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Abstract

This thesis examines the socio-economy of smallholder sugar cane farms in Fiji with particular attention to the participation and experiences of women. There is also consideration of the involvement of other household members, especially children in the farm economy. Questions concerning the study are; how are smallholder cane farms operated in terms of allocation of labour and resources? What is the relationship between paid and unpaid work on the farm? What are the notions of family and work that orientate the farm economy and how is this articulated to the production of sugar cane in Fiji? The study also sought to examine how issues concerning the sugar industry at national and global levels played out in a localised context, including the trends towards trade liberalisation resulting in the demise of preferential trading agreements.

The thesis explores these questions from inside the farm through ethnographic research undertaken with twenty farming households during 1996 and 1997. The study examines intra and inter-household relations within smallholdings and is primarily a qualitative account that contextualises the experiences of respondents with historical, socio-economic and comparative literature on Fiji and linkages with the sugar industry at local, national and global levels. The field site was situated on the island of Vanua Levu in the northern region of Fiji. The households in the study comprised both Fijian and Fiji Indian respondents who lived on smallholdings and relied primarily on selling sugar cane for their cash income. The study focuses on the way gender relations intersect with generational relations, denoting age and kinship, in orientating socio-economic processes within the farm.

I conclude that smallholder households are internally differentiated by gender and generation in allocation and control over production and resources. Constructions of seniority which have become embedded in cultural 'traditions' and institutions generally favours older male members of the household which is exemplified by their predominance as household heads and legal title holders to land leases and cane contracts. Familial and household relations are maintained through the process of marriage which was found to be the linchpin between paid and unpaid work on these smallholder farms. I argue that the unpaid work of women and children is integral to the production of cane, by contributing to the cane cultivation process and by performing work that allows other members of the household to participate in cane production. The thesis therefore aims to deconstruct perceptions of separation in production processes of remunerated and unremunerated labour that are evident in sugar industry discourses and aspects of economic analysis from the Fiji government.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the farming families who participated in the study and were so generous in allowing me into their lives. Their hospitality and friendship were overwhelming and I owe them a great debt of gratitude. A special vinaka vaka levu to my host family who made me feel at home and provided so much assistance. I would also like to thank the personnel at both governmental and non-governmental organisations in Fiji who gave up their time to be interviewed, providing me with invaluable insights and stimulating conversations. In particular personnel at the Fiji Sugar Corporation, Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, UNIFEM, Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Department of Women and Culture, Native Land Trust Board, Fiji Development Bank, Lands Department and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Thankyou to the University of the South Pacific, particularly Mele Radrodro and Cros Walsh from the Development Studies Programme for providing facilities and offering their assistance and to Helen and Donovan Storey whose hospitality I enjoyed in Suva.

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Table of Contents

Abstract  ii
Acknowledgments  iii
Table of Contents  iv
Glossary  vi
List of Figures and Tables  x
List of Acronyms  xii
Map of Fiji Sugar Producing Areas and Market Destinations  xiii

Chapter One: Introduction  1 - 22
   Introduction  1
   Smallholder Settlement - A Colonial Legacy  3
   Research Outline  20

Chapter Two: Methodology  23 - 48
   Introduction  23
   Paradigms  23
   Methodological Interpretation  28
   Field and Method  42

Chapter Three: Fijian Marriage  49 - 89
   Introduction  49
   Historical notes: Marriage, Missionaries and Family Relations  50
   Marriage in the Contemporary Context  56
   Summary  87

Chapter Four: Fiji Indian Marriage  90 - 135
   Introduction  90
   Historical notes: Indenture, Religion and Family Relations  91
   Marriage in the Contemporary Context  110
   Conclusion: Fijian and Fiji Indian Family Relations  131

Chapter Five: Farms and Families  136 - 184
   Introduction  136
   Land Tenure and Cane Contracts  137
   The Farm Environment  150
   Households and Families  158
Chapter Six: Labour and the Farm Economy

Introduction
Women’s Work and Men’s Work
Why Women get up at 4a.m.
Making Dinner
Children
Aspirations and Education
Sugar Cane Production
Time and Work
Statistical Queries
Conclusion

Chapter Seven: Negotiating Resources

Introduction
Intrahousehold Negotiations
‘Exchange’ and the Household Economy
The Sale of Products
The Sale of Labour
Sugar Production and Cane Payment
The Politics of Selling Sugar - Preferential Trading Agreements
Negotiating Knowledge - FSC Extension
Conclusion

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Works Cited

Appendix I: Sugar Industry Structure

Appendix II: House Group and Household Composition by Family Relationships and Current Education Status of Children

Appendix III: Household Composition by Ethnicity, Sex and Age
Glossary

**Fiji Hindustani**

bhabhi - sister-in-law
bhaini - sister
bhaiya - brother
bhakti - devotional worship
bhathwaan - The third ceremony performed for a Hindu wedding, held at both the brides and groom's homes. Important for family members to be present, particularly at the brides place as this is the last ceremony before she takes her wedding vows and leaves home. Involves rites of purification and beautification using turmeric.

Brahman - priestly caste
chai - tea
dhal - soup made from split peas and spices.
dharma - duty
Girmit - comes from agreement and is the name Indian labourers used for indenture, calling themselves Girmaitya (Lal, 1992:38).
gulab jamun - sweet
jeeja - brother-in-law
kam - work
kalapani - black water
Kshatriya - warrior caste
kulambar - Plantation manager
laddo - sweet
lakaree methayee - sweet, lakaree literally means wood
larka - boy
larki - girl
ordhni - veil worn over head or shoulders
prasad - ceremonial offering, for example sweets and fruits which should always be presented in an odd number.
pundit - priest
punja - prayer ceremony
purda - seclusion
rakhee - wrist amulet used in the Raksha Bandhan ceremony. The sister ties it with a knot onto her brothers wrist which symbolises their relationship, where he will protect and look after her for the rest of her life.
Raksha Bandhan - annual ceremony celebrating the brother and sister relationship
roti - similar to a pancake
saadi - The final and main Hindu wedding ceremony where the bride and groom exchange vows.
sirdar - overseer / refers to harvesting gang leader in contemporary context
satitva - chastity and purity
sil - large stones used for grinding for example: spices and split peas
thalwaan - The second ceremony performed for a wedding involving rites of purification and beautification using oil.
tilak - First ceremony performed for a wedding. The bride's brother and senior relatives go to thank the groom for accepting the bride and take him gifts.

Fijian (Bauan and local dialect)
bele - Hibiscus manihot, the young leaves are eaten as a vegetable
bulubulu - ceremony of atonement (for family affairs)
cakacaka - work
dalo - or taro - root crop
dresuivola - period of time after notification of marriage to registry office to allow for objections to marriage
galala - Overton (1989) defines galala as ‘a person who is independent of the village and free of, or exempted from, communal obligations.’
io - yes
i yau - wealth
kai vavalagi - foreigner of European descent
kerekere - to ask another for a favour, either goods or services
koro - village
kumala - sweet potato
lalakai - to take food to another household when they have visitors as a sign of care and respect for the visitor.
lolo - coconut milk
lotu - religion; vale ni lotu - church
lovo - earth oven
magiti - feast
maku - local term for senior man used affectionately like ‘grandfather’
masi - bark cloth with designs
mataqali - patrilineal tribal grouping, along with tokatoka the most common land owning unit
nau - local term for senior woman used affectionately like ‘grandmother’
salusalu - flowers woven in to a large necklace
sevusevu - presentation; can be small, taking something to someone's house as a sign of respect for them to the more formalised presentations at ceremonies.

solevu - gathering for celebrations, particularly after wedding ceremony.

soli - giving; for example to the family. Used in present study to refer to tything to the church,

soqo - gathering for a celebration

soro - ceremony of atonement (general)

sulu - length of cloth wrapped around waste

tabu - forbidden

tabua - whales tooth

tagane - boy, man

talatala - minister, pastor

tavale - cross cousin

tavioka - tapioca or cassava, root crop

tauvu - tau - friend and vu - ancestor spirits

tevutevu - used in this context to refer to the last ceremony in marriage, literally means unfolding which relates to the unfolding of mats in the presentation of exchange items.

tokatoka - extended family grouping, along with mataqali the most common

Turaga ni koro - chief of the village

Turaga ni Mataqalia - chief of the extended family

Turaga i Taukei - chief of the indigenous Fijians

Turaga ni Yavusa or Turaga ni Qali - Chief of the district

uvi - yarn

vakamau - marriage

vakaturaga - in a chiefly manner

vakavanua - Fijian traditional way; the way of the land; the use or borrowing of land that refers to informal land tenure arrangement between tenants and Fijian landowners

vakaviti - the Fijian way

vale - house; vuvale - household

vanua - land, place; Political confederation under a chief

vavanua - marriage proposal ceremony

vakatevoro - literally 'the way of the devil' and colloquially used to mean elopement

vinaka - thank you; vinaka vaka levu - thank you very much

voivoi - type of flax used to weave mats and for other craft work

Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB) - Register of Birth (for indigenous Fijians)
yalewa - girl, woman
yaqona - kava, (colloquially known as 'grog') drink made from pepper plant, Piper methysticum
yavusa - district, largest kinship and social division
List of Figures

Figure 1. On the way to visit respondents, walking up a 'cane access' road on their farm. Another respondent who is related to them accompanied me and took the photo.

Figure 2. Weaving voitovi mats that are used in ceremonial exchanges as well as for home use.

Figure 3. Preparing food for the magiti which will take place later that day when the couple returns from the marriage ceremony in town.

Figure 4. Youths preparing food for the magiti.

Figure 5. Just married! The bride and groom arrive back from town.

Figure 6. Uncovering the lovo.

Figure 7. Presentation of the lovo food by the groom's side to the bride's family.

Figure 8. Groom at his tilak ceremony.

Figure 9. Pundit about to recite prayer.

Figure 10. Hammering bamboo to split so it can be woven into walls for housing.

Figure 11. Weaving the bamboo into walls to repair the house.

Figure 12. House and compound surrounded by cane fields.

Figure 13. 'Lean-to' kitchen for cooking on open hearths.

Figure 14. There is piped water into most of the respondents' farms.

Figure 15. Fetching water from a well situated on the farm.

Figure 16. Preparing breakfast for children before they go to school.

Figure 17. Grating tavioka to make bread.

Figure 18. Washing clothes in the river.

Figure 19. Planting subsistence vegetables.

Figure 20. The daily harvesting and planting of tavioka.

Figure 21. Winnowing rice.

Figure 22. Rolling out roti dough into circles ready for the hot plate.

Figure 23. Grinding split peas on a stone sil in preparation for making 'stuffed' roti.

Figure 24. The finished product.

Figure 25. Cleaning up afterwards, doing the dishes.

Figure 26. Looking after a young child while preparing a meal.

Figure 27. Bathing the baby.

Figure 28. Brothers rounding up the goats to take to fresh pasture.
Figure 29. Always doing something! Sorting through rice for stray husks before cooking.

Figure 30. A secondary school student helps her younger cousins with their homework.

Figure 31. Children with toy trucks they have made.

Figure 32. Harvesting cane stems for planting.

Figure 33. Weeding cane field so sugar cane plants can thrive.

Figure 34. Cane harvesting gang by a rail truck they have just finished loading.

Figure 35. Tractor used for hauling rail 'trucks' loaded with cane to rail depot.

Figure 36. Drums of kerosene and beef to be distributed among mataqali members.

Figure 37. Weaving a voivoi mat.

Figure 38. Women in kitchen preparing food for Ramayan evening.

Figure 39. Preparing sweets for prasad.

Figure 40. Sorting beans into bundles for market.

Figure 41. Weaving baskets for sale.

Figure 42. Gang harvesting burnt cane.

Figure 43. Labasa mill and lorry loaded with cane waiting to be delivered to the mill.

List of Tables

No. 1 Native Land Trust Board Distribution of rents to Fijian land owners 142
No. 2 Calculations for distribution of sugar proceeds between the Fiji Sugar Corporation and cane contractors 282
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>African Caribbean Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTA</td>
<td>Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Colonial Sugar Refinery Co. Ltd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESG</td>
<td>Extension Support Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Farm Adviser</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBA</td>
<td>Farm Basic Allotment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDB</td>
<td>Fiji Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHQ</td>
<td>Farm Harvest Quota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Field Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSC</td>
<td>Fiji Sugar Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Fiji Sugar Marketing Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWRM</td>
<td>Fiji Women's Rights Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEAS</td>
<td>Household Economic Activity Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAFF&amp;ALTA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOGA</td>
<td>Memorandum of Gang Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPI</td>
<td>Ministry of Primary Industries and Co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLC</td>
<td>Native Land Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLTB</td>
<td>Native Land Trust Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCGC</td>
<td>Sugar Cane Growers Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ScoF</td>
<td>Sugar Commission of Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Special Preferential Sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VKB</td>
<td>Voli ni Kawa Bula (Register of Birth - indigenous Fijians)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCC</td>
<td>Women's Crisis Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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</table>
Chapter One
Introduction

This thesis sets out to examine the dynamics of contemporary smallholder sugar cane farms in Fiji with particular focus on the participation and experiences of women in the farm economy. The involvement of other family and household members, notably children, is also examined. The questions that orientated the research were: How is unpaid family labour articulated with the capitalist enterprise of cane production? What are local constructs of familial relations that orientate the socio-economy of the farm? How are smallholdings internally differentiated in terms of work and access to resources? What are the socio-economic processes that preoccupy smallholders? How are these different processes connected? What are people's experiences of farm life? What changes and challenges do people identify?

The present study explores these questions through ethnographic research with twenty farming households undertaken during 1996 and 1997. The field site was situated on the island of Vanua Levu in the northern area of Fiji. The study examines intra and interhousehold relations within smallholdings and is primarily a qualitative account that contextualises the experiences of respondents with historical, socio-economic and comparative literature on Fiji and linkages with the sugar industry at local, national and global levels.

The study seeks to go beyond some of the formalised structures and discourses of the sugar industry and situate the production of cane within the socio-economic processes of the smallholder farm. I argue that unpaid family labour is integral to the production of cane on these smallholdings and that cane production is (inter)dependent on other production processes within the farm
complex. The thesis aims to contribute to a fuller understanding of how these different economic processes are articulated.

The majority of previous studies on smallholder cane farms tend to concentrate on either one of Fiji’s main ethnic groups, indigenous Fijians or those of Indian descent who are referred to here as Fiji Indian. K. L. Gillion (1977:13) attributes the lack of research incorporating both ethnic groups to separate social, religious and political lives of the two groups during the early part of the twentieth century. He qualifies this by noting the ‘pervasive influence’ of British culture on the whole of the colony and exchanges between Fijian and Indian cultures that have yet to be thoroughly researched (Gillion, 1977:15). The present study encompasses families of Fijian and Fiji Indian ethnicity and is a reflection of the field site where both groups lived and worked together as neighbours and friends.

There are very few detailed accounts of Fiji’s sugar cane farming families that focus on intra or interhousehold relations and a consequent neglect of the involvement of women and children on smallholdings. This thesis aims to contribute towards this area of research and focuses on an intersection of gender and generation, which takes into account age and kinship relations. These social relations are foregrounded, while ethnicity and class, which are still recognised as important elements in orientating socio-economic life, take a back seat.

The importance of this kind of detailed qualitative analysis is that it provides insights into respondents’ experiences, discourses and practices. This is important not only from the perspective of respondents, but also for adding to an understanding of how socio-economic and political structures interrelate with their lives. During the field work period the sugar industry in Fiji was facing major issues in regard to land tenure arrangements and trade liberalisation. The study provides a snapshot of how these issues impacted at the

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1 Respondents referred to themselves as Indian and in acknowledgment of this I have opted for Fiji Indian rather than the more commonly used academic term Indo-Fijian.
micro level by incorporating some of the respondents' concerns and responses. Threats to Fiji’s preferential trading agreements in particular were adding to pressure on the sugar industry as a whole to sort out its infrastructure and increase efficiency.

Rather than enter the debate on efficiency by analysing the size of farm holdings and cost effective production of cane at a purely economic level, the study emphasises that social relations are integral to the way economic relations are conducted.Production and the disbursement of economic benefits are not only differentiated by class and occupation but also by gender and generation through cultural, legal, regional and political opportunities and constraints. An increased awareness of how some of these phenomena, particularly cultural and economic relations, intersect in the operations of smallholder farming can only help with the planning and implementation of the sugar industry's processes. The study also hopes to contribute generally to an understanding of how the well-being of families in these circumstances can be enhanced.

Throughout the thesis historical information contextualises the ethnographic research. It is appropriate here to briefly summarise the beginnings of the sugar industry in Fiji and the transition from plantation production to the smallholder system in order to introduce the relationship between smallholder farming and the production of cane for milling as they have some bearing on the contemporary smallholder system.

**Smallholder Settlement - A Colonial Legacy**

To situate the transition to smallholder farming several points about the inception of the sugar industry need to be outlined. For more detailed historical analysis of the development of the sugar industry in Fiji see authors such as Ahmed Ali (1979, 1980); K. L. Gillion (1962, 1977); J. Kelly (1989, 1991); B. V. Lal
(1983, 1985, 1992); M. Moynagh (1981)\(^2\); V. Naidu (1980); W. Narsey (1979) and S. Shameem (1990). The chronology from this literature starts with the establishment of a plantation economy by Europeans in the 1860s cotton boom. When the boom ended in 1870 European planters, many in debt and struggling to survive, diversified into other crops such as coffee, copra and sugar. Moynagh (1981:13) states that sugar was regarded as the best prospect for commercial success. Growing wild in Fiji it was identified as an easily produced crop with good prospective markets in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji (Moynagh, 1981:14). The major problem for these planters was finding mills to crush their cane to produce sugar. The debt of many planters and consequent lack of capital to invest in mills of anything but the smallest size meant that during the 1870s there was a lack of crushing capacity which threatened to halt the development of any sugar industry in Fiji (Moynagh, 1981:14).

When Fiji was ceded to Britain in September 1874, the colony's first Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon, was charged with implementing political and social stability and economic development. The British had acquired Fiji reluctantly and were not prepared to financially support the colony for long. They advanced only £100,000 as grant-in-aid which they wanted reimbursed as soon as possible (Moynagh, 1981:17). In order to obtain revenue for the colony Gordon and John Thurston, who was then the auditor general, favoured the attraction of large overseas capital investment in building up an industry that could increase trade for the colony. The possibilities of a prosperous sugar industry were envisaged if investors could be persuaded to build mills and provide infrastructure (Lal, 1992:13).

In order to achieve political stability that was desirable for overseas investors and as part of Gordon's strategy for indigenous Fijian welfare he

\(^2\) Michael Moynagh (1981) gives a very detailed account of the sugar industry in Fiji which is focused on CSR operations and much of this summary comes from his discussion.
implemented a series of policies that have reverberated down through the centuries. Moynagh (1981:16) summarises Gordon’s ‘native policy’;

so-called ‘indirect rule’ through Fijian chiefs, the entrenchment of native rights to the land, the protection of Fijians against exploitative labour recruiters, and the promotion of indigenous cash cropping through a system of native tax payments in kind. The policy could be - and was - justified in moral terms, but it also helped solve the problem of political control in the colony. Thereby it created the stability that was a prerequisite for overseas investment.

In addition to political stability the other major concerns of colonists and potential overseas investors was land and labour. Land claims made by Europeans before cession had to be settled by the new administration and this process will be discussed in Chapter Five. The policy of inalienable ‘native’ land and limitations on leasing ‘native’ land seemed adverse to consequent development of a plantation industry. However it should be noted that European claimants had been granted some of the best arable land (Narsey, 1979:75). There were enticements of cheap land to milling companies such as Thurston’s offer to the Colonial Sugar Refinery Ltd (CSR) of 1000 acres at £2 an acre (Moynagh, 1981:19). CSR agreed to invest in Fiji in 1880 and start its operations there by 1882 (Moynagh, 1981:24).

CSR stands out as the dominant milling company of the colonial period. Based in Australia they used Fiji as a source of raw sugar to supply their refineries at home and in New Zealand. This company eventually came to dominate the whole industry becoming the sole miller in Fiji from 1926 to 1973. The company initially preferred a policy of buying cane for its mills but found that a lack of supply prompted them into major plantation production to reduce

---

3 Moynagh (1981:24) details other incentives the government gave to CSR to encourage its investment, for example ‘[t]he decision to build a mill at Lautoka, in western Viti Levu, followed a strong official indication, designed to allay CSR fears on the matter, that export duties on sugar were unlikely to be levied in the foreseeable future.’

4 Fiji was a British colony from 1874 to 1970.
the unit costs of milling (Moynagh, 1981:40, 45). The Company's acquisition of land started as a compromise to increase cane supply and it also acquired land from European planters who forfeited to the company because of debt and speculators who refused to plant cane forcing CSR to buy them out (Moynagh, 1981: 44-45). By 1914 CSR owned over 100,000 acres (Moynagh, 1981:46).

