advocacy. Eventually, their united actions, aided by a freer media, as well as accountable statutory bodies and judiciary, led to the electoral loss of the ruling party in 2016. Similar to the Maldives, the case of Seychelles demonstrates the importance of civil and political societies working together to remove authoritarianism. International observation of

Seychelles' elections since 1993 by organisations such as the Commonwealth have had a positive influence, as it pressured the judiciary and electoral commission to display neutrality.

The final vestiges of autocracy are being removed after the opposition LDS coalition's victory in the 2016 and 2020 elections. The reform of laws and institutions for democratisation, that had commenced in 1991, has been continuing since 2016. Seychelles' transition to democracy now complies with Dahl's (1998) conditions for democracy as its security forces are under civilian control; there is no strong foreign power against democracy; and a majority prefer the democratic political system. The next chapter draws conclusions by comparing and analysing lessons from the three case studies, Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

> *"Dictatorships don't always die when the dictator leaves office… long after… powerful networks of regime loyalists can remain behind and can attempt to strangle their nascent democracies," (Nasheed 2012).*

This PhD thesis addresses the research question on the anomaly of how authoritarian regimes developed in the small island states of Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles after independence. The above quotation from Nasheed, following his removal as President after the 2012 coup in the Maldives, poignantly sums up the findings of this thesis, about how powerful elite networks created by authoritarian rulers protected their interests, and created obstacles in the transition to democracy, ultimately leading to coups and, later, authoritarian elections.

This research is important because it identifies reasons why newer types of authoritarianism developed in small island states. In turn this analysis can point to ways for SIDS to prevent authoritarian trends and to develop sustainable democratisation. Review of the literature revealed the silence in international databases about authoritarianism in small island nations, as they tend to exclude countries with populations of less than one or two million. This omission obscures the fact that small island states can also be at risk of authoritarianism. This research contributes towards filling the gap in the literature created by the non-inclusion of these small countries in some international data sets and the consequent limited analysis in this domain.

The practices of participatory democracy and active citizenry are grossly undermined under authoritarian rule regardless of whether it takes the form of a dictatorship, single party, or electoral authoritarianism. This is demonstrated in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, the only three nations out of 28 independent small island states with populations of less than 1.5 million, where usurpers established lasting governments in the aftermath of coup-type events. Key civil and political rights were suppressed in all three. These three countries deviated from the norm that most small island nations are democracies and are thus anomalous. Indeed, Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles are examples of extreme deviant cases.

The multiple-case study methodology was utilised for this research, using the descriptive case study approach. In addition to drawing on the secondary literature, due to gaps therein,

notably in relation to events in the last decade, it was essential to conduct field trips in all three countries. Qualitative research methods were utilised, including direct observations and open-ended interviews of respondents, the majority of whom are key actors in politics, the public service, military and civil society. Primary documentary sources and empirical data from the three nations, international organisations, global non-government organisations and media were also drawn on extensively. Wherever possible, information was triangulated to verify accuracy.

Authoritarian regimes developed in the three nations post-independence in large part because democracy had not yet been consolidated. Notwithstanding the introduction of multiparty elections by the colonisers in the lead-up to independence, the transition to democracy only commenced after independence in Fiji in 1970 and Seychelles in 1976. In the Maldives, the transition phase to democracy did not commence until 43 years after independence in 2008 when, due to popular uprisings and global pressure, multiparty elections were introduced. It appears that being former colonies of the leading Western democracy, Great Britain, did not provide lessons of precedence as, more than 40 years after independence, democracy has still not been consolidated in the three nations. Further, their transitions to democracy have been far from smooth or linear. Rather, they included waves of authoritarianism.

At different periods post-independence, the three nations were perceived as democracies because they met the minimal benchmark of multiparty elections. Nevertheless, deficiencies continued to exist in the functioning of civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy and economic society. These are the five interacting and mutually reinforcing arenas for democratic consolidation identified by Linz and Stepan (1996). Fiji is currently under multiparty electoral authoritarian rule, whereas Seychelles and the Maldives are in phases of transition from electoral authoritarian to democratic rule. The five arenas of democratic consolidation were undermined during authoritarian and competitive authoritarian rule because they were controlled and manipulated by the respective regimes' laws, policies and actions. In each case, compliance was enforced by the compromised state and its beneficiaries who, being allies of the authoritarian leader, were nurtured through patron-client relationships which are the bedrock of durable authoritarian rule.

Following is a comparison of the findings in the three case studies, based on the five thematic areas that are the analytical framework for this thesis: legacies of precolonial and colonial

political history; authoritarian regime types post-independence, evolution of the armed forces, the nature and role of civil society, as well as the conduct of elections. This includes comparing and contrasting the diverse factors contributing to coups, authoritarianism and the eventual transition back towards democracy. Common trends, but also distinctive differences, identified in the three case studies are examined for additional lessons. This study vindicates the value and importance of research on authoritarianism in small island states. Limitations to the scope of this research allow identification of potential avenues for further research. Finally, key recommendations are presented.

7.1 Thematic comparison

7.1.1 Precolonial and colonial political history

An examination of the pre-independence political histories of Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles revealed autocratic rule, including tribal wars and chiefly rivalries. At times, these resulted in usurpation of power in precolonial Fiji, and periodic monarchical tussles for power involving coups and counter-coups in precolonial Maldives. Fiji experienced aristocratic rule in precolonial times. This persisted parallel to the country's transition to electoral representative government prior to independence. Although the chiefly system was retained, supreme control over the government and the military was exercised by the British Queen's representative – thus it was a colonial autocracy. Precolonial Maldives was under monarchical rule, which continued under British colonialism because the Maldives was self-administered, whereby political power and military control were still exercised by monarchical and other elite families. The Maldives transitioned to electoral authoritarian government prior to independence. Seychelles did not have precolonial rule and traditional political-military elites because they were a French settler colony later taken over by Britain. However, the settlers themselves came from autocratic nations. This regime type was also a colonial autocracy due to supreme power vested in the Queen's representative.

The British followed no uniform policy for decolonisation in the three countries except for introducing universal suffrage in the lead-up to independence. The undemocratic nature of politics during colonialism, and the resultant deficiencies of democracy, contributed to the emergence of various types of authoritarian regimes after independence. Unlike western European countries where revolutions for democratic ideals set states on a path towards

eventual democracy, there was little popular struggle for democracy in these island nations. Instead, prior to independence, universal suffrage, institutions and mechanisms of democracy were introduced by the colonial power.

Colonial legacies that prevented a genuine democratic transition post-independence include, in Fiji, the colonisers leaving behind a political system and society divided on racial grounds and an army dominated by one race, both of which contributed to future coups. In the Maldives, Britain did not introduce a plural multiparty system during colonisation, which meant that the monarchical authoritarian rule of the sultanate translated to one-man rule. This morphed into an absolute one-man dictatorship after independence. In Seychelles, the legacy of slavery and subsequent poverty of a majority Creole population of African descent, was manipulated by René to justify and acquire support for the 1977 coup.

This research found that being a British colony did not result in an increased understanding, nor appreciation, of democratic ideals by the majority of ordinary citizens in the three case studies. Parliamentary institutions and electoral mechanisms were introduced and practiced in these British colonies, and competition also occurred where political parties were permitted. However, as these were practiced in the confines of a British autocracy, it provided a poor role model of controlling and manipulating elections to ensure that particular elite groups remained privileged, and to delay equal rights of commoners. These nations had autocratic rule in both precolonial (except Seychelles) and colonial times, then as colonies they were initiated into authoritarian elections by Britain.

7.1.2 Authoritarian regime types post-independence

The categorisation of regime types for various periods of rule was particularly useful for this thesis as it displays that the three nations had a long history of different modes of authoritarian rule. Electoral governance prior to independence was subject to colonial restrictions and thus not democratic. The types of authoritarian regimes that emerged at various times after independence in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles are:

- Fiji: civil-military coalition rule, competitive authoritarianism, personal/military hybrid rule, electoral autocracy, and electoral authoritarianism.
- The Maldives: one-man personal rule and electoral autocracy.

- Seychelles: single-party personal rule, electoral autocracy, and competitive authoritarianism.

Authoritarian regime features of coercion and control by rulers are evident in the three countries where the military was used to suppress dissent in undemocratic times. Other features were manipulation of the media, judiciary and 'independent' institutions, and use of gifts, government benefits, employment and other rewards to get support, or at least acquiescence. Failing that, dissidents were purged, imprisoned, exiled or, in extreme cases, killed.

At independence, Fiji and Seychelles transitioned to multiparty electoral democracy but did not consolidate democracy because powerful citizens and elite groups did not utilise parliamentary processes and institutions to address grievances, but instead planned and facilitated regime changes by force through coups. Substantive population groups supported the post-coup regimes for ideological reasons, or economic and material gains, thus bestowing a degree of legitimacy on the illegal post-coup regimes. A significant proportion of elites stood to gain from the illegal changes of government and therefore, instead of aiding democratic consolidation, they supported reversion to varying levels of authoritarianism.

Disinformation was employed to garner the public's support for post-coup regimes. In Fiji, this included fear-mongering tactics that Indians would control both the economy and the government. This propaganda assisted the 1987 and 2000 coup-makers in rallying ordinary Fijians. In the Maldives, the rhetoric that Nasheed would favour Christianity provoked pro-Islam sentiments and whipped up hatred for Nasheed who was portrayed as *laadheeni,* or anti-Islam. In Seychelles, Mancham was characterised as being in league with western elites and not genuine about improving the lives of poor Creoles. These tactics enabled the authoritarian rulers to gather support for their rule and acquire legitimacy. Thus, although there was electoral governance in these countries after independence, they had long periods of different types of both unelected and electoral authoritarian rule and comparatively short phases of transition to democracy.

7.1.3 Development of the armed forces and reform of civil military relations

Political-military relations directly affected the development of armed forces in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. The armed forces played a key role in both the installation and maintenance of authoritarian rule. After independence, political-military relations in Fiji were democratic due to civilian control over the military. However, this was undermined by the traditional aristocratic political-military relations of *turaga-bati* (chief-warrior) relations. Post-independence, the traditional relations between chiefs and warriors in Fiji, hindered the process of professionalisation of soldiers and diversification of their ethnic composition. The army was cultivated by high chiefs, and iTaukei encouraged to join for lucrative employment and overseas travels. The 1987 coup leader Rabuka, later as elected Prime Minister, nurtured relations with the military. Under democratic Prime Ministers relations with the military were ambivalent. The post-2006 coup Prime Minister Bainimarama promoted loyalists, but persecuted those perceived to be critical, independent thinkers. This demonstrates that Fiji's military was encouraged to develop personal loyalty to the leader post-independence, instead of the democratic values of apolitical professionalism.

In the Maldives, the aristocratic model of political-military relations was maintained under the post-independence dictatorships, whereby the soldiers transferred their loyalty to the President. Patron-client relationships were challenged after the transition to democracy commenced in 2008 because the elected democrat, President Nasheed, was ambivalent to the military. During democratisation, personal relations between the former dictator Gayoom and soldiers in the Maldives, impeded the process of professionalisation of soldiers. The post-2012 electoral autocratic President Yameen had personal control of the military and police, but his failure to cultivate them undermined the patron-client relationship.

In Seychelles, authoritarian-mass party control was ensured by socialist indoctrination under the post-coup dictator René who also created the army, with pivotal aid from Tanzania, to protect his regime. Socialism was indoctrinated through political education via the army, militias, compulsory National Youth Service and voluntary organisations to control the population. René's dictatorship was sustained by cultivating loyalists through an extensive patronage system. This was retained after the transition to multiparty elections by his loyalist deputy Michel who became President in 2004. Traditional loyalties, as well as loyalties to the

socialist revolution and its leaders in Seychelles, thwarted the professionalisation of soldiers. Seychelles is still trying to dismantle the entrenched legacy of authoritarianism.

The Maldives' experienced an attempted invasion, which was used to justify the creation of a relatively large army. Fiji's army grew due to lucrative UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, which created a mercenary-like attitude in soldiers who view conflict in the Middle East as an income opportunity. Paradoxically, the peacekeepers have become the instigator of coups and repression in their own country. Fiji and, in recent times, the Maldives face internal, not external, security threats – Fiji from its own military and the Maldives from suppressed political aspirants and Islamist extremists. Conversely, Seychelles faces external threats from piracy and other illegal activities in their maritime area. Lack of external threats means that armies have been misused by coup-makers, and authoritarian leaders, in order to entrench their rule.

Increased military size contributed to authoritarianism in Fiji. The Maldives already was an authoritarian regime and the military's growth was in response to coup attempts to overthrow the dictator. Consequently, the larger military falling directly under the command of the President led to its misuse. In Seychelles, the army was created after the 1977 coup to protect the dictator and safeguard the aims of the regime's socialist ideology. In all three countries, under authoritarianism, or in the aftermath of coup-type events, loyalist soldiers received benefits. Patron-client relationships generally, and with the military in particular, sustained authoritarian regimes in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles. In all three countries, armed forces are considered a good employment opportunity as soldiers are well paid and receive overseas training opportunities. The lack of better employment opportunities is another reason that soldiers remained in the army (even if they were unhappy with the regime), and also explains why there is opposition to downsizing the military in these nations.

In Fiji and Seychelles, the development of the police was undermined in the aftermath of coups, whereas those in the military received preferential treatment and enhanced professional development, as well as lucrative career opportunities in other arms of the government. The morale and authority of the police were also diminished through usurpation of their roles, responsibilities, and authority by the military. Conversely, in the Maldives, the police were a new creation in 2004, in preparation for democratisation, and comprised of former soldiers. The result was a confused division of labour among the security forces

whereby the police were prone to behave in a soldierly manner, and the soldiers continued to undertake policing tasks which were part of their traditional roles.

Civil Military Relations (CMR) reforms produced mixed results in the three nations. In Fiji, defence reviews were undertaken in the aftermath of the 1987 and 2000 coups. The 2004 and 2005 defence reviews commissioned by the Qarase government identified that Fiji did not need a large military because it did not face external threats and that the government's expenditure on peacekeeping made such missions a liability for Fiji. The last review recommended the military to be reduced to less than half its size, and for the military to be apolitical and under civilian authority. But the report came to nought after Qarase was ousted in the 2006 military coup. Post-coup militarisation of the Fiji government, and current occupation of prime ministerial and other cabinet positions by the military, has dashed hopes for CMR reforms.

In the Maldives, although a separate police force was created in 2004, legislation to guide the police and army's work was only created prior to the first democratic elections in 2008. Although changes were made in law, practices did not change on the ground. Allegiance to the former dictator Gayoom by the police force, comprised of former soldiers, led to mutiny by a faction, and Nasheed's premature removal from power in 2012. Reform of the police recommenced under Solih's government and is ongoing.

In Seychelles, although democratic reforms resulted in the constitution being changed in 1993, the military remained an instrument of the former dictator's party. But dire economic circumstances forced President Michel to implement structural reforms required by donors, which led to professionalisation of the military and reduction by more than half its former size to 450 soldiers by 2016. Out of the three case studies, only the microstate Seychelles successfully implemented CMR reforms. The lesson it provides is that CMR reform is a lengthy process which can take many years to complete. Furthermore, democracy requires subservience to civilian democratic rule, as opposed to individual leaders, which has not yet been achieved in Fiji.

7.1.4 Civil society

United action by civil society and the political society was crucial for democratisation in the Maldives and Seychelles. Conversely, a division in civil society in Fiji post-2006 coup made it ineffective in producing mass public demands for the removal of authoritarianism. In Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, the general populace was intimidated by state repression such as - arrests, dismissal from jobs, and other forms of victimisation. Civil society also came to accept the regime's line that, as a professional, sporting, medical, public service, religious, socio-economic, environmental, or community welfare organisation, they must be apolitical.

Despite a pervading climate of fear, some individuals and organisations spoke out against injustice, representing the silent majority who were afraid or unwilling to do so. In Fiji, the brunt of advocacy for civil and political rights fell on middle class personalities and a few civil society organisations (CSOs) after the coups. In the Maldives and Seychelles, rights-based CSOs were virtually non-existent. Individuals and the opposition in Seychelles risked their safety and welfare to agitate for a return to democracy after the coups. Some had to go into exile or face permanent incarceration which entailed risks to their life. In the Maldives, advocacy for democracy started towards the late 1990s with a few individuals engaging in activities regarded as dissent and consequently being subjected to torture, incarceration and exile. As a result, all three countries have experienced continuous emigration of highly qualified people.

In all three nations, during periods of electoral autocracy, segments of the population displayed ambivalence towards government repression and achievement of fully-fledged democracy. It is a cause for concern that many people do not have high expectations of the governments they elected. Yet, the growth of civil society in the Maldives and Seychelles over the past two decades is a healthy development for democratisation. In contrast, the efforts by the Fiji government to restrict advocacy by active CSOs after the 2009 abrogation of the constitution is evidence of democratic backsliding there.

Civil society faced challenges under post-independence authoritarianism. Even during periods of multiparty elections, the Freedom House status for all three nations was only Partly Free, meaning that each was still in transition to democracy. National processes such as constitution-making failed to resolve problems in the three countries because progressive

agendas were either not implemented properly, not allowed to be implemented, or because the people in leadership positions remained the same as previous regimes meaning that, in reality, little changed.

In all three case studies, religion was manipulated in the aftermath of coups and under authoritarian rule. In Fiji, the Methodist Church was utilised before and after the 1987 and 2000 coups to propagate indigenous ethno-nationalism and racism against Indo-Fijians. Conversely, the Methodist church was restricted and purportedly depoliticised by Bainimarama after the 2006 coup in Fiji. In the Maldives, opposition politicians portrayed the former democratic President Nasheed as anti-Islam to generate hatred for him. The current Maldivian government continues to face danger from opposition politicians provoking citizens through Islamic extremist rhetoric, and also from its youth joining *jihad*. In Seychelles, the church was removed from school names and administration after the coup, while religious pictures were removed from school classrooms and replaced with portraits of the dictator René.

However, despite suppression of political rights under authoritarianism, a segment of civil society in the three nations has been resolute in their efforts to challenge unjust laws and leaders. In the case of Seychelles and the Maldives, a united civil society was able to gradually weaken the support base for authoritarianism. Civil and political leaders campaigned for democracy and, ultimately, a large proportion of civil society voted for democratic change. This indicates that while fear of reprisals from the regime prevented the wider civil society from displaying support for democracy openly, they nevertheless willingly supported democracy through the secrecy of the ballot. In Fiji, civil society was divided after the 2006 coup, as the regime was purportedly against corruption and racism, in contrast to previous coup perpetrators. Not surprisingly, the divided civil society, including middle-class professionals, has been unable to muster a popular movement for the full restoration of democracy, especially since the regime has strong backing from the military. These findings concur with Linz and Stepan's (1996) theory that it is necessary for the civil and political society to work together for democratisation to occur.