A plentiful and cheap labour supply was needed to work on the plantations which were very labour intensive, particularly before horse ploughing was introduced. Fijians were not keen to partake in cane production on any large scale because of the low returns for arduous work, and while traditional subsistence crops and copra offered much better options (Gillion, 1962:2; Moynagh, 1981:36). However the tax in kind system implemented by Gordon did prompt some to produce cane from the early 1880s. In 1884 Fijians produced 8,884 tons\(^5\), 12 percent of the cane crushed that year. In 1900 the tonnage had risen to 15,447 tons but fallen to under 6 percent of the total. Moynagh (1981:34) states that their production steadily declined so that by 1914 their output was negligible. This was partially due to the reformation of the tax in kind system in 1902 so Fijians could pay in cash (Moynagh, 1981:35). Some Fijians still worked as casual labourers on plantations, but the strict Fijian labour laws that were part of the colonial government's protectionist policies prevented them from going into their own cane production on any large scale (Moynagh, 1981:20).\(^6\) Fijians preferred to rent land, and rentals 'became the principal way in which they shared the profits from sugar', yet as Moynagh (1981:37) states 'their share was small' and methods of distribution 'left relatively little for . . . those who were not chiefs'. Rent assessment is still a pivotal issue in the industry.

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\(^5\) The text this is taken from is referring to a British colonial context and I presume 'ton' refers to the long ton which is the equivalent of 1016kg (2240 lbs) as opposed to the United States short ton of 907kg (2000 lbs). The Fiji sugar industry currently uses the metric measurement of 'tonne' which is 1000kg.

\(^6\) Currently Fijian growers make up 25 percent of the approximate 22,000 registered cane contractors. They participate in all areas of the industry and at all levels including top management positions.
and integral to current debates in Fiji regarding land tenure, however it falls outside the scope of this study.7

Pacific Island labourers from Melanesia and Gilbert Islands did work in Fiji from the 1860s, but many were lured to Queensland by better wages and conditions in the 1870s (Leckie, 1990:47). Gordon knew a cheap labour supply was essential and he was not prepared nor would he have been able to force Fijians into servitude because of lack of British militia support. His proposal for indentured labour from India was no doubt inspired by his experiences in Mauritius and Trinidad (see Gillion, 1962:3-18). Throughout the colonies indentured labour had replaced slavery. The first ship of indentured labourers from India arrived in 1879 and up until 1916 60,000 Indians were to emigrate to Fiji under this scheme (see Gillion, 1962). The contracts were for five years and labourers were offered a free return passage if they remained in the colony for a further five years of ‘industrial residence’ (Lal, 1992:39). Indenture is discussed in Chapter Four to provide a historical context for present day gender and familial relations in Fiji Indian households. For more detailed accounts of the conditions and experiences of Indian indentured labourers in Fiji see A. Ali (1979); K. L. Gillion (1962); V. Naidu (1980); T. Sanadhya (1991); Subramani (1979).

Moynagh (1981:69) conceptualises the transfer of cane production from European operated plantations to Indian smallholdings in three stages. In the first stage, from 1884 to 1912 Indian settlement was viewed by European planters and millers ‘as a way to augment the supply of labour on plantations’ (Moynagh, 1981:69). During the second phase from 1912 to 1923 Indian settlement was regarded as a substitute for indentured labour with the end of indenture looming in 1920. Moynagh (1981:69) states that during the third stage from 1923 to 1939 ‘there were efforts to ensure that this substitute was effective’. He emphasises the important point was

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7 While aspects of the landlord, lessee relationship and the administrative process are discussed in Chapter Five I have focused on gendered aspects of land tenure rather than between smallholders and Fijian landowners.
that settlement was promoted in ways that would benefit plantation enterprise, particularly CSR. The result was that though Indians were better off as growers than they had been as plantation labourers, the advantage of settlement to them and to the rest of the colony was limited by the subordination of their interest to the needs of plantation enterprise (Moynagh, 1981:69).

What stands out in Moynagh’s (1981) discussion is the control CSR maintained of the industry and the way labour was manipulated. Initially labour was subordinated through indenture, which included penal sanctions, fines and physical violence (see Naidu, 1980), to enforce labour for low wages to maintain low production costs for plantations. When this was no longer possible due to the end of indenture and consequent labour shortages and demands for better wages and conditions, the company rapidly implemented smallholder settlement on its former plantations. This is a complex history which has been detailed by other authors, notably Moynagh (1981), and I have only highlighted a few points for the purposes of the present study.

**Free Indian settlers 1884-1912**

As Indian indentured labourers finished their contracts many ventured into smallholder farming including the production of cane. Free indentured labourers settled where they could, often near plantations as there were few opportunities for employment elsewhere (see Gillion, 1962; Moynagh, 1981:77). The government was keen for the ex-indentured Indians to stay in Fiji and although they would have preferred them to be labourers they realised there was little likelihood of many of them staying if they could not obtain land. This thinking resulted in a number of government settlement schemes for Indians, beginning in 1887 at Vatuwaqa near Suva (Gillion, 1962:138-140). Government enacted a series of legislation that were designed to promote Indian settlement to

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8 See Lal (1992:39-40) for a range of occupations early free Indian immigrants were involved in, but the majority stayed in agriculture.
provide a cheap labour pool, particularly for plantation interests (Moynagh, 1981:70-76, 85-87).

European planters subdivided and leased to Indian settlers in response to their circumstances. Some found it easier to lease their whole plantation and collect the rent, while others went into sharecropping arrangements or used Indians settled on marginal parts of their plantation as a labour pool (Moynagh, 1981:76-81). Moynagh (1981:83) summarises the situation by 1912,

the trend among planters in general, on the Navua and by CSR was away from seeing settlers on plantation land as primarily a source of cane. Instead, the emphasis was on settling immigrants so that they would provide a pool of casual labour and, of secondary importance, so that they would provide food crops needed on plantations. . . settlers were placed at the edges of plantations, on marginal land.

Indians also entered into a variety of leasing arrangements with Fijians which the government endeavoured to regulate (see Moynagh, 1981:85-87). However, it was not until 1946 that the intermediary body, the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB), that administers Fijian land would come into being (see Chapter Five).

CSR tenants; planters and settlers

CSR had begun leasing out its own plantation land to tenants in the 1890s. Moynagh outlines two types of settlement; smallholdings to Indian settlers and larger holdings to wealthier tenants, particularly former European plantation managers. As stated above the poorer Indian settlers were initially seen as a source of labour but there was also hopes that they might be able to provide the company with a cheaper source of cane than Europeans (Moynagh, 1981:81). This was influenced by racial ideas that Indians did not need as much as Europeans to live on (Narsey, 1979:105-106). However, settlement of Indian
smallholders proceeded slowly and there was a series of unsuccessful experiments, some of which are outlined below.

CSR found that former overseers produced cane more cost effectively as tenants on their own plantations than the Company could on managed plantations (Moynagh, 1981:43,46). By 1914 most of CSR’s land had been divided into estates of 400 to 1000 acres and leased to these tenants who sold their cane to CSR. Apart from its own tenants CSR bought cane from contractors who produced cane either on their own freehold land or leased land from Fijians, Europeans, Indians and others.

Rising costs and lower wages

The first World War (1914-1918) caused a dramatic rise in the cost of living and in world sugar prices. Initially CSR tried to help plantation owners with ‘what it realised was an unavoidable rise in the price of labour’ by adding a war-time bonus per ton of cane to assist them meet a rise in the minimum wage (Moynagh, 1981:101-102). According to Moynagh (1981:102) in 1916 the emphasis shifted from direct assistance ‘to helping the planters solve the problem of escalating labour costs themselves’ and to cope with the labour shortage by introducing labour saving devices. For example more horses for ploughing work and tractors were introduced.

The essential problem from CSR and the plantation owner’s point of view was that the shortage of labour brought on by the end of indenture, combined with the war and rising cost of living, was causing demands from labourers for higher wages. The last ship of indentured labourers arrived in 1916 and all indentures were eventually cancelled on 1st January 1920. The Company was adamant, particularly its founder and manager Edward Knox, that there should

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9 See Moynagh (1981:52-64) for a discussion on CSR’s control of European tenants through rents and credit advances rather than cane price.
10 Lal (1992:81) citing a government Commission of Inquiry into the economic disruptions of World War I notes the price of Fiji Indian basic food items needed for a weeks supply rose by 100 percent between 1914 and 1920, whereas the wages of Fiji Indians had remained the same.
be no increase in wages as it would be very difficult to reduce wages when sugar prices fell, as was predicted after the post war boom (Moynagh, 1981:104). CSR endeavoured to pressure plantation owners not to raise wages in order to compete for labour. It also cultivated wealthy Indian farmers to act as buffers between the company and the demands of labourers as these planters were employers as well (Moynagh, 1981:102-103).

The government was critical of CSR not distributing the increased proceeds from higher sugar prices, due to World War I, to the rest of the industry in the form of increased cane prices to planters and increased wages. The profits CSR made at this time were quite phenomenal and as with most of the money the Company made, was repatriated out of Fiji to its shareholders (see Narsey, 1979). However, the government did little directly to ease the low wages, for example officials abandoned pay parity between government workers in urban and rural areas so as not to apply pressure to the rural based sugar industry (Moynagh, 1981:107).

The labour strikes of 1920 and 1921 have been well documented elsewhere (see Gillion, 1977; Lal, 1992). What is relevant to the present study is how the strikes exposed the crisis in the sugar industry at that time. In the 1921 strike smallholder cane farmers went on strike as they were able to identify with labourers’ demands for more money when the Company announced a decrease in the cane price and wages shortly after it had raised them in 1920\textsuperscript{11} (Moynagh, 1981:110). CSR was able to sit out the six month long strike, but many European planters who had not already abandoned plantations due to labour shortages were finished after the strikes which had prevented planting and cultivation of cane (Moynagh, 1981:112). Moynagh (1981:101) has pointed out that the ‘survival of planters depended on control over labour costs’ and that as long as immigration continued so would the plantation system. With no alternative

\textsuperscript{11} In 1920 CSR wanted to take advantage of the exceptionally high sugar prices and mill as much cane as possible and to facilitate this it gave growers a significant rise in payment for the cane they supplied. Labourers were given a small increase in wages (Moynagh, 1981:109-110).
cheap supply of labour available and no hope of further immigration schemes from India or elsewhere, both millers and planters faced a labour shortage. The problem for CSR became how to maintain low cost production of cane to supply to its mills. Shameem (1990:373) states,

Although other factors such as the price of sugar on the international market, and company control over credit facilities and instruments of labour also led to higher profit margins, it was the productive sphere that was always most significant for CSR in Fiji (emphasis original).

Writers like Gillion (1962, 1977) and Moynagh (1981) state CSR operations in Fiji were saved by several factors. One, was the temporary tax concessions by the government who removed export taxes on sugar exports in 1922 (see Moynagh, 1981:112-113). An important factor was the introduction of preferential trading with Britain in the form of an imperial preference. The British subsidy had a substantial influence on CSR’s decision to continue its operations in Fiji (Moynagh, 1981:113). Preferential trading in sugar continues to be a vital factor in the maintenance of Fiji’s sugar industry and will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The extra subsidy from British preferential prices allowed CSR to increase cane prices and pay a bonus to labourers at no extra cost to themselves. CSR had conceded in the 1921 strike to help labourers with the cost of living by importing essential food stuffs and selling them at cost. The company continued to do this and sell essential clothing to labourers. This ‘arrangement was enough to persuade Indians to plant cane and enter cash employment’ (Moynagh, 1981:113).

This facilitated a third factor that saved CSR operations, which embarked on the rapid conversion from plantation to smallholder production. The problems of labour shortage and demands for higher wage rates were solved by the company subdividing its plantations (many having reverted back to CSR

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12 FSC continues to sell rice and sugar at below retail prices to cane contractors.
after European planters left them) into smallholder farms. Indian small farmers were now regarded as the best hope for a source of cheap cane supply and furthermore the change in production system was seen as a means of labour control (Moynagh, 1981:114).

As Narsey (1979:102) notes CSR was well informed of how smallholder systems operated in other colonies such as Mauritius, where indentured immigrants had become farmers. Also during the 1870's and 1890's CSR had successfully divided some of its plantations in Australia into small farms (Narsey, 1979:102). To effect the most strategic benefits, the company took some experimentation with farm size.

**Smallholder settlement - experiments**

The division of CSR and, another milling company, Vancouver-Fiji Sugar Company estates actually began in 1912 and met with varying success as different sized blocks and leasing conditions were tested. Both companies in 1912 tried small lots ranging from four to eight acres (Moynagh, 1981:96-99). These trials were found to be problematic fundamentally because the plot size was too small, resulting in the underemployment of farmers and production issues (see Moynagh, 1981:99). Moynagh (1981:100) gives a description of the CSR settlement scheme, started in 1917, which divided plantations into 50-70 acres (20.25 - 28.35 hectares) for Indian tenants. While some were successful, land disputes resulted as large farms were redivided and sublet among Indian tenants. A major disadvantage at the time was that these larger farms competed with plantations for labour thus hindering CSR’s existing plantation operations. Moynagh (1981:100-101) summarises these experiments in farm settlement by saying:

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13 Note one acre is 63.64 square metres and is equal to 0.405 of a hectare (10,000 square meters) (Fiji National Agricultural Census 1991). Therefore four acres would be equivalent to 1.62 hectares and eight acres is 3.24 hectares.
... it was doubtful if in the long run large Indian-owned farms would overcome the labour shortage. If all plantations were divided into fifty acres or so, was it likely that Indians would work their labour so much more efficiently as to be able to farm with fewer men than Europeans? And would Indians be more successful than planters in resisting demands for higher wages? On the other hand, leasing in small plots of four or six acres, with a prohibition on off-farm employment, added to the scarcity of labour by creating underemployment among growers. The number of Indians settled on a given area was greater than it need have been. ... In short, the settlement schemes tried before 1922 failed to overcome the shortage of labour and to induce tenants to accept the control of sugar companies failed because the farms were either too small or too large.

What is important here is the relationship between the size of the farm, the labour needed to operate it successfully and as cheaply as possible and the control and benefits CSR was able to maintain. Eight to twelve acre blocks (3.24 - 4.86 hectare) were found to be appropriate because they could be run by a nuclear family. Narsey (1979:107) cites several major advantages this size of farm gave to CSR. The average ten acre size (4.05 hectare) was just enough to keep one family and encouraged the farmer to 'plant all the land with cane to obtain a decent income' (Narsey, 1979:107). 

Because the size was predicted to be too small to support more than one family, future generations would be a source of surplus labour available to work for CSR in its milling operations, thus helping to resolve the labour shortage problem brought on by the termination of indenture. Other factors Narsey cites are political and economic as many poor farmers who could not acquire the wealth that might make them dangerous social or political forces ... ensured that there was less likelihood of unity and organisation developing among farmers that might pose a countervailing threat to CSR’s monopsony position (Narsey, 1979:107).

14 CSR actively encouraged monocropping and obstructed agricultural diversification in cane areas (Moynagh, 1981:120). However, during World War II there was an increase in subsistence crops on cane farms due to pressure from growers and in response to food shortages. The Company did not revert to its previous restrictions after the war (Moynagh, 1981:157).
Rapid implementation of smallholder settlement 1923-1939

Moynagh (1981:115) states that once CSR decided through discussions in 1922 and 1923 what form settlement should take it was rapidly implemented and completed by the 1930s. Narsey (1979:108-109) critically analyses the Tenancy Agreement that tenants at that time had to sign with CSR concluding that

[the tenants bore all the responsibilities and costs of being farmers without any of the advantages normally associated with free farmers. Given the conditions under which the small owners were to operate, it is clear that the rules of the game were biased against the farmers even before the game began. . . Having nominally got out of one system of repression, they were moulded for the next stage of exploitation.]

Farmers were forced to follow CSR’s instructions of how to use the land and what crops to grow including species of cane, quotas, planting, fertilising and harvesting strategies because the tenancy could be terminated if their farm practice did not met with CSR approval (Narsey, 1979:108-109; Shameem 1990:375). Moynagh (1981:124-130) argues that with the tight control CSR had over growers and the retention of cooperative production methods such as harvesting gangs, growers were little more than plantation workers. Farmers, both tenants of CSR and contractors who sold their cane to the company were closely supervised by CSR officials, although not as diligently as on plantations because by the late 1930s ‘one overseer looked after between 100 and 200 farms, the equivalent of 1,000 to 2,000 acres or more’ (Moynagh, 1981:114). It is interesting to note that in the present study area during 1996 one Field Officer and one Farm Adviser working for the Fiji Sugar Corporation were responsible for 806 cane contractor’s farms (see Chapter Seven).

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15 ‘In 1925 the CSR itself cultivated 52 percent of the area under cane, European planters 7 percent, Indian and Fijian tenants of the company 10 percent, and Fijian and Indian contractors 31 percent. In 1933 the CSR cultivated 9 percent, European planters 1 percent, tenants 51 percent, and contractors 39 percent. In 1938 the CSR cultivated only 4 percent, there were no European planters, and tenants cultivated 52 percent and contractors 44 percent’ (Shephard report, 38 cited in Gillion, 1977:213).
Further advantages accrued to CSR as they maintained a firm control on production, effectively owning the crop, as farmers were not allowed to lien to anyone else. CSR offloaded production costs, including cultivation costs, farm labourers wages and 'care' of their workforce.\footnote{During indenture CSR provided minimal housing on their plantations, which were known as the 'lines' and included a room which three people or a family were expected to live in. The Company, as per government regulations, provided rations for the first six months of indenture which were docked from the labourer's pay. After that workers were expected to procure food as best they could.} Narsey (1979:103) notes that CSR completely removed the risk of outlaying capital on growing cane, the benefits of which might not be realised because of natural disaster. CSR only paid out money for cane when the cane was delivered into the mill. The farmer bore all the risks involved, at no possible loss to CSR.

The success of the smallholder scheme for CSR is blatantly stated in the continuation of huge profits after the end of indenture (see Narsey, 1979). CSR dictated the pricing structure it paid growers for their cane, and the various payment systems it employed were largely upheld by the different Commissions of Enquiry which had been prompted by disputes between cane growers and the Company. It was not until Lord Denning's Commission of Enquiry in 1969 made an arbitration award that proportioned a larger share of the proceeds to growers that CSR was forced to share more equitably. Although not the main reason for CSR's departure from Fiji, it would have been a contributing factor (see Moynagh, 1981; Narsey, 1979:118-119).

Narsey (1979) gives us a critical account of CSR's eventual retreat from Fiji when they could no longer sufficiently exploit these operations, and political and economic concerns cast doubt on the viability of the Fiji sugar industry (also see Moynagh, 1981). CSR\footnote{In 1961 CSR formed a subsidiary company South Pacific Sugar Mills Ltd (SPSM) to take over operations in Fiji. When SPSM was formed CSR offered shares to people in Fiji, however only a small number were bought (FSC, 1995).} sold its Fijian operations to the government in 1973,
including its freehold land. The government formed the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) which 'was incorporated in Fiji by an Act of Parliament and is the largest public company in Fiji. Its shareholders include the Fiji Government, statutory bodies, local public companies and individuals' (Galuinadi, 1996:3). The Fijian government is still the majority shareholder of the Fiji Sugar Corporation, owning 67 percent of shares.\(^{18}\) The contemporary structure of the sugar industry in Fiji is illustrated in the diagram in Appendix I.

Many of the structures and debates within the industry can still be broadly delineated between 'miller' and 'grower' and there is a 'them' and 'us' resonance about the relationship that is inherited from CSR dominance and the legacy of indenture (cf. Moynagh, 1981:243). There have also been many changes implemented by FSC and growers representatives\(^ {19}\) that deserve further research.

Writers such as Ali (1980); Gillion (1962, 1977); Lal (1983, 1985, 1992); Moynagh (1981) and Narsey (1979) have critiqued CSR domination of the industry and the position of smallholders within a framework of ethnic and class differentiation showing up economic and political exploitation. It should be noted that there is class differentiation among cane growers, some of whom have larger holdings and/or obtain income from a variety of sources. The

\(^{18}\) This percentage was as of 20th April 1999 and may have changed in light of a call by the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC, see below) for cane growers to invest in FSC. The SCGC proposed forming a company called Cane Growers Investments Ltd to eventually buy out government shares in FSC. The Council Chief Executive Girish Maharaj said "Each grower would be issued a share certificate and would take part in the policy making of the FSC, making it a grower-oriented organisation" (Pacific Island Report, Online, Archives 20th April 1999).

\(^{19}\) Growers began to organise into unions in the late 1930s (the Kisan Sangh was the first, established in 1937) and formed a number of different unions that have become highly politicised. Growers' unions and their affiliation with different political parties reflect the diversity of the Fiji Indian population and the communal politics inherited from colonial policies (see Ali, 1980; Gillion, 1977; Moynagh, 1981; Prasad, 1994). Fijian growers belong to various growers' unions and have also formed their own unions at times. Union lobbying and industrial action over the years for better terms has improved the lot of growers particularly after the retreat of CSR. The Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) is an umbrella organisation for all the grower's unions formed in 1984 under the Sugar Industry Act. Other unions within the industry, such as those for mill workers, are also very active. Negotiations between FSC management and unions is arbitrated over by the Sugar Tribunal and Sugar Commission of Fiji. Examples of these negotiations are outlined in Chapter Seven when I discuss some of the main issues that affected smallholders during the 1996 and 1997 cane harvesting seasons.
extensive analysis of wage rates, 'man' days, payment systems, credit controls and cane contract arrangements that outlines this exploitation is fundamental, yet it still misses a vital factor. These authors mention it briefly, Moynagh (1981:115-116) says after 1922;

The equivalent wage rates for Indians had risen, yet the cost of cane to CSR remained stable. Why was this? One reason probably was that the smallfarmer used his labour more efficiently than when he worked on plantations. With a greater interest in the outcome of his work, he achieved a higher output per hour. **He also had access to the labour of his family, at no monetary cost.** Another reason was that part of the cost of supervision on plantations was distributed as extra income to the grower. Instead of labour gangs being supervised for cultivation work each day, the self-employed farmer supervised himself. Though overseers paid frequent visits to growers, the amount of detailed direction was less than on plantations (emphasis added).