7.1.5 Elections

The post-coup governments established in Fiji, Seychelles and the Maldives resembled the categories of single-party rule, personalist rule, and most recently, multiparty electoral autocracies. The authoritarian leaders in these three states embraced multiparty elections to legitimise their rule with both domestic and international audiences. The Maldives' 2013 elections and Fiji's 2014 elections were authoritarian because the executive and the judiciary were able to interfere in its conduct and manipulate the process to ensure the incumbents would win. The executive controlled key appointments to the judiciary, electoral offices, security forces and state-owned media. They were thus able to manipulate the dissemination of information, as well as rules to contest elections, and reduce the amount of space and time given to other political actors, meaning that the playing field was in favour of the incumbents. Fiji's 2014 elections allowed the post-coup autocratic regime to transition to an electoral autocracy. The Maldives became an electoral autocracy after the 2013 and 2014 elections, which returned the autocratic old guard to power. Electoral authoritarianism was unable to persist in the 2015 and 2016 elections in Seychelles due to social media options, a freer society, an independent judiciary and the reluctance of the military to interfere in elections due to their decreased size and role. Seychelles, after 39 years, had returned to transition to democracy.

The mutually reinforcing role of the civil and political societies can lead to democratisation through change of leadership via elections. United action by civil society and political society led to the end of electoral authoritarian rule through electoral defeat of the incumbent regime, and the opposition coalition winning the Maldives (2018) and Seychelles (2016) elections. Conversely, divisions after the 2006 coup made Fiji's civil society ineffective in producing mass public support for the removal of authoritarianism and Bainimarama's FijiFirst party retained power after the 2018 elections. Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles have transitioned from different types of authoritarian rule to authoritarian electoral regimes over the past three decades. The 2018 authoritarian elections in the Maldives and Fiji revealed the use of techniques of electoral manipulation by rulers to control electoral outcomes. Independent institutions such as the judiciary, electoral bodies, and media, as well as the armed forces, were manipulated and utilised in favour of the incumbent government.

The pseudo democracy under electoral authoritarianism allowed the opening of limited spaces for civil and political societies (non-elites or opposition) to exercise liberal democratic rights in a restrained manner, including engaging in protests, making speeches and media campaigns. Rights-based advocacy CSOs also became more vocal. Maximising the opportunities provided by these constrained spaces enabled the creation of alliances and strategies which ultimately led to the electoral defeat of Parti Lepep in the 2016 Seychelles National Assembly election and of Yameen in the Maldives 2018 Presidential elections. The FijiFirst win in the 2018 Fiji general elections was with a bare majority of 50.02%. Thus, electoral authoritarian multiparty regimes provide a more conducive environment for achievement of democracy, than a full authoritarian military, single party or no party regime. Politics requires financial resources and networking, which means the elite, chiefly and/or monarchical families of the past, are best equipped to take part in multiparty electoral competition. Therefore, although in theory democracy promotes human rights with the core principles of equality and non-discrimination, in reality, the high costs of political competition mean that mainly the well-off participate and a level-playing field is virtually non-existent. Patronage, nepotism, personalisation of politics, and the blurring of lines between politics and the bureaucracy (as well as the military) are common problems, magnified in small island nations. These hamper democratisation which requires impartial appointments of public servants.

Similar to many other nations, electoral processes in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles have largely been driven by elites and professionals, although the ultimate power to change the government lies with the general population. The election outcomes of the three nations reveal that the ordinary voters can choose to favour democracy or to favour authoritarianism, ethno-nationalism, and religious fundamentalism or a combination thereof. But the citizens make these voting choices in reaction to strong rhetoric by political and civil leaders. Thus, for a change towards democracy to be successful, it is essential for both the elites and the ordinary citizens to believe in its merits.

As exemplified by the Maldives and Seychelles, for an authoritarian regime to be toppled it is necessary for the broader civil society and political society to work together – and for all significant organisations and individuals to support democratic means of rule and governmental change. Consolidation of democracy is obstructed, not just by the vestiges of coups and dictatorships, but also by the absence of exemplary leadership precedents. In the

Maldives and Seychelles, government leaders were accustomed to past practices of excessive power and direct decision making through the President's prerogative. Moreover, nepotism or direct presidential rule are facilitated as the constitution still endows the President with a great deal of power. Post-coup leaders in Fiji sidelined parliamentary processes of consultative decision-making and ruled directly by imposing promulgated decrees. Democracy is still vulnerable in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles because past coup leaders and dictators have not been prosecuted for illegal seizures of power and alleged human rights violations, and continue to be held in high esteem by both elite and commoner supporters.

Despite leaders of the three countries displaying greater affinity towards authoritarian nations rather than democracies at different times under non-democratic rule, their governments found it necessary to invite international observers to monitor their elections in the new millennium. The Commonwealth and the EU have sent international observers to elections in the Maldives, although they did not send monitors to the 2018 Presidential elections, due to Yameen's brutal repressive leadership. Seychelles received observers from the Commonwealth and the AU in their 2016 election who generally found the elections were credible. Fiji invited country representatives to form the Multinational Observer Group (MOG) to monitor the post-2006 coup elections of 2014 and 2018. Overall, the international observer groups tended to focus narrowly on the conduct of elections on the day and tallying of votes, which led to most elections being pronounced as credible. But these observer groups did produce detailed reports on discrepancies and shortcomings, as well as providing recommendations for improvements in future elections. It was found that for the three case studies generally, both the media and the government highlight the declaration of credibility and give negligible publicity to recommendations for improvement. This shows that the priority for governments was to have elections deemed credible, mainly because this is vital for securing western donor aid. Their lack of concern about improving future elections could be addressed if more stringent observation criteria are adopted, whereby issues that need improvement can be factored in as part of the declaration of credibility, discussed in the later section on recommendations.

7.2 Factors contributing to coups, authoritarianism and transition to democracy

This study shows that the execution of coups is directly linked to having armed forces of reasonable size. Therefore, most small island nations are democracies because they do not have an army of reasonable size and lack material resources to maintain a post-coup regime. Out of 28 independent small island nations with populations of less than 1.5 million, 50% had militaries and the other 50% did not. Small island states with populations of less than 1.5 million do not need an army, as they are not capable of defending themselves from large-scale foreign invasions without assistance from larger countries. Post-coup regimes were more likely to be successfully established and sustained when coups were justified on ideological grounds which generated support from a significant proportion of the population. This support assists the regime to acquire legitimacy and deters interference by outside forces, such as powerful democratic nations whose sphere of influence they fall under in that region.

The armed forces – especially the senior ranks – tend to be beneficiaries of coups and in two countries, Fiji and Seychelles, the army was nurtured and given benefits, whereas the police were neglected. The army was given extra roles, and tended to take over some policing tasks. In the Maldives, soldiers were cultivated by the former dictator Gayoom. The police being former soldiers owed loyalty to Gayoom, and a faction of them was utilised by opposition politicians to force Nasheed out of power in 2012.

Another theme to resonate for the three countries is that the authoritarian ruler not only had loyalist supporters in the armed forces, traditional, political and business elites and a compromised bureaucracy, their agendas were also implemented by a submissive state. In all three nations, in the aftermath of coups or undemocratic action, the state bureaucracy continued to operate as normal and obeyed the instructions of the new regime that came into power through illegal means including the use of force. Only a few state officials resigned because their conscience would not allow them to work for an illegitimate regime. An autonomous bureaucracy is among Linz and Stepan’s (1996) requirements for democracy. This implies apolitical state bureaucrats who are nonpartisan and will uphold democratic principles and the sanctity of electoral parliamentary rule. State officials have no legal obligation to abide by an illegitimate regime’s rule. However, in small island nations with

limited resources and employment options, a job in the state – even with meagre salaries - is regarded as indispensable. Additionally, fear of reprisals through victimisation and prosecution, and also a belief by some employees in the ideology espoused by the coup-makers, makes them accept the regime's authority.

Under authoritarian rule in microstates such as Seychelles and the Maldives, the over-reliance on government for stable jobs and welfare benefits can create a situation of a divided society with regime supporters guaranteed to enjoy benefits and non-supporters feeling left out. Fiji is bigger than the other two nations and has relatively less dependence on government jobs. Yet Fiji also experienced bitter divisions based on government job allocations along racial and political allegiance lines. However, the impact was not as extreme as the other two nations due to availability of private sector employment. Nevertheless, discrimination and insecurity under authoritarian rule continued to be a major factor driving the emigration of skilled workforce in all three nations.

Unlike precolonial and colonial eras, when many small island territories were isolated from the rest of the world, they are highly influenced by world events in contemporary times. Geopolitical considerations play a crucial role in the success of coups and authoritarianism as well as a return to multiparty elections in small island nations. A key factor in coups, authoritarianism and transition to democracy in small island states is the moral, economic and financial support provided by larger nations, including training and development of armed forces. Factors such as the Cold War in the past, and China's global ambitions currently, have a great impact. Geopolitical support by a large undemocratic nation can make those seeking power in small island states bold enough to carry out coups or propagate authoritarianism and act in defiance of established democracies.

In Seychelles, the coup in 1977 was only possible because of military aid from socialist Tanzania who not only trained the initial coup makers, but also provided training for the creation of the Seychelles People's Liberation Army. In Fiji, the military grew from a mere 200 personnel at independence to 2,200 by 1986 due to recruitment for UN peacekeeping, mainly in Lebanon, from 1978. The experience acquired from peacekeeping equipped soldiers with the confidence and skills to carry out the 1987 coup, after which the military's size increased to over 6000. Rogue soldiers were involved in carrying out the 2000 civilian coup, and there was a military coup again in Fiji in 2006. In the Maldives, the deadliest coup

attempt was launched from sea in 1988 by prominent Maldivians abetted by the Sri Lankan terrorist organisation PLOTE, to remove Gayoom. To safeguard from future coups, the size and capability of the Maldives' military were increased exponentially. Segments of the security forces were complicit in the coup-type event in 2012 in the Maldives. The 2013 elections ushered in the tyrannical rule of electoral autocratic President Yameen, enforced through repression by the armed forces.

Although western democratic nations and organisations like the EU and the Commonwealth have condemned coups and subsequent unelected authoritarian rule, sanctions were the only definitive actions taken. Post-2006 coup, Fiji formed close relationships with countries like Indonesia and China, and similarly the Maldives under Yameen strengthened ties with China and Muslim majority nations that tend to have poor democracy and human rights records. In Fiji, the democratic geopolitical Pacific power Australia renewed Australia's assistance to Fiji's military after the coup leader Bainimarama legitimised his rule through election victories. Australia was undoubtedly motivated by countering the undue influence of the autocratic nation China on Pacific countries. Australia is a better role model for democratic aspirations.

During the transition to democracy phase, all three countries suffered a reversion to authoritarianism and/or electoral authoritarianism, and then eventually resumed agendas for democratisation. Their political leaders realised that their vulnerability as small nations with limited natural and financial resources made it difficult to sustain dictatorships. The collapse of the Soviet Union, global push towards democratisation, the world financial crisis of 2008, major impacts inflicted on island nations by climate change, the need for security protection from great powers, and the aid benevolence of western democratic nations, were all factors explaining why these small nations returned to multiparty electoral governance. Another factor was that a significant portion of their population appear to hold partnerships with larger democratic nations in high esteem, in part due to longstanding colonial ties. Small island nations need the support of larger nations to safeguard their territories. If democratic powers maintain a sphere of influence and provide geopolitical security, small nations are more likely to remain democracies and less likely to be wooed by undemocratic world powers.

The theories of prominent scholars were applied to the case studies in order to identify types of authoritarian rule through Perlmutter's (1981) definition, and assess how the military were

utilised by the rulers through Janowitz's (1975) models of political-military relations. The myriad forms of personal control wielded by dictators, as explained by Geddes (2004), were found in the rule of Gayoom (Maldives), René (Seychelles) and Bainimarama (Fiji). In a similar vein, Dahl (1998) emphasised the need for civilian control of the armed forces and a democratic culture, which were absent in the three nations, and contributed to authoritarian reversion there. Linz and Stepan's (1996) conditions of democracy, when applied to these small island states, show that challenges remain for state bureaucracy and rule of law, and that these can be rectified by united action on the part of civil and political societies to bring about a change for democratisation.

These theories are equally applicable for small nations because research on larger countries tend to focus on small units for assessment. The findings from the small-scale sample can be applied to larger conditions. The advantage of studying a small state is that it allows close observations and easier direct access to significant events and actors. In big countries, close observations could be for relatively few events or for a clearly defined geographical study area. When larger geographical areas, such as an entire large nation is covered, the results tend to be generalised rather than specific. The advantage of studying a small nation, therefore, is that results can be very specific.

7.3 Limitations of the research

The multiple case study approach produces comparative analytical data that are useful for policy-making. This PhD thesis focuses on three nations with different geographical, cultural, religious, ethnic and historical factors, that are located in different regions. It has analysed five principal thematic areas and various regimes that formed government over a period of more than 40 years after independence. However, the analysis of three countries under five themes covering such a lengthy period limited the detailed coverage of particular issues and events, in favour of a 'big picture' comparative approach to identify key commonalities and differences between the case studies, their relation to other SIDS and their relevance to theories depicting trends in developing countries more widely.

Another limitation was that the repression and censorship arising from extended periods of authoritarian rule, meant there were fewer primary and secondary sources on the Maldives,

and even more so Seychelles. Some official sources were classified and difficult to access. In addition, as the Maldives was under the repressive electoral autocratic rule of Yameen during most of the research project, it was a challenging task to organise a field trip to the nation. The researcher managed to visit the Maldives for a month to present a conference paper in 2017, but fear of reprisals meant that not as many people were interviewed as in the other case studies. It was not possible to interview any loyalist supporters of the autocratic President Yameen or the former President Gayoom. However, Yameen's regime was quite outspoken and therefore adequate information was collected from media reports.

7.4 Avenues for further research

Authoritarianism in small island nations is an under-researched topic. Relative to larger countries, there is less comparative qualitative and quantitative data in international databases available about SIDS. This research recommends that scholars and international organisations include small island states in any study on worldwide trends. SIDS research data facilitate insightful comparisons between SIDS as well as with larger countries.

There is insufficient comparative data on the SIDS case studies. Coups and militarisation in Fiji, as well as Fiji's post-colonial history, have been extensively written about. However, there are only a handful of scholars from the Maldives although their number has slowly started growing. The predicament is worse for Seychelles due to a lack of scholarly writings from Seychellois born there. Authoritarianism adversely impacts on academic freedom, thus in Fiji and the Maldives some researchers moved overseas in the aftermath of coups to avoid persecution. More research on small states is needed to enrich the secondary literature. In particular, there is a dearth of local researchers who would be best placed to access valuable historical archives, traditional knowledge and contemporary sources inaccessible to outsiders who do not have adequate grasp of local language and culture. Research by locals provides alternative viewpoints that may not be present in Western scholarly accounts.

7.5 Recommendations

Recommendations arising from the research for the elites, military and police, election observers and international organisations are presented below. These could assist in achieving sustainable democratisation and reduce chances of a reversion to authoritarianism.

Military ideology and training need to be reformed to prevent the military from being susceptible to misuse by political elites. Soldiers feel compelled to obey orders for coups or other actions they may perceive as illegal, if they are issued as directives by their commander. Therefore, this could be partly addressed by removing the head of a state or a minister from the military commander position. Instead, a parliamentary committee with balanced representation could have oversight of military policy and appointment of high ranking military officers. Military oaths of loyalty need to uphold the constitution, as is the practice in many democracies, and not to a person.

Civilian control and monitoring of the military are essential for consolidation of democracy. To prevent future coups, greater professionalism could be inculcated in soldiers, including acceptance of civilian rule, support for stable political regimes and civilian control over the armed forces. These are derived from recommendations by CMR scholars, such as Feaver (1999).

Fiji and the Maldives could draw lessons from Seychelles and allow CMR reforms to downsize the military to an adequate size. Maintaining a large army of 2000-4000 suggests a desire by the political-military elite to interfere in governance. Small states of less than 1.5 million do not need an army as they are not capable of defending from large scale foreign invasions, and geopolitical alliances with dominant powers are sufficient for their protection from external threats as well as provision of disaster aid.

In comparison to Mauritius' paramilitary of 1 personnel per 433 residents, and Comoros military of 1 soldier per 1,600 residents, the three nations' armies were found to be too large with Fiji having 1 soldier per 257 residents, the Maldives having 1 soldier per 143 residents, and Seychelles having 1 soldier per 206 residents. It is recommended that Fiji and Seychelles reduce their military size by at least half, and the Maldives decrease its military size by two-

thirds, to bring them down to a per capita size comparable with Mauritius, which is a relatively stable and peaceful polity.

Fear of the military prevents people from fully exercising their freedom of expression and holding the government accountable. Participatory democracy with active citizenship is difficult to achieve in a militarised environment. For democracies in SIDS to flourish post-authoritarianism, it is vital that the military is disbanded or at least reduced to an appropriate size. The military should be subservient to civilian rule and follow CMR principles. That is the lesson offered by Seychelles. They proved their commitment to democratisation by reducing the size of their armed forces by more than half to less than 500.

A clear demarcation needs to be made between the roles of the army and the police. There were instances in Fiji and Seychelles where police roles were undermined by the military. With the Maldives, as most police officers are former army officers, there is a tendency for them to behave in a soldierly manner and for the military to carry out policing activities. The military need not have any role in civilian policing work, which is solely the domain of the police. Furthermore, the police are not meant to behave in a soldier-like manner and adequate training needs to be provided on various aspects of community policing so they understand their role in a democracy.

International organisations need to adopt the IPU criteria for: free and fair elections; party candidature and campaign rights and responsibilities; as well as rights and responsibilities of states. Under the IPU criteria, elections could not be deemed 'free and fair' if there were: excessive power and misuse of resources for elections by the incumbent government; state media monopolisation to benefit one party; intimidation of opposition parties and their supporters including laws which make it challenging for parties to register and operate; and the impact of repressive laws. This would prevent the current practice where an election is classified free and fair merely on the basis of monitoring the casting and counting of votes. Taking into account unfair practices in the lead up to the election would prevent legitimation of authoritarian elections which put into power electoral autocracies.