Narsey (1979:104) goes into slightly more detail,

... in Fiji, where the wives and children of the farmers pitched in to work the farm. They were not paid wages but were sustained from the income of the farmer. The farmer's income therefore represented the labour of his whole family and not just one adult.

Ethnographic accounts of Fiji Indian smallholder sugar cane farming households such as Mayer's (1961) and Jayawardena's (1975) also do not focus in any detail on women and children's involvement in smallholder operations. Nor are there many accounts of Fijian family participation in cane farming (see Cema Bolabola, 1986). Shaista Shameem (1987; 1990:373-377) is the only author to date who specifically addresses the contribution of women's labour, focusing on gender relations and concepts of femininity in the control of female labour. However, apart from a short description of contemporary farm work,

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20 Here I refer to all the work carried out on smallholder farms including activities that have been categorised as 'domestic duties'.
Shameem's thesis is historically situated between 1879 - 1930. This period covers the transition to smallholder farming and her analysis of CSR's intention to use family labour as a viable alternative to indentured labour demonstrates the company's awareness of women and children's involvement in cane production (Shameem, 1990:375-376). The size of the farms and the contracting only to married men all accommodated the ideal of a nuclear family operation (Shameem, 1990:374). Thus from the scheme's inception it was reliant on notions of family that had a male head of household who ostensibly controlled the labour and resources of his family. This view of male hegemony within marriage was the dominant ideal that is still to a large extent legally and socially recognised.

Children in the literature on cane farming families\(^{21}\) are discussed more in terms of their birth and care while they are young, and as marriageable daughters or inheriting and working sons when they are older. While these are important aspects of their lives, their contribution from a young age to work on smallholder farms, particularly in poorer families should not be underestimated.

In 1995 there were 22,430 registered 'growers' contracted to sell sugar cane to FSC. The average size of a cane farm in 1995 was 4.6 hectares, with an area of 3.68 hectares of sugar cane harvested (Barrack and May, 1996:6). The average production of cane per cane contract in the same period was around 180 tonnes (Maharaj, 1996:5). The smallholder system is then still the mainstay of cane production in Fiji. The question the transfer from plantation to smallholder production poses for the present study is; what is the articulation between unpaid and paid household labour; cane production; the size and lease terms of holdings and the conditions of contract with FSC? I have teased out certain elements of this question focusing on the gendered aspects of production, control

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\(^{21}\) The literature I am referring to discusses Fiji Indian families as there was even less material on Fijian cane farming families.
and ownership of resources. The following section outlines the direction of the research process through the organisation of chapters.

**Research Outline**

In this study marriage is identified as a pivotal relation in the maintenance and continuation of households on smallholder farms. The marriage union is where two families come together and is the primary dynamic in household groupings and it is also an important focus for socio-economic relations. Chapters Three and Four discuss Fijian and Fiji Indian marriage respectively. The marriage process, from proposal through to ceremony, provides an excellent focal point for exploring family relations which orientate socio-economic relations within the household. Gender and generational relations, particularly between parents and children are examined throughout this process. Because marriage is predominantly patrilocal for both Fijians and Fiji Indians, expectations of parents-in-law and the daughter-in-law were important when looking at the extended family farms.

Many other kinship and non-kinship relations (including neighbours and labourers) are relevant to the smallholder context and the marriage process glimpses these relations in the organisation and performance of ceremonies and celebrations. Thus on one level the rhetoric of ceremonies can be explored for ideals on family relations and on another level the courting, proposal, preparation and enactment of ceremonies conveys information about a variety of social relations. This is interrelated with respondents own 'expectations' and experiences portraying an interplay between dominant discourses in religion, tradition and legislation with local beliefs and practices.

With the stage set on family relations I decided to use a loose narrative approach and follow the bride into her new environment. Chapter Five on farms and families reflects on what sort of 'place' she is coming to. This arose out of the myriad ways of conceptualising the smallholder farm. With different
legal and social practices pertaining to boundaries and relationships I chose to make sense of these relationships by using the notion of 'place'. Borrowed from geography (see McDowell, 1999), the idea provided a way of conceptualising physical, legal and social environs and therefore would interrelate various aspects of the farm. In this chapter I outline gendered aspects of ownership and control on smallholdings by examining land tenure and cane contracts. This is interrelated with the social position of the bride which is examined by looking at the protocols of some of the most prevalent intra-household relationships. Here gender and generation intersect in constructs of seniority and hierarchy within the household and also between extended family households. The farm environs are also described to envisage what sort of 'place' the bride has come to and relates information on the physical environment, housing and amenities.

The social constructs relating to family and household relations and the environment where people live provide a context for the following two chapters on the socio-economy of smallholder farms and their relationship with the sugar industry. Chapter Six looks at the work people do on the farm and Chapter Seven examines the way resources are negotiated. Research from ethnographic fieldwork continues to form the foundation of the discussion combining my own participant observation and respondents' accounts of daily life. There is an integration of macro influences within the daily life accounts predominantly in the form of sugar industry structures and local interpretations and practices of these.

Chapter Six provides a detailed description of the work women do on the farm and seeks to give a comprehensive overview of the different tasks they are involved in and the way these activities are interrelated with other productive processes on the farm. Work allocation and organisation is analysed in terms of gender and generation which highlights the different regimes and social expectations of household members. Children's work is outlined in this chapter which challenges conventional perspectives on their unpaid work within the
family context. The correlation between formal education and children's aspirations and opportunities is also discussed. The production of sugar cane is examined and contextualised within other socio-economic processes of the smallholder farm. The chapter seeks to demonstrate the integrated nature of different economic processes on the farm and breakdown categorical separations evident in the discourses of the sugar industry and the Fiji government's economic analysis.

Chapter Seven looks at redistribution and various transactions within the farm economy such as the sale and exchange of labour and goods. Intra and interhousehold negotiations over access and control of resources is discussed in terms of gender and generation. Negotiations between smallholders and FSC is contextualised within the field work period and I outline different issues that were of concern to respondents and the sugar industry. This chapter links the household to local and global economies as the sugar price is examined in relation to Fiji's main trading agreement between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries under the Lomé Convention. The way that returns to the household are controlled and distributed continues the argument on how this can be differentiated by gender and generation. Ideas on needs, rights and value are integral to this discussion as are the interconnections between paid and unpaid work.

The literature review is incorporated through the body of the thesis rather than as one comprehensive section because of the variety of literature consulted. With so many different, but interrelated topics it seemed more pertinent to write applicable literature reviews with the relevant texts. The following chapter outlines the methodological development of the study.
Chapter Two
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with an idea of how the research was conceptualised and implemented. The chapter begins with a discussion on the paradigmatic orientations of the thesis. The second section discusses the methodological interpretation of these theoretical perspectives and how this directed the present study. The final section outlines the methods employed during fieldwork.

Paradigms

An understanding of ontological and epistemological questions about the way humans relate to the world were gleaned from two social science paradigms, the interpretative and the critical perspective. Particularly useful were phenomenological and feminist approaches which go some way to forming the theoretical foundations of the present study. My rendition of the relationship between the physical world and our perception of it is that it is at once mutually constitutive, interpretative and relational. It is mutually constitutive as our 'minds' are embodied within sentient physical bodies that live in a material world that inform our consciousness. We interpret our physicality and material environs in diverse and dynamic ways, which effects interacting with the world in different ways. Furthermore, the interpretations of 'reality' are not purely

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1 Paradigm is defined here as 'a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientists in general 'what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable' (Saratakos, 1998:31-32; citing Patton, 1990:37).
subjective, but rather intersubjective and formed in relation to other people and
the world around us. This relationship is contained within notions of 'inter-
experience' (Laing, 1967:15-17 cited in Jackson, 1996:27) and 'embodied
subjectivity' (Moore, 1994). This is exemplified throughout the thesis by the
inclusion of extracts from my field notes and presentations of respondents'
views as well as my own.

While allowing room for agency, this is tempered by the processes and
conditions that influence those interpretations and actions. The human reality
created in relation to others and their environment is politically charged and
this politicisation of 'reality' is a critical perspective. Thus, I am concerned with
exploring how meanings are shared, enacted upon or challenged. While this
may indicate a focus on forms of hegemonic domination and asymmetrical
social relations I agree with Ortner’s (1984:157) proclamation that '[p]atterns of
cooperation, reciprocity, and solidarity constitute the other side of the coin of
social being.' Of particular note here is the relations between intra and
interhousehold members and the connection between views of smallholders
and those of different agents of the sugar industry, notably FSC.

The conceptualisation of the ways social constructs in the form of
'discourses' create and maintain social relations is useful. However, while
discourse analysis is very informative for analysing the politics of representation

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2 Internalised and external influences on behaviour are prevalent in forms of prescriptive
discourses, community pressures, persuasion, legislation and coercion as well as responses to
material conditions. These are not necessarily deterministic, but, depending on the context can
leave people with little choice as Naila Kabeer (1994:56) writes in regards to gender relations;
'What exists in most societies are what Connell (1987) calls 'hegemonic forms' of masculinity and
femininity which constrain the actual practices of men and women, but do not determine them.
Instead there are a range of possibilities between the acceptance of normative sanctions as the
legitimate rules of behaviour, and conforming to them (Giddens, 1979). In some societies, the rules
and practices which shape gender relations are relatively flexible, leaving room for multiple
interpretations; in others, they are severely and punitively enforced. Nevertheless, most societies
display a proliferation of gender identities along with normative standards which exercise greater
or lesser pressures for conformity.' See Ortner (1984) for discussion on the ways anthropological
theories have conceptualised this process.

3 The notions of ideological suppression through false consciousness inherent in the critical
perspective implies a true consciousness (Guba, 1990:24), a form of the 'reality out there' that I do
not concur with. That is not to deny that some beliefs mystify and obscure other processes at work.
and exposes the constructed nature of dominant social meanings it can not be solely relied upon to investigate the relationships between people. Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney (1995:17-19) have criticised the reductive tendencies in discourse analysis when only one discourse is examined. They state that the ‘coherence’ of culture, which has been widely critiqued, is only transferred to the much reduced locale of a specific discourse, often based on already established social divisions, such as medical discourse, economic discourse, legal discourse or educational discourse. Instead Yanagisako and Delaney (1995) call for a reading across domains and at the intersections of discourses. While it is useful to study discourses on material and social life, it is also important to study this in conjunction with relations between the physical environment, daily activities, socio-economic practices and social constructions.

I therefore look at various discourses and retain the notion of culture as an important concept delineating how respondents represent themselves. Culture here is conceived of as ‘whatever people say, think, do, or initiate to get the world to work for them (get=intention: world=plurality: work=make sense, achieve)’ (Peter Wilson pers. comm 1999). There is also a transcultural thread that denotes the spaces at the intersections of cultures which can move beyond differentiation towards commonalities of experience.

The notion of the individual implicit to this discussion is based on Western philosophical traditions of a bounded, autonomous individual. While ideas on multifaceted selves and shifting identities may challenge notions of a coherent ‘individual’, the paradigmatic framework used here still envisions the relationship being between an individual and their world. This is problematic when doing cross cultural research between western trained researchers and people who have different conceptions of what people are and how they relate to their world. (Even within ‘western’ cultures this is a problem!) For example I have not alluded to spiritual, collective or land based perceptions of identity.

I have drawn on various feminist theoretical perspectives to understand
the conceptual linkages between family, work and industry. The feminist
theories I found most relevant to the present study discussed ontology in terms
of an 'embodied subjectivity' and replaced totalising generalities with analysis of
specific locales, with their own histories and political, socio-economic contexts.
This specificity and localisation does not deny the 'global in the local' and the
myriad interconnections across time and space between people (see Lila Abu-
Loghud, 1993:8). This resonates with di Leonardo's (1991) discussion of the
'culture and political economy' tendency in anthropology. Her summation of
the then contemporary trends in feminist culture and political economy bring
together many of the theoretical threads the present study has been influenced
by. These ideas are namely the constructed and culturally contingent notions of
gender and sex; historical contingency and political use of 'constructions of the
past'; the embeddedness of gender constructs within a social and material world
that is crosscut with other social divisions such as age, generation, ethnicity and
religion; and the importance of social location in perception of cultural realities
(di Leonardo, 1991:27-33). The relationship of these concepts to the present study
will be discussed in the next section on methodology. However, it is appropriate
to expand on several of these concepts here, as they provide guidance for my
methodological development.

The socially constructed nature of 'gender' has been extended to the body
and the previously sacrosanct biological distinctions of female and male.
Moore's (1994) synthesis of diverse ethnographic accounts of the body and sex
identity reiterates that 'biology' too is socially constructed. While my study does
not attempt to examine how people formulate their sexed bodies, I found this
important to remember when examining gender constructs as the two, sex and
gender, are inseparable. Moore (1994:14) explains,

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Sex, then, as far as we understand it within the terms of western discourse, is something which differentiates between bodies, while gender is the set of variable social constructions placed upon those differentiated bodies. It is precisely this formula which obscures rather than illuminates when it comes to the cross-cultural analysis of sex, sexual difference and gender. In many instances, as I have already suggested, gender differences are internal to all bodies and are part of the process through which bodies are sexed. In such situations it is far from apparent how we should distinguish sex from gender, and, even more problematic, it is unclear exactly what gender as a concept or a category refers to.

What I have categorised as 'gender' in the present study is also part of a process of constructing a biological sex identity and is an area that warrants further research. Allied to this is biological reproduction and the relationships between women and men's different physicality and the various gender roles women and men are assigned. The fundamental question is how does women's role in biological reproduction influence their gender identity. As Moore (1988:30) puts it 'physiology presents possibilities; it does not determine cultural elaboration'. The couvade practices of males for example question the conception that women universally take the responsibility for birth. Variations on child care practices also query the primacy of the mother-child bond and standardised notions of family (Moore, 1988). The dominance of perceptions regarding the 'ideal mother' has had a particularly sinister history in colonialism (and on the working class). For example, British colonists imposed through surveillance and legislation, ideals of 'family' that demanded mothers go through maternity and practice child care in the 'appropriate' way (see Jolly, 1998).

My interpretation of di Leonardo's (1990:30) 'embedded nature of gender' referred to above means recognising that gender constructs influence social beliefs and practices and become 'embedded' (although not static) within traditions, organisations, institutions and legislation. Women can be studied within the context of these environs and furthermore must be seen in relation
to other women as well as men, remembering that the crosscutting of other social divisions impact on gender divisions. In this thesis much of this is shown by indicating how respondents conceptualised appropriate gender behaviours in accordance with other determinants such as age and kinship relation.

A common criticism by post-colonial feminists is the privileging of gender in identity construction and the homogenisation of the categories 'men' and 'women' that omits other criteria such as ethnicity. As many third world feminists and post-colonial scholars have stated, constructions around a woman's ethnicity can play just as much a part in her subordination as gender constructions (for example Bulbeck, 1998; Kabeer, 1994:32; Trinh, 1989; Shameem, 1990). There is not a shared experience just determined by being a 'woman', particularly as deconstructions of notions of a shared biology and reproductive experience further differentiate the category 'women'.

The epistemological question of how the 'inquirer' knows the 'known' is conflated with the ontological question of how we know reality in the interpretative paradigm (Guba 1990:26). Because how the inquirer knows the 'known' is always going to be constructed and filtered through their own social location. This knowledge is intersubjectively produced through the sharing of meanings and experiences which by no means implies a uniform interpretation. The power relations involved in this process and the 'crisis of representation' in anthropology are ongoing debates (for example; Behar and Gordon, 1995; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Fox, 1991; James, Hockey and Dawson, 1997; Smith, 1999; Wolf, 1992). The following sections will discuss these issues in relation to the present research in an attempt to make the processes of producing the thesis more visible.

Methodological Interpretation

This research was primarily guided by the interpretative paradigm that entails qualitative methodology to pursue an understanding of the social
expressions and actions of participants. The process of fieldwork developed a specific research model very much in situ as a response to the local context, and this orientated the methodology, including some quantitative research.

The present study set out to explore the relationship between family farming and the sugar industry in Fiji. A review of the literature on farming in Fiji carried out for the Ph.D. proposal in 1995 revealed few detailed studies that analysed intra (or inter) household relations on smallholder sugar cane farms. A gap was identified regarding the participation of women and children within these farm economies and I was particularly interested in focusing on their contribution towards the running of the smallholder farm. The study is therefore situated within the context of household relations that highlight gender and generation. Generation denotes configurations of both age and kinship relation and intersects with gender in notions of hierarchy.

I had always conceived of the study in micro and macro terms, from local farming families, national sugar industry to global sugar trading trends. I wanted to situate these linkages from the perspective of farming households and see how the industry at national and international levels impacted on families lives. One of the major questions, stated above, was how do ideas about 'family' and work relate to the requirements of the smallholder system so that family labour effectively replaced indentured labour? The historical formation of the smallholder system provided a starting point for contextualising the study of respondents contemporary experiences with the sugar industry. Other factors such as land tenure issues, marriage legislation, religious beliefs and social practices for Fijians and Fiji Indians are greatly influenced by Fiji's colonial past. The thesis consequently required a strong historical context, but how far to go? The selection of historical material was first, very specific to the issues raised in the study and second, tends not to go back further than the formation of the sugar industry and the beginning of indenture in 1879. This specificity is partly
due to the limitations of a thesis but also reflects the focus on the relationship between the sugar industry and farming families.

Because of the micro/macro framework of the present study research with participants was carried out in two main ways. This was firstly, ethnographic fieldwork with farming families and secondly, qualitative interviews with officials from FSC and other organisations.

**Interviews with organisational personnel**

The interviews with personnel at various organisations provided an invaluable resource for this research and helped me to identify and investigate issues. Firstly, interviews with sugar industry officials helped to contextualise my research with smallholders, which provided an interesting juxtaposition at times. Personnel were extremely generous with their time and information which in FSC's case served somewhat to deconstruct any notion of a 'faceless Corporation'. Its officials had various views and opinions, all of which could not be included here but do provide background to the study.

I interviewed personnel who worked in various positions within FSC including; mill management, administration and extension services, ranging from the most local sectoral level to regional and national levels. At a national level key officials at the Sugar Commission of Fiji (SCoF) and Fiji Sugar Marketing (FSM) were also interviewed. Growers' unions have a strong history in Fiji and it was important to interview union representatives at regional and national levels, the three unions interviewed were; the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC), National Farmers Union (NFU) and Fiji Cane Growers Association (FCGA). At a more localised level I interviewed several sirdar of harvesting gangs, cane cutters and of course the farming families themselves.

During fieldwork other interrelated issues such as health, schooling, finance, social welfare, crime and domestic violence all seemed vitally important. The conceptual boundaries of the thesis threatened to explode as I
incorporated more linkages and perspectives. As I identified issues and opportunities became available to me I began to interview people in various organisations and professions at a local level. Not all of this rich information could be included in the thesis but it did provide a valuable background. For example, I interviewed the district health nurse about work related illnesses and families' health in regards to living conditions, particularly children's nutrition. Two school teachers, one primary and the other secondary school, were asked about issues relating to children, education and the work they were expected to do at home. Loans officers at three banks and the Northern Division Manager of Fiji Development Bank (FDB) and Labasa branch Manager were interviewed regarding farmers' finances and loan conditions. Such interviews provided important information for evaluating the conditions many of the poorer smallholder cane farming families faced.

I interviewed Ministry of Primary Industries and Co-operatives (MPI) extension staff in relation to other farming activities on farms when I realised that many farms were not simply cane farms. They were mixed farms with a variety of crops and some livestock, although sugar was the mainstay of all the case study farms in terms of cash crop. Various government departments were also very helpful with information. For example the local Social Welfare department gave me an indication of poverty in the area and the benefit resources available to people. The Department of Lands provided maps and details about land tenure. Land tenure is a major issue in Fiji and particularly impacts on smallholders. Key officials at the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB) that were involved in the Agriculture Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA) review were also interviewed.

Various women's organisations were extremely helpful and provided a variety of information. I visited The Department of Women and Culture at both national and local levels and was invited to attend one of their rural workshops on craftwork. I was able to ask about their small business initiative for women
as I became interested in the off-farm labour opportunities for women in the area.

The Labasa Women's Crisis Centre (WCC) which had only been going for a year at that stage were very hospitable and I conducted some personal as well organisation based interviews with members there. I was privileged to attend a three day Women and Violence Workshop conducted by Ema Tagicakibau which alerted me to local views on gender relations and domestic violence. I am gravely concerned about domestic violence but have chosen not to analyse it in the present study because farming family participants were not forthcoming with much information.

The Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) based in Suva provided valuable information and access to their library. Interviews with Praveen Sharma and Ema Tagicakibau about the status of women in Fiji and the current programs the FWRM were implementing were illuminating. I also accessed the library at UNIFEM and interviewed Tauga Vulaono about her work amongst women in rural Fiji with the YWCA. A UNDP/UNIFEM Regional Sectoral Planners Workshop (4-15 November 1996) on gender sensitising primary industry planners from Pacific nations was very stimulating and gave me a chance to meet and listen to people who had been working in research and development throughout the Pacific. I delivered a paper on preliminary findings that helped me to focus my ideas midway through fieldwork.