Political leaders, middle-class professionals, and other members of the elite need to make a commitment to practice and uphold democracy, so democracy can endure in these nations. Bad leadership and ambivalence to democracy by this group can pave the way for extreme

religious, ethnic-based, or authoritarian regimes and creates apathy or cynicism amongst the grassroots population about making democracy work and holding leaders accountable.

Fiji is under electoral autocratic rule now whereas Seychelles and the Maldives are back on the transition to democracy. Challenges remain in all three nations to ensure that laws restricting freedom of expression, media, association, political parties, assembly, religion and independence of the judiciary, are revised. To function effectively, statutory institutions need to be appointed in a non-partisan transparent way and operate independently. Government jobs and welfare benefits cannot be dependent on allegiance to the ruling party. Most importantly, civil society's freedom to organise, protest, hold government to account and engage constructively with government are prerequisites for participatory democratic rule.

The findings of this thesis point to problems of authoritarianism, democratic backsliding and populism, that have gripped the attention of international scholars in relation to larger countries. It can enhance the data produced by experts and international organisations. It is recommended that international organisations such as IDEA and the Centre for Systemic Peace include data on coups and authoritarianism in small island nations.

7.6 In conclusion

The prime reason authoritarian regimes were able to develop post-independence in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles, is due to a lack of a democratic culture, as emphasised by Dahl's theory (1998). This implies that a majority of citizens did not regard democracy as the only means of changing political power. These citizens encompass the military and Linz and Stepan's (1996) five arenas of democratic consolidation: political and civil societies, bureaucracy, rule of law and economic society. These nations precolonial autocratic societies, and authoritarian elections introduced under British colonialism, did not provide adequate precedence of democratic practices. The traditional leadership of Fiji (chiefly autocracy) and the Maldives (monarchs and nobles) undermined democratic principles as it prevented transition to democratic political-military relations in the armed forces. Elements of the traditional elite portrayed democracy as being detrimental for the indigenous people in Fiji as it may allow rule by the immigrant Indian population. In the Maldives, democratic leadership has been deceptively portrayed as being in favour of non-Muslim religions and nations. In

Seychelles, there was no traditional society, however, slavery's legacy of poverty and illiteracy amongst the Creole population, combined with an introduction to democratic institutions at independence without the resources to protect it, meant that democracy was overthrown easily there. In all three nations, the political leaders' control and manipulation of a relatively large military, was crucial for implementation of authoritarian rule. That a significant proportion of their respective populations supported illegal government changeovers, confirms that many citizens did not possess a democratic culture and political elites did not regard democratic institutions as the only means to bring change to political power.

The return to democratic transition in the three nations is in part due to the regime's need for aid and trade from democratic nations, but it also illustrates that democracy has become an aspiration of a major portion of their society in recent decades. Multiparty elections resulted in electoral authoritarian governments. However, this was still an improvement compared to being under a personal or military dictatorship, primarily because it allowed some freedoms of association and expression. This permitted constrained spaces for the continuous engagement of the civil society and the political society, which in turn ultimately led to a democratic change of government in Seychelles and the Maldives.

The gradual removal of the remnants of dictatorship in Seychelles provides the seminal lesson that authoritarianism takes a long time to eliminate. Genuine democratisation necessitates a long-term commitment of years if not decades. As the armed forces were used to buttress authoritarian leaders in all three nations, it is necessary for CMR reforms to create a military that is apolitical, professional, and subservient to civilian constitutional rule, as a starting point for genuine democratisation. More importantly, the Seychelles and the Maldives demonstrate that dictatorships can be gradually eroded by the political society and the broader civil society working together to agitate for a return to democracy via competitive elections. This key argument, that a great number of citizens need to work together for democratisation, is eloquently encapsulated by Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018):

> *"No single political leader can end a democracy; no single leader can rescue one, either. Democracy is a shared enterprise. Its fate depends on all of us," (Levitsky & Ziblatt 2018, p. 230).*

References

4TheRecord 2014, Peceli Rokotuivuna, Edwin Nand and Nemani Delaibatiki interview FijiFirst leader and Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama, *Fiji Broadcasting Corporation*, Episode 36, 21 July, viewed November 4 2014, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ7SeBypTxk>

ABC 2016, ‘Cyclone Winston: Australia pledges another $10 million in aid for Fiji victims’, *ABC News*, 1 March, viewed 9 July 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-29/australia-pledges-another-$10m-to-fijis-cyclone-winston-victims/7209070?nw=0>

- 2015, ‘Fiji police commissioner Ben Groenewald resigns, replaced with military commander’, *ABC News*, 11 November, viewed 03 January 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-11-10/fiji-police-commissioner-ben-groenewald-resigns/6928358>

- 2013, ‘Fiji government released final version of constitution, paving the way for 2014 elections’, *ABC News*, 22 August, viewed 13 September 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-22/an-fiji-government-released-final-version-of-constitution/4904020>

- 2007, ‘Former Fiji PM Chaudhry back in government’, *ABC News*, 9 January, viewed 04 January 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2007-01-09/former-fiji-pm-chaudhry-back-in-government/2169156>

- 2006, ‘Fiji chiefs ‘want Qarase to resign’, *ABC News*, 22 December, viewed 9 November 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2006-12-22/fiji-chiefs-want-qarase-to-resign/2159592>

Afif, A Rojid, S & Sacerdoti, E June 2013, *Seychelles: How Classic Policies Restored Sustainability*, World Bank, Government of Seychelles, Washington.

African Union 7 December 2015, African Union Observation Mission to the Presidential Election in the Republic of Seychelles, 3-5 December 2015 – Preliminary Statement.

Agence France-Presse 2018, ‘New Maldives president signals end to pro-China stance as he embraces India’s Narendra Modi at swearing-in ceremony’, *South China Morning Post*, 18 November, viewed 23 September 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/south-asia/article/2173776/new-maldives-president-signals-end-pro-china-stance-he-embraces>

Agerholm, H 2017, ‘Chagos Islands: Mauritius sovereignty dispute reveals Brexit Britain’s loss of global influence’, *Independent*, 23 June, viewed 29 August 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/brexit-latest-chagos-islands-sovereignty-dispute-uk-mauritius-eu-diplomatic-influence-indian-ocean-a7804066.html>

Air Seychelles 2018, *Map of Seychelles*, viewed 3 August 2018, <http://blog.airseychelles.com/practical-info-seychelles/>

Al Jazeera 2018, ‘Controversial vote on presidential powers passes in Comoros’, *Al Jazeera and News Agencies*, 1 August, viewed 7 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/controversial-vote-presidential-powers-passes-comoros-180731151417057.html>

- 2018b, ‘Maldives challenger Ibrahim Mohamed Solih wins presidency’, *Al Jazeera News*, 24 September, viewed 21 January 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/maldives-opposition-takes-early-lead-tense-presidential-poll-180923150807023.html>

- 2018c, ‘Observers to monitor Cambodia elections after calls for boycott’, *Al Jazeera News*, 25 July, viewed 24 January 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/07/observers-monitor-cambodia-elections-calls-boycott-180724160418594.html>

- 2015, ‘Seychelles heads for an election run-off’, *Al Jazeera English*, 6 December, viewed 29 August 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/12/seychelles-heads-election-runoff-151206073946876.html>

- 2004, ‘Comoros Country Profile’, *Al Jazeera*, 1 September, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2004/09/20084914382548342.html>

Ali, A 1986, ‘Chapter 1 Fiji – Political change, 1874-1960’, (ed.) Lal, BV *Politics in Fiji – Studies in Contemporary History*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 1-27.

Alvarez, M, Cheibub, JA, Limongi, F, & Przeworski, A 1996, ‘What Makes Democracies Endure?’ *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, iss. 1, pp 39-55.

Anckar, C 2008, ‘Size, Islandness, and Democracy: A Global Comparison’, *International Political Science Review*, vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 433-459.

Anckar, D 2010, ‘Small Is Democratic, But Who Is Small?’ *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, vol. 2010, ASSJ-2, pp1-10.

- 2008, ‘Microstate Democracy Revisited: Developments in Time and Space’, *The Open Political Science Journal*, vol. 1, pp. 75-83.

- 2002, ‘Why are Small Island States Democracies?’ *The Round Table*, vol. 91, no. 365, pp. 375-390.Taylor & Francis Group.

- 2002, ‘Democratic Standard and Performance in Twelve Pacific Micro-states’, *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2, July Summer 2002, pp. 207-225.

- 2000, ‘Westminster Democracy: A comparison of small island states varieties in the Pacific and the Caribbean’, *Pacific Studies*, vol. 23, nos. 3/ 4 – Sept./Dec. 2000, pp. 57-76.

Aneez, S & Junayd, M 2018, ‘Maldives declares state of emergency as Yameen tightens grip on power’, *Reuters*, 6 February, viewed 10 September 2019, <https://news.abs-

cbn.com/overseas/02/06/18/maldives-declares-state-of-emergency-as-yameen-tightens-grip-on-power>

AP Archive 2015, *Seychelles Independence – 1976*, AP (Associated Press) Archive, viewed 11 November 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8-67WqMUVIs>

Arendt, H 1962, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, The World Publishing Company, Ohio.

Ashraf, I December 2012, *Civil-Military Challenges for a Consolidating Democracy: The Maldives,* Master of Arts Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, California.

Asian Military Review 2018, 'Great power competition in the Indian Ocean region' (Map), *Asian Military Review*, 17 October, viewed 15 September 2020, <https://asianmilitaryreview.com/2018/10/indias-careful-approach-to-china-continues/>

Asian Tribune 2018, 'The Maldives: A year after the killing of Yameen Rasheed, justice remains elusive', *Asian Tribune*, 23 April, World Institute for Asian Studies, viewed 7 June 2018, <http://www.asiantribune.com/node/91788 >

Associated Press 2018, 'Former Maldives president is sentenced to 19 months in prison following coup investigation', *Associated Press*, 13 June, viewed 10 September 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/south-asia/article/2150667/former-maldives-president-sentenced-19-months-prison>

- 2018b, 'Maldives president fires 2nd police chief in 3 days', *The Associated Press*, 3 February, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://accesswdun.com/article/2018/2/632521>

- 1983, 'North Korea sells military training in Africa', Associated Press, September 8, Boca Raton News, viewed 6 December 2019, <https://news.google.com/newspapers?id=zztUAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ho0DAAAAIBAJ&pg=6810%2C1780167>

Attorney General's Office, *Maldivian Land Act*, Attorney General's Office, Republic of Maldives, viewed 29 June 2019, <http://www.agoffice.gov.mv/pdf/sublawe/Land.pdf>

Avas 2020a, 'COVID-19: Maldives crosses 9,000-mark; 62 new recoveries', *Avas,* 12 September, viewed 13 September 2020, <https://avas.mv/en/88712>

- 2020b, 'Aeroflot resumes operation to Maldives', *Avas,* 12 September, viewed 13 September 2020, <https://avas.mv/en/88698>

- 2019a, 'Maldives govt announces decision to dissolve MDN', *Avas*, 5 November, viewed 6 November 2019, <https://avas.mv/en/72791>

- 2019b, 'Majlis 19: An overview in numbers', *Avas*, 11 April, viewed 27 November 2020, <https://avas.mv/en/62819>

- 2018, ‘Police quiz rights defender over multi-religious comment’, *Avas,* 2 April, viewed 7 June 2018, <https://avas.mv/en/47080>

Baba, T & Bain ’A 1990, *Bavadra: Prime Minister, Statesman, Man of the People – Selection of Speeches and Writings 1985-1989*, Sunrise Press, Nadi, Fiji.

Baba, T, Field, M & Nabobo-Baba, U 2005, *Speight of Violence – Inside Fiji’s 2000 Coup*, Reed Books, Auckland.

Baker, B & Massey, S 2009, *Comoros: External Involvement in a Small Island State.* Program Paper AFP July 2009/1, Chatham House, London.

Baker, B 2008, ‘Seychelles: Democratising in the shadows of the past’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, July 2008, Routledge, pp. 279-293.

Baledrokadroka, J 2012a, ‘The Unintended Consequences of Fiji’s International Peacekeeping’, *Security Challenges*, vol. 8, no. 4, Summer 2012, pp. 105-116.

- October 2012b, *Sacred King and Warrior Chief: The Role of the Military in Fijian Politics*, PhD Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra.

Baleilevuka, R & Narayan, V 2018, ‘Police will not comment on Ratu Apenisa’s complaint while RFMF says they were carrying out their constitutional responsibility’, *Fijivillage*, 21 June, viewed 1 July 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news-feature/Police-will-not-comment-on-Ratu-Epenisas-complaint-while-RFMF-says-they-were-carrying-out-their-constitutional-responsibility-k9sr25/>

Banivanua-Mar, T 2010, ‘Cannibalism and Colonialism: Charting Colonies and Frontiers in Nineteenth-Century Fiji’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2010, pp. 255-281.

BBC News 2018, ‘Fiji profile – timeline’, *BBC News*, 4 January, viewed 25 November 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-14919688>

- 2018a, ‘Grenada Profile - Timeline’. *BBC*, 12 March, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19596901>

- 2018b, ‘Sao Tome and Principe profile’, *BBC*, 14 May, viewed 9 October 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093670>

- 2018c, ‘Bahrain country profile’, *BBC*, 12 November, viewed 30 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14540571>

- 2017, ‘Solomon Islands profile – Timeline’, *BBC*, 30 November, viewed 31 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-15897585>

- 2017b, ‘Dominica profile – Timeline’, *BBC*, 19 September, viewed 31 January 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19409492>

- 2016, ‘Maldives leaves Commonwealth amid democracy row’, *BBC News*, 13 October, viewed 19 September 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37647310>

- 2015, ‘Seychelles Profile – Timeline’. *BBC*, 21 January, viewed 18 September 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14094191>

- 2015a, ‘Maldives profile – Timeline’, *BBC*, 17 March, viewed 18 September 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12653969>

- 2015b, ‘Former Maldives president Mohamed Nasheed re-jailed’, *BBC*, 24 August, viewed 18 September 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34043340>

- 2014, ‘Entire Maldives election commission sentenced’, *BBC News – Asia*, 9 March, viewed 22 August 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26508259>

- 2012, ‘Maldives ex-president Mohamed Nasheed was ‘forced out’’, *BBC News*, 8 February, viewed 24 July 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-16945764>

- 1979, ‘1979: Grenada leader ousted by coup’, *BBC,* 13 March, viewed 18 September 2015, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/13/news1d_2804000/2804259.stm>

Behera, HC 2006, ‘Chapter II – The Evolution of Political System’, *Political System and Governance in Maldives (1968-1998)*, PhD Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Pp. 16-35, viewed 9 August 2017, <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/14494>

Bekaj, A 2017, ‘Introduction’, *The Global State of Democracy – Exploring Democracy’s Resilience*, International IDEA, Sweden.

Bell, HCP 1998, *Excerpta Máldiviana*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi.

Bertram, IG & Watters RF 1985, ‘The MIRAB Economy in South Pacific Microstates’, *Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 26, iss. 3, pp. 497-519.

Bhim, M 2019, ‘Chapter 10 - Does Electoral Authoritarianism Persist? A Comparison of Recent Elections in Fiji, Seychelles and Maldives’, in Lahai, JI, von Strokirch, K, Brasted, H & Ware, H (eds), *Governance and Political Adaptation in Fragile States*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 243-270, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-90749-9_10

- 2015, ‘Fiji 8. Stifled Aspirations – The 2014 General Election Under Restrictive Laws’, in *Pacific Journalism Review*, vol. 21, is.s 1, May 2015, pp. 108-125.

- 2013, ‘Constitution-making in a stifled democracy: A case study of self-censorship perpetuating propaganda in Fiji’, *Pacific Journalism Review*, iss. 19, no. 1, pp. 167-184.

- 2011, *Stifling Opposition: An Analysis of the Approach of the Fiji Government After the 2006 coup*, Discussion Paper 2011/6, State Society and Governance in Melanesia

(SSGM), College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, viewed 11 March 2013, <http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/ssgm/papers/discussion_papers/2011_06_bhim.pdf>

- 2010, 'Why Fiji's grassroots citizenry and media need to be informed, engaged for democracy to flourish', *Pacific Journalism Review*, vol. 16, issue 2, pp. 127-146.

- 2007, 'Chapter 10 – The impact of the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill on the 2006 elections', in Firth, S & Fraenkel, J (eds), *From Election to Coup in Fiji - The 2006 campaign and its aftermath*, ANU E-Press, Asia Pacific Press and IPS Publications, pp. 111-143.

Bohane, B. 2018. 'The United States is losing the Pacific', *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 414, 26 March 2018, East-West Center, Washington.

Bolanavanua 2018, 'Writ of Election Issued Today', *Fiji Sun Online*, 1 October, viewed 30 January 2018, <https://fijisun.com.fj/2018/10/01/writ-of-election-issued-today/>

Bolatiki, M 2016, 'Girmitiyas Accepted as Rewans', *Fiji Sun Online*, 10 July, viewed 1 December 2018, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2016/07/10/girmitiyas-accepted-as-rewans/>

Bonofer, JA 2010, 'The Challenges of democracy in Maldives', *International Journal of South Asian Studies (IJSAS)*, vol. 3, no. 2, July – December 2010, pp. 433-449.

Bordewich, C, Davis-Roberts, A & Carroll D 2018, 'Introduction', *International Election Observation*, 1998-2018 ACE Project, viewed 18 September 2018, <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/international-election-observation/onePage>

Bosley, D 2014, 'Indian aircraft arrives to ease Malé water crisis, *Minivan News – Archive*, 5 December, viewed 24 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/society/indian-aircraft-arrives-to-ease-male-water-crisis-91468>

Boyle, M 2019, 'RFMF to increase women recruits', *FBC News*, 14 June, viewed 18 June 2019, <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/rfmf-to-increase-women-recruits/>

Brewster, D & Rai, R 2011, 'Flowers Are Blooming: the story of the India Navy's secret operation in the Seychelles', *The Naval Review*, vol. 99, no. 1, United States Naval Institute, pp. 58-62.

Buadromo, V 2009, 'Chapter 26 – The impact of Fiji's 2006 coup on human and women's rights', in Firth, S Fraenkel, J & Lal, BV (eds), *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 405-408.

Cabenatabua, L 2018, 'Bainimarama Had No Part in 2000 Coup, Ex-Gunman Tells Crowd', *Fiji Sun Online*, 9 November, viewed 14 December 2018, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/11/09/bainimarama-had-no-part-in-2000-coup-ex-gunman-tells-crowd/>

Campling, L Confiance, H & Purvis, MT 2011, *Social Policies in Seychelles*, Commonwealth Secretariat and United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), Hampshire.

Cava, L 2018, 'Not guilty: Newspaper acquitted of sedition', *The Fiji Times*, 23 May, viewed 10 December 2018, <https://www.fijitimes.com/not-guilty-newspaper-acquitted-of-sedition/>

CCCE 2014, Concerned Citizens for Credible Elections – Voter Perception Based Election Report, Concerned Citizens for Credible Elections (CCCE), Suva, Fiji, viewed 19 June 2019, <http://news.ccf.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/CCCE-Voter-Perception-Based-Election-Report.pdf>

Center for Systemic Peace 2014, *Coups d'Etat: 1946-2014*, Centre for Systemic Peace, Vienna, viewed 04 April 2016, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>

Chand, S 2014, 'Chaudhry guilty', *Fiji Times Online*, 5 April, viewed 23 March 2015, <www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=264718>

Charron, N & Lapuente, V 2011, 'Which Dictators Produce Quality of Government?' *Studies in Comparative International Development*, December 2011, vol. 46, iss. 4, pp. 397-423.

Chaudhury, DP 2018. 'India and Seychelles agree on naval base at Assumption Island', *The Economic Times*, 13 July, viewed 28 August 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-and-seychelles-agree-on-naval-base-at-assumption-island/articleshow/64731817.cms>

Chesshyre T 2015, *Gatecrashing Paradise – Misadventures in the real Maldives*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London.

Cheng, A 2018, *Will Djibouti Become Latest Country to Fall Into China's Debt Trap?* Foreign Policy, July 31, viewed 27 August 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/31/will-djibouti-become-latest-country-to-fall-into-chinas-debt-trap/>

Citizens' Constitutional Forum, *History of CCF*, Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF), viewed 24 November 2018, <http://news.ccf.org.fj/history/>

- 2013, *History of CCF*, Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF), viewed 31 July 2019, <http://news.ccf.org.fj/test/history/>

Clague, C, Gleason, S, & Knack, S 2001, 'Determinants of Lasting Democracy in Poor Countries: Culture, Development, and Institutions', ANNALS, *American Academy of Political and Social Science* (AAPSS), no. 573, January 2001, pp. 16-41.

Cobban, A 1971, *Dictatorship – Its History and Theory*, Haskell House Publishers Ltd, New York.

Coelho, R 2018. *"The only explanation for the coups in Sao Tome is the elections"*, Plataforma, 9 August, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.plataformamedia.com/en-uk/news/politics/interior/the-only-explanation-for-these-coups-in-sao-tome-is-the-elections-9696273.html>

Cole, BR & Marshall, MG 2014, *Global Report 2014 – Conflict, Governance and State Fragility*, Centre for Systemic Peace.

Cole, RH 1998-99, 'Grenada, Panama, and Haiti – Joint Operational Reform', Autumn/Winter 1998-99 / JFQ, *Center for Counter-proliferation Research*, National Defense University, Washington.

Collin, K October 28 2016, 'Everything you need to know about election observers – and why the US needs them', The Washington Post, viewed 18 September 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/28/everything-you-need-to-know-about-election-observers-and-why-the-u-s-needs-them/?utm_term=.81c4d9324997>

Commonwealth 2018, *Fiji: History*, The Commonwealth, viewed 25 September 2018, <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/fiji/history>

- 2018a, *Elections Observation*, The Commonwealth, viewed 18 September 2018, <http://thecommonwealth.org/elections-observation>

- 2018b, *Democracy and Elections*, The Commonwealth, viewed 18 September 2018, <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/democracy-and-elections>

- 2018c, *Revised Commonwealth Guidelines for the Conduct of Election Observation in Member Countries*, The Commonwealth, London.

Commonwealth Secretariat 2009, *Maldives People's Majlis (Parliamentary) Elections, 9 May 2009 – Report of the Commonwealth Expert Team*, Commonwealth Secretariat.

- 2008, *Maldives Presidential Election 1st Round of Voting, 8 October 2008 & Run-Off Election 28 October 2008, Reports of the Commonwealth Observer Group*, Commonwealth Secretariat.

- 2006, *Fiji Islands General Election 25 August-1st September 2001- The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

CoNI 2012, *Report of the Commission of National Inquiry – Maldives*, Commission of National Inquiry (CoNI), Maldives, viewed 21 August 2019, https://maldivesindependent.com/files/2015/03/CONI-Report-20121.pdf

Constitution of the Republic of Fiji (2013). Available at www.electionsfiji.gov. fj/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Constitution-of-the-Republic-of-Fiji-.pdf

Constitution of the Republic of Fiji (2013). Retrieved on 13 September 2017, from http://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/8e981ca2-1757-4e27-88e0-f87e3b3b844e/Click-here-to-download-the-Fiji-Constitution.aspx

Corbett, J & Veenendaal, W 2018, *Democracy in Small States – Persisting Against All Odds*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

CountryReports.org, *Map of the Pacific Ocean*, CountryReports.org, viewed 24 August 2018, <http://www.jarvisisland.info/maps/oceania.gif>
Dahl, RA 1998, *On Democracy*, Yale University Press, United States of America.

Danford, I 2018, 'FijiFirst Leader shares reasons why he took over leadership in 2006', *Fijivillage*, 7 November, viewed 10 December 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news-feature/FijiFirst-Leader-shares-reasons-why-he-took-over-leadership-in-2006--s2k59r>

Dauris, J 2015, 'The Golden Years, A Golden Celebration – by James Dauris', *Maldives Independent*, 26 July, viewed 4 July 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/the-golden-years-a-golden-celebration-by-james-dauris-115697>

Dean, E & Ritova, S 1988, *Rabuka – No Other Way*, Doubleday, Australia.

Deen, T 30 November 2017, *Fiji Civil Society Meeting to Focus on Pacific Islands Under Threat*, United Nations, Inter Press Service (IPS), viewed 22 November 2018, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/11/fiji-civil-society-meeting-focus-pacific-islands-threat/>
defenceWeb 2013, *Seychelles People's Defence Forces*, defenceWeb – Africa's leading

defence news portal, viewed 7 November 2018, <http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32423:seychelles-peoples-defence-forces&catid=119:african-militaries&Itemid=255>

Delaibatiki, N 2014, 'Remembering race hate of 1987, 2000 upheavals', *Fiji Sun*, 8 August, viewed 23 July 2019, <https://fijisun.com.fj/2014/08/08/remembering-race-hate-of-1987-2000-upheavals/>

- 2018, 'Politics – God in the Constitution', *Fiji Sun*, 16 July, Suva, Fiji, p. 10.

Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS 2011, 'Chapter 1 – Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research', in (eds) Denzin, NK, Lincoln, YS, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications, Inc. California.

Department of Town & Country Planning 2015, *Land Tenure*, Department of Town & Country Planning, Suva, Fiji, viewed 13 October 2018, <http://www.townplanning.gov.fj/index.php/planning/planning-issues/land-tenure>

Derrick, RA 2001, *A History of Fiji – Volume One*, Government Press, Suva, Colony of Fiji.

DFAT September 2016, Australia-Fiji Civil Society Engagement Strategy 2016-2019, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Government, Canberra.

Didi, A February 2012, *The Maldives in Transition: Human Rights and Voices of Dissent*, PhD thesis, Centre for Human Rights Education, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University.

Doorenspleet, R 2006, *Democratic Transitions – Exploring the Structural Sources of the Fourth Wave*, Viva Books Private Limited, New Delhi.

Dorsey, JM 2017, 'Why Saudi Arabia, China and Islamic State are courting the Maldives', *South China Morning Post*, 12 March, viewed 24 September 2019,

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2077913/why-saudi-arabia-china-and-islamic-state-are-courting-maldives>

Electoral Commission 2016, *Report on the Conduct of the National Assembly Elections – 2016*, Electoral Commission, Seychelles.

- 2016a, *A History of Elections in Seychelles*, Office of the Electoral Commission, Republic of Seychelles, viewed 13 November 2018, <http://www.ecs.sc/history.html>

Ellis, R 1998, *A Man for All Islands – A Biography of Maumoon Abdul Gayoom President of the Maldives,* Times Editions, Singapore.

Environment Department 2015, 'PEMPHIS .49: Environmental Newsletter – Congestion Malé', February 2015, Environment Department, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Malé, Maldives, viewed 20 August 2020, <http://www.environment.gov.mv/v2/wp-content/files/pemphis/20150304-pemphis-49-feb2015.pdf>

Erk, J & Veenendaal, W 2014, 'Is Small Really Beautiful? The Microstate Mistake', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 25, no. 3, July 2014, pp. 135-148.

EU 2016, *Compendium of International Standards for Elections*, European Union (EU), Luxembourg.

EU ISS 2016, *Understanding African Armies: Report No. 27 - April 2016*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EU ISS), Paris.

European Union 24 March 2014, *European Union Election Observation Mission: 22 March 2014 Parliamentary Elections, Republic of Maldives – Preliminary Statement*, European Union.

Everest-Phillips, M 2014, *Small, So Simple? Complexity in Small Island Developing States*, UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Singapore.

Ezrow, N & Frantz, E 2011a, *Dictators and Dictatorships: Understanding Authoritarian Regimes and their Leaders*, The Continuum International Publishing Group, New York.

- 2011b, 'State Institutions and the Survival of Dictatorships' *Journal of International Affairs*, Fall/Winter 2011, vol. 65, no. 1, pp. 1-13.

FBC News 2020a, 'Border quarantine cases pose no risk to the Fijian public: Dr Fong', *FBC News*, 9 September, viewed 11 September 2020, <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/covid-19/border-quarantine-cases-pose-no-risk-to-the-fijian-public-dr-fong/>

- 2020b, 'RFMF's allocation down by $14.9million', *FBC News*, 19 July, viewed 17 September 2020, <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/fiji-budget-2020-21/rfmfs-allocation-down-by-14-9million/>

- 2020c, 'Peacekeeping Missions allocated $57.5million', *FBC News*, 19 July, viewed 17 September 2020, <https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/peacekeeping-missions-allocated-57-5million/>

FBoS 2018, *Fiji Statistics at a Glance*, Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS), viewed 3 August 2018, <http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/>

- 2015, *Provisional Annual Paid Employment 2014 - Statistical News*, FBoS Release No. 94, Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS), Suva, Fiji.

Feaver, PD 2003, *Armed Servants – Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

- 1999, 'Civil-Military Relations', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 2, pp. 211-241.

Fenner, S & Slater, D 2011, 'State Power and Staying Power: Infrastructural Mechanisms and Authoritarian Durability', *Journal of International Affairs*, Fall/Winter 2011, vol. 65, no. 1, pp 15-29.

FIBoS 15 October 2008, *Census 2007 Results: Population Size, Growth, Structure and Distribution*, Statistical News, No. 45 2008, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (FIBoS), Suva.

Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2019, *Religion: Population by Religion – 2007 Census of Population*, Fiji Bureau of Statistics, viewed 31 March 2019, <https://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/index.php/statistics/social-statistics/religion>

Fiji High Commission, *Fijian Economy*, Fiji High Commission to the United Kingdom, viewed 6 August 2018, <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/about_3.html>

- 2018a, *About Fiji*, Fiji High Commission to the United Kingdom, viewed 6 August 2018, <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/about.html>

- 2018b, *About Fiji – History*, Fiji High Commission to the United Kingdom, viewed 15 August 2018, <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/about_1.html>

- 2018c. *Fijian Economy*, Fiji High Commission to the United Kingdom, viewed 6 August 2018, <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/about_3.html>

Fiji Labour Party, *Bavadra Profile*, Fiji Labour Party, viewed 30 May 2019, <http://www.flp.org.fj/bavadra-profile/>

Fiji Museum, *James Cook*, The Fiji Museum – Virtual Museum, Government of Fiji, viewed 24 February 2021, http://virtual.fijimuseum.org.fj/template.php?id=DJC1&next=sub56&cat=50

Fijilive 2007, 'Fiji denies entry visas to New Zealand police', *Pacific Islands Report*, 15 June, viewed 18 June 2019, <http://www.pireport.org/articles/2007/06/15/fiji-denies-entry-visas-new-zealand-police>

Fijian Elections Office 2019, *2018 General Election: Final Report by Supervisor of Elections – Joint Report by The Electoral Commission & Supervisor of Elections*, 19 January, viewed 7

July 2020, <https://www.feo.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Joint-Report-EC-SOE-ecopy-compressed.pdf>

- 2018, 'Fiji General Elections 2018 – Results', *fijivillage.com*, viewed 10 December 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/election-2018-results/>

- 2014, *2014 General Elections – Report by the Supervisor of Elections*, 22 October, viewed 6 July 2020, <https://www.feo.org.fj/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Final-Report-by-Supervisor-of-Elections.pdf>

Finer, SE 1962, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Transaction Publishers, New Jersey.

Firth, S & Fraenkel, J 2009, 'Chapter 6 – The Fiji military and ethno-nationalism: Analysing the paradox', in Firth, S Fraenkel, J & Lal, BV (eds), *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 117-137.

- 2009b, 'Chapter 1 – The enigmas of Fiji's good governance coup', in Firth, S Fraenkel, J & Lal, BV (eds), *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 3-17.

- (eds) 2007, *From Election to Coup in Fiji – The 2006 Campaign and its Aftermath*, ANU E Press, Asia Pacific Press and IPS Publications, Canberra.

Firth, S Fraenkel, J & Lal, BV (eds) 2009, *The 2006 Military Takeover in Fiji: A Coup to End All Coups?* ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra.

Firth, S, Lowry, RW & Vitusagavulu, J 2004, *Safeguarding Peace and Prosperity – National Security and Defence Review (NSDR), Fiji*, Government Printing Department, Fiji.

Flyvbjerg, B 2011, 'Chapter 17 – Case Study', *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (eds) Denzin, NK, Lincoln, YS, SAGE Publications, Inc. California, pp. 301-316.

Forbes, ADW 1987, 'The Pre-Islamic Archaeology of the Maldive Islands', *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, Tome 76, 1987, pp. 281-288.

Fox, L 2014, 'China's President invites Pacific island allies to ride the Chinese 'express train' of development', *ABC News*, 23 November, viewed 27 August 2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-11-23/chinese-president-touts-pacific-ties-on-visit-to-fiji/5911774>

Fraenkel, J 2019, 'Ethnic Politics and Strongman Loyalties in Fiji's 2018 Election', *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 54, issue 4, DOI: 10.1080/00223344.2019.1599152

Frantz, E & Ezrow, N 2011, *The Politics of Dictatorship: Institutions and Outcomes in Authoritarian Regimes*, Lynne Rienner, Colorado.

Freedom House 2019, *Freedom in the World 2019: Democracy in Retreat - Highlights from Freedom House's annual report on political rights and civil liberties*, viewed 30 January

2020,
<https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Feb2019_FH_FITW_2019_Report_ForWeb-compressed.pdf>

- 2016, *Freedom in the World 2016: Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies: Global Freedom Under Pressure – Highlights from Freedom House's annual report on political rights and civil liberties*, viewed 30 March 2016, <www.freedomhouse.org>

Gandhi, J & Lust-Okar, E 2009, 'Elections Under Authoritarianism', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 12, pp. 403-422.

Gandhi, J & Przeworski, A November 2007, 'Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats', *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 11, Sage Publications, pp. 1279-1301.

Garber, L 1984, *Guidelines for International Election Observing*, The International Human Rights Law Group, Washington.

Geddes, B 2004, *Minimum-Winning Coalitions and Personalization in Authoritarian Regimes*, Draft paper prepared for presentation at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 2-5 September 2004, American Political Science Association, pp. 1-32, viewed 16 April 2013, <http://www.international.ucla.edu/cms/files/geddes.pdf>

- 1999, 'What Do We Know About Democratization After 20 Years?' *Annual Review of Political Science,* vol. 2, pp. 115–44.

Geddes, B, Frantz, E & Wright, J 2014, 'Autocratic Regimes Code Book Version 1.2', in, 'Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions'*, Perspectives on Politics,* vol. 12, no. 2, pp. i-133.

- 2014a, 'Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 12, no. 2, June 2014, pp 313-331.

- 2014b, 'Military Rule', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2014, vol. 17, pp. 147-162.

Georges B July 2011, *Democracy Delayed – The 2011 Presidential Elections and their Impact on the Future of Democracy in Seychelles*, Report by Member of the National Assembly, Seychelles.

Global Fund for Women, *Sharon Bhagwan Rolls – Board Co-Chair*, Global Fund for Women, viewed 25 November 2018, <https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/sharon-bhagwan-rolls/#.W_nXak0UmUk>

GlobalSecurity.org 2017, *Military – Seychelles Peoples' Defense Forces (SPDF)*,

GlobalSecurity.org, viewed 7 November 2018, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/indian-ocean/se-spdf.htm>

- 2017, *Tonga Defence Services (His Majesty's Armed Forces)*, GlobalSecurity.org, viewed 11 November 2020, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/oceania/tonga-hmaf.htm>

Goiran, H 2013, 'Chapter 4 – The Political Roles of the Fiji Military: A Brief History of the Chiefs' Warriors, Heroes of the World Wars, Peacekeepers and Dictators', *Politics, Development and Security in Oceania*, (eds) Hegarty, D & Tryon, D, ANU E Press, Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 57-67.

Government of Fiji 28 March 2014, *Electoral Decree 2014 - Decree No. 11 of 2014*, Government Printer, Suva.

- January 15 2013, *Political Parties - Registration, Conduct, Funding and Disclosures Decree 2013 - Decree No. 4 of 2013*, Government Printer, Suva.

- January 5 2012, *Public Order (Amendment) Decree 2012 - Decree No. 1 of 2012*, Government Printer, Suva.

- June 25 2010, *Media Industry Development Decree 2010 - Decree No. 29 of 2010*, Government Printer, Suva.

Government of India 2018, *Ministry of Defence Annual Report 2017-2018*, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, viewed 31 July 2020, <https://mod.gov.in/sites/default/files/AR1718.pdf>

Government of the Republic of Fiji 1990, *Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of Fiji (Promulgation) Decree 1990 - Decree No. 22*, Government Printer, Suva, viewed 23 July 2019, <http://www.paclii.org/fj/promu/promu_dec/cotsdrofd1990712.pdf>

Graue, C 2018, 'Federal Government flags willingness to help Vanuatu with high-speed undersea internet cable', *ABC News*, 27 June, viewed 29 August 2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-27/vanuatu-asks-australia-for-help-on-high-speed-internet-cable/9904270>

Greene, A 2018, 'Chinese ambassador to Fiji denies 'spy ship' was sent to snoop on Australian navy', *ABC News*, 12 June, viewed 29 August 2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-12/china27s-ambassador-to-fiji-hits-back/9861334>

Grynberg, R Munro, D & White, M 2002, *Crisis: The Collapse of the National Bank of Fiji*, USP Book Centre, Suva, Fiji.