My supervisor Dr Jacqui Leckie had set up an informal liaison with the Post Graduate Programme in Development Studies headed by Croz Walsh at the School of Social and Economic Development (SSED) at the University of the South Pacific (USP). This provided an opportunity to meet with other academics

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5 The UNDP and YWCA I believe also have libraries and of course the National Archives are another good sources of literature. Future researchers need to be alerted to the several small library collections held by various organisations where unpublished reports and documents can be obtained. Much consultancy work never surfaces directly into the public arena. These include libraries at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), MAFF (Suva), FSC Research and Extension (Lautoka), and the above mentioned women's organisations including Suva's WCC. The Government Printers on the out skirts of Suva is also well worth the trip.
and students formally and informally. This milieu of academics provided invaluable insight and suggestions for my project and was also influential in the methodological development. These interviews, meetings and informal chats with a variety of people were also supplemented by a literature search at USP's library, particularly the Pacific Collection.

**Ethnographic research**

The research with farming families entailed ethnographic research using participant/observation methodology and qualitative interviewing techniques. The attributes of this methodology are that a more in depth knowledge of peoples' beliefs and practices may be obtained as the researcher lives with respondents over an extended period of time. Emmerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995:2) state that the ethnographer seeks a deeper immersion in others' worlds in order to grasp what they experience as meaningful and important... giving the fieldworker access to the fluidity of others' lives and enhances his sensitivity to interaction and process. Furthermore, immersion enables the fieldworker to directly and forcibly experience for herself both the ordinary routines and conditions under which people conduct their lives, and the constraints and pressures to which such living is subject.

However, I can not live their lives and so while I might develop empathy, my experiences will always be different. It is the tension caused by this deep sense of difference and similarity that contributes to the reflexive process. With the above research paradigms in mind, my knowledge of farming families was gained inter-subjectively through shared conversations and activities. My own social location and research agenda shaped this knowledge, as does this further transformation into a written academic format (for example di Leonardo, 1990; Bowman, 1997; Strathern, 1988). In social anthropology there has been a well plotted debate on the over turning of the objective ethnographer, authoritatively telling it like it is because they have been there and documented the life of the
‘X’. A recognition of the interpretative, intersubjective process of doing ethnographic fieldwork and then ‘writing up’ the research requires the anthropologist to ‘identify’ themselves. The following section discusses my own social location in relation to the present study.

Positioning

The paradigmatic orientations outlined above situate my academic perspectives, identifying an education in Western academia. I think the way I conducted research, my relationships with respondents and my construction of this thesis is to some degree implicit throughout the study. However, certain aspects of my social location are not made explicit and it is important to discuss these in terms relevant to the research, particularly in regards to power relations and consequent issues of representation. What I consider significant to this study can be framed in some of the major intersections of ‘social location’, ethnicity, gender, age, class and religion. Baldly stated, I am a Pakeha (New Zealander of European descent) woman, brought up in a middle class environment. I was thirty-three to thirty-four years of age during fieldwork and I have no religious affiliation. What bearing these attributes have is contextual and I found that this changed over time.

There is a critique of ‘foreign’, usually white, anthropologists coming to study the ‘natives’, made by post-colonialists and other scholars (for example, Trinh, 1989; Smith, 1999). Objections to objective/scientific authority and colonial/political authority are inseparable in these critiques. They raise issues of legitimacy and power relations that are encapsulated in ‘insider/outsider’ debates and discussions on representation. For me this meant primarily a consideration of ‘insider/outsider’. Researchers from within the community can have different perspectives and considerations than researchers coming from outside (see Smith, 1999). Coming from the outside my advantages were that I was entering a new environment where I was sensitive to things that are
possibly mundane to locals and combined with my different perspective would give a new interpretation. In this way the present study aims to add to the body of knowledge in this area and does not stake claim to be the authoritative account.

The question of ethnicity (I am a Pakeha, researching Fijian and Fiji Indian farming families) is extremely complex. My legitimacy as a 'foreign white anthropologist' can only really be answered as above. I will add to research work in this area, doing so in a way that is ethical, respectful and as transparent as possible. In terms of power relations it would be ignorant to say that my ethnicity did not impact on my fieldwork relationships but also eurocentric to think that was always to my advantage. Remembering too that my ethnicity cannot be separated from other aspects of my identity such as gender, age, class, researcher and so on.

Power relations with respondents were contextual and dynamic depending on the situation and my relationship with the person. During fieldwork one is the 'inquirer', rather than the 'knower' and in that context I found that respondents often took on a teaching role, explaining ideas and showing me what they do and how I could do it. My initial interactions with respondents were not just determined by being a white researcher, but were also effected by being a visitor, an unmarried woman and my age. My host family who introduced me to people (see Field and Method) also affected this situation. My host 'mother' is also of European descent and I was initially perceived as a relation of hers.

As I got to know people better, local orientations of gender and seniority played more of a role in my relationships with them. My status was influenced greatly when I was assigned various kinship terms in relation to respondents families such as sister and sister-in-law. Some of these relationships include ceremonial obligations such as two Fiji Indian brothers I give Raksha Bandhan gifts to (see Chapter Four). Post fieldwork I now have two Fijian babies who are
yaca (namesake) and one boy who is named after my father, these acknowledgments predicate ongoing relationships and are a great honour.

In fact no one challenged or queried my role in terms of being a 'white foreign' researcher. Farming families, non-governmental organisations (NGO's), government officials, FSC, academics and all the people I interviewed for the project were extremely helpful and hospitable with their time and resources. However, I do worry about my use of Western paradigms and categories. This is one of the main reasons for making the research process more visible and stressing the interpretative nature of the study. This is not an extreme relativist position and I want to qualify the interpretative orientation with 'inter-subjective' and 'inter-experience' acquisition of knowledge gleaned from fieldwork, interviews and literature.

This study has a primary focus on women within the context of gender relations. My gender played an important part in the research process but was offset by other aspects of my social location. From my perspective I was looking at family and work relations as well as gender relations and identified with people in a variety of ways not solely based on whether they were men or women. Being a woman did allow me privileged access to other females because of gender segregation and tabu. My access to men was a lot more circumspect and was aided I think by being a researcher. For example I had legitimate reasons for engaging men in lengthy conversations about farming and related issues and to go into the cane fields by myself to question and observe (male) harvesting gangs. My gender allowed me to communicate more freely with other females and indeed demanded that I be 'taken care of' by other women, rather than men. I could spend time with women and girls, participating in their daily activities.
Figure 1. On the way to visit respondents, walking up a ‘cane access’ road on their farm. Another respondent who is related to them accompanied me and took the photo.
Along with certain activities and spaces that I occupied as a female I was also expected to behave and deport myself as a ‘woman’. This included adhering to dress codes and protocols. I felt these expectations increased over the duration of fieldwork as I became more familiar with what was expected and respondents became friends and treated me more as a ‘person’ rather than a kai vavalagi researcher.

The transformation of experiences into ‘data’, explicated in field notes (see Emmerson et al, 1995) is best described by an extract from my fieldnotes written eight months after beginning fieldwork;

Where to begin, comments sliding through the air, if I miss them they have floated away . . . It’s my luck if I hear it, catch it, remember it, write it down, it’s also my knowledge and skill in asking the right questions but so much seems hit and miss. A confusion of noise, sighs, glances, shouts, I swim through them grasping and collecting . . . (Fieldnotes 21 December 1996)

The further transformation into the present academic format consequently transforms me into the ‘interpreter’, a conveyer of knowledge. In line with the paradigmatic orientation, this study is based on inter-subjective knowledge and experience through fieldwork and qualitative interviews. This ‘knowledge’ is interrelated with literature from academic, sugar industry, NGO, governmental and media sources along with interviews, and synthesised into the present account. In this sense the present study is a collaboration but undoubtedly, I hold the major stake in its creation. My intention is that the voices of respondents come through strongly.

Producing knowledge - synthesising the material

The discussion on my own ethnicity brings up the question of why I decided to incorporate both Fijian and Fiji Indian respondents. Simply put, because these people were neighbours and friends, they worked and socialised
together and consequently the way I met people was not isolated to networks of either ethnicity. Ten of the households are Fiji Indian, nine are Fijian and one household is from both ethnic groups. The study does not favour one group over another and indeed seeks to highlight commonalities rather than differences.

It has been difficult to know how to organise the material so that ethnicity can be acknowledged but does not end up being a comparative study. Chapters three and four tell the different histories, social constructs and practices, for Fijians and Fiji Indians respectively, in regards to the marriage process. They also bring together some of the similarities of experience. Throughout the rest of the study ethnicity winds through the discussion and is implicit in respondents' identities as they either have Fijian or Fiji Indian pseudonyms.

There is another important consideration, class. Initially I would have liked a comparison between wealthier and poorer farms but the constraints of the study meant that I stayed in one area and these case study farms were relatively poor. Against this economic indicator of class, socially all the Fijians were of commoner class and most of the Fiji Indian respondents could be said to come from working class backgrounds. It should be remembered then that this study discusses poorer farming families. It should also be noted that this study was carried out in the Northern Division. It has been pointed out to me that there are differences between the Northern and Western Divisions in terms of family labour and available off-farm labour opportunities.

The methodological organisation of the thesis involved locating the study from different but interrelating positions. First, from respondents' experiences and comments about life on the farm and my own participant observation. Second, taking some of the institutionalised structures of the sugar industry and

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6 See Chapter Four for a discussion on caste.
7 The divisional terms relate to governmental administrative areas. Here, the Northern Division refers to the cane growing area on Vanua Levu. The Western Division refers to the cane growing area on Viti Levu.
relating how these are interpreted and implemented at the farm level. Third, by examining different discourses and practices regarding smallholder farms from growers representatives, FSC and farming families. Fourth, from the incorporation of written accounts from academics, consultants and media to provide historical context and contemporary commentary.

These positions are not internally homogenous as different household members, union representatives and FSC personnel have varying opinions. I have stated where I perceive trends emerging and where there is dissension. It is important to emphasise the sugar industry is not a bounded system, the discourses and practices are affected by the social and material environs. As an important industry in Fiji, it consequently has a large impact on those environs.

The study primarily focuses on production and consumption processes using the framework of the ‘household’ which is regarded by many social science researchers as a locus for the allocation of labour and resources. Local interpretations and formations of the household were examined. Moore (1994:86-87) states that the analysis of the household has had two major developments in the last fifteen years. First, there has been a move from seeing the household as a bounded unit to recognising the variability and permeability of household types. ‘[T]heir internal structures and workings both produce and are produced by larger-scale cultural, economic and political processes’ (Moore, 1994:86). Second, the household is no longer viewed as an homogenous ‘unit’ where members are ‘equal and co-operative’. Moore (1994:87) notes a rapprochement between feminist theorising and mainstream anthropology and economics that now views the household as a site of ‘competing interests, rights, obligations and resources, where household members are often involved in bargaining, negotiation and possibly even conflict’. Implicit to processes of negotiation are questions of power and ideology as it is the socially constructed views of a person’s rights, responsibilities and needs that can determine who
does what and who gets what. In a mutually constitutive frame this, I think, is also dependent upon economic conditions.

Moore (1994:88) observes that one way this relationship was examined was through the Marxist and feminist debates of the 1970s and 1980s concerning the connection between reproduction and production. However, she critiques the notion implicit in the arguments that women had a different relationship to production than men, resulting in a focus on production and an 'overvaluing and overestimation of production in relation to reproduction' (Moore, 1994:88). She argues that in order to investigate intrahousehold relations or the links between the household and 'larger-scale institutions and processes' it is important to examine the relations of reproduction which she asserts are not secondary to relations of production.

I concur with Moore's (1994:88-90) emphasis on the need to clarify what is meant by the term 'reproduction'. Moore (1994:89) bases her discussion of reproduction on the tripartite model proposed by Olivia Harris (1981) which views reproduction as; social reproduction, reproduction of the labour force and biological reproduction. Moore (1994:89) critiques feminist scholars for not noting that relations of reproduction apply to an understanding of the whole of society and does not just take place within the household/family. She cites an inadequate explanation of social reproduction and accuses feminist and Marxist anthropologists of conflating social reproduction with reproduction of the household which results in a linear equation of the reproduction of society flowing from the reproduction of 'its most basic units - that is, households' (Moore, 1994:89).

I have been cautious in my use of the concepts of 'reproduction' and 'production' to explain gender divisions, in terms of labour and value and the relationship between smallholder farming and FSC. As social science terms they carry particular connotations that do not necessarily correlate with what respondents think and do. Reproductive work in the literature tends to be
conflated with domestic work and with women, as Moore observed, women’s relationship with production is conceived of as different to men’s. It is easy to get into reductionist accounts that maintain harmful distinctions rather than explain the complexity of peoples working lives. For example Carolyn Sachs states that

> [t]he attempt to separate the categories of farm and farm household, the site of both production and reproduction, to measure women’s work is artificial. Women perform productive and reproductive tasks simultaneously or a single task might include elements of production and reproduction (Sachs, 1996:130).

My query is, is it still useful analytically to maintain a distinction between reproductive and productive labour? Do these two categories separate tasks too crudely as Sachs suggests? Do they explain the relationship between different values placed on work and the way it is gendered in the context of the present study? Chapter Seven and Eight discuss these questions in more detail. Another important point that Moore (1994:102) emphasises is that the focus on production can overlook ‘the fact that gender relations and the differences of race and class are structured through redistribution as well as through relations of production and reproduction.’ Redistribution, access and control of resources is integral to the way social relations on the farm are differentiated and maintained. The following section examines methods used in the field including ethical considerations during fieldwork and in textual representations.

**Field and Method**

To undertake research in Fiji one must first obtain a research permit. This requires a detailed application to both the Secretary of Research Committee, Prime Minister’s Department and the Director of Immigration. Once a research permit is granted it is expected that you will pay a courtesy call to the Secretary of Research Committee to discuss your research. Venina Kaloumaira held this
position at the time and I visited her during the course of my research to explain more fully what I was doing and the possible outcomes of my study. She was very enthusiastic about the topic of research as little had been done in this area and I appreciated her encouragement.

The task of finding a field site occurred through contacts and networking. Initially I intended to study two field sites, preferably one in the Western Division and one in the Northern Division for comparative purposes. However, as the study progressed I decided not to compromise the quality of research and opted for a more in depth analysis of one field site in the Northern Division. I spent a total of eleven months in this area during 1996 and 1997, primarily staying with one family. A further three months were spent mainly in Suva, the capital of Fiji, where library research and interviews with a variety of officials were conducted.

I contacted my host family through mutual acquaintances in New Zealand and after an initial visit it was agreed I could stay with them. They were extremely generous in allowing me to stay for so long and I owe them a great debt of gratitude. Through them I met their friends and neighbours and thus the networking for participants began.

Following the codes of ethical conduct from the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand (ASAA/NZ) and the American Association of Anthropologists (AAA) and local protocols I endeavoured to meet people with respect and openness about why I had come to Fiji. In the first week of fieldwork I attended two weddings with my host family, one for a Fijian couple and the other for a Fiji Indian couple. A mix of family, neighbours and friends attended these weddings and unknown to me at the time, probably most of the local people I was likely to meet. People were interested to know why I was there and these occasions provided an excellent way of 'introducing' me to the area.
My host family were instrumental in formally introducing me to people and over the weeks my host mother escorted me to different farms to visit. These first visits usually required me to follow the local Fijian custom of taking a sevusevu 8 of yaqona 9 which I took to both Fijian and Fiji Indian farms. During these visits I explained what I was doing and asked people if they were interested in participating in the study. Over a period of several months twenty households consented to help me with my research.10

I stated that I was interested in the work people did, particularly the work of women and children and that I would like to visit them regularly and participate in their activities. Some of these households were clustered together in settlements of three or four households and consisted of predominantly extended family members. Women and children from these households often worked together in the fields and visited each others houses where they did communal tasks such as mat weaving or processing vegetables. They also congregated at the river to do their washing so it was not always a matter of being with one household at a time. Similarly men worked together in sugar cane harvesting gangs and men from some of the households I was studying were in the same gangs. There was then often more a sense of not visiting households but visiting locations where I might actually meet people from eight households and physically go to five different houses and three different farms.

Often I would stay in one location for several days at a time, sleeping the night in different houses. Most of the farms were within easy walking distance from my host family’s farm, which was convenient for day excursions as transport was not readily available. At each location I had primary respondents who I had arranged to meet and I would spend the majority of my time with them, participating in their activities where I could. At my host family’s farm I

8 *Sevusevu* is an offering extended as a sign of respect.
9 *Yaqona*, also known as kava and colloquially as ‘grog’ is the *Piper methysticum* plant. A drink is made from the pounded root and used for ceremonial purposes as well as when entertaining guests and more informal occasions.
10 Details in regards to household composition are outlined in Appendix II and III.
endeavoured to participate in activities as much as possible and experience farm life. While I felt like I was living ‘fieldwork’ twenty-four hours a day, my approach to ethnographic research meant that I was not just a ‘researcher’. My relationships with the majority of the people involved in the case study were not just researcher/respondent. I developed friendships with many of these people and interacted with them foremost as a person. Indeed at times I felt like the research was almost incidental, although I was always conscious of it. In this way my professional and personal ‘modes’ became inseparable (see Storey, 1997).

People were extremely generous with their time and resources and I tried to be as considerate as possible and sensitive to local proprieties. The ethos of hospitality is very strong with Fijians and Fiji Indians and one salient feature of this was the wonderful meals people cooked for me. In return I often brought food to peoples houses and small gifts, particularly for the children. This is something I was brought up to do when visiting people’s homes anyway and was not an overtly conscious concession to the ‘research bargain’ (Parry, 1987:94-96).

The issue of reciprocity had concerned me as I was aware respondents were giving me much more than I could give them, particularly as they were giving me information that would enable me to gain academic status and earning potential. Personalised videos for each family taken over the period of field work, special event videos and photographs were something small but hopefully memorable that I could give back. I did not know how a video camera would be received and was very conscious not to be intrusive and of course to always get permission. People were very obliging and often asked me to take family portraits or video them, particularly on ceremonial occasions. I intended to incorporate a small amount of video footage into the present study in the form of ‘filmic footnotes’ on a Compact Disc.\(^\text{11}\) Unfortunately time and finances

\(^{11}\) Consequently, the reason there are so few photo’s in Chapter Four is that most of my visual material of Fiji Indian wedding ceremonies is on video.
have taken precedence and the material awaits a future project. I was however able to use the video footage as a valuable reference source for the present study.

There are photographs throughout the thesis that were taken with permission from respondents. To protect their identities I have not named who they are in the captions. I have tried to preserve the anonymity of respondents as much as possible throughout the thesis by using pseudonyms. I also have not given detailed biographical information for this purpose and indeed have sometimes left out their pseudonym only referring to ‘a respondent’ where I think information may compromise their identity. In a small country like Fiji it can be difficult to preserve anonymity and I realise the photographs may identify certain respondents. However, their direct quotes and information I have used in the written text should not be able to be directly traced to any particular respondent from the case study. People interviewed within organisations have been identified when necessary as they are speaking in their professional capacity.

Upmost in my mind has been the protection of respondents. A study of intrahousehold relations and daily life implicitly intrudes on the privacy of participants. The parameters of privacy were negotiated in the field as respondents organised where I could and could not go. They would decline certain avenues of questioning and promote others, and decide where I could photograph and how they should arrange themselves. From these negotiations I attempted to become sensitised to what was and what was not acceptable. It is because of this concern over privacy, that I have not explicitly identified household formation or which household respondents belonged to when using quotes. The risk of more easily identifying respondents outweighs this information. This influenced the organisation of the thesis which focuses on themes and respondents’ experiences and comments regarding those issues rather than a biographical approach.
I started taping interviews with case study respondents after six months in the field. By that time I had begun to form relationships with various people and started to develop themes that I wanted to find out more detailed information about. The interview technique I employed with participants in the case study and at various organisations was an informal open ended style. I had a list of topics, but followed them in a flexible manner so I could pick up on comments, concerns and issues that respondents brought up. I interviewed most of the case study respondents twice, sometimes three times as the study developed and new themes emerged or I wanted to confer on some point previously made. These interviews were valuable confirmations of the dozens of chats I had with people and were a chance for me and respondents to clarify different issues as well as alert me to areas I had not thought of.

Language of course is very important when working cross culturally. The dominant languages spoken are Fijian and Fiji Hindi. Bauan is the official Fijian dialect and I had started to learn this in New Zealand. While most Fijian and some Fiji Indian respondents spoke Bauan they predominantly used a local dialect of Fijian, which I changed to learning. Consequently the Fijian terms used in this text are a mix of Bauan and the local dialect. Fiji Indians have their own language; Fiji Hindustani, which I also started to learn. English is taught at school and many people do have some competency at English. However everyday conversing is conducted in vernacular languages that are used interchangeably when people from both ethnic groups are present. Many Fijians in the study know some Fiji Hindi, which results I think, from working closely with Fiji Indians in a cane farming area (see Siegel, 1987). Conversely many of the Fiji Indians know Fijian. This was gendered to a degree with men seeming to have more fluency in both languages as a result of working in cane gangs. However some of the women were fluent in both languages. English was consequently not used so much as a bridging language as it appears to be in more urban centres. English usage is also patterned, with many older women, and
some men, not speaking English as they had not been formally educated at school.