Hadenius, A Teorell, J & Wahman, M 2013, 'Authoritarian regime types revisited: updated data in comparative perspective', *Contemporary Politics*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2013, Taylor & Francis, pp. 19-34.

Hale, HE October 2005, 'Regime Cycles: Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia', *World Politics*, vol. 58, no. 1, Cambridge University Press, pp. 133-165.

Hameed, S 2015, 'State companies accused of dismissing, suspending opposition supporters', *Minivan News – Archive*, March 15, viewed 17 September 2019,

<https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/state-companies-accused-of-dismissing-suspending-opposition-supporters-93834>

Hassan, A December 2011, *Islamism and Radicalism in the Maldives*, Master of Arts Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, California.

Hatchard, J 1993, 'Re-Establishing a Multi-Party State: Some Constitutional Lessons from the Seychelles', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 31, no. 4, Dec 1993, Cambridge University Press, pp. 601-612.

Haynes, J 1997, *Democracy and Civil Society in the Third World – Politics & Political Movements*, Polity Press, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford.

Howlett, Lieut RA 1948, *The History of the Fiji Military Forces: 1939-1945,* Crown Agents for the Colonies, Government of Fiji, London.

Hudson, M Shaer, M & Williams, M June 3 2014, *Sun and Shadows: How an Island Paradise Became a Haven for Dirty Money,* International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), viewed 4 September 2018, <https://www.icij.org/investigations/offshore/sun-and-shadows-how-island-paradise-became-haven-dirty-money/>

Human Rights Watch 2018, *"An All-Out Assault on Democracy" – Crushing Dissent in the Maldives*, Human Rights Watch, New York, August 16, viewed 11 September 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/08/16/all-out-assault-democracy/crushing-dissent-maldives>

Huntington, SP 1993, 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, vol. 72, no. 3, ABI/INFORM Global, pp. 22-49.

- 1970, 'Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems', *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society – The Dynamics of Established One-Party Systems*, (eds) Huntington, SP & Moore, CH, Basic Books Inc., New York, pp. 3-47.

- 1968, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Yale University Press, United States of America.

- 1957, *The Soldier and the State – The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Vintage Books, New York.

Hurley, J, Morris, S & Portelance, G March 2018, *Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective - CDG Policy Paper 121*, Centre for Global Development, Washington.

Hyde, SD 2011, 'Introduction', *The Pseudo-Democrat's Dilemma – Why Election Monitoring Became an International Norm*, Cornell University Press, pp. 1-27.

ICJ 2011, *International Commission of Jurists condemns the attack on JSC member Aishath Velezinee*, Press Release, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), 5 January, Geneva,

viewed 9 August 2019, <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Maldives-attack-news-2011.pdf>

IDEA 2017, *The Global State of Democracy – Exploring Democracy's Resilience*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Sweden.

- 1997, *Code of Conduct for Ethical and Professional Observation of Elections*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Varberg.

- 1995, *The founding conference of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), February 27-28 1995 – Declaration*, IDEA, viewed 20 November 2015, <http://www.idea.int/upload/Declaration.pdf>

IMF 2010, *Maldives: 2009 Article IV Consultation—Staff Report; Staff Supplements; Public Information Notice on the Executive Board Discussion; Press Release on the Executive Board Discussion; and Statement by the Executive Director for Maldives*, IMF Country report No. 10/28, January 2010, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Washington, viewed 20 July 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr1028.pdf>

- 2009, *IMF Executive Board Approves US$79.3 Million Stand-By Arrangement and US$13.2 Million Arrangement Under the Exogenous Shocks Facility for Maldives*, Press Release No. 09/444, December 4 2009, International Monetary Fund (IMF) External Relations Department, Washington, viewed 20 July 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2010/cr1028.pdf>

IPU 2018, *IPU condemns threats to parliamentary democracy*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Press Releases, 28 March, viewed 9 September 2019, <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2018-03/ipu-condemns-threats-parliamentary-democracy>

- 2017a, *Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, Report on the Mission to the Maldives, 10-12 October 2016 - 136th IPU Assembly, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1-5 April 2017*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 5 April 2017, Dhaka, viewed 9 September 2019, <http://archive.ipu.org/hr-e/200/Maldives16.pdf>

- 2017b, *IPU deeply concerned over human rights violations against Maldives lawmakers*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 19 October, viewed 9 September 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/maldives/ipu-deeply-concerned-over-human-rights-violations-against-maldives-lawmakers>

- 27 October 2016, *Fiji: FJI/03 – Ratu Isoa Tikoca – Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva.

- 2005, *Revisiting Free and Fair Elections – An International Round Table on Election Standards organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva, November 2004,* IPU.

- 26 March 1994 (IPU), *Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), viewed 19 September 2018, <http://archive.ipu.org/cnl-e/154-free.htm>

- Archive, *Women's Suffrage – A World Chronology of the Recognition of Women's Rights to Vote and to Stand for Election*, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), viewed 30 August 2020, <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>

IRIN 2009, *Reforming the 'coup-coup islands'*, IRIN – The inside story on emergencies, 25 February, viewed 7 September 2018, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/83144/comoros-reforming-coup-coup-islands>

Janowitz, M 1975, *Military Conflict – Essays in the Institutional Analysis of War and Peace*, Sage Publications Inc., California.

- 1960, *The Professional Soldier – A Social and Political Portrait*, The Free Press of Glencoe.

Jordan, W 2016, 'Exclusive: Maldives president's corruption revealed', *Al Jazeera*, viewed 4 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/exclusive-maldives-president-corruption-revealed-160904110226846.html>

Journal of International Affairs 2011, 'After 1989: Redefining "Democracy" – An Interview with Ivan Krastev', *Journal of International Affairs*, Fall/Winter 2011, vol. 65, no. 1, pp. 199-205.

Junayd, M 2019, 'Authorities silent over Luthufee capture', *Maldives Independent*, 25 June, viewed 28 June 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/authorities-silent-over-luthufee-capture-146166>

Kanemasu, Y & Molnar, G 2017, 'Private Military and Security Labour Migration: The Case of Fiji', *International Migration*, vol. 55 (4), International Organisation for Migration, pp. 154-170.

Kaplan, M 1990, 'Meaning, Agency and Colonial History: Navosavakadua and the "Tuka" Movement in Fiji', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 17, no. 1, February 1990, American Anthropological Association, pp. 3-22.

Kaplan, M & Kelly, JD 1999, 'On Discourse and Power: "Cults" and "Orientals" in Fiji', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 26, no. 4, November 1999, American Anthropological Association, pp. 843-863.

Kelly, JD 1995, 'Threats to Difference in Colonial Fiji', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 10, no. 1, February 1995, American Anthropological Association, pp. 64-84.

Khan, A 2018, 'Mohamed Nasheed on the Maldives Crisis', *The Diplomat*, 28 March, viewed 17 July 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/mohamed-nasheed-on-the-maldives-crisis/>

Khan, MH, Shah A & Siwatibau S 2007, *Fiji Civil Society Index Report – A Civil Society in Transition*, Fiji Council of Social Services, CIVICUS – World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Suva.

Khandekar, O 2018, 'Sun, sand and politics: How tourism tycoons influence elections in the Maldives', *Maldives Independent*, 19 September, viewed 26 January 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/sun-sand-and-politics-how-tourism-tycoons-influence-elections-in-the-maldives-141305>

Krishant, N & Narayan V 2018, 'Fiji to have Elections on November 14th, 2018', *fijivillage.com*, 30 September, viewed 10 December 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news-feature/Fiji-to-have-Elections-on-November-14th-2018-k5sr29/>

Kumar, A 2016, *Multi-party Democracy in the Maldives and the Emerging Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Pentagon Press, New Delhi.

Kurer, O 2001, 'Land and Politics in Fiji: Of Failed Land Reforms and Coups', *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 299-315.

Lakatos, I 2018, 'Thoughts on Universalism versus Cultural Relativism, with Special Attention to Womens' Rights', *Pécs Journal of International and European Law*, 2018/I, pp. 6-25.

Lanka Business Online (LBO) 2012, 'Maldivian President calls for early polls in July 2013', *Lanka Business Online*, 18 April, viewed 23 August 2017, <http://www.lankabusinessonline.com/maldivian-president-calls-for-early-polls-in-july-2013/>

Lal, BV 2016, 'Chapter 4 – Fiji Indians and the Fiji general elections of 2014: Between a rock and a hard place and a few other spots in between', in Ratuva S & Lawson, S (eds), *The People Have Spoken: The 2014 Elections in Fiji*, ANU Press, The Australian National University, Australia, pp. 59-82.

- 2012, 'Chapter 3 – The Odyssey of Indenture', Lal, BV *Chalo Jahaji On a Journey Through Indenture in Fiji*, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 41-66.

- 2012, 'Chapter 4 – A Journey Begins', Lal, BV *Chalo Jahaji On a Journey Through Indenture in Fiji*, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, pp. 67-98.

- 2011, 'Where Has All the Music Gone? Reflections on the Fortieth Anniversary of Fiji's Independence', *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2011, University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 412-436.

- 2000, 'A time to change: the Fiji general elections of 1999', in Lal, BV, (ed.) *Fiji Before the Storm: Elections and the politics of development*, Asia Pacific Press, Australian National University, pp. 21-47.

- 1992, *Broken Waves – A History of the Fiji Islands in the Twentieth Century*, University of Hawaii Press, United States of America.

- 1986a, 'Chapter 4 - Politics since independence: Continuity and change, 1970-1982', in Lal, BV, (ed.) *Politics in Fiji – Studies in Contemporary History*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 74-106.

- 1986b, 'Postscript – Emergence of the Fiji Labour Party', in Lal, BV, (ed.) *Politics in Fiji – Studies in Contemporary History*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 139-157.

Lal, BV & Pretes, M 2008, 'Coup Timeline 1987-2001', *Coup – Reflections on the Political Crisis in Fiji*, ANU Press, pp. 180-183.

Lands Department, March 2019, *Map of Fiji Islands*, Cartography Section, Lands Department, Government of Fiji, Suva.

Larmour, P 2002, *Custom and Democracy in the Pacific Islands*, A report prepared for the Commonwealth Secretariat, RPIC(02)4.

Lawrence, D 2019, 'Seychelles Supreme Court to hear case of former tourism minister at the end of January', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), January 18, viewed 31 January 2019, <www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10360/Seychelles+Supreme+Court+to+hear+case+of+former+tourism+minister+at+the+end+of+January>

Lawson, S 1996, *Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific – Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge/Melbourne.

- 1995, *Culture, Relativism and Democracy: Political Myths about 'Asia' and the 'West'*, Working Paper No. 1995/6, Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra.

- 1991, *The Failure of Democratic Politics in Fiji*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Lee, C 1976, *Seychelles – Political Castaways*, Elm Tree Books, London.

Levitsky, S & Way, LA 2010, *Competitive Authoritarianism – Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Levitsky, S & Ziblatt 2018, *How Democracies Die*, Crown, New York.

Lijphart, A 2012, 'Chapter 1 – Introduction', *Patterns of Democracy*, Yale University Press, pp. 1-8.

Linz, JL & Stepan A 1996, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation – Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, The John Hopkins University Press, Maryland.

Lipset, SM March 1959, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 69-105.

Loanakadavu, N 14 May 2016, ‘The Arrival of Girmityas in Fiji’, *The Fiji Times Online*, viewed 15 August 2017, <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=353759>

Loga, M 2014, ‘Fiji’s Electoral Commission takes Supervisor of Elections to Court’. *Fiji Television Limited*, August 23, viewed 14 November 2014, <http://fijione.tv/electoral-commission-takes-supervisor-of-elections-to-court/>

Luithui, EL & Phadnis, U 1985, *Maldives – Winds of Change in an Atoll State*, South Asian Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.

- 1981, ‘The Maldives Enter World Politics’, *Asian Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 3, Jan-Feb 1981, pp. 166-179.

Luxner, L 1990, ‘Covering a Coup Attempt: Press became Part of Story During Dramatic Trinidad Coup Attempt’, *Editor & Publisher*, Dec 8 1990, vol. 123, no. 49, ProQuest Central, pp. 22-23.

Macias, A 2018, ‘From Aruba to Iceland, these 36 nations have no standing military’, *CNBC*, 3 April, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/03/countries-that-do-not-have-a-standing-army-according-to-cia-world-factbook.html>

Maldivian Democracy Network (MDN) 3 April 2018, *Stop targeted harassment of MDN Executive Director, Shahindha Ismail*, Press Release, MDN, viewed 7 June 2018, <http://mdn.mv/press-release-on-calling-the-government-of-maldives-to-stop-targeted-harassment-of-mdn-executive-director-shahindha-ismail/>

Maldives Independent 2015a, ‘Timeline – Story of Independence’, *Maldives Independent*, 26 July, viewed 5 July 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/timeline-story-of-independence-115638>

- 2015b, ‘A lingering longing for self-rule’, 26 July, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 5 July 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/the-longing-for-self-rule-115666>

- 2015c, ‘We could have done better:” conversations with an independence hero’, 26 July, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 10 July 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/conversations-with-an-independence-hero-115646>

- 2016, ‘Maldives pays US$271m in damages to India’s GMR’, 17 November, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 27 August 2019, https://maldivesindependent.com/business/maldives-pays-us271m-in-damages-to-indias-gmr-127767

- 2016a, ‘DhiTV shuts down after eight years on air’, 11 August, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 11 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/dhitv-shuts-down-after-eight-years-on-air-126006>

- 2016b, 'Maldives army bars soldiers from meeting politicians and foreigners', *Maldives Independent*, 11 August, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-army-bars-soldiers-from-meeting-politicians-and-foreigners-126016>

- 2016c, 'Four soldiers fired and placed under investigation', *Maldives Independent*, 23 August, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/four-soldiers-fired-and-placed-under-investigation-126141>

- 2016d, 'Saudi Arabia pledges US$50m for military housing project', *Maldives Independent*, March 14, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/saudi-arabia-pledges-us50m-for-military-housing-project-122779>

- 2017a, 'Gasim sentenced in absentia to three years, stripped off seat', 25 August, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 4 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/gasim-sentenced-in-absentia-to-three-years-stripped-of-seat-132255>

- 2017b, 'Witnesses testify against Rajje TV arson suspect', 14 August, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 29 August 2017, http://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/witnesses-testify-against-raajje-tv-arson-suspect-131994

- 2017c, 'Rajje TV pays fine as court appeal begins', 5 November, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 11 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/raajje-tv-pays-fine-as-court-appeal-begins-133993>

- 2017d, 'Maldives severs diplomatic ties with Qatar', 5 June, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 24 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-severs-diplomatic-ties-with-qatar-131067>

- 2017e, 'Police summons issued to liberal bloggers with threat of trial in absentia', 29 May, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 30 July 2020, <https://maldivesindependent.com/society/police-summons-issued-to-liberal-bloggers-with-threat-of-trial-in-absentia-130891>

- 2017f, 'Maldives defends Saudi Arabia over UN report on killing Yemen children, 11 October, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 5 August 2020, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-defends-saudi-arabia-over-un-report-on-killing-yemen-children-133075>

- 2018, 'Supreme Court orders Nasheed's release in landmark ruling', 1 February, *Maldives Independent* viewed 9 February 2018, <http://maldivesindependent.com/politics/supreme-court-orders-nasheeds-release-landmark-ruling-135502>

- 2018a, ‘May Day protestor released after three years in prison’, 20 May, viewed 30 November 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/may-day-protester-released-after-three-years-in-prison-138259>

- 2018b, ‘Sangu TV slapped with MVR100,000 defamation fine’, 29 March, *Maldives Independent*, viewed 11 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/sangu-tv-slapped-with-mvr100000-defamation-fine-136969>

- 2018c, ‘Villa resorts owe $5 million in taxes’, *Maldives Independent*, 22 January, viewed 14 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/business/villa-resorts-owe-5-million-in-taxes-135291>

- 2018d, ‘Maldives man ‘beheaded in Syria’ had history of extremism’, *Maldives Independent*, July 25, viewed 14 November 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/maldives-man-beheaded-in-syria-had-history-of-extremism-139537>

- 2018e, ‘Maldives presidential poll to be held September 23’, *Maldives Independent*, 8 June, viewed 23 January 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/maldives-presidential-poll-to-be-held-september-23-138716>

- 2018f, ‘Massive erection of Maldives president spotted in capital’, *Maldives Independent*, 30 August, viewed 4 September 2018, <https://maldivesindependent.com/society/massive-erection-of-maldives-president-spotted-in-capital-140706>

- 2018g, ‘Election monitors and observers lack Maldives visa’, *Maldives Independent*, 21 September, viewed 23 January 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/society/election-monitors-and-observers-lack-maldives-visa-141368>

- 2018h, ‘Maldives police asked to probe ‘behead Nasheed’ call’, *Maldives Independent*, 27 August, viewed 22 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/maldives-police-asked-to-probe-behead-nasheed-call-140625>

- 2018i, ‘New military welfare company formed’, *Maldives Independent*, 17 October, viewed 27 January 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/new-military-welfare-company-formed-142107>

- 2018j, ‘Q&A: Navaanavi’, *Maldives Independent*, 27 December, viewed 11 January 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/feature-comment/qa-navaanavi-143285>

- 2018k, ‘EU and UN ‘not interested’ in observing Maldives election’, *Maldives Independent*, 27 August, viewed 24 January 2020, < https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/eu-and-un-not-interested-in-observing-maldives-election-140587>

- 2018l, ‘Live blog: Maldives State of Emergency’, *Maldives Independent*, 6 February, viewed 9 February 2018, http://maldivesindependent.com/politics/live-blog-maldives-state-of-emergency-135709

- 2019, ‘Rilwan killed by Maldives group linked to al-Qaeda, presidential commission reveals’, *Maldives Independent*, 1 September, viewed 11 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/crime-2/rilwan-killed-by-maldives-group-linked-to-al-qaeda-presidential-commission-reveals-147705>

- 2019b, ‘Nasheed apologises for ‘no jobs for pepper spray’ comments’, *Maldives Independent*, 3 September, viewed 24 September 2019, <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/nasheed-apologises-for-no-jobs-for-pepper-spray-comments-147692>

Maldives Royal Family, *Maldives National Security Service*, Maldives Royal Family Official Website: Majid’s Pages, viewed 5 October 2018, <http://www.maldivesroyalfamily.com/maldives_nss.shtml>

Maldives Times 2018, ‘Maldives top court rejects president’s petition for fresh polls’, *Maldives Times*, 21 October, viewed 27 January 2019, <https://maldivestimes.com/maldives-top-court-rejects-presidents-petition-for-fresh-polls/>

- 2017, ‘Asst Police Commissioner Fairoosh dismissed’, *Maldives Times,* 1 November, viewed 1 August 2020, <https://maldivestimes.com/asst-police-commissioner-fairoosh-dismissed/>

Maloney, C 2013, *People of the Maldive Islands*, Orient Blackswan Private Limited, New Delhi.