I was not fluent in either Fijian or Fiji Hindi, therefore the choosing of households to study required that there was at least one good English speaker in the house who was prepared to act as a translator. I did not want to hire a translator even if I could have afforded it, because of privacy issues. At least with a household member or close relative, information could be kept more private than using a neighbour. I did not often have to use translators as most of the respondents I interviewed did speak some English and combined with my Fijian and Hindi (sometimes we would use all three languages!), we managed. Of course this is not ideal, I would have liked to have been fluent but it was beyond my capabilities when learning two languages at once. To only have concentrated on one language I felt would have been offensive to the families of the other ethnic group.

The following chapter begins the exploration on family relations, the household and smallholder farms by discussing the marriage process and experiences of Fijian respondents.
Introduction

Marriage in Fiji encompasses cultural traditions, family, social relations and expectations, love, romance, religious aspirations, political and economic considerations, even coercion and survival. The ceremonies surrounding marriage give formalised expression to 'ideal' family relations, specifically those that are determined by more general social relations of gender, generation and social position. The relationships are signified through kinship terms and social etiquette. However, there is a dialectical process between perceived ideals as represented in the ceremonies and the actualities worked out in behind the scene negotiations of how and why a couple marry, the different forms of the marriage ceremony and the realities of married life. These 'test' the ideals and ultimately act as a catalyst for changing ideal images and eventually the ceremonies themselves.

The processes surrounding marriage are discussed in the present study to explore what they may reveal about the construction and maintenance of gender ideology and family relations. This discussion ranges from the ideals prescribed in marriage ceremonies and the respondents' ideas about qualities that constitute a good husband, wife and family, to the realities of their experiences and observations. This is to give some understanding of the reference points on which people base intrahousehold relations.

Ravuvu (1987:325) emphasises the dynamic nature of culture by noting the ability of people to adapt ceremonies, incorporating new cultural elements and thus ensuring the continuity of the Fijian way of life.
For clarity I have separated the discussion into two chapters corresponding to each ethnicity. This is not intended as an ethnic or religious comparison, but rather a recognition that the respondents identify themselves as belonging to either group. I have included changes over time that respondents have noted which reflect the ongoing processes of creating, defining and challenging social relations.

**Historical notes: Marriage, Missionaries and Family Relations**

**Christianity**

Religion is central to the lives of the Fijian people I interviewed and seems an appropriate place to begin this discussion. They are predominantly Methodists with some respondents being members of the Pentecostal movements, the Christian Mission Fellowship and Every Home. The meaning of marriage and family life is ideologically based on a combination of Christianity and Fijian tradition as Christianity has become integral to what is considered the Fijian way of life (cf. Thomas, 1992:323). Margaret Jolly (1992:330) observes that Fijian culture expressed in the terms *vakavanua* (the way of the land) and *vakaviti* (the Fijian way), 'incorporates European elements - Wesleyan Methodism and British codifications of chiefly hierarchies and land tenure - that are now seen as part of “the way of the land”' (cf. Overton, 1989). The churches' place is evident in ceremonial addresses where the land, the people, the church and the government are commonly referred to.

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society started arriving in Fiji from 1835 onwards (Toren, 1990:19) and influenced Fijian marriage practices and ideas about family. Andrew Thornley (1996) citing the work of missionary-anthropologist Alan Tippett in Fiji, says that contemporary marriage practice and ideas concerning the nuclear family were colonial Christian introductions. Prior to this chiefs practiced polygamy to ensure their lineage and wives were
also central to forming political alliances. Lower ranked men such as warriors had no wives and lived in men's houses.

Tippett notes that these men "were rewarded sexually by the enslavement and abuse of women captured in war". Apparently, life in the communal houses was grim and the men were quickly attracted to the Christian idea of each man having his own wife and home (Thornley, 1996:4).

Victoria Lukere (1997) in her PhD thesis Mothers of the Taukei: 'Fijian Women and the Decrease of the Race' gives an elucidating discussion on marriage practices and the protracted transition from polygamy to monogamy in response to missionisation and colonial impact. Lukere challenges any oversimplification of this process and indeed observes the 'category "polygamy" was internally heterogenous, as was the category "wife"'. Intersected with hierarchy (and no doubt regional variability) co-wives had different status's, rights and 'functions' in accordance with their birth rights. Pre-contact monogamy was present as men did not have the wealth or status to accrue more than one wife and a form of serial monogamy was evident with the installation of wives in various locations (Lukere, 1997:51, 69). By the end of the nineteenth century marriage practices in Fiji thus encompassed Christian monogamy, civil monogamy, de facto monogamy, serial monogamy both legal and de facto, surviving traditional polygyny, as well as de facto polygyny - and perhaps other varieties as well (Lukere, 1997:90).

Although all missionaries were in principle against polygamy their attitudes towards enforcing converts to give up this practice varied (Langmore, 1989:91-92). As Diane Langmore (1989) notes in her work on Papua the various missionary bodies appraised and approached issues in different ways and
Methodists were particularly unyielding on this issue (cf. Lukere, 1997:72-75). Christine Dureau (pers. comm. 1998) notes that the attitude of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in the eighteenth century was heavily influenced by Pauline doctrines that emphasised the family and the subservient role of women. Lukere, citing Lawrence Stone's (1982) work *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, notes that the early missionaries' own brand of religiosity and social experience imparted a particular value to their vision of marriage. 'Holy Matrimony' was the spiritual pattern for social life. Like Our Father, God in Heaven, the husband was the supreme authority in the family; his dominance was modified by respect for his wife, her domestic domain and her spirituality, and by their mutual humility before God; marriage was to preserve (the man in particular) from temptation, adultery and fornication, by providing a sanctified preserve for sex; the family home was its church; and also socially and architecturally, a clearly defined, detachable unit (Lukere, 1997:73).

The missionaries were also concerned about the treatment of women, citing polygamy as a debasing practice that turned women into 'concubines' or 'slaves' (Langmore, 1989:92, Lukere, 1997:74). Thornley (1996:4) states that the life of men and women improved with Christianity because women no longer had to fear enslavement and lower ranking men could live a longer life and were able to marry. However, not all European colonists objected to forms of polygamy and certainly many Fijians, notably chiefs, were reluctant to relinquish all their wives (Lukere, 1997).

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2 Langmore (1989:93) gives a good discussion of possible reasons for variation between the four missionary bodies she studied in Papua. For example socio-economic background, theology and citing Burridge's (1973:205) hypothesis of the mono-culturalism of Northern European missionaries verses a more tolerant multi-cultural approach of Mediterranean European missionaries.

3 Christine Dureau (pers. comm. 1998) observes that while the European Methodist church evolved liberal attitudes, indigenous missionaries in the Pacific retained the more conservative doctrines of the earlier European missionaries. Thus by the 1930s European Methodists were criticising the 'dark old ways' of local beliefs, ironically reiterating their 'forbearers' admonishment of pre-Christian 'native ways'.

4 Lukere's (1997) thesis is concerned with perceptions during the early Fijian colonial period of mothering, family forms, birthrates and infant mortality that culminated in the *Report of the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Decrease of the Native Population* (1896). See Lukere for a discussion of the debates surrounding marriage forms and particularly in regards to their impact on maternity and child care during this period.
Christian teachings⁵ have been used to justify the subservient position of women. These views are being officially challenged, for example the Report of the First PCC Women’s Consultation (1979) advocated the notion of the liberated family. This constituted equality between husband and wife and children within the family and is theologically underpinned by Galatians 5:1 and Ephesians 6:1-4. (PCC 1979:29) In the study area the ideal of equality in terms of leadership within marriage was not expressed by the respondents who thought that the man should be the head of the household (cf. Toren, 1990:48). This was stated matter of factly and can be seen as part of the kinship ‘order’, in this sense it is an ideal which is supported by cultural traditions.⁶ How this ideal relationship translates to the everyday lives of families will be discussed in the following chapters.

Kinship

It is important to note the dynamism of kinship relations as well as the regional variation in Fiji. Michael Walter (1973) in his comparative examination of the ethnographic literature concludes there are different kinship criteria for marriage and he disputes any underlying universal Fijian kinship system. Colonial legal codification of marriage and property has standardised some relations: for example descent is traced patrilineally with Fijians registering in the Vola ni Kawa Bula (VKB) through their father's mataqali. This has implications for matrimonial property and property rights in general and will be

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⁵ Christina Toren (1990:129) noted from her fieldwork on the island of Gau in Fiji during the 1980's that St Paul's teachings were often used to justify 'the subjugation of women and a man's position as head of the household'. These beliefs supported the view that a wife's duty is to her husband and 'a child's is to its parents' (Toren, 1990:243). Although the Methodist church allowed women to become lay preachers Toren found that this met with a lot of resistance among men who could not condone women as leaders and she summarised that the 'official church view is that women are almost, but perhaps not quite, the equals of their menfolk, particularly in respect of the partnership of husband and wife and as parents...' (Toren, 1990:134).

⁶ I heard this from many of the respondents along with other people I talked to, for a direct quote refer to Venina’s comments on page 60. See Ravuvu (1987:263-268) for an account of a Fijian creation myth that explains the status of men, women and children. Local mythology, pre-colonial religion combined with nineteenth century Wesleyan Methodism (predominate in this area) lend religious legitimation to the hierarchy within the family which helps to make it appear god given and vakaviti.
discussed in Chapter Five. This ensures that Fijian marriage is predominantly patrilocal as children are registered under their father's *matagali*. There are exceptions due to land availability and family circumstance.

Kinship dictates daily interaction and although the boundaries shift, as people discussed the changes they had witnessed, kinship relations are the framework of *vakaviti* as noted above. Nicholas Thomas (1992) gives an interesting discussion on Fijian neo-traditional identity in response to other cultural communities in Fiji. A dichotomy of communalism and individualism has become reified in local debates where *vakaviti* is defined in terms of the former and 'others' defined in the latter (Thomas, 1992:323; see Overton's (1988a; 1988b) comments on page 162). A graphic illustration of this is when a Fijian respondent, Viliame, described my *kai vavalagi* way of life to me as an open hand, fingers spread wide, independent of each other, as opposed to the Fijian way which was portrayed as a closed fist, fingers together symbolising unity.

Finding out your kinship relation to someone is important to establish how you should interact with each other and accounts for the standard forms of introduction that include your *koro* (village) and region (cf. Becker, 1995:22). Kinship is extended to Fijians with whom one cannot find any closer relationship through regional affiliations, legitimised by origin myths where *vu* or ancestor spirits are the same or related establishing you as *tauvu* (cf. Becker, 1995:23; Toren, 1990:56; Walter, 1973:17). In this relation one addresses the other as *tau* and you may joke and tease them mercilessly. Stories of the tricks *tau* played on one another were often told with great hilarity. The relationship of *tavale* or cross-cousin is also characterised by joking friendliness and it is within this kinship category that many ethnographers have noted people are allowed to marry. Cross cousin-marriage has been documented\(^7\) as the preferred marriage

\(^7\) See for example; Brewster (1922); Nayacakalou (1955); Quain (1948); Sahlins (1962); Teckle (1985); Thomas (1992), Toren (1990). Walter's (1973) study on Mualevu shows a different selective principle based on kinship distance rather than the Dravidian system of lineal/cross classification. Becker (1995:21) refers to the malleability of kinship relations suggesting genealogical and affinal relationships as 'secondary to its use for social manipulation'. For
type between kin as many regions have *tabu* on siblings who are both real and
classificatory, different generations and parallel cousins. Even though cross-
cousin marriage is often encouraged the preferred spouse should not be

Toren (1990:51-53) writes about the transformation of the relationship
between cross-cousins after they marry. The essence of her argument is the
subversion of kinship relations from the relative equality of male and female
cross-cousins to the inequality of the wife and husband relationship. I am
unable to comment as having read this post-fieldwork I would need to inquire
further to see if this was applicable to the case study area. However, I frequently
observed friendliness and joking across sexes that was explained in terms of
kinship relations. As well as the avoidance *tabu* between certain relatives, there
is the general avoidance between husband and wife in public. As mentioned
above the respondents were in no doubt about the hierarchy within the
household and also between households within farm settlements which is
determined by kinship relations. The variations of these prescribed relations
and the implications for the allocation of labour and resources will be discussed
in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

The wedding along with other ceremonies express the ideals of gender,
family and community relations. These events provide a space for mapping out,
reaffirming and learning the appropriate relationships between people. Asesela
Ravuvu (1987) gives an informative discussion in his book *The Fijian Ethos* on
the place of ceremony within Fijian life. ‘The ethos of the Fijian people is
embodied in their ceremonies. Without them, Fijian culture as we know it,
would no longer exist’ (Ravuvu, 1987:329). The Fijian ethos is conceptualised in
*vakaturaga* which can be translated as respectfully or in a chiefly manner.
Ravuvu (1987:320) states this is the ‘governing principle for action and mode of

example the assignation of kin terms such as *tau* to ease rapport and the overlooking of *tabu*
marriage partners if the association is favourable (Becker, 1995:21-22).
expression within and between vanua'. Vakaturaga demonstrates the respect for Fijian hierarchical structure as:

... the presence of a chief or a leader who is chiefly in manner, serves as a symbol upon which the members of the community constantly reflect and measure their personalities in relation to others. As a unifying factor, the presence of a chief acts as a focus or rallying support, structured togetherness and co-operation in the struggle for a more prosperous life... The ceremonies dramatise the charter for the distribution of power and privilege which is a key element of the vakaturaga concept... The dominance of males is manifest at every stage of a ceremony. Females cannot occupy the places of privilege, perform the prestigious roles, hold the powerful titles, or even act as intermediaries with the gods during any ceremonial offering. The females are marginalised in all aspects of all ceremonies. Even though their place is acknowledged and their useful functions in reproduction and provision of sustenance appreciated, both are done in ways that reaffirm their distinctiveness and their lesser nature... Age is a well recognised criterion of participating in ceremonial activities. As a general principle, the older the more prestigious one is, but this is qualified by vigour, and many who would be significant are by-passed by being unable to travel or produce. Thus power tends to increase till middle age and then may decline. Children are almost irrelevant to the ceremonies, except to the extent that procreation and increased population are frequently referred to and highly valued (Ravuvu, 1987:320-321).

Ravuvu (1987:307) concludes that ceremony provides a blueprint for ideal behaviour, 'though not necessarily followed to the full extent'. How ideals portrayed in the marriage ceremonies play out in daily life is explored in the following sections.

Marriage in the Contemporary Context

Analysing marriage

Belainesh Teckle in her doctoral thesis The Position of Women in Fiji; Vatulele Case study (1985) critiqued the way authors of previous Fijian ethnography's have treated marriage, observing that scholars had concentrated on the significance of what they identified as 'traditional' marriage to the exclusion of other types of marriages (Teckle, 1985:229). This approach limited
the discussion to the time that the formal proposal is made and then jumps to
the day of the wedding which leaves out all the negotiations that surround these
ceremonies (Teckle, 1985:229). There has been a perception that the main actors
are men as they play the major role in formal ceremonies, which have been the
most documented part of marriage. Teckle (1985:230) says that there has been an
emphasis on ‘ceremonial exchange of property and the transference of rights and
duties created by marriage’ and noted that

This emphasis is not peculiar to Fijian ethnography. As pointed out by Lamphere
(1974), marriage analyses in the ethnographic literature generally suffer from the
approach developed by Radcliff-Brown (1950) and followed by Gluckman (1950) and
Leach (1955) and others. This approach stresses the rights which are transferred at
marriage from one kin group to the other, thus viewing women as a repository of the
rights their kinsmen have in them (Teckle, 1985:308).

Teckle (1985:229-311) challenges this approach to Fijian marriage by
examining different types of marriage and the negotiating processes that
underlie the formal ceremonies. Through the stories of respondents she
demonstrates women have a large part to play in the negotiations and contribute
greatly with the production of exchange goods. More recent studies by Ravuvu
way towards addressing Teckle’s criticisms by giving a broader account of
marriage and incorporating a gender perspective.

However the majority of studies have been done either in a koro or in an
urban setting. There is nothing to date on the marriage of Fijian smallholder
cane farmers that live away from the koro. The Fijian respondents I interviewed
live in small settlements, of between two and five households on their own
mataqali land and although they do not live in the village they are still very
much involved with their koro and extended family networks. The small
settlements they live on appeared to have the same protocols as villages,
however it falls outside the present study to explore any differences with *koro* life as no ethnographic research was undertaken there.

**Expectations**

In order to gain an idea of the kind of qualities people perceived to be ideal for a husband and a wife I asked them what they looked for in a prospective spouse. These discussions gave me an insight into what the respondents considered to be appropriate gender roles and family relationships as well as the realities of their own experiences and observations. When I asked parents about the sort of spouse they would like for their child, their answers also reflected the ideal standards along with issues of parental control. Some of the processes of gender construction become apparent when parents explained about teaching their children various tasks in preparation for marriage. The answers also revealed the types of issues that were of main concern to people.

The potential husband should be a good provider and the ultimate proof of this is his plantation. A good plantation indicates he is a hard worker and will be able to provide for the family. Associated with being a good provider are factors such as whether he has a house, or the potential to get one. As Paulini succinctly stated; “The work, that the boy can plant, do the work, build the house.” Sereima who comes from a *koro* told me that cane farmers were considered a good prospect because they have money, the cane payment is given in lump sums that would be hard to obtain in her *koro* lifestyle. She said with that money one could build a good house and also help support the woman’s family when they needed ceremonial contributions.

When I asked what they thought generally about girls choosing husbands, Raijiel summed it up,

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8 Plantations include cash and subsistence crops and for Fijian men root crops in particular such as *dalo*, *uvi*, *tavioka* and *yaqona* have prestige (cf. Toren, 1990:62).

9 Sereima (pseudonym) comes from a *koro* near the study area but was not a respondent during the field work period. Our conversations have been invaluable for my analysis of the study material on marriage.
Some girls, looking for a face, some looking for the man who works... some looks for the village they can make a family, for that man where it’s good staying in his village for planting, because in his family we are going to eat, keep well like that.

She expressed disdain for girls who only looked for a “nice face, never mind that they haven’t got any food, or money... hasn’t got any house... oh I don’t want, some girls like that.”

As well as being a good worker a man should also have a good personal reputation. This was defined to me as someone who did not roam around all the time, drinking alcohol or lots of yaqona (cf. Teckle, 1985:242).

Venina: If they [men] want to get married, I mean if they are drunkard people, they have to leave all those things by the time they get married, they want to build one new house and so they have to leave the alcohol.

Venina thought her husband was a good example for her daughters and she also gave them advice on their position as wife:

Venina: I say to them you see your father, my husband, he don’t drink alcohol. I told them, myself by the time we get married, he just punched me one time just because of me, I didn’t listen what he says and a wife should listen to her husband. What he says you have to listen, wrong or right and that way you have to follow.
Sue: So the man is the head?
Venina: Yeah, the man is the head of the house... the women, when they marry, their position in the house is down, the husband is the head.

I asked a young man, Seru, about his future intentions concerning marriage and he answered,

The first thing is I want to build one house and then plant a lot of cassava, dalo, yams, grog [yagona] etc. After that I try to be a polite boy to clean up myself and look for one girl to be my wife. I want to choose one that can love me and my family, look after the kids and the family, also our life.
Mere said in Fijian custom you have to be well 'built up' in everything, on the woman’s side you have to know how to cook, do housework and look after relatives when they come. I asked her about gardening skills and she said they are not so worried about those. Other respondents disagreed with this and put more emphasis on gardening ability which could be due to where they were brought up and a person’s access to plantations and other resources.\(^\text{10}\)

Several people pointed out the importance of a woman’s craft skills which carry prestige because their craftwork is needed for exchange in ceremonies that not only fulfils obligations but can bring kudos as the quality is admired. For example Raijieli said:

The boys, when they see the girls they want to know that they know the mat making and that, know, can be cleaning the house, cook the food... Because in traditional ceremonies if one died, when we go we take the mats. In traditional ceremonies like wedding when we go we take the mats. If not the mats, the *masi*.

This is also an economic saving as mats would have to be bought in the market otherwise and I was told many women from town buy the mats instead of making them.

A girl’s household skills not only reflect on herself but also her family, especially her mother or the woman who brought her up. For example Milika described how she teaches her eleven year old daughter in preparation for marriage:

Milika: I tell her to cook food, afternoon after school you come and cook tea and rice.
Sue: How old was she when she started to learn cooking.
Milika: She is in class 6 now... class 5 [age 10] start cooking, last year... washing, planting some cabbage, tomatoes. I tell her to go and do.
Sue: Do the boys [her brothers] do that job too?

\(^{10}\) There appears to be variation in attitudes towards agricultural work among Fijian women that could be due to factors such as rank, region, environment and colonial influences such as the Christian missionaries emphasis on domestic work (see for example Lukere, 1997).
Milika: Yeah together. [planting] I tell her some day you will be married... do your job... Taught her, every day I tell her.

I asked Milika if she wanted her daughter's future in-laws to think her daughter had been taught well which would give herself a good name, she laughed and said yes. Another Fijian respondent said to her husband that she had been brought up without a mother so she would have to be taught. Even though she ran the house for her father and brothers and had gone to multicraft school she felt she lacked skills as no woman had been in her home to teach her. It is important not only to be able to do a range of different tasks but also to be able to perform them well and ideally it is a mother's job to teach her daughter how to accomplish this.

Reputations regarding what sort of person you are, your skills and competence are gauged from behaviour or inferred behaviour. A woman should be caring and capable. This is demonstrated in the way she looks after her own family, for example, can she take care of younger brother and sisters when the parents are away? How competent is she at cooking, craftwork and so on? Is she respectful to elders? Even in the smaller farm settlements behaviour can be evaluated by family members, neighbours and the steady flow of visitors. This agrees with Anne Becker's (1995:19) findings from her Nahigatoka (sic) village study:

. . . actions manifesting a sense of duty to one's family, children, mataqwali, village, church, or traditions earn the approbation of the everwatching villagers. The person who achieves the epithet "good women" (lewa vina) or "good man" (seigwane vina) is the one who is actively, selflessly, and visibly engaged in "carrying the responsibilities of the land on his shoulders" . . .

She elaborates further and states that the commentary 'about men reviews their participation in community events and their diligence on the plantation;
similarly, women are appraised for their conscientiousness in fulfilling their various domestic and village duties' (Becker, 1995:87).

A Fijian male respondent, Viliame thought the important qualities were not a person’s ability to work, wealth or rank but more their personality and reputation. Viliame had heard about his future wife, she had a ‘good’ reputation, her father and brothers had kept her at home, she did not roam around going to *soqos*\(^\text{11}\) and he was ‘looking for a good partner for life’. A girl is under the protection of her father and brothers who guard her sexuality (cf. Toren, 1990:52). When Viliame first expressed interest in this woman he took a *sevusevu* to her father so ‘he would not do anything’ to him. This was not a formal proposal but a means of legitimation otherwise Viliame would have run the risk of being beaten by her father and brothers. I was often told that if a boy was caught illicitly with a girl or even if it was rumoured that they were secretly seeing each other it was mandatory for her close male relatives to beat him.

Teckle (1985:242) also found that the young Fijian men she talked to emphasised the quality of being a ‘good girl’. This could mean a variety of things, being a caring, capable, respectful person as mentioned above. Ideally this should also mean that the girl is a virgin and was expressed in phrases like ‘one who does not go here and there’ (Teckle, 1985:242; cf. Toren, 1990:52). Which is the same as the expression I heard about ‘roaming around’, inferring girls had more opportunities not to be virgins.

Female virginity used to be symbolised by a long ringlet of hair worn down the back of the neck but this stopped a long time ago and Viliame thought this could be due to Christian influences.\(^\text{12}\) Mere can remember going to a wedding about fifteen years ago where the virgin test was still applied. Vestiges of it are still very much part of traditional wedding ceremonies with the making

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\(^{11}\) A general term referring to gatherings, usually for ceremony, celebration, church.

\(^{12}\) Quain conducted field work during 1935-36 on Vanua Levu in Bua Province, he noted then that the virgin’s hairstyle was going out of fashion which he attributed to saving embarrassment at having it cut before marriage as ‘virgins are few’ (Quain, 1948:345).
up of the bridal bed, but apparently the mothers no longer check for blood after the couple have consummated their marriage.\textsuperscript{13}

I asked Sereima how a man’s premarital sexual activity was regarded:

Sereima: I think the boys they are let off quite easily ... it's like if he is seeing a lot of girls it's sort of looked at like its something to do with his virility ... Sue: So it doesn’t matter if they have been with all these girls? Sereima: No, no ... its sort of looked at like if a girl can catch that kind of guy she must be really special. ... marriage is regarded highly so when he’s decided to marry a girl, when considering his reputation, she must’ve been a catch and special to do this to him or maybe one exactly like him, one he cannot tame.

Toren (1994:22) in her case study on the island of Gau also found this double standard, (which is by no means isolated to Fiji), and says that ‘male sexuality is understood to be urgent, difficult to control’.

\textbf{Kinship obligations}

The ideal of a good, caring, capable provider could be said to apply to both a husband and a wife although the definition and performance of the qualities differ. These criteria are viewed as important for establishing a new family and also for the extended family in the form of kinship relations and obligations. As mentioned above kinship relations are a blueprint for social interaction. This is partially expressed through obligations to provide goods and services on an informal as well as ceremonially basis.

When I questioned Sereima about kinship obligations between a husband and a wife’s family she emphasised that it was not so much between the families as between the husband and wife in consultation with their families. The couple’s immediate families are also like their support team and will help them with kinship contributions.

\textsuperscript{13} See Quain (1948:338-341) and Becker (1995:88-89) for an account of rituals associated with virginity during the wedding ceremony.
Sue: What is his obligation to her family, like does it continue on through their whole married life?
Sereima: Yes
Sue: Is it quite even between...
Sereima: Yeah, the women as well.
Sue: So the woman’s family is suppose to contribute to his mataqali?
Sereima: Not so much the woman’s family but her, herself and so is he from his side, he contributes to her family, things like you know and then it’s up to him if he wants help from his family he can ask them ‘we are having this . . .’ like it might be kava from his own plantation and he needs help with work so he could get his brothers and his family to help him because he needs it for his traditional ceremonies. . . if there is something on in the girls family the family would just say to her ‘oh you have to have you know [contribution]’, we talked about this and usually the girl and her husband it would be like something they were doing together and they would talk about it . . . say it was her sister getting married, they would all come together and talk about who is going to do what. All the stuff, they would dish out what is their part . . . ‘you make so many mats, pillows’ and sometimes he [husband] would suggest that he would bring something. Or they would ask him if he would bring some taro or something. It is the same with his family if there is something on, maybe his sister is getting married she [wife] would take part as well . . . because they are part of that family, they would be given something to make, something to do. It is not like ‘oh no I don’t want to do that’ it’s not like that. It’s like ‘okay we’ll do that’.

As a society that traditionally organises patrilocally around the extended family, the in-laws can be an important consideration for a woman. When I questioned mothers about the sort of husband they would like for their daughters I was told a husband should also come from a good family. For example when I asked Milika about her preferences for her daughter’s husband she said she wanted the mother-in-law and father-in-law to be good and look after her daughter. Venina had a similar response when I asked her “What do you think are important things to make a good husband?”

Venina: I’m looking for their family, I don’t bother whether he is a millionaire or what, the thing I just want is I want him to give my daughters a home just like me. . .
keep them... Another thing for the family is as far as we know what happens to the family, happy every day, very important.

Mere was not worried about money and emphasised that the family should love each other. Ideally happiness and love are more important than material wealth, which was expressed by terms such as ‘millionaire’ and ‘money face’. As mentioned above cane farmers can be an attractive proposition to women because of their perceived wealth but there is a tension between being well provided for and brazenly going just for the money.

Finding a spouse

I wondered how people could meet prospective partners when sex segregation was the norm at any social event I attended. Dancing had been banned for Fijians in this area by the Methodist Church about five years ago.14 People did meet of course, at soqos, social events, church, school, sports, through relatives and friends and I was told many people would go out for years before they married. Viliame said in the past when Fijians would arrange marriages, the man’s family would go and search for a girl:

Some they just go for high rank. Like king, like a Tui, this Tui from this district will go for another Tui in another district... but now they don’t do that, if you are a Tui and love someone then you go there.

He said although some people were choosing a partner without really looking at the person but rather “what they have got behind them”. Other respondents also told me that chiefly families used to arrange marriages because they did not want to mix with commoners. The desire to marry into a chiefly family did not seem to be an issue for the respondents I interviewed.

14 Toren (1994:23) noted the dangers of dancing as it gives an opportunity for people of the opposite sex to communicate. ‘Young men and women expect dancing to lead to sexual liaisons; so do adults and especially church leaders who cannot countenance dancing and must leave the room where it takes place’ (Toren, 1994:23).
Women play a large role in the negotiation of marriage for family and friends, matchmaking, vetting prospective spouses and acting as go betweens (cf. Teckle, 1985:229-311). Mothers, aunties and grandmothers are very involved in this process and reputations are a very important consideration as noted above. Unmarried girls may also play a part as messenger. Jimi mentioned to me that a boy may have a girl who is just a friend and acts as a go between for him to other girls he likes.

When I asked a respondent about meeting her own husband and how she felt when she first came to her husband’s place and did not know them well, ‘We don’t know Gods... God arranged everything but some of us think ‘how you come here?’’ and then laughed. She felt her marriage was ordained by God who guided the hand of fate, in this case through the meeting of her husband’s sister.

Sue: How did you actually met your husband?
Respondent: I just came here for a week, one of his sisters was working in town, we use to play basketball, in town, so I met her there. So during the play time we come to know each other so from there I came here, just for a week... Sister came to me and said I have got one brother at home, I need my brother to get married... she arranged that marriage.

*Vavanua* - the proposal and wedding organisation

Venina told her daughters:

... if one boy want to get married with one of you, you tell him ‘my mother and father still alive’.
Sue: So they should do it properly.
Venina: Yeah, the Fijian way, there is the Jesus way we don’t do the devil way, the devil’s way is if he wants to get married with one of you, you tell him straight, that my mother and father still alive, if you want to get married with me you go to my home.

Venina was warning her daughter not to consider eloping which is called *vakatevoro* or the devil’s way. The right thing to do, ‘Jesus’ way’, was to ask
your parents' permission first which is the first formal step in the marriage process and is known as *vavanua*.

A respondent had told me about her first meeting with her future husband; he had approached her while she was waiting outside the bank and had asked her then and there to marry him. She thought he was joking and had said 'yes' more out of embarrassment and wanting to get away from him, being shy and afraid her sister-in-law would see her talking to this stranger. Her husband told me later that you can just say that to girls but do not really feel it inside. It takes time to love someone, and it is better if you know them first. He said you are married a long time, and emphasised that communication is very important.

Raijieli’s husband was visiting relatives at her village when she met him.

Raijieli: He asked me first then I tell him to wait for one week, I want to think about it.
Sue: How old were you?
Raijieli: At that time I was seventeen years old. After that, the next week after then I tell his Aunty in the village to come and tell his mother that it is time to go and ask me in my village..

All the respondents I spoke to who had a formal marriage or *vakamau* told me the same thing about the proposal, Raijieli’s is typical of these accounts and continues from the above quote:

Sue: So to come with the *tabua*..15
Raijieli: Yeah
Sue: So you said yes.
Raijieli: Yes
Sue: How old was [he]?
Raijieli: He was about twenty-three.
Sue: So he came with his father, just the men?
Raijieli: Just the men and his mother.
Sue: So usually the mother will come as well?

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15 *Tabua* are whale’s teeth which are prestige items used in ceremonial exchange.
Raijieli: Only his mother. I am at home and I tell my father [that his family will come to propose] and my father tells my brothers... After that we open the village and cook the food waiting for them... I feel very afraid, it’s the first time, I am in the kitchen, after they make the sevusevu, [groom’s] father. After that my father calls me inside the house and I am sitting near my mother. Then [groom’s] father takes the tabua and tells my father about the tabua because [he] wants to marry me and my father calls me and asks me do I know that tabua and I said ‘yes I know it’.

Sue: That’s all you have to say?
Raijieli: Yes, I am married. So what about the tabua, you want to, so this tabua you want to, it’s mine or I give it back to them. I say it’s yours.

Sue: You have accepted.

Raijieli: Yes, after that they make some yaqona and drink grog together... It’s like that.

In all these cases the man asked the woman first and when her consent was assured he consulted with his family and if all were in agreement they would obtain the necessary tabua to offer her family in the proposal ceremony. The vavanua ceremony takes place at the woman’s home and the discussions and feasting can go on for days (cf. Thomas, 1992:319). The tabua is considered a ‘dead’ one as the woman’s family does not reciprocate during the proposal ceremony. More than one tabua can be presented, and this is taken as an indication of status and respect for the bride and her family. Along with the tabua, yaqona is also presented as a sevusevu. Perhaps prior consent from the bride was not always sought, one person said there was a tradition of taking the tabua for marriage proposal at night because if the woman refused, the man and his family could slip away under the cover of darkness to hide their shame.

All the women I spoke to who were proposed to in this way had previously consented and during the ceremony had the option of refusing the tabua and thus the proposal.16 The participants of the proposal ceremony were

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16 Teckle (1985:234) says that women do have choice and retain the option to refuse an unwanted proposal. However the ceremonial procedure is different in Teckle’s research area as the daughters father will accept the tabua on her behalf during the vavanua without consulting her as a sign of regard for the proposer and his family. The woman’s family then goes through a period of consultation similar to what the intended groom’s family went through before the proposal. If the
predominantly senior male members of the two families and notably the potential groom’s mother often came with the groom’s party. After the acceptance there was discussion about wedding arrangements between the two families. Both families contribute to the wedding and the bride and groom’s immediate families may need to take *tabua* to their extended family to ask for their assistance, which includes exchange goods and labour needed to carry out the ceremonies. The contribution people make to the wedding is determined among family members according to kinship obligations and resources. As a Fijian male respondent told me, “people give what they can”.

The prospective bride may go back with her future in-laws after the proposal ceremony and depending on the circumstances the wedding ceremony may be held within a week or two or a few years down the track. The time frame from the man asking a woman to marry him to the proposal ceremony and then for her to be living at his place can be just a few weeks. Mere and Raijieli said this was because the man’s side worried that the girl might change her mind and go with another suitor as the proposal is not binding.

This is different to Thomas (1992:319) who, in his Noikoro case study distinguishes between two stages of the formalised proposal, the initial proposal seeking consent from the woman and her family and then the confirmation or *vavanua* ceremony that may take place a few months afterwards. *Tabua* and *yaqona* along with other items such as kerosene, mats and material are presented to the bride’s family at the *vavanua* ceremony. These items are known as ‘*i yau ni vanua*, valuables of the land for exchange’ and are intended as a confirmation of the proposal. In the present study only one respondent, who was marrying into a chiefly family, had a second ceremony. The other respondents had only one proposal ceremony where the man’s family presented *tabua* and *yaqona*. Possibly because they did not conduct the second more costly
ceremony to confirm the proposal the man’s family wanted the woman to come back with them after the initial presentation.

Respondents agreed that legal marriages are taking place sooner after the proposals and that in the past people would live together for a few years before they got married. A reason given for speedy legal marriages is the influence of Christianity as Elenoa states when she is telling me about the arrangements for her son’s marriage,

Elenoa: We take one week for ready everything. Dalo and something like that, prepare everything for eating and the party.
Sue: It’s very quick one week.
Elenoa: [agrees] and everything for the drink, [yaqona] preparing goes for one week.
[Ask bride’s parents] Say excuse me can we have the birth certificate for the marriage and those people say they will bring on Monday. Take this and put at your house. After that we came back on that time. I don’t like to leave that for many days because we are Christian, you can’t stay with those people and not married.
Sue: They can’t stay together those two?
Elenoa: [agrees]
Sue: Were they staying together?
Elenoa: When they stay together we are Christian that’s not right.
Sue: Tell me what happened, you took that tabua and then did you take the girl back with you?
Elenoa: Must not take back, stay there... I said to them don’t take the girl. They just think [my son] is too young. We can’t correct his mind in everything, day and night you must take the girl and put them together there, you take it to married for one week.
Sue: I see so they wanted you to take their daughter.
Elenoa: Yes
Sue: Before they got married so they could see how they got on together.
Elenoa: [agrees] ... In the Fijian rule we must take one or two years, we want to see how the girl stays with the parents and make the food and then we can have marriage. But now we pray for, we are Christian ah, we can’t stay together, we must make marriage for staying together.
**Vakatevoro - Elopement**

There is another form of marriage, *vakatevoro* or elopement. A man may take a woman, with her consent, to his home or the house of a close relative. The couple must then atone to the woman's family with a *bulubulu* or *soro* ceremony, this should take place before the couple legally marry, but for some this may not be performed until years later. *Bulubulu* means graveyard and in this ceremonial context implies you are burying the shame. Ravuvu (1987) gives an in-depth analysis of this type of ceremony and says that it is not only a means of

compensation for the misdeeds, but also a way of improving relations between [vanua]... the *bulubulu* or atonement act, a cleansing rite, which compensated structurally for the initial marriage rites and procedures which had not been carried out (Ravuvu, 1987:281).

Mere commented that while both sides exchanged *tabua* and goods such as kerosene and material the man's side must always be 'heavier' contributing more to the ceremony.

Why do couples elope? It is usually because there is some objection to the marriage from the families. Joni, a male respondent, explained it to me after asking me to explain how *kai vavalagi* couples and their families negotiated marriage,

Sue: I noticed in Fiji it's like one family marries another family.
Joni: *Ilo* [yes]
Sue: It's not just the boy and girl coming together is it, the families are behind it?
Joni: *Ilo, io,* Firstly you must say the *kai vavalagi* and then I can say about the Fijian.
Sue: With the *kai vavalagi*, like if I love a boy I take him home to meet my mother and father and hopefully they will love him. But if I really love him and they don't, I will still go and marry him. We will introduce the parents to each other, but if they don't

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17 Teckle (1985:233-234) differentiates between two types of non-legal marriage, the first as described above and the second she calls elopement (*vituba*) whereby it is *tabu* for the couple to marry because they are related so they runaway and consummate their marriage in the bush.
really like each other they still don’t have a say, if my parents say we don’t like his family we don’t think they are any good I will listen to them but . . .

Joni: Now Fijians it’s like open ah, it’s only for the boy and the girl, their own love, it’s up to their love. When we say ‘oh they love each other’ that is the time the parents have to... it might be sometimes met that way you say, like Europeans ah. But this one boy say seventeen or eighteen and he love one girl, it’s up to them to make their love and keep their love.

Sue: The parents don’t have any say.

Joni: No, could be that, might be some parents say don’t marry, mostly the mothers talk and say that. The men don’t do that thing. . . This is why many Fijian boys and girls who love each other got trouble there from the family and they run away. But if the love and the parents good both sides then they take the tabua.

Sue: I know the ceremony, are more boys and girls running away now?

Joni: More, your side [where I was staying] lots more than before. . . . Its shows that the parent’s side is no good, the trouble comes from the parent’s not the two lovers no. It’s the parents, like you say you kai vaivalagi when they see that they love each other the parents have to stand by ah, to watch them, that’s why trouble come [parents interfering]. . . Yeah, because the parents have to ready, when they see the son or daughter love somebody you know they have to ready everything for the marriage. Should prepare the tabua, if you want to marry that girl you have to make the sevusevu. . . Somebody didn’t want, some parent, like I say because mother, very few that one, not very much. . . father should take them the right way because he is the leader of the wife. Troubles from her.

Joni’s assertion that it is the mother who usually objects supports the fact women are very involved in the decision making process about prospective spouses. There may be objections to a marriage because of kinship tabu or the proposed spouse and sometimes their family as well are not seen as ‘good enough’.

Solrun Williksen-Bakker (1992) in her study on elopement in urban Fiji uses this practice and more specifically the atonement ceremonies to illustrate some of the gendered aspects of Fijian personhood. The main focus of her paper was the embodiment of ritual cleansing as part of the essence of Fijianess. To
maintain one’s Fijian identity is to fulfil ceremonial obligations and with the attainment of keeping pace with your obligations you therefore become ‘clean’.\(^{18}\)

Williksen-Bakker (1992:126) notes an increase in elopement in urban areas and has a very different interpretation of why this is so. She cites the tensions between traditional cultural forms and living in an urbanised environment where it is harder to maintain these forms due to the distance from kinship networks and the cosmopolitan influences of other cultures. Elopement and its inherent ceremonies of atonement becomes a way of re-establishing Fijian identity.

It is, rather, a struggle to remain Fijian despite the massive import of non-Fijianness. Events must, therefore, occur in which identity can be performed and sustained (Battaglia 1990:14). Working on each other’s behalf, “stealing” each other, blaming each other, leaving each other and coming back, making atonement and being atoned for are all part of this frenzied work, concerned with not losing oneself (Williksen-Bakker, 1992:126).

However vakamau offers the same opportunities for ceremonies. Williksen-Bakker gives no consideration as to why people elope in the first place except to maintain their Fijianess through a ritual cleansing process and to indulge in a lavish ceremony (Williksen-Bakker, 1992:119). Parental control and interference, the idea that you can ‘steal’ a woman and that it is the man’s side who must atone more for taking her when she did consent are not considered by Williksen-Bakker. These aspects highlight gender and generational relations that intersect with other considerations and culminate in elopement.

The following explanation that Sereima gave me of why some couples decide to do the *bulubulu* for elopement, or any other wrong doing, partially supports Williksen-Bakker. It is about finding a sense of completeness through fulfilment of obligations which could be interpreted as an reaffirmation of one’s

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\(^{18}\) See Ravuvu (1987:10,268,278,281) on metaphor of cleansing away dirt, debt or dark spot through ceremony. The body becomes an icon during the ceremonies to be ‘inscribed’ upon, attention is given to bodily form, posture, gesture, proximity (Williksen-Bakker, 1992:121-122).
Fijian identity. This identity encompasses kinship relations that promote a profound respect for parents, elders, chiefs and family and to transgress this can invite retribution from the material and spiritual worlds.

Sereima: ... usually later then they think about how they have harmed their family. They think about it, this is not good because it’s seen as a bad omen if you do something wrong ... disobeyed your parents, it’s seen as a curse on you and your family, that is going to be going down generations. So it [bulubulu] has to be done, even some people when they are much older they would go, take the whole family. It’s sad when you see them come but it’s a happy occasion as well.