Mancham, JR 1983, *Paradise Raped: Life, Love and Power in the Seychelles*, Methuen London Ltd., London.

Manik, AHH 10 August 1997, ‘Chapter 1 – Mohamed Ameen’s Services to the nation’, *Yesterday (Iyye)*, viewed 15 August 2017, <http://www.maldivesculture.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=30&Itemid=42>

- 10 August 1997a, ‘Preface and Introductions’, *Yesterday (Iyye)*, viewed 10 August 2017, <http://www.maldivesculture.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=29<emid=42>

- *Maldives – British Protectorate*’, viewed 9 August 2017, <http://www.maldivesculture.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=38<emid=58>

Marshall, M.G. Marshall, D.R. May 2 2018. *Coup d’État Events, 1946-2017 Codebook.* Center for Systemic Peace.

Mathiot, T 2014, *The 50th Anniversary of SPUP/SPPF/Parti Lepep 1964-2014 – A chronological account in words and images*, Ministry for Youth Sports and Culture, Seychelles, viewed 13 November 2018, <http://www.pfsr.org/history-of-seychelles/the-50th-anniversary-of-spupsppfparti-lepep-1964-2014/>

McAteer, W 2008, *To be a Nation – The History of Seychelles, 1920-1976*, Pristine Books, Mahe, Seychelles.

- 2000, *Hard Times in Paradise - The History of the Seychelles, 1827-1919*, Pristine Books, Mahe, Seychelles.

- 1991, *Rivals in Eden – A History of the French settlement and British conquest of the Seychelles Islands, 1742-1818*, The Book Guild Ltd, Sussex.

MEA India 2018, *India-Seychelles Bilateral Relations*, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, 14 January, viewed 11 November 2019, <https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Bilateral_Brief_Seychelles_2018.pdf>

MFA Maldives, *Golden Jubilee of Maldives Membership at the UN*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Maldives, viewed 17 August 2018, <https://www.foreign.gov.mv/index.php/en/international-issues/maldives-at-un>

Michel, J 2011 *Distant Horizons: My Reflections*, Rila Publications Ltd., London.

Minivan News 2015, ‘Judge Abdulla suspected of involvement in “contract killing,” says Nasheed’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 18 March, viewed 22 August 2017, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/tag/criminal-court-chief-judge-abdulla-mohamed>

- 2015b, ‘Nasheed trial “not free or fair,” says Maldivian Democracy Network’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 12 March, viewed 26 August 2019, https://minivannewsarchive.com/tag/maldivian-democracy-network-mdn

- 2015c, ‘10,000 protest in Malé, call for President Yameen’s resignation’, *Minivan News – Archive*, February 27, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/live-blog-mdp-jp-mass-protest-underway-93007>

- 2015d, ‘Brigadier General Ahmed Shahid appointed new Vice Chief of Defence Force’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 9 February, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/tag/maldives-national-defence-force>

- 2012, ‘Police crackdown sparks riots across the Maldives – “acts of terrorism” say police’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 8 February, viewed 24 July 2020, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/live-mohamed-nasheed-reported-injured-as-mdp-supporters-clash-with-security-forces-31688>

Ministry of Fisheries 2019, *Atolls of Maldives*, Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, The President’s Office, Maldives, viewed 28 June 2019, <http://www.atollsofmaldives.gov.mv/>

Ministry of National Planning 2009, Roadmap for Democracy and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development 2010-2014 – A Better Fiji for All, December, Government of Fiji, Suva.

Ministry of Planning and National Development 2007, 'Map of Maldives', *Seventh National Development Plan 2006-2010*, Ministry of Planning and National Development, Government of Maldives, Maldives, p. vii, viewed 15 July 2020, <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/seventh_ndp.pdf>

Mishra, N 2019, *In Conversation with Maldivian President Mohamed Nasheed*, February 27, Pacific Council on International Policy, Los Angeles, viewed 17 July 2019, <https://www.pacificcouncil.org/newsroom/conversation-maldivian-president-mohamed-nasheed>

Moala, J 2018, Jale Moala: Fiji's longest day – George Speight and the march of madness, *Pacific Media Watch*, May 19, viewed 11 June 2019, <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2018/05/19/jale-moala-fijis-longest-day-george-speight-and-the-march-of-madness/>

MoDNS 2012, *Reshaping the Defence Sector of a Secure Maldives - Defence White Paper 2012*, Ministry of Defence and National Security (MoDNS), Government of the Republic of Maldives, Maldives.

MOFA Fiji, *Fiji and the United Nations*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Fiji, viewed 17 August 2018, <http://www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj/news-release/10-foreign-policy/foreign-policy/6-fiji-and-the-united-nations>

MOG 2018, *2018 Fijian General Election – Final Report of the Multinational Observer Group*, Multinational Observer Group (MOG), Fiji Elections 2018, viewed 19 June 2019, <https://www.mog.org.fj/>

- 2014, *2014 Fijian Elections – Final Report of the Multinational Observer Group*, Multinational Observer Group (MOG), Fijian Elections Office, Suva, Fiji, viewed 19 June 2019, <http://www.parliament.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2014-General-Elections-Final-Report-of-the-Multinational-Observer-Group-1.pdf>

Mohamed, IM 2019, 'History: Road to Independence', *Sun Online International*, Sun Media Group, Malé, Maldives, viewed 5 July 2019, <https://en.sun.mv/49689>

Musthaq F 2014, 'Shifting Tides in South Asia: Tumult in the Maldives', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April 2014, pp. 164-170.

n.a. 2008, *Armed Forces Act 2008*, Act Number: 1/2008, Attorney General's Office, Republic of Maldives, viewed 14 August 2019, <http://agoffice.gov.mv/pdf/sublawe/ArmedForces.pdf>

n.a. 2008, *Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008*, Functional Translation by Ms Dheena Hussain, viewed 14 August 2019, <http://agoffice.gov.mv/pdf/constitution.pdf>

n.a. 2008, *Police Act 2008*, Unofficial Translation of Law Number 05/2008, translated by Chief Inspector of Police Abdulla Phairoosch December 2009, viewed 14 August 2019, <https://www.policinglaw.info/assets/downloads/2008_Maldives_Police_Act_(Unofficial_English_translation).pdf>

Naahee, M 2013, ‘Two more MNDF officers suspended indefinitely, Brigadier General removed from command’, *Minivan News – Archive*, October 5, viewed 17 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/two-more-mndf-officers-suspended-indefinitely-brigadier-general-demoted-67713>

- 2012, ‘Police follow MNDF in forming cooperative society to conduct business activities’, *Minivan News – Archive*, September 3, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/police-follow-mndf-in-forming-cooperative-society-to-conduct-business-activities-43301>

Naigulevu, F 2018, ‘Australia assists Fiji redevelop Blackrock Camp’, *The Fiji Times*, 23 August, viewed 29 August 2018, <http://www.fijitimes.com/australia-assists-fiji-redevelop-blackrock-camp/>

Naikaso, F & Narayan V 2016, ‘Biman Prasad voted out as Chair of Public Accounts Committee’, *fijivillage.com*, 12 May, viewed 15 December 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news/Biman-Prasad-voted-out-as-Chair-of-Public-Accounts-Committee-9s2k5r>

Naish, A 2012, ‘Police summon Chief Criminal Court Judge Abdulla Mohamed for questioning’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 16 January, viewed 13 August 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/police-summon-chief-criminal-court-judge-abdulla-mohamed-for-questioning-30830>

- 2012b, ‘Police crackdown on February 8 “brutal”, “without warning”: HRCM’, *Minivan News – Archive*, August 22, viewed 24 July 2020, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/police-crackdown-on-february-8-brutal-without-warning-hrcm-42434>

Naqelevuki V 2018, ‘Consensus reached’, *The Fiji Times*, 17 August, viewed 17 August 2018, <http://www.fijitimes.com/consensus-reached/>

Narayan, V 2018a, ‘Court dismisses Nur Bano Ali and Aliz Pacific’s application against Auditor General and Attorney General’, *fijivillage.com*, 7 February, viewed 21 June 2019, <http://fijivillage.com/news/Court-dismisses-Nur-Bano-Ali-and-Aliz-Pacifics-application-against-Auditor-General-and-Attorney-General-r29ks5>

- 2018b, ‘Jay Dhir Singh convicted of contempt of scandalizing the court’, *Fijivillage*, 14 June, viewed 1 July 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news/Jay-Dhir-Singh-convicted-of-contempt-of-scandalizing-the-court-2r95sk/>

- 2015, ‘Jioji Konrote sworn-in as President’, *Fijivillage.com*, 12 November, viewed 6 July 2020, <https://www.fijivillage.com/news/Jioji-Konrote-sworn-in-as-President-k52r9s/>

- 2014, ‘Fiji TV given another six month extension’, *Fijivillage.com*, June 19, viewed 20 June 2014, <http://fijivillage.com/news/Fiji-TV-given-another-six-month-extension-s25rk9/>

- 2014, ‘FijiFirst secures 32 out of the 50 parliament seats’, *Fijivillage.com*, 22 September, viewed 13 September 2018, <http://fijivillage.com/news-feature/FijiFirst-secures-32-out-of-the-50-Parliament-Seats-rs92k5>

Narayan, V & Turaga, S 2014, ‘Multinational Observer Group says this was a credible election’, *Fijivillage.com*, September 18, viewed September 22 2014, <http://fijivillage.com/news/Multinational-Observer-Group-says-this-was-a-credible-election-5k9sr2/>

Narsey, W 24 July 2016, *USP History/Politics with no place for Dakuvula and Sanday in 1986*, Blog at WordPress.com, viewed 24 November 2018, <https://narseyonfiji.wordpress.com/2016/07/24/usp-historypolitics-with-no-place-for-dakuvula-and-sanday-in-1986/>

Naseem, A 2015, ‘The Honeymoon is Over: Maldives as a Growing Security Threat in the Indian Ocean’, *Irish Studies in International Affairs - Special Focus: Conflict Resolution in South Asia*, Vol. 26, pp. 99-119.

- 2010, ‘Majlis amend law over Rf600,000 a year retirement package to former judge with fraud record’, *Minivan News – Archive*, Maldives, 29 December, viewed 10 August 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/majlis-amend-laws-over-rf600000-a-year-retirement-package-to-former-judge-with-fraud-record-14647>

Nasheed, M 2012, ‘The Dregs of Dictatorship’, *The New York Times*, February 8, viewed 26 August 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/08/opinion/in-the-maldives-strangled-democracy.html

Nation 1977a, ‘The hard road of freedom’, *Nation*, Seychelles, 28/29 June, vol. 1, no. 16.

- 1977b, ‘A Government of the people for the people’, *Nation*, Seychelles, July 12, vol. 1, no. 27, p. 1.

- 1977c, ‘The Role of the Liberation Army’, *Nation*, Seychelles, August 2, vol. 1, no. 52, p. 2-3.

- 1977d, ‘President Rene issues ultimatum to former Ministers “Stop Acts of Treason and Return Now or Never”’, *Nation*, Seychelles, August 10, vol. 1, no. 52, p. 1.

- 1977e, ‘Second Chance for Prisoners – President Rene Declares Amnesty’, *Nation*, Seychelles, August 23, vol. 1, no. 62, p. 1.

National Bureau of Statistics, November 2017, *Seychelles in Figures – 2017 Edition*. National Bureau of Statistics (NBoS), Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles.

NationMaster 2018, ‘Countries Compared by Military > Personnel’, *International Statistics at NationMaster.com*, viewed 28 March 2018, <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Military/Personnel>.

- 2018, ‘Countries Compared by Military > Personnel > Per capita’. *International Statistics at NationMaster.com*, viewed 28 March 2018, <http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/stats/Military/Personnel/Per-capita>

NBoS 2015, *Maldives – Population and Housing Census 2014*, National Bureau of Statistics (NBoS), Ministry of Finance and Treasury, Male’.

- 2014, *Maldives Population & Housing Census 2014 – Statistical Release: IV Employment*, National Bureau of Statistics (NBoS), Ministry of Finance & Treasury, Male’, Republic of Maldives.

NDI December 7 2004, *Assessment of the Opportunities and the Challenges to the Development of Political Parties in the Maldives – Draft – November 29 2004*, The National Democratic Institute (NDI) for International Affairs, Washington.

Nelson D 2012, ‘Maldives president resigns after police and army mutiny’, *The Telegraph*, 7 February, viewed 21 July 2020, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/maldives/9066746/Maldives-president-resigns-after-police-and-army-mutiny.html>

New York Times 2018, ‘Behind on payments to China, Sri Lanka coughed up territory instead’, *The Economic Times*, 26 June, viewed 24 August 2018, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/behind-on-payments-to-china-sri-lanka-coughed-up-territory-instead/articleshow/64746755.cms>

- 1981, ‘Coup Attempt Fails in Dominica’, Archives, *The New Yok Times*, 20 December, viewed 26 May 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/12/20/world/coup-attempt-fails-in-dominica.html>

Newbury, C 2008, ‘Chieftaincy in Transition: Secularisation and Tribute in Pre-cession Fiji’, *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 43, no. 2, September 2008, pp. 167-187.

Newland, L 2015, ‘The Lost Tribes of Israel – and the Genesis of Christianity in Fiji: Missionary Notions of Fijian Origin from 1835 to Cession and Beyond’, *Oceania*, vol. 85, iss. 3, 2015, Oceania Publications, pp. 256-270.

NGOs Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning Fiji, August 2007, *Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Concerning the Republic of the Fiji Islands – Endorsed by three Fiji Non-Government Organisations*, Prepared by Citizens’ Constitutional Forum (CCF), Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA), and Women’s Action for Change (WAC), viewed 17 June 2020, <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/FJI/INT_CERD_NGO_FJI_72_8768_E.pdf>

Nicole, R 2011, *Disturbing History – Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji*, University of Hawai’i Press, Honolulu.

NLTB, *Frequently Asked Questions*, Native Lands Trust Board (NLTB) Fiji Islands, viewed 2 April 2019, <https://nltb.com.fj/faqs.html>

Norris, P 1999, 'Introduction - The Growth of Critical Citizens?', in Norris, P (ed), *Critical Citizens – Global Support for Democratic Government*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, pp. 1-27.

Norton, R 2004, 'Seldom a transition with such aplomb – From Confrontation to Conciliation on Fiji's path to independence', *The Journal of Pacific History,* vol. 39, no. 2, 2004, pp. 163-184.

- 2002, 'Accommodating Indigenous Privilege – Britain's Dilemma in Decolonising Fiji', *The Journal of Pacific History,* vol. 37, no. 2, 2002, pp. 133-156.

- 1986, 'Chapter 3 Colonial Fiji – Ethnic divisions and elite conciliation', (ed.) Lal, BV *Politics in Fiji – Studies in Contemporary History*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 52-73.

Nossiter, BD 16 September 1978, 'Seychelles Intrigue', *The Washington Post*, viewed 13 November 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/09/16/seychelles-intrigue/e78ad441-64e0-4662-8b0c-c20a82124d17/?utm_term=.edfb5a5fe20f>

Nthai, S 2005, *Developing Justice in Developing States: The Comoros Islands Experience*. Paper delivered at the 19th International Conference on Modernisation of Criminal Justice Systems, organized by the International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law: Edinburgh, Scotland, 26-30 June 2005 by Adv. Seth Nthai, Member of the Pretoria Bar and Judicial Service Commission (Presidential Nominee).

Nuttin, X, Schulz S & Vuylsteke V 2006, *Note – On the Maldives*, European Parliament, Brussels.

O'Donnell G & Schmitter PC 1986, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule – Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Maryland.

O'Gorman, M 2019, *Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life: Materials, Intimacy and Being Creole in London and Seychelles*, PhD Thesis, PhD in Social Anthropology, The University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

O'Sullivan, D 2018, *Bainimarama wins again in Fiji, helped by muzzling the media, unions and the church*, The Conversation, 20 November, viewed 30 January 2019, <https://theconversation.com/bainimarama-wins-again-in-fiji-helped-by-muzzling-the-media-unions-and-the-church-107192>

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions Suva 2016, 'DPP Charges Fiji Times With Inciting Communal Antagonism', *Fiji Sun Online*, 17 August, viewed 10 December 2018, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2016/08/17/dpp-charges-fiji-times-with-inciting-communal-antagonism/>

OHCHR 2013, *Response Maldives 01072013 – Legal security of tenure, including protection from forced eviction*, viewed 29 June 2019,

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/SecurityTenure/ResponseMaldives01072013.pdf>

OSCE/ODHIR 2005, *Election Observation*, Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) (OSCE/ODHIR), Warsaw.

Palinkas, LA, Horwitz, SM, Green, CA, Wisdom, JP, Duan, N & Hoagwood, K 2015, 'Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research', Adm Policy Ment Health, vol. 42, no. 5, September 2015, pp. 533-544, viewed 7 September 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4012002/>

Parliament of Fiji 1997, *Defending Fiji – Defence White Paper 1997, Parliamentary Paper No. 3 of 1997*, Government Printer, Suva.

Payne, A & Sutton, P 1993, 'Lilliput under Threat: the Security Problems of Small Island and Enclave Developing States', *Political Studies*, XLI, Political Studies Association, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 579-593.

Peceny, M & Pickering, J 2006, 'Forging Democracy at Gunpoint', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 50, no. 3, September 2006, pp. 539-559.

Pemstein, D, Meserve, SA & Melton J 2010, 'Democratic Compromise: A Latent Variable Analysis of Ten Measures of Regime Type', *Political Analysis*, vol. 18, no. 4, Autumn 2010, pp. 426-449.

Perlmutter, A 1981, *Modern Authoritarianism – A Comparative Institutional Analysis*, Yale University Press, New York.

Population Reference Bureau (PRB) July 2017, *Maldives' Population Dynamics*, PRB, viewed 6 August 2018, <https://www.prb.org/maldives-population-dynamics/>

Porter, T 2019, 'See inside Diego Garcia, a secretive US Navy base on British land at the center of a bitter tug-of-war in the Indian Ocean', *Business Insider*, 2 September, viewed 8 November 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.com/photos-diego-garcia-air-base-indian-ocean-2019-8>

Porto, JG 2003, 'Coup D'Etat in Sao Tome and Principe, Africa Watch', *African Security Review*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 33-35.