Sue: So it’s like a burden they have with them?
Sereima: Yeah, and it won’t go away. Some people would think about it, yeah when we are young, but then they have to do this because sometimes say the kids are sickly and never well, they think okay we have really got to do ... People start thinking, they look back ... Sue: Do they think like the ancestor, spirits ...
Sereima: That’s right, especially with the parents, the older the people that you disobey the more you sort of look at it as being really you know, the older they are they hold a bit more mana. Think of them like that and we try hard not to anger our grans, not annoy them, not to do something that we would really be rebellious ... You might disagree on some things but if you just disobey them deliberately and they are really angry ... because of that we look at them you know, and if they are chiefs then that’s a bit more. Just like the aunties and uncles will come around ... if there was one of their child [that] was sickly and send to the doctor and it never got any better and they don’t know what is wrong with them. One of the relatives would come and say don’t you think you would like to go and do something about that and maybe you should go and do a soro to your Dad or to your Mum ... do the soro and then they ask the parents or whoever they have wronged to massage the child ...

Sue: I bet it often works too.
Sereima: Yes it does, we look at it as that’s quite important kind of thing.

Most importantly it is a means of reconciliation with the family, to reinstate a sense of belonging by healing the ties that have been severed through elopement. Sereima likened this to the Christian story of the prodigal son. She said that “feelings of love are restored especially between father and daughter as males are the protectors of daughters and sisters”.

Lotu Vakamau and Solevu

After the vavanua the couple has to go to the registry office to apply for the marriage license and this registration is supposed to be left for a period of time to allow for any objections to the marriage to be noted. This is called dresuivola. When no objections have been registered the couple can then legally marry. They may choose to be married by the talatala (minister or pastor) at their koro, or as the couples I spoke to, marry in town first at the registry office or at a minister's residence. The solevu (gathering for celebrations) is held at the groom's place and may be on the same day, a few days afterwards or quite some time afterwards depending on the circumstances. At the solevu different ceremonial presentations will be made between the bride's and groom's families. These presentations will consist of i yau (wealth) such as tabua, yaqona, kerosene, mats, masi, pillows, bedding, household goods and food. The i yau from the woman's family is called i yau ni yalewa and from the man's side it is called i yau ni tagane.

Preparations

The work involved in preparation for a wedding can be extensive (cf. Quain, 1948:331-339; Teckle, 1985:252-262). Everyone has their allotted job which is based on kinship, gender, age, skills and labour availability. Only the females will serve the food, decorate and wait on the table and clean the dishes afterwards. Depending on the size of the wedding, this can involve feeding hundreds of people on a rotational basis over a period of days and well into the night. The many guests also have to be looked after and made comfortable which is predominantly a female domain. Production of goods such as masi and mats are female tasks and take months to prepare and are the major contribution to the exchange process.  

19 See Ravuvu (1987:261-2) and Teckle (1985:230, 253-267) for discussion on importance of women's contribution to ceremonial exchange. Teckle (1985:253) notes that the bulk of the wedding
Youths from the woman's side are expected to help with the preparations. I was told that male youths work very hard at *soqa* for example, building shelters, digging fire pits and pounding *yaqona* which can be an exhausting task. Some of the men participate and supervise these activities at various times. Otherwise the men, particularly those of senior status, drink *yaqona* together and it is *tabu* for the youths, children and women to go and sit with them unless they allow it.

As discussed above ceremonies create and reaffirm social bonds and the material facilitation of this is through exchange of goods and the provision of a *magiti* (feast). Both men and women cook but there is division of certain tasks, for example it is men only who prepare the *lovo* and kill the livestock.\(^{20}\) The *lovo* food is regarded as fitting for special occasions and it takes a prominent place in the presentation of food in ceremonial exchange. This confers prestige on men, while it is the women who take charge of the day to day cooking (cf. Toren, 1990:63). The rest of the harvesting, preparation and cooking for the *magiti* is shared by men and women. Because the groom's side hosts the wedding they are responsible for the *magiti*, although relatives from the bride's side may also contribute food. As acting hosts, the groom's family wait on the bride's relatives.

Sereima: . . . it's expected of the man because they are hosting, to provide food and . . . if the woman's family comes and during the ceremony and they eat well and there was plenty, it is looked at oh you know he can provide, his family can do well kind of thing.

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\(^{20}\) The *lovo* is an earth oven in which root crops, usually yams and *dalo*, and meat is cooked. Ravuvu (1987:27-28) says that traditionally a *magiti* should have these two main elements although 'attitudes are becoming increasingly flexible' with the introduction of factory manufactured food-stuffs. In the present study pigs were the most valued type of livestock for feasts and are prepared whole in the *lovo*, then presented in ceremonial exchanges along with *dalo* and yams. At the weddings I attended the presentation was made from the husband's to the wife's family. Cattle are also important and are killed on the day and used for the *magiti* and exchange. See Thomas (1992) for a discussion on the importance of livestock for weddings and the labour and expense of ceremonies.
Quain (1948:336, 344) observed that the bride's family should be well fed by the 'ovens of the groom' and lavishly entertained. The *magiti* as part of the contribution of the groom’s family to the wedding demonstrates, as Sereima says, a man and his family’s productive capacity. This agrees with Ravuvu (1987:268) who states in an analysis of a ceremony that a

... *magiti* accompanied the presentation because it was an essential substance for maintaining life. ... also a public demonstration of the productive power of the man’s side, their potency in procreating and nurturing life, and capability in producing the objects of wealth being offered.

I noted that people talked a lot about the food they were going to eat or had eaten at various *soqo*. I asked Esala about the importance of food at *soqo* and he said it is like a competition. You had to have as much as the people at the last *soqo* and it would be shameful to not have enough food for everyone, it reflects on the family and *mataqali*.

Participants display their productive capacities as they quietly compete and rival for recognition and self-esteem by producing the best and the most, which are criteria of honour, respect and success (Ravuvu, 1987:323).

*I yau* such as *masi*, mats, pillows, bedding, (clay pots in other areas) along with other household goods, are regarded as objects for 'women's domestic and life-nurturing roles' (Ravuvu, 1987:28, 268). While these are associated with women, the *tabua* and *yaqona*, which are the lead objects in any ceremony, are aligned with men. This is because they are

... used as the medium through which aspirations are conveyed from one social unit to another, or from this world to the metaphysical one ... In the cultural ordering of things among these communities, the male and his ritual objects of wealth are ranked highest. As the link to the ancestral gods, they possess certain spiritual or divine powers and are treated with a degree of sacredness. ... Men and their ceremonial objects of value occupy the position between the supernatural and the temporal,
whereas women and their valued goods are relegated to the temporal, secular sector (Ravuvu, 1987:263).

The *i yau* is shared out amongst both families with the couple keeping a proportion for themselves. The reciprocity of exchange between the husband’s and wife’s families shows they both want to demonstrate their productive capacity,

Sereima: It’s sort of like because our daughter is getting married we can show that we can provide, we can do quite well for ourselves. Sometimes it’s like a show. The man’s family usually brings a lot of stuff as well, its usually the place where people go and admire.

Sereima expanded on this and said the value placed on the daughter by her parents and as a sister by her brothers, particularly if she is the only girl in the family or the eldest, is usually the motivation behind the amount her family gives. This demonstrates she is from a good family with the ability to provide. It is important for a woman to show her and her family’s productive capacity as a matter of honour which gives her more respect amongst her husband’s people. As Ravuvu (1987:291) states; ‘To go empty-handed into a marriage would imply a lack of support from the woman’s people and thus their weak productive power and blessing.’ The opposite of this is that a woman can use the productive power of her own people as a come back to quiet criticism and thus her maternal family are still protecting her in her married life.
Figure 2. Weaving voivoi mats that are used in ceremonial exchanges as well as for home use.

Figure 3. Preparing food for the magiti which will take place later that day when the couple returns from the marriage ceremony in town.
Figure 4. Youths preparing food for magiti.

Figure 5. Just married! The bride and groom arrive back from town.
Figure 6. Uncovering the lovo.

Figure 7. Presentation of the lovo food by the groom’s side to the bride’s family.
Soli na Yalewa - Bride going to Groom's family

The elders will talk to the bride and groom separately about what is expected of a husband or wife. Viliame gave me the essence of this speech for the bride:

You are going to start a new family, try to be good, try to show what we taught you here and do there. Love everybody, just like that, you tell them what to do in their family. But some they talk very long but that is the main part to remind them.

I asked him whether in cases where the bride did not know how to cook, for example, if that would reflect badly on her own family. Viliame’s answer reflected the ideal response which is prescribed ceremonially. When the father hands over the daughter he asks that if she does not know something then teach her because she is now part of the family and if you see any weakness in her life then love her. The following speech was given at a wedding I attended and is an example of the father giving his daughter to her husband’s family. In this case it was performed by the brides uncle, as her father had passed away, and took place after the presentation and display of the bride’s i yau.

Brides Uncle: To the chiefly house of ___ and the chiefly child of ___. Your pact (vow) has come to fruition in the exchange of Tabua at the ___ for a child of ___.

Response from Husbands family: Vinaka

Brides Uncle: I am very grateful that the wedding service has been celebrated earlier in the afternoon. That we have come and witnessed the wedding celebration. The most solemn moment has come to hand over [dedicate, give over] a child of ___ coming over to be one to stoke the fires of ___. That child I can say while it was just a flower, growing, cared for and nurtured in the house [home] of ___ till the time it has come to be picked today. It has been picked to be used to weave a salusalu to show what [colour] this salusalu is made of. I hope that she will be bringing a salusalu with a sweet scent, to sweeten the scent of the air. Whatever happens that you will see the good [all the time, always].

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21 This speech was translated by a Fijian respondent and the explanations in square brackets that interpret various phrases are hers.
... This is a small tabua that I am holding before you the chief of __, to dedicate to you [Bride]. She will be walking the coastlines of your country side of ____ if she picks a flower she didn’t plant we ask that she be loved, that you do not talk about her because she is just young. Don’t know much. I am confident in offering this [masamaya?] because of the bloodlines between us [relationships] that she will be cared for, taught and forgiven for her awkwardness [behaviour that is not appropriate] with the chiefly house of ___.

Whatever colour she will be, she will show the colours of ___ sometimes it will depend on the direction of the wind [moods] that blow. We ask that the winds will be still and its waves will be calm and stories will start? of her to tell young life that reveals her weaknesses [inappropriate behaviours] at times while she’d performing her duties in the chiefly house. This is the wish [prayer] of the people of ___ and its foundations where maternal [milk] ancestors flew/ from who are here this evening.

... all that here come who are from all her maternal parents family, all the relatives Tui ___, Tui ___ and where she was nurtured [milk] and now she is going to leave us [leave the breast - figure of speech] I have come to now dedicate her with this tiny tabua. Her troubles are our troubles as well. You heard what I’ve been saying [tonight] leaving the family that she has come to care for is not an easy one because it is the home of chiefs. If she doesn’t perform her duties well I ask that you’ll be good and teach her. If she hears talk, you will only be talking about one of your own blood [relations].

I hope that your promise that you made at ____ will protect [Bride] and her relations that come to visit her sometimes. Whatever words I have to say. It is our wish and the wish of those behind me because of the flower that has been picked today. It has been woven into your salusalu of the chiefly house of ___. I hope that it will perfume your salusalu and keep your house clean [figure of speech] the chiefly house.

So So rai tu
aaa!!! eee!!!

Response: I accept the gift, the tabua, the rock of the land, a clean gift, a gift of honour. I accept with a grateful heart. Thank you very much for the respect and honour that you’ve shown in your speech.

During this speech, the bride dressed in masi sat demurely on the mat, with her head bowed as a sign of respect. Although the imagery is beautiful the bride’s position is almost talked about like a wayward child that needs guidance and gentle correction. There is a proscription for appropriate behaviour; to fit in with her husband’s large extended family she needs to know her place and her
own family ask that any indiscretions may be forgiven. Viliame emphasised
that this is a very sad moment for the father, bride and bride’s family. The
giving of the tabua is like giving the daughter to the husband’s family for life. A
woman is ideally bound to her husband’s family for the rest of his life, if she is
widowed her family will ceremonially ask for her to come back. However, this
does not signal the end of a woman’s involvement with her natal kin as she
may return home frequently, sometimes for months at a time and, dependent
on proximity, actively participant in daily life.

This transference of a woman from one group to another can be
interpreted as a redistribution of power and privilege (Ravuvu, 1987:328). That
is because through women and children the ‘strength and life of a group is
enhanced and continued . . . transfer of both economic and human resources . . .
economic or political power is redistributed and generally made equitable’
(Ravuvu, 1987:328). Consequently there is a lot of emphasis during the marriage
ceremonies on fertility and the importance of having children. Ravuvu
(1987:268) explains that the exchange of valued objects is ‘symbolic of a physical
and social union between the side of the man and the side of the woman. It thus
publicised the completion of an act of procreation.’

Tevutevu

I yau is exchanged between the bride’s and groom’s families in a series of
ceremonies throughout the marriage process and the tevutevu is the last of
these. The term literally means ‘unfolding’, which relates to the unfolding of
the mats and is a presentation of i yau such as masi, mats, pillows, kerosene and
other household goods that helps the new couple to set up house. Sereima said
that this was for the mothers to do and ‘it’s sort of like Mum and Dad’s last gift to
their child.’ There may be two separate tevutevu, one from the woman’s side
and one from the man’s or the parents may chose to combine in one ceremony.
The groom’s people may have the tevutevu on the marriage day, with the
bride's family having it at some later date. This variation in format, according to convenience and resources, correlates with Ravuvu's (1987:325, see above) comments on the flexibility of ceremonies to incorporate new cultural elements thus guaranteeing vakaviti.

As the final act the families are supposed to perform for the couple, the tevutevu gives a sense of completion to the obligations that the parents have for their unmarried children. Kinship obligations do continue after marriage as discussed above but there is a shift in expectations as the couple have formed their own family.

I Yau - Exchange and the Bride

When I asked respondents if i yau given during the succession of ceremonies associated with marriage was considered to be a form of bride price or dowry, they said 'no' (cf. Cema Bolabola pers. comm. 1997). Both male and female respondents did not perceive goods given to the bride's family as some kind of payment for the bride. The bride's family also contributes and the goods are situated more in a complex of kinship obligations to facilitate the coming together of the woman's and man's families and a means of establishing the couple as a new family. Becker (1995:24-25) notes that the main purpose of accumulating i yau is to 'equip the group to enter into their next exchange, thereby guaranteeing maintenance of social ties' therefore any accumulation 'is generally transient: what endure are the social ties with each exchange and the prestige conferred upon both the recipient and the giver in enacting it.'

There are conflicting messages about the value given to the size of ceremonial contribution. On the one hand people can be competitive and possibly critical if not enough food is provided as discussed above. Ethnographers such as Quain (1948:332), Sahlins (1976) and Toren (1990) have noted that the groom's family is expected to provide more than the bride's.
Toren (1990:54) reinterprets Sahlins' (1976:26) assertion that the husband's side is 'superior' in these exchanges because they should give more:

The man’s side was never said to be superior; rather it was said of these exchanges that the man’s side must ‘win’ because if they do not give more they will be ‘ashamed’. This suggests that the woman herself is part of what is given by ‘the side of the woman’ and that the greater amount of goods from the man’s side is to compensate the woman’s kin for their loss . . . For my purposes here, what is most significant is that the woman’s status as ‘object’ in the marriage exchanges constitutes a distinct denial of the exchange relations that ideally exist between cross-cousins. In marriage exchanges the woman ceases to be a party to a balanced and reciprocal exchange between equals (that is, between cross-cousins) and is transformed into an object of exchange (cf. Brewster, 1922:197).

This compliments Toren’s theory on the change of status from the equality of cross-cousins to the hierarchy of husband then wife (see page 55). However, I was only told that the man’s side should be ‘heavier’ for the bulubulu ceremony for elopement (see page 71). Seru denied that any side must win or that the husband’s should be more than the wife’s. He said people gave what they could afford and expressed a more forgiving attitude towards people who could only contribute a small amount. The point of this debate concerns status, not just in terms of a man being above a woman, which is implicit in the ceremonial structure, but in the notion that the woman is an ‘object’ who can be part of the ceremonial exchange in marriage.

Thomas (1992:320) found that the perception of a bride’s status in the marriage ceremony differed between men and women. Men were inclined to discuss the iyau given by the groom’s side as ‘na isau ni yalewa, the price of the woman. It was also explained to me in other contexts that ‘we (or they) buy the

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22 Ravuvu (1987:329) states that size is not important, as the ceremony ‘is an act of transformation and superordination. It transforms objects, including human beings, from an inferior state to a superior one . . .’. Mundane objects are transformed through ritual into the superordinate and small things into large.
woman” (Thomas, 1992:320). The implication is that they have bought the woman to ensure the strength and continuity of their group which includes her labour contribution as her natal family forfeit these claims on her once married. Thomas (1992:321) qualifies these implications as the realities of ongoing interaction and kinship obligations contradict this, however he is more ‘concerned with perceptions and their historical context than the level of more fundamental but implicit relationships’. Women interpreted the amount of *i yau* as a sign of women’s worth rather than a ‘price’ ‘which suggests that they are like things which change hands in the market’ (Thomas, 1992:320).

I never got the impression that women were tallied up in the exchange process and agree with Teckle (1985:300-302) who found women were ‘active agents in the marriage processes’ and were not symbolically or otherwise, objects to be bought or sold. In the present study Fijians are free to choose their own partners although this can be tempered by disapproval from parents and senior relatives. Within the discourses of expectations and ceremony; care, respect and love stand out as contradictory to the idea that the bride becomes an ‘object’ to exchange. The emphasis on her abilities to be productive both in providing offspring and labour do not correspond to her objectification and considered ‘price’ in the present research.

**Summary**

A general conclusion to Fijian and Fiji Indian marriage is at the end of the following chapter. In summary, the main themes of this chapter were the importance of colonisation and particularly the missionary influence in impacting on Fijian family relations. This continues to be a complex and

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23 Sereima wrote the following comments on a draft regarding Thomas’s findings of some males perceptions; ‘These observations and comments Sue would be seen and observed or spoken by those that are so up themselves and lazy who can’t do anything for themselves so that they need a woman to be their labourer while they while the time away drinking *kava* all night, sleep all day, no work but demand to be fed, *procreate*!! of course get my drift Sue...’
dynamic process as Fijians negotiate codified and customary protocols to accommodate their circumstances.

Marriage in the present study is still predominantly patrilocal and farms inherited patrilineally. Therefore generally women come in to smallholder farms through marriage, whilst men inherit farms. This has implications for the ownership and control of farms and will be discussed in Chapter Five. Within the Fijian kinship complex gender, age, rank and kinship relation were all determinants of seniority and hence control. ‘Husbands’ are senior to ‘wives’ and are expected to ‘take the lead’. This does not indicate that women thought they were any less of a person than their husbands, rather that their roles as ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ were different.

A young bride coming into her husband’s family is expected to conduct herself according to kinship protocols and relate to her in-laws in the appropriate manner. Expectations about behaviour concern both the prospective bride and groom and their families. A woman’s reputation in terms of sexuality is far more closely monitored and critiqued than a man’s. While moral standards are extremely high for woman, I did notice a great element of forgiveness. For example, unmarried mothers in this area may incite scandal when their pregnancies are first detected but they are generally cared for and supported by their families and the children welcomed into their mother’s mataqali.

Other expectations on the part of prospective spouses and their families have to do with work ethic and the ability to provide both materially and emotionally with care and love. This is gendered as specific skills and responsibilities are attributed to a ‘wife’ and a ‘husband’. However, people fall in love and do not necessarily calculate ‘what the person has behind them’. There can be tension as parents may disagree with their child’s choice of spouse for a variety of reasons, which can result in vakatevora. These complex family negotiations are worked out through ceremonies, such as the bulubulu as well as through daily relations.
The importance of ceremony in maintaining *vakaviti* and laying out the blueprint for family life is extremely important. However, ceremony is only part of the negotiations that are involved in the marriage process and presents the formalised ideal of family relations. The process of marriage identified here includes the more personal relations between groom and bride and their families; their expectations, hopes and desires; the customary and civil processes; and the social and economic side of marriage.
Chapter Four
Fiji Indian Marriage

Introduction

To have some understanding of Fiji Indian marriage practices and family relations, acknowledgment of how the indenture experience influenced the present day Indian community is necessary. In what ways did Fiji Indian people reconstruct themselves in response to challenges to their previous Indian identities from the violence of indenture? There was (and continues to be) a multiplicity of responses as Fiji Indians expressed their diversity along such lines as religion, ethnicity, politics, economics and social position. The following section highlights some of the responses relevant to the present thesis. Authors such as Ahmed Ali (1979, 1980); Ken Gillion (1962, 1977); John Kelly (1989, 1991); Brij Lal (1983, 1985, 1992); Vijay Mishra (1979); Vijay Naidu (1980); Shiu Prasad (1974); Totaram Sanadhya (1991); Shaista Shameem (1990) and Subramani (1979, 1995) provide fuller accounts of the indenture experience.

The literature is by no means comprehensive in discussions of what impact indenture had on Fiji Indian family relations, but tends towards the public debates surrounding female sexuality and marriage practice.¹ I will briefly discuss these debates as they provide a background to current marriage legislation and gender expectations. John Kelly (1989, 1991) challenges political-economy focused accounts of indenture and colonial relations giving a much broader analysis which he defines as ‘cultural’ (Kelly, 1989:389). Ali (1979), Kelly

¹ Kelly (1989:374, 390) also found a lack of material on Fiji Indians when he was researching the colonial period, particularly in relation to the literature about Fijians. He attributes this to European colonial romantic notions of Fijians as the ‘exotic primitive’ who could be civilised and placement of the Indian as a peripheral labouring class (Kelly, 1989:383). These divisions were reflected in scholarship where the lives of indigenous Fijians took precedence.
(1991), Lal (1985) and Shameem (1990) have all noted the lack of women’s voices in the literature concerned with this period. Work by Chandra Jayawardena (1971, 1975), Inge Jensen (1989), Adrian Mayer (1961) Vijay Mishra (1979) and Subramani (1979, 1995) among others include discussions of contemporary family relations and marriage practices of cane farming families but again women are not well represented. Shireen Lateef’s (1985) discussion of Fiji Indian marriages in Suva is very informative and gives a female perspective but does not include farming families, although there are many correlations. So what are some of the ways different practices become the ‘ideal’ of social behaviour, acceptable, customary, legal, religiously sanctioned and legitimate, progressive, vilified or scorned?