Prabha, J 2018, 'Beware of fake news', *Fiji Sun*, 16 July, pp. 1-2.

Prasad, B & Singh S 2008, 'Coups, Media and Democracy in Fiji', *Fijian Studies – A Journal of Contemporary Fiji*, vol. 6, nos. 1 & 2, May & November 2008, Fiji Institute of Applies Studies, pp. 1-8.

Przeworski, A 1991, *Democracy and the market – Political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, United States of America.

Puamau, PQ 2001, ‘A Post-colonial Reading of Affirmative Action in Education in Fiji’, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 109-123.

Radio Australia 2014, ‘Fiji set for September 17 poll’, *ABC Radio Australia*, March 29, viewed 11 November 2014, <www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/2014-03-28/fiji-set-for-september-17-poll/1287006>

Radio New Zealand (RNZ) 2007, ‘Fiji court awards damages to academic tortured by police in 1990’, *RNZ*, 7 September 2007, viewed 29 June 2018, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/172500/fiji-court-awards-damages-to-academic-tortured-by-police-in-1990>.

Rai, S 2011, *In Exile at Home – A Fiji-Indian Story*, Partial Thesis for Doctor in Creative Arts, The University of Sydney, Australia.

RajjeMV 2018, ‘Four officers of the military’s SPG dismissed’, *RajjeMV*, 7 March, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://raajje.mv/28183>

Rasheed, AA 2014, ‘Historical institutionalism in the Maldives: A case of governance failure’, *The Maldives National Journal of Research*, vol. 2, no. 1, June 2014, pp. 7-28.

- 2013, *Tourism, Economic Development and Governance in the Maldives: A Historical Institutional Evaluation*, PhD Thesis, The University of Queensland, Australia.

Rasheed, Z 2018, ‘Maldives President Yameen ‘received $1.5m in cash’ before vote’, *Al Jazeera*, 3 October, viewed 22 September 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/maldives-president-received-15m-hard-cash-vote-180930083126271.html>

- 2017, ‘Maldives parliament shut down to stop speaker’s removal’, *Al Jazeera*, 24 July, viewed 4 September 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/07/maldives-parliament-shut-stop-speaker-removal-170724102004891.html>

- 2015, ‘On social media, an outpouring of support for ex university vice chancellor’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 12 July, viewed 14 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/tag/national-university-act>

- 2013a, ‘MNDF dismisses three senior officers in ongoing firing spree’, *Minivan News – Archive*, December 1, viewed 17 September 2013, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/mndf-dismisses-three-senior-officers-in-ongoing-firing-spree-72533>

- 2013b, ‘Lieutenant Colonel Zubair “forced” to retire from MNDF’, *Minivan News – Archive*, 4 December, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/lieutenant-colonel-zubair-forced-to-retire-from-mndf-72771>

Ratuva S 2016, ‘Chapter 2 – Shifting democracy: Electoral changes in Fiji’, in Ratuva S & Lawson, S (eds), *The People Have Spoken: The 2014 Elections in Fiji*, ANU Press, The Australian National University, Australia, pp. 17-40.

- 2014, ‘Ethnicity, affirmative action and coups in Fiji: indigenous development policies between the 2000 and 2006 coups’, *Social Identities*, vol. 20, nos. 2-3, pp. 139-154.

- April 2011, ‘The Military Coups in Fiji: Reactive and Transformative Tendencies’, *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 96-120.

- 2007, ‘Chapter 3 – The pre-election ‘cold war’: the role of the Fiji military during the 2006 election’, in Firth, S & Fraenkel, J (eds), *From Election to Coup in Fiji – The 2006 Campaign and its Aftermath*, ANU E Press, Asia Pacific Press and IPS Publications, Canberra, pp. 26-45.

Ratuva S & Lawson, S 2016, ‘Chapter 1 – The People Have Spoken …’, in Ratuva S & Lawson, S (eds), *The People Have Spoken: The 2014 Elections in Fiji*, ANU Press, The Australian National University, Australia, pp. 1-16.

Ravuvu, A 1991, *The façade of democracy—Fijian struggles for political control 1830-1987*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

- 1987, *The Fijian Ethos*, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Ray, S 2018, ‘Riot police shut down Maldives parliament after leader’s ‘coup’’, *The Times*, 5 February, viewed 10 September 2019, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/riot-police-shut-down-maldives-parliament-after-leader-s-coup-kc3pg9lvz>

Reeves, P 1998, ‘The Making of the Fiji Constitution’, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. 107, no. 3, September, pp. 223-228.

Reuters 2018, ‘Maldives seeks scaling back of Indian presence as it woos China’, *Saudi Gazette*, August 10, viewed 24 September 2019, <http://saudigazette.com.sa/article/540897/World/Asia/Maldives-seeks-scaling-back-of-Indian-presence-as-it-woos-China>

- 2013, ‘Maldives Supreme Court annuls presidential election result’, *The Telegraph*, 8 October, viewed 23 August 2017, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/maldives/10362617/Maldives-Supreme-Court-annuls-presidential-election-result.html

- 2000, ‘Fiji Military Takes Control and Declares Martial Law’, *Reuters*, 30 May, viewed 16 June 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/30/world/fiji-military-takes-control-and-declares-martial-law.html>

RFMF 2020, *Current Disposition of Troops 2020 Update,* RFMF (Republic of Fiji Military Forces), Suva, Fiji, viewed 25 June 2020, <https://www.rfmf.mil.fj/fiji-peacekeeping-mission/>

- 2018, *Current Disposition of Troops*, RFMF (Republic of Fiji Military Forces), Suva, Fiji, viewed 1 November 2018, <http://www.rfmf.mil.fj/fiji-peacekeeping-mission/>

- 2016, *Fiji Peacekeeping Mission – Chronology of Peacekeeping Missions*, RFMF (Republic of Fiji Military Forces), Suva, Fiji, viewed 1 November 2018, <http://www.rfmf.mil.fj/history/>

Richard, H 2016, 'The real-life garden of Eden?', *BBC*, 5 December, viewed 9 November 2019, <www.bbc.com/travel/story/20161128-the-real-life-garden-of-eden>

RNZ 2018, 'Hughes' documents illustrate Fiji coup moves', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 4 October, viewed 14 November 2018, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/367859/hughes-documents-illustrate-fiji-coup-moves>

- 2018b, 'Voting suspended at 26 polling stations in Fiji due to weather', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 14 November, viewed 7 July 2020, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375866/voting-suspended-at-26-polling-stations-in-fiji-due-to-weather>

- 2018c, 'Fiji's Attorney General denies avoiding elections challenge', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 14 December, viewed 10 September 2020, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/378285/fiji-s-attorney-general-denies-avoiding-election-challenge>

- 2017, 'New Electoral Commission for Fiji announced', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 4 February, viewed 04 January 2019, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/323793/new-electoral-commission-for-fiji-announced>

- 2016, 'Another Fiji Government MP Resigns', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 31 August, viewed 25 June 2019, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/312245/another-fiji-government-mp-resigns>

- 2006, 'Defence White Paper in Fiji recommends cutting army by 50%', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 5 June, viewed 21 June 2020, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/162494/defence-white-paper-in-fiji-recommends-cutting-army-by-50-percent>

Robertson, R 2017, *The General's Goose – Fiji's Tale of Contemporary Misadventure*, ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra.

Robertson, R & Sutherland W 2001, *Government by the Gun – The Unfinished Business of Fiji's 2000 coup*, Pluto Press, Australia.

Robinson, JJ 2012, 'Q&A: Former Brigadier General Ibrahim Mohamed Didi', *Minivan News – Archive*, August 8, viewed 18 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/qa-former-brigadier-general-ibrahim-mohamed-didi-41741>

Robinson, JJ 2015, *The Maldives – Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy*, C Hurst & Company (Publishers) Ltd, London.

- 2013, 'Rajje TV destroyed in arson attack', *Minivan News – Archive*, 7 October, viewed 29 August 2017, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/raajje-tv-destroyed-in-arson-attack-67833>

- 2013a, 'MNDF officers sign appeal not to obey government's orders following expiry of presidential term', *Minivan News – Archive*, 9 November, viewed 17 September 2019, <https://minivannewsarchive.com/politics/mndf-officers-sign-appeal-not-to-obey-governments-orders-following-expiry-of-presidential-term-71225>

Roopnaraine, R 2010, 'Resonances of Revolution – Grenada, Suriname, Guyana', *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, Taylor & Francis, DOI: 10. 1080/ 13698010903553187, pp. 11-34.

Round, S 2016, 'Third opposition MP suspended from Fiji parliament', *Radio New Zealand (RNZ)*, 30 September, viewed 15 December 2018, <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/201818083/third-opposition-mp-suspended-from-fiji-parliament>

Saberin, Z 2018, 'What's behind Saudi-UAE aid to Maldives?', *Al Jazeera*, 1 March, viewed 14 November 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/saudi-uae-aid-maldives-180228130657644.html>

- 2018a, 'India's Seychelles military base plan hits choppy waters', *Al Jazeera*, 22 March, viewed 29 August 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/india-seychelles-military-base-plan-hits-choppy-waters-180321150926691.html>

Samoa Observer 2018, Pohiva says 'slow down' on Chinese loans, *Samoa Observer*, 15 August, viewed 17 August 2018, <http://www.fijitimes.com/pohiva-says-slow-down-on-chinese-loans/>

Savike, J 2018a, 'Retrial ordered in Bulitavu, Karunaratne sedition case', *The Fiji Times*, 24 August, viewed 15 December 2018, <https://www.fijitimes.com/retrial-ordered-in-bulitavu-karunaratne-sedition-case/>

- 2018b, 'Court grants leave', *The Fiji Times*, 21 December, Suva, p. 2.

Scarr, D 1999, *Seychelles since 1770: History of a Slave and Post-Slavery Society*, Africa World Press Inc., Trenton, NJ.

- (ed.) 1983, *Fiji: The Three-legged Stool – Selected Writings of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna*, Macmillan Education – For the Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Biography Committee, London.

Schedler, A 2002, 'The Nested Game of Democratization by Elections', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 23, no. 1, January 2002, Sage Publications, pp. 103-122.

Schieder, D 2017, ‘The 1961 British Military Recruitment Campaign in Fiji: Historical Circumstances, Discourses of Fijian Culture and Personal Narratives’, *Oceania*, vol. 87, issue 2, 2017, pp. 139-155.

Schmidt, N, *Slavery and its Abolition, French Colonies, Research and Transmission of Knowledge*, Collective Volume – The Slave Route Project, UNESCO.

Seibert, G 2003, ‘The Bloodless Coup of July 16 in Sao Tome e Principe’, *Lusotopie 2003*, pp. 245-260.
Seychelles Map, 2018, Air Seychelles, viewed 3 August 2018, <http://blog.airseychelles.com/practical-info-seychelles/>

Seychelles Nation 2020, ‘SPDF geared and read to serve during the COVID-19 crisis’, *Seychelles Nation,* 1 April, viewed 28 August 2020, <http://www.nation.sc/articles/4155/spdf-geared-and-ready-to-serve-during-the-covid-19-crisis>

- 2019a, ‘Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Commission hearings’, *Seychelles Nation*, 10 September, viewed 4 December 2019, <http://www.nation.sc//articles/1506/truth-reconciliation-and-national-unity-commission-hearings>

- 2019b, ‘Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Commission – Commission hears more complaints’, *Seychelles Nation,* 9 November, viewed 8 December 2019, <http://www.nation.sc//articles/2302/truth-reconciliation-and-national-unity-commission>

- 2018, ‘Assembly approves creation of Human Rights Commission’, *Seychelles Nation*, 1 June, viewed 30 November 2018, <http://www.nation.sc/article.html?id=259074>

Seychelles Police 2016, *Eight police officers promoted*, The Seychelles Police Force, Seychelles, 23 July, viewed 18 December 2019, <https://www.police.gov.sc/police-communique/news/item/47-eight-police-officers-promoted>

Shaahunaz, F 2018a, ‘Opposition MP Faris Maumoon arrested again for bribery’, *The Edition*, Maldives, 27 January, viewed 9 September 2019, <https://edition.mv/news/5028>

- 2018b, ‘Ex-Auditor General Niyaz to return to Maldives after 2 years’, *The Edition*, Maldives, 4 October, viewed 8 September 2019, <https://edition.mv/news/7398>

- 2018c, ‘Candidates under political asylum face disqualification with new bill’, *The Edition*, Maldives, 26 June, viewed 9 September 2019, <https://edition.mv/news/6328>

Shillington, K 2014, *Albert René: The Father of Modern Seychelles – A Biography,* UWA Publishing, Crawley, Western Australia.

Singh, A 2007, *Making it Right – A Sequel to Silent Warriors*, Vicas Press, Lautoka, Fiji.

Singh, S 2017, *State of the Media Review in Four Melanesian Countries – Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu – in 2015*, Discussion Paper 2017/1, State Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM), College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University.

SMH 2007, 'Fijian peacekeepers to stay: UN to NZ', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH), 25 January, viewed 14 November 2018, <https://www.smh.com.au/world/fijian-peacekeepers-to-stay-un-to-nz-20070125-gdpbi8.html>

SNA 2020, 'Seychelles turns 250: How a culture, language, food and island music began', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 27 August 2020, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/13446/Seychelles+turns++How+a+culture%2C+language%2C+food+and+island+music+began>

- 2020a, 'Seychelles disappointed at EU blacklisting, trying to get removed by April', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 20 February, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/12462/Seychelles+disappointed+at+EU+blacklisting%2C+trying+to+get+removed+by+April>

- 2020b, 'Right to work, freedom from torture among 32 complaints received by Seychelles' Human Rights Commission', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 19 June, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/13083/Right+to+work%2C+freedom+from+torture+among++complaints+received+by+Seychelles%27+Human+Rights+Commission>

- 2020c, 'Once the opposition, LDS celebrates a political sweep and new control of Seychelles', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 25 October, viewed 16 November 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/13764/Once+the+opposition%2C+LDS+celebrates+a+political+sweep+and+new+control+of+Seychelles>

- 2018, 'President of Seychelles asks for forgiveness from family of police officer slain in 1977 coup', *SNA*, 29 March, viewed 1 July 2018, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/8913/President+of+Seychelles+asks+for+forgiveness+from+family+of+police+officer+slain+in++coup>

- 2018a, 'Chief of Seychelles Defence Forces retirement announced after 41 years of service', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 27 October, viewed 13 November 2018, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/9969/Chief+of+Seychelles+Defence+Forces+retirement+announced+after++years+of+service>

- 2018b, '20 Tanzanian officers added to security team at Seychelles' main prison', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 6 September, viewed 13 November 2018, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/9691/+Tanzanian+officers+added+to+security+team+at+Seychelles%27+main+prison>

- 2018c, 'Seychelles debt drops to 60 percent of GDP, IMF says', *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 3 October, viewed 29 August 2020,

<http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/9832/Seychelles+debt+drops+to++percent+of+GDP%2C+IMF+says>

- 2018d, ‘French, Seychellois militaries in joint training exercise centred on illicit drug fight’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 23 November, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10093/French%2C+Seychellois+militaries+in+joint+training+exercise+centred+on+illicit+drug+fight>

- 2018e, ‘Maritime security, combating illicit drugs are areas of cooperation for Seychelles, US’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 13 November, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10048/Maritime+security%2C+combating+illicit+drugs+are+areas+of+cooperation+for+Seychelles%2C+US>

- 2018f, ‘India's $ 68 million grant to help Seychelles fund police station, Attorney General's office, community projects’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), November 12, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10018/India%27s+++million+grant+to+help+Seychelles+fund+police+station%2C+Attorney+General%27s+office%2C+community+projects>

- 2018g, ‘Seychelles' top court sentences former Anti-Corruption Commission official to 8 years’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 7 December, viewed 31 January 2019, <www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/10170/Seychelles%27+top+court+sentences+former+Anti-Corruption+Commission+official+to++years>

- 2017, ‘Truth, Reconciliation, and National Unity Committee to hold reconciliation symposium Sunday’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 6 May, viewed 19 September 2017, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/7215/Truth%2C+Reconciliation%2C+and+National+Unity+Committee+to+hold+reconciliation+symposium+Sunday>

- 2016, ‘Seychelles Constitutional Court orders removal of four people from electoral roll’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 7 September, viewed 18 September 2017, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/5871/Seychelles+Constitutional+Court+orders+removal+of+four+people+from+electoral+roll>

- 2016a, ‘NATO ends anti-piracy operation; Seychelles to continue to monitor sea threats’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 14 December, viewed 17 December 2019, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/6434/NATO+ends+anti-piracy+operation%3B+Seychelles+to+continue+to+monitor+sea+threats>

- 2016b, ‘Seychelles’ top court maintains Constitutional Court decision validating December 2015 presidential election result’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 10 December, viewed 29 August 2017, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/6416/Seychelles+top+court+maintains+Constitutional+Court+decision+validating+December++presidential+election+result>

- 2016c, ‘SNP leader Ramkalawan to remain on Seychelles register of voters’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 12 August, viewed 8 February 2018, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/5734/SNP+leader+Ramkalawan+to+remain+on+Seychelles+register+of+voters>

- 2015, ‘First-round results of presidential election in Seychelles celebrated in spite of looming run-off’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 6 December, viewed 28 January 2019, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/4228/First-round+results+of+presidential+election+in+Seychelles+celebrated+in+spite+of+looming+run-off+-+the+two+top+contenders+say+they+are+ready+for+the+second+round>

- 2015a, ‘Seychelles Constitutional Court ruling declares sections of the Public Order Act are unconstitutional’, *SNA* (Seychelles News Agency), 7 July, viewed 16 December 2019, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/3284/Seychelles+Constitutional+Court+ruling+declares+sections+of+the+Public+Order+Act+are+unconstitutional>

- 2014a, ‘Seychelles commemorates 100 years since the First World War in memory of Seychellois war victims’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), 04 August, viewed 20 March 2018, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/1098/Seychelles+commemorates++years+since+the+First+World+War+in+memory+of+Seychellois+war+victims>

- 2014b, ‘Seychelles taking steps to protect more marine areas of its oceanic zone’, *Seychelles News Agency* (SNA), June 11, viewed 1 October 2019, <http://www.seychellesnewsagency.com/articles/702/Seychelles+taking+steps+to+protect+more+marine+areas+of+its+oceanic+zone>

Sookram, R 2007, ‘Book Review – Grenada in Contemporary Historiography’, February, Small Axe 22, *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, Indiana University Press, pp. 156-163.