Historical notes: Indenture, Religion and Family Relations

Indenture and the demise of caste

The literature talks about a Girmitiya\textsuperscript{2} mythology that provided their own interpretation of indenture which Kelly (1991:29) observes has became standardised and briefly outlines as:

The stories begin with the lies and tricks of sleazy recruiters (arkatis) and continue with the isolation and pollution of the new recruits, first in the depots and then on the ship in passage to Fiji. Food is mixed, black water is crossed, caste is ignored by the Europeans in command. Those refusing to eat are forced to eat off dirty plates. The new “coolies” realise, on the ship or even in the depot, that their lives have changed in fundamental ways, that they have lost caste and been lowered in personal substance. Once in Fiji they are treated uniformly as people of the lowest rank, moved into the lines and put to work.

By the time Fiji was importing indentured labourers in 1879 the proportion of men and women had been fixed by the Colonial Office in 1868, to

\textsuperscript{2} Girmit comes from ‘agreement’ and is the name labourers used for indenture, calling themselves Girmitiya (Lal, 1992:38).
40 women to every 100 men. Authorities were particularly attentive when it came to women migrating, declining or suspending their registration if it was not in order, which is not to deny that cases of deception happened (Lal, 1983:111 cited in Shameem, 1990:178). Naidu (1980:23-24) points to the corruption of petty officials to facilitate recruitment and the schooling (based on fear and obligation) of new labourers by their recruiters to answer favourably to questions by emigration officials concerning their understanding of what they were about to embark on. He recounts the experiences of ex-indentured labourers he interviewed in the 1970s which indicates that labour recruiters in India deceived recruits and even kidnapped women to fill their quota (Naidu, 1980:17-24). Shameem (1990:176, 178) observes that approximately 64 percent of the women were single and most of them registered outside their home districts. This indicated that many of them had already left home which was not unheard of as many women were involved in labour migration within India at that time (Lal, 1985:57). Shameem (1990) proposes that for women being single and away from their families meant that they enjoyed some autonomy from patriarchal kinship protocols, although not from other forms of male dominance as we shall see.

Shiu Prasad’s (1974) analysis is based on interviews with twenty former Girmitiyas from the Labasa region and is therefore particularly relevant to the present study. Prasad (1974:33) states that the majority of immigrants were from the middle agricultural castes and that they could no longer practice strict observance of caste laws for five reasons;

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3 See Shameem (1990:158-165) for a discussion on the British Colonial Office’s development of the indenture system in regards to the recruiting of women. What is interesting is that many plantation owners, including those in Fiji did not want to employ women as they regarded them as inferior workers. However, the authorities (fuelled by the Anti-Slavery Society) thought it would be better for the men if women were available, presumably to take care of them. It was thought if men could emigrate with their families they would settle and thus stay for longer contracts. The other alternative was a greater number of single women. Planters rejected family emigration, preferring single women because they could be hired as workers and could also ‘service and nurture men with whom they established sexual/emotional relations’ (Shameem, 1990:159-160).
First, in order to be recruited and to secure economic benefits from the famed islands of Fiji, many immigrants had promised the recruiters that they would not let the doctor or agent in India, or the CSR Company in Fiji, know their true caste identity. Most Brahmans got recruited by disguising themselves as men of other castes. Second, the immigrants could not remain segregated as they had been in India . . . the rooms and utensils had to be shared, and helping with minor illnesses, borrowing, and finally the creation of gangs against the sardar and sahib, could only be organised with the assistance of low caste people. All these factors compelled the immigrants to become more and more tolerant of each other and their customs. Third, the appointment of low caste persons as sardars on some estates dealt a blow at the root of the caste system . . . fourth, the social pressures from their own kind were greatly reduced compared with in India. Without all the rituals and community pressures, the immigrants came as individuals and were relatively free. This freedom was much appreciated. The only people who had to be deferred to were the sardar and the kulambar - not whole segments of society. There did not seem to be much sense in abiding by caste practices when they did not have much relevance to the new social and economic situation. Last but not least was the shortage of women on the plantations for many who tried to look down upon low castes were ultimately attracted to low caste women and so broke their own rule (Prasad, 1974:33-34).4

Prasad’s mention of intercaste marriage belies a rather male orientated view implying that women were not really included in the decision making process. The literature shows that some Girmitiya women did change husbands (and lovers), which highlights their agency in the marriage process, but this has to be contextualised within the harsh environment of indenture, women’s lower wages and their strategies to survive. The demographic imbalance between men and women indicates women would have had more choices than men but the evidence of crimes against girls and women demonstrates that for many their autonomy was curtailed by domestic violence, rape and crimes of sexual jealousy (see Naidu, 1980 and pages 96-97 of the present study).

Writers such as Gillion (1962:123-126), Jayawardena (1971), and Lal (1992:75) have also observed a general disintegration of the caste system among

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4 Crossing the kalapani (black water) or sea also meant a loss of caste which could only be reinstated with an expensive ritual involving holy water from the Ganges (Prasad, 1974:2).
Girmitiyas and their descendants. Jayawardena (1971:91) notes the diversity of caste practices depended on 'personally recognised customs among individuals and families according to inclination and circumstance'. Other factors such as living arrangements and work relations took precedence over caste as a foundation of social life (Jayawardena, 1971:93). Although Prasad (1974:35) reports that some who were of lower caste aimed to 'thrust themselves up the social ladder' by adding high caste surnames and children of intercaste marriages having 'the tendency to claim to belong to the caste of the parent of higher caste persisted'. Marriage within caste seems to have been the most reticent of caste practices to have been abandoned by the Girmitiya families.

Mayer's (1961:63) fieldwork in the early 1950s, included a settlement in the Northern Division near Labasa, and found that people ideally preferred to marry within their own caste but that '[i]t cannot be asserted that this was an overriding consideration, for men might not invariably reject an eligible suitor of another caste of roughly the same status for a less favoured person of their own caste' (Mayer, 1961:63). Jayawardena's (1971:108) field findings from the Sigatoka Valley during the 1960s correlate with Mayer's, endorsing caste endogamy (or caste of similar status) but due to availability of suitable candidates other factors such as 'social standing and economic circumstances of the family' also come under consideration. Jim Wilson (1979) did fieldwork from 1972-1973 in the Suva area and a short stint in Labasa. He found that,

Older and more conservative Sanatanis are still concerned about caste, especially where marriage is concerned. But my impression is that many Hindus, especially the younger generation, sit fairly lightly to it (Wilson, 1979:102).

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5 Other Indians who did not emigrate under indenture have generally retained their caste identity especially when it came to marriage, for example the Gujarati community (see J. Leckie, 1998; K. Prasad, 1978).
6 The Sanatanis practice the Sanatan Dharm form of Hinduism which is based on devotionalism. See pages 107-108 for a brief theological outline.
In the present study Fiji Indian respondents said caste had very little impact or denied caste even existed any more and certainly was not a determining factor for marriage eligibility. There was a tendency to see caste as an unwanted custom of the past as Anil commented, "with no caste system, working good ah". The following quotes from interviews are examples of respondents' thoughts about caste and marriage;

Sue: When you get married you don’t consider whether he is a Brahman or ...
Devika: But now no, only a few cases like Brahmans will not marry Kshatriyas, ... very isolated because older people are dying, they [younger people] hate those times, so they don’t want to continue, so the older generation day by day getting old . . . he [people] never goes for caste system, never goes for Brahmans or . . . the person you love you will be getting married to him.

Sue: Could you please ask your grandmother if the caste system is still here in Fiji?
Shayal: Now it’s not there. Brahmans, Kshatriya’s, Untouchables, now it’s not there.
Sue: Because with indenture everyone got mixed up?
Shayal: Mixed up yeah.
Sue: Now do you people worry about which caste somebody is in at all, does it make any difference if you know they are from a certain caste?
Shayal: No, in the past use to look for the Brahmans to get their daughter married but now it’s not like that. Grandmother said now the Hindus are getting married with the Fijians, Muslims are getting married to the Fijians.

It was not evident that caste was an organising principle for labour as it is in India. The exception was the Brahman as pundit (priest) which Jayawardena (1971:114) links to the persistence of orthodox Hinduism (cf. Prasad, 1974:39). Also linked with religious ceremonies was the work done by one male respondent which was apparently caste related and passed on through his family. Mahendra would assist the pundit, preparing the altar and ritual objects needed for the proceedings. Other tasks were helping the family who were hosting a ceremony such as a wedding by inviting people to attend. One day I saw Mahendra arrive at the local shop with a large sack. The shopkeeper went inside
and brought out a small plastic bag of flour to give him and in return Mahendra gave him rice coloured with turmeric. This is the traditional way of inviting guests before written invitations were used. In return people gave him small amounts of food stuffs such as sharps (flour), sugar and rice and sometimes money. This was Mahendra’s payment for his services in helping with the wedding and for his family’s own use.

‘Sita’s’ Virtue

One of the major factors that led to the demise of indenture was the debates over the treatment of women on the plantations and their sexual morality. Kelly (1991) provides a fascinating account, and interprets the different discourses of Europeans and Indians concerning the ideology and practice of indenture from the historical texts.

To describe plantation violence in colonial Fiji we have to operate between the plantations in the European imagination, following the lines of order of the European project, and the plantations as Indian immigrants received and responded to them (Kelly, 1991:27).

The European apologists for indenture perceived Indian indentured labour as racially inferior, of low caste (and class) and therefore base in nature. Their opinion was that indentured labourers should be grateful for the work and the chance to learn new skills and upgrade their moral fibre by following the European example (Kelly, 1991:32). The prolific violence of the plantations was interpreted as part of the character of the ‘cooler’. This included violence that arose because of ‘sexual jealousy’.

Murders were by and large committed by indentured men on their women, and the main reason for this was “sexual jealousy”. Women were murdered for infidelity. As observed earlier there was a great disproportion between the sexes, and many women
exploited the advantage that their scarcity brought them. Men were killed because they were the lovers of the women concerned, or were their husbands (Naidu, 1980:71).

Indian women were often judged sexually immoral and promiscuous when they left one man for another. Shameem (1990:232) notes that the 'permanency of the relationship between wives and husbands within families served as the standard against which "morality" on plantations could be measured both by the Indians themselves and by the colonial authorities.' Some regarded Girmit women as prostitutes and ensuing debates between defenders and critics of indenture argued about whether the Indian women recruited were already prostitutes or the situation they found themselves in forced them into sexually immoral behaviour (Lukere, 1997:173).

European critics of indenture such as C.F. Andrews7 and W.W. Pearson (who wrote the Report on Indentured Labour in Fiji: An Independent Inquiry, 1916) disagreed on the degraded nature of Indians. Rather they attributed immoral behaviour more to the conditions of indenture, including lack of privacy on the lines and the disproportionate sex ratio. Another reason given by critics of indenture at that time was the absence of marriage law. However, on the whole these critics still did not implicate European men for their part in the sexual exploitation of Indian women (Kelly, 1991:34).8 Kelly outlines the contradictions of the European position,

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7 C. F. Andrews (1920) also wrote a revealing commentary, The Indian Women in Fiji where he was pained to see their independence causing the degeneration of family life but applauded their militancy and patriotism during the 1920s strikes against CSR.  
8 Kelly (1991:34) speculates whether Andrews and Pearson believed what they wrote or were being diplomatic in this report. The assumption is that men, European or Indian, have no control over their sexual conduct. While these critics of indenture blamed the system for the moral downfall of women, they still colluded with the notion that women's role in seduction and temptation was the precursor of vice rather than the actions of overseers (Kelly, 1991:34). The notable exception is Methodist missionary J. W. Burton who was the only critic of indenture to explicitly denounce the behaviour of some of the European men (Kelly, 1991:35). See Lukere (1997) for an outline of different protagonists in debates about Girmit women's immorality, including early New Zealand and British feminist and humanitarian groups. Her discussion is within the context of examining the changing perceptions of colonists towards the Indian 'mother' and correlates the rise of the Indian 'mother' with the change over to the small farming system.
As basic to the operation of indenture in Fiji as the constructions of ‘coolie’ labour identity, and more consequential for the eventual fate of labour importation, were the contradictions between the European imagination of ‘coolie’ social and sexual life and its reality as lived by Indians, and the contradiction between European participation in an ‘Oriental’ sexual world of their own imagination and their wilful silence over, and official neglect of, the consequences of the very real abuses occasioned (Kelly, 1991:31).

Indians had a very different interpretation of the indenture system, which they regarded as ‘based on deception, pollution and concerned with exploitation much more generally’ (Kelly, 1991:30). Their response to exploitation apparently baffled many Europeans as they focused their criticisms of indenture around the sexual morality and abuse of Indian women (Kelly, 1991:30). The discourse on Indian women was couched within the Hindu devotional (bhakti) religious rhetoric. Kelly (1991) proposes that religion, which had to be adapted to plantation life, still remained central to Girmitiya life and as one Girmitiya said ‘It was our religion that saved us’ (Ali, 1979:35 cited in Kelly, 1991:42).10

Kelly (1991:44) notes that the Ramayan Epic (Tulsi Das text) was used as an analogy for indenture as the labourers felt sentenced to exile like the god Ram, (and Sita his devoted wife who went with him), who underwent terrible hardships and loss of social status. Ravan who was evil and kidnapped Sita symbolised the Europeans and their abuse of Indian women.11 This analogy was used to great effect as it fired the imagination of the Indian public and was taken up by the Indian Nationalist Movement who applied pressure to the Colonial Raj to end indentured labour going to Fiji. Cases such as Kunti’s, which was

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9 See pages 107-108 for an explanation of bhakti religious devotion.
10 Adaptation to the living conditions and available resources meant, for example, Brahmans would be ‘creative’ with ceremonies if they were not sure and there was an absence of more knowledgeable practitioners. Religious festivals were a focal point in plantation life and Muslims, Christians and Hindu would celebrate each other’s holy days (Prasad, 1974:35).
11 For further discussion of the relationship between Ram and Sita see pages 108-109.
published in India, caused a large response which no doubt worried the British Raj.\footnote{Indian Nationalism was on the rise and the British Raj were very concerned about issues that would sway public opinion against their authority (see Kelly, 1991:62).}

Kelly (1991:45-55) examines the discourses surrounding Kunti, among other cases, and points out the devotional rhetoric in Indian accounts of her ordeal. For example as Kunti flees the overseer who is about to rape her she jumps into a river to save her virtue (as Sita would have done) and is rescued by a boy in a boat.\footnote{‘In Indian devotional literature, rivers are a paradigmatic metaphor for the tribulations of life, and God is sometimes figured as a boatman, who can be asked “to aid men to cross from existence or to cross the dangerous situations in existence”’ (Wadley, 1975:117 cited in Kelly, 1991:48).} ‘Kunti’s purity and self-sacrifice are rewarded, she is saved’ (Kelly, 1991:48).

Lal (1985, 1992:45) also notes the importance of Kunti’s story and similar ones concerning the maltreatment of Indian women and the morality of plantation life in the political debates that ended indenture.

The indenture system was thus doomed, despite pleas from Fiji that the colony faced certain ruin without the continued importation of Indian labour and despite promises of major reforms if the system were allowed to continue. . . The last ship carrying indentured laborers, Sutlej V, arrived in Fiji on 11 November 1916; all remaining indentures of Indian laborers in the colony were cancelled effective 1 January 1920 (Lal, 1992:45).

Even when Fiji offered free transport for ‘free’ labourers in the 1920s the Indian government refused permission,

Exposure of its sexual immorality had permanently undone the labour system supporting Fiji’s colonial capitalism. . . the Europeans’ racial and sexual imagination not only masked but also fostered the most destructive practice, not only hid but also generated the contradictions. Exposure of its sexual immorality was exposure of exploitation in indenture that was as real in its practice as its exploitation of the Indian labour (Kelly, 1991:59).
Shaista Shameem (1990) is a strong critic of the lack of Indian women’s voices in the discourses concerned with their exploitation and sexual morality and endeavours to address this in her Ph.D. thesis *Sugar and Spice - Wealth Accumulation and the Labour of Indian Women in Fiji 1879-1930*. Shameem uses a feminist neo-Marxist approach and argues that wealth accumulation could not have taken place on such a scale if Indian women had not contributed their labour in the fields and in the domestic arena. In the lines they looked after men thus maintaining a labour force which lessened the costs for plantation owners. She discusses the exploitation of women by the plantation owners and by Indian men and asserts that women were not just passive victims and demonstrated overt and covert forms of resistance. For example,

Women’s poor wages as a consequence of this forced them to consider associations with men who could also attract them with promises of a better life. But competition between men for women’s services and affection led to women attaining a form of independence. This was expressed in the way women “changed their husbands”, disregarding the customary laws of faithfulness to husband for life (Shameem, 1990:171).

C.F. Andrews (1920:380) alludes to a ‘Women’s Movement’ among female *Girmitiyas* and observes that ‘[t]he Indian women in Fiji are certainly more independent than in India. I noticed this at every turn.’ He goes on to blame the gender ratio in the ‘coolie lines’ as the cause of this,

...roughly that of three men to every one woman. The result had been to throw immense influence into the women’s head. For the woman, in these circumstances, was able to choose her mate, or mates. Indeed, something akin to polyandry and a matriarchal system often occurred. In such a state of society, the woman had naturally obtained the advantage over the man: and the men were very soon made aware of it. The least quarrel, -and the woman would go off to find another mate! Again and again, hen-pecked husbands have come to me, asking me to solve their domestic troubles or to get back for them their wives (Andrews, 1920: 381).
Kelly (1991:228) states that,

... the indenture rhetoric emphasising the virtue or chastity of women carried with it reprobation for a woman who did not follow the rules of satītva, dedication to the man who was her husband. Interviews with surviving girmitiyas conducted in the 1970s (Ali 1979; Naidu 1980) suggest the girmitiya women were measured against two extremes, pressured to be the good, chaste woman and not the wicked manipulator, while also pressured by circumstances and even by violence to leave one man for another.

Shameem agrees that pressure and violence was exerted on Indian women but has reinterpreted what was deemed to be immoral behaviour as a form of resistance by some women. Other forms of resistance directed at European bosses involved using their sexuality to attain certain material advantages and taking time off under the pretext of pregnancy and nursing which resulted in many complaints about women’s low work participation (Shameem, 1990:172).

Marriage Ordinance Debates

It is worth noting the Marriage Ordinance debates that raged in the earlier part of the twentieth century as they reflected the contesting political, social and religious concerns of the Indian community. They were fighting for political franchise as the colonial government had a separate Marriage Ordinance for Indians which marginalised their personal autonomy and religious freedoms.¹⁴ Tensions arose between civil and customary forms of marriage, as Indians wanted their traditional practices and religious ceremonies recognised, which posed a problem for the colonial authorities (Shameem, 1990:398, 403; Kelly, 1989:375; 1991). Kelly (1989) analyses a European colonial perspective on the marriage debates that demonstrates the unwillingness of administrators to recognise Indians as anything other than a labouring class whom they wished to

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¹⁴ See Kelly (1989, 1991) and Shameem (1990) for a full account of these debates.
keep in their place. Imposing European standards on Indian marriages through legislation would, they reasoned, resolve the ‘irregular’ marriage practices that were not only immoral but also seen as a cause of strife and violence in the Indian community. For example, a 1916 marriage bill proposed compulsory registration of marriage, aided by licensing religious officiates, to enforce requirements such as minimum age and stop practices such as child marriage, ‘trafficking’ in women and children, polygamy and ‘unlawful’ relationships (Kelly, 1989:375).

Indians in Fiji and India objected to this censure of their customary practices and there ensued a flood of debates over the marriage ordinances which were changed many times and involved colonial authorities in India, Fiji and Britain and different interest groups amongst the Indian community in Fiji. The main issues of these debates that I wish to highlight are betrothal practice, marriage age, consent and sexual morality.

Colonial officials and Indian groups such as the Arya Samaj15 contested child marriage and the practice of betrothing even babies and wanted to introduce a minimum legal marriage age (Kelly, 1991:231). For Sanatan Dharm this was accepted practice because a girl should be married as soon after puberty as possible to verify her chastity and begin her life as a wife, her raison d’être for being (Young, 1987:81). With the unbalanced gender ratio girls were in high demand, which encouraged the practice of brideprice. This sometimes led to betrayal and violence as parents ‘resold’ their daughters to a higher bidder, which raised allegations of trafficking in women and children (Kelly, 1991:180; Naidu, 1980:71-72; Shameem, 1990:168).

As the gender ratio began to even out in the late 1930s, there was a move from brideprice to dowry as this was regarded as a higher form of marriage practice because it was associated with higher castes (Kelly, 1991:227-228). Infant

15 See Kelly (1991) for an in depth analysis of the debates between proponents of Sanatan Dharm and Arya Samaj forms of Hinduism. See pages 107-108 for a brief account of their theological differences