Southern African Development Community (SADC). 12 September 2016. SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) to the Republic of Seychelles - Preliminary Statement. Delivered on 12 September 2016. Victoria, Seychelles.

SPDFa *Welcome to Seychelles People’s Defence Forces Website*, Seychelles People’s Defence Forces, viewed 8 November 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150402114751/http://www.defence.sc/>

- SPDFb *Presidential Security Unit*, Seychelles People’s Defence Forces, viewed 8 November 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150405015416/http://www.defence.sc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=51&Itemid=71>

- SPDFc *Special Forces Unit,* Seychelles People’s Defence Forces, viewed 8 November 2018,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150404212622/http://www.defence.sc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=34>

Srebrnik, H 2004, 'Small Island Nations and Democratic Values', *World Development*, vol. 32, no. 2, Elsevier Ltd, pp. 329-341.

St. Ange, A 2007, *Seychelles – The Cry of the People*, Ange St. A, France.

- 2007, *Seychelles: The Cry of A People – A Document recording the Aspirations and Demands made by a People 1964-2006*, Alain St. Ange, France.

- 1991, *Seychelles What Next?* Ange St. A.

St. Ange, A & Georges, B 2005, *Seychelles - In Search of Democracy*, Ange St. A & Georges B, France.

Stango, A 2014, 'Human Rights between Universalism and Cultural Relativism', Italian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, *Chorzowskie Studia Polityczne,* nr 7 rok 2014, pp. 157-171.

State House 2018, *President Faure appoints new chief of Defence Forces*, State House, Office of the President of the Republic of Seychelles, 28 December, viewed 29 August 2020, <http://www.statehouse.gov.sc/news/4248/president-faure-appoints-new-chief-of-defence-forces>

- 2016, *Appointment of Members of the Anti-Corruption Commission*, State House, Office of the President of the Republic of Seychelles, 5 August, viewed 16 December 2019, <http://www.statehouse.gov.sc/news/3107/appointment-of-members-of-the-anti-corruption-commission>

- 2010, *New vision for modern, professional and efficient defence force*, State House, Office of the President of the Republic of Seychelles, 25 November, viewed 17 December 2019, <http://www.statehouse.gov.sc/news/1512/new-vision-for-modern-professional-and-efficient-defence-force->

Stolz, E 2014, 'FijiFirst leader reassured public', *Fiji Broadcasting Corporation*, 11 September, viewed 11 September 2014, <www.fbc.com.fj/fiji/22896/fijifirst-leader-reassured-public>

Susu, A 2014, 'Leave military alone, replies commander', *Fiji Sun Online*, September 6, viewed 8 September 2014, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2014/09/06/leave-military-alone-replies-commander/>

Sun 2019, Parliament committee votes to revoke foreign ownership of Maldivian land, *Sun Media Group*, Male', Maldives, April 9, viewed 29 June 2019, <https://en.sun.mv/53181>

Swami, N 6 November 2018, 'Prove your claim, Chaudhry tells PM', *The Fiji Times*, viewed 8 November 2018, <https://www.fijitimes.com/prove-your-claim-chaudhry-tells-pm/>

- 2018a, ‘Ghai opens up about PM Bainimarama’, *The Fiji Times*, 10 November, viewed 11 November 2018, <https://www.fijitimes.com/ghai-opens-up-about-pm-bainimarama/>

- 2014, ‘Election was free and fair: Electoral Commission’, *The Fiji Times Online*, September 19, viewed 20 September 2014, <www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=280725>

Takala, T 1998, ‘Plato on Leadership’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 17, no. 7, May 1998, Springer, pp. 785-798.

Talei, F 2018a, ‘Rabuka Acquitted in High Court Appeal’, *Fiji Sun Online*, 12 November, viewed 03 January 2019, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/11/12/rabuka-acquitted-in-high-court-appeal/>

- 2018b, ‘Sedition Conviction Excludes SODELPA’s Bulitavu, Fiji United Freedom Party’s Karunaratne From Contesting 2018 Election’, *Fiji Sun Online*, 27 March, viewed 19 June 2019, <https://fijisun.com.fj/2018/03/27/sedition-conviction-excludes-sodelpas-bulitavu-fiji-united-freedom-partys-karunaratne-from-contesting-2018-election/>

Tarai, J 2018, *Fiji elections: the real losses and wins*, Development Policy Centre, Australian National University, viewed 30 January 2019, <http://www.devpolicy.org/fiji-2018-elections-the-real-losses-and-wins-20181203/>

Tarte, S 2010, ‘Fiji Islands’ security challenges and defense policy issues’, *Asia Pacific Countries’ Security Outlook and Its Implications for the Defense Sector*, NIDS Joint Research Series No. 5, Tokyo: The National Institute for Defense Studies, Japan, pp. 67–84, viewed 21 June 2020, <http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/publication/joint_research/series5/pdf/5-5.pdf>

The Commonwealth 2016, *Small States*, viewed 08 April 2016, <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/small-states>

- 2015, *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group: Seychelles Presidential Elections 3-5 December 2015 and Re-Run of Seychelles Presidential Elections 16-18 December 2015*, Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

- 20 December 2015, *Second round of the Seychelles Presidential Election 2015: Observer Group Interim Statement, Statement by Commonwealth Observer Group*, The Commonwealth, viewed 18 August 2017, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/second-round-seychelles-presidential-election-2015-observer-group-interim-statement>

- 22 March 2014, *Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group – Maldives People’s Majlis Election*, The Commonwealth.

- November 2013, *Reports of the Commonwealth Observer Groups – Maldives Presidential Election 7 September 2013 and Re-run of Maldives Presidential Election*

9 November 2013 and Maldives Presidential Run-off Election 16 November 2013, The Commonwealth.

- 5 August 2011, *Commonwealth Expert Team issues Final Report on 2011 Presidential Election in Seychelles*, Commonwealth Secretariat, viewed 29 January 2019, <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/commonwealth-expert-team-issues-final-report-2011-presidential-election-seychelles>

The Economic Times 2014, 'China gives $500,000 to Maldives for restoring water supply', *The Economic Times*, 8 December, viewed 24 September 2019, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/china-gives-500000-to-maldives-for-restoring-water-supply/articleshow/45415107.cms?from=mdr>

The Government of Maldives (GOM) 2006, *The Political Reform Agenda: A Mid-Term Progress Report – A background paper prepared by the Government of the Maldives for the Maldives Partnership Forum to be held in the Maldives on 26 June 2006*, The Government of Maldives.

The Guardian 1983, 'US troops invade Grenada – archive', The Guardian Archive, *Guardian News and Media Limited*, 26 October, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/26/us-troops-invade-grenada-archive>

The Military Balance 2018, 'Chapter Ten: Country comparisons and defence data', *The Military Balance*, vol. 118, no. 1, Routledge, pp. 499-508.

The President's Office, *President Al Ameer Ibrahim Nasir*, The President's Office, Republic of Maldives, viewed 5 July 2019, <https://presidency.gov.mv/PO/FormerPresident/6>

The President's Office (a), *President Mohamed Nasheed*, The President's Office, Republic of Maldives, viewed 17 July 2019, <https://presidency.gov.mv/PO/FormerPresident/4>

The Times 2018, 'Obituary – Geoffrey Caston', *The Times,* Times Newspapers Limited, 30 January, viewed 24 November 2018, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/obituary-geoffrey-caston-smpjrg0d7>

TLTB 2019, *Land Ownership in Fiji*, iTaukei Land Trust Board (TLTB), TLTB Head Office, Suva, viewed 2 April 2019, <https://www.tltb.com.fj/getattachment/Media/Brochures/Land-Ownership-in-Fiji-Booklet-(1).pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>

Torture Victims' Association Maldives June 2012, *This is What I Wanted to Tell You – Addressing the Legacy of Torture and Ill-treatment in the Maldives*, Torture Victims' Association Maldives, Redress, Male.

Transparency International 2018, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2017*, February,

Transparency International – International Secretariat, Berlin.

- 2017, *Maldives: Rescind the summary suspension of 56 lawyers calling for judicial reform*, Transparency International Secretariat, 14 September, viewed 14 September 2019,

<https://www.transparency.org/news/pressrelease/maldives_rescind_the_summary_suspension_of_56_lawyers_calling_for_judicial>

Transparency Maldives 2019, *Election Observation Report: Presidential Election 2018*, viewed 22 September 2019, <http://transparency.mv/v16/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Election-Observation-Report_-1.pdf>

- 2008, *Domestic Observation of the 2008 Maldivian Presidential Election: First Round, 8 October 2008, Second Round, 28 October 2008 – Final Elections Report by Transparency Maldives*, Transparency Maldives.

Trejo, G 2014, 'The Ballot and the Street: An Electoral Theory of Social Protest in Autocracies', *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 12, no. 2, June, pp. 332-352.

Trumbull, R 1970, 'Fiji Raises the Flag of Independence After 96 Years of Rule by British', *Archives – The New York Times*, 10 October, viewed 04 May 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/10/10/archives/fiji-raises-the-flag-of-independence-after-96-years-of-rule-by.html>

UN 27 October 2005, *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers*, United Nations (UN), New York.

UNEP Newsdesk 2015, *Questions and Answers – About: Small Island Developing States*, United Nations Environment Programme, viewed 13 October 2015, <http://www.unep.org/wed/downloads/WED-SIDS-Media-QnA.pdf>

UNESCO 2018, *UNESCO List of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)*, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), viewed 8 August 2018, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/sids/resources/sids-list/>

- 2014, 'UNESCO List of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)', *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation*, viewed 3 March 2014, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/priority-areas/sids/about-unesco-and-sids/sids-list/>

United Nations 30 July 2015, *Issues Facing Small Island Developing States 'Global Challenges' Demanding Collective Responsibility, Secretary-General Tells Security Council*, Security Council 7469th Meeting (AM), United Nations Meetings Coverage, viewed 29 August 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11991.doc.htm>

- 2014, *Population and Development in SIDS 2014,* Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Population Division. United Nations, New York.

United Nations Human Rights Committee 2012, *Consideration of reports submitted by State parties under article 40 of the Covenant – Concluding observations adopted by the Human Rights Committee at its 105th session, 9-27 July 2012: Maldives*, United National International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 31 August 2012.

UN-OHRLLS 2018, *About SIDS – 38 UN Member States*, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island

Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), viewed 9 August 2018, <http://unohrlls.org/about-sids/country-profiles/>

- 2013, *Small Island Developing States in Numbers*, UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), United Nations, New York.

- 2011, *Small Island Developing States – Small Islands Big(ger) Stakes*, Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), United Nations, New York.

UN Peacekeeping 2018, *Fijian troops conclude UNIFIL mission*, United Nations Peacekeeping, 22 December, viewed 18 June 2019, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/fijian-troops-conclude-unifil-mission>

UNSIDS 2014, *About Small Island Developing States - UN Conference on Small Islands Developing States*, viewed 13 October 2015, <http://www.sids2014.org/index.php?menu=1496>

US History, *The U.S. Invasion of Grenada*, United States History, viewed 11 September 2018, <https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h2047.html>

Vakasukawaqa, A 2018, 'Lebanon mission likely to end, says military', *The Fiji Times*, 24 November, viewed 26 November 2018, <https://www.fijitimes.com/lebanon-mission-likely-to-end-says-military/>

- 2016, 'A-G Responds To Monkey Reference', *Fiji Sun Online*, 4 June, viewed 03 January 2019, <http://fijisun.com.fj/2016/06/04/a-g-responds-to-monkey-reference/>

Veenendaal, WP 2015, 'Democracy in microstates: why smallness does not produce a democratic political system', *Democratization*, vol. 22, no. 1, Routledge, pp. 92-112.

Velezinee, A 2012, *The Failed Silent Coup: In Defeat, They Reached for the Gun*, translated by Azra Naseem, 10 September, viewed 9 August 2019, <https://www.dhivehisitee.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/The%20Failed%20Silent%20Coup.pdf>

VNews 2018, 'Assistant Commissioner of Police Mannan's dismissal revoked', *VNews*, Maldives, 30 September, viewed 18 September 2019, <http://vnews.mv/103653>

VOA 17 July 2003, *Nigeria urges Sao Tome and Principe Coup Leaders to Return Power to Civilians*, viewed 10 September 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2003-07-17-12-nigeria/395820.html>

Vukailagi, D 2014, 'Colonel Mosese Tikoitoga is new military commander', *Fiji Television Limited*, 4 March, viewed 4 November 2014, <http://fijione.tv/colonel-mosese-tikoitoga-is-new-military-commander/>

Walzer, M 2003, ‘Chapter 3 - The Idea of Civil Society: A Path to Social Reconstruction’, in Elliott, CM (ed), *Civil Society and Democracy – A Reader*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 63-82.

Weeks, JL 2012, ‘Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict’, *American Political Science Review*, vol. 106, no. 2, May, pp. 326-347.

Weir, C 2014, ‘‘We visit the colo towns… when it is safe to go’: Indigenous Adoption of Methodist Christianity in the Wainibuka and Wainimala Valleys, Fiji, in the 1870s’, *The Journal of Pacific History,* vol. 49, no. 2, pp. 129-150.

White, CM 2006, ‘Moving up the Ranks: Chiefly Status, Prestige, and Schooling in Colonial Fiji’, *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 46, no. 4, Winter, pp. 532-570.

Wuppertal Institut February 2018, *The Calm Before the Storm – An assessment of the 23rd Climate Change Conference COP23 in Bonn*, Wuppertal Institut for Climate, Environment and Energy, Wuppertal, Germany, viewed 9 July 2020, <https://wupperinst.org/fa/redaktion/downloads/publications/COP23-Report.pdf>

Yabaki, Reverend A November 2010, *Critical Engagement and Future Scenarios*, CEO Citizens’ Constitutional Forum (CCF), speech delivered at Victoria University, Melbourne. Citizens’ Constitutional Forum, Suva.

Yin, RK 2012, *Applications of Case Study Research*, SAGE Publications, Inc. California.

- 2009, *Case Study Research – Design and Methods*, Fourth Edition, SAGE Publications, Inc. United States of America.

Zovatto, D 16 September 2018, *The State of Democracy: Stagnation, Regression or Resilience?* IDEA, viewed 17 September 2018, <https://www.idea.int/news-media/news/state-democracy-stagnation-regression-or-resilience>

Zubair, A December 2013, *Challenges to the Consolidation of Democracy: A Case Study of the Maldives,* Master of Arts Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, California.

Appendix

List of people interviewed in Fiji, the Maldives and Seychelles

Political Party Representatives		
Fiji	**Maldives**	**Seychelles**
Laisenia Qarase - Former Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka – leader of the first coup in 1987, became the army commander and Major General in the army after the coup. Also, former Prime Minister, and current leader of the opposition Prof Biman Prasad - Leader of the NFP, professor in economics. Semesa Karavaki - SODELPA MP, former Supervisor of Elections Viliame Gavoka – former hotelier, SODELPA MP Roshika Deo - independent candidate, feminist Dr Eci Nabalarua - NFP Candidate in 2014, Dean of College of Humanities and Education, FNU, in 2016. Mick Beddoes - long-time general voters' politician, leader of the opposition in 2006. Sanjit Patel - former FijiFirst MP, businessman	Ali Hussain – Member of Parliament from Jumhooree Party, lawyer Hamid Abdul Ghafoor- former MDP Minister, former teacher and civil servant Ahmed Naseem - former (MDP) Minister of Foreign Affairs	Reverend Wavel Ramkalawan – leader of the SNP party, leader of the LDS opposition in 2016, elected President in October 2020 Regis Francourt – leader of the new party Seychelles Patrotic Movement in 2016 Ralph Volcere - independent presidential candidate in 2011, also editor of the newspaper *Seychelles Independent* Alexia Amesbury - independent Presidential candidate, lawyer Roger Mancienne - Leader of the LDS party, former newspaper editor. Speaker of the House in October 2020. Gervais Henrie - opposition LDS MP, newspaper editor, deputy speaker in October 2020. Peter Sinon - Deputy Secretary-General of the Parti Lepep.

Civil Society

Fiji	Maldives	Seychelles
Shamima Ali - head of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC) Rev Akuila Yabaki – anti-racism activist, former head of the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF), retired in 2014. Bulu Mataitini - head of the CCF in 2016. Virisila Buadromo - former director of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement Jone Dakuvula – head of the Pacific Dialogue (CSO), political negotiator. Anonymous current head of a civil society organisation Anonymous former head of a civil society organisation	Ahmed Tholal - senior officer with the Transparency Maldives, former Vice-Chair of the Human Rights Commission Maldives (HRCM) Anonymous former senior human rights official Mariyam Shiuna - Executive Director of Transparency Maldives in 2018.	Jules Hoareau - Chairperson of the National Platform for Civil Society Sector in Seychelles in 2016. Bishop French Chang-Him – received Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2017. Mrs Monica Servina – head of the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) in 2016, also a commissioner of human rights Anonymous member of independent institution Anonymous member of international organisaton

Media

Fiji	Maldives	Seychelles
Netani Rika - former editor of the *Fiji Times* newspaper Dr Shailendra Singh – head of the journalism programme at USP. Senior journalist.		

Experts

Fiji	Maldives	Seychelles
Prof Vijay Naidu – human rights defender, professor in	Anonymous former member of elections commission.	Judge Bernardin Renaud - Supreme Court Judge in 2016, also

development studies at USP. Dr Sandra Tarte – head of the School of Government, Development and International Affairs at USP.	Fuwad Thowfeek - former Chair of Maldives Elections Commission Anonymous senior academic and human rights expert Dr Azra Naseem - Maldivian academic, researching on Islamic radicalisation in the Maldives at Dublin City University, Ireland	Chairman of the 1993 Constitution Review Commission. Dennis Hardy – Vice Chancellor of the University of Seychelles in 2016.

Senior and other members of the security forces

Fiji	Maldives	Seychelles
Retired Colonel Sakiusa Raivoce Anonymous two former senior soldiers	Anonymous former senior soldier Abdulla Phairoosch - Former Assistant Police Commissioner	Robert Ernesta – served in the Seychelles army for almost 30 years. Former Chief of Operations in the army. Anonymous two former senior soldiers

Senior and other public servants

Fiji	Maldives	Seychelles
Jioji Kotobalavu – longest serving Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's office, from the 1970s until 2006.	Anonymous former senior public servant (pro-Yameen) Anonymous former public servant in IT sector (pro-Yameen) Anonymous employee in parastatal organisation	Anonymous senior long-term civil servant Ralph Agrippine – director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016, former editor of the *Nation.* Anonymous expatriate staff in Attorney General's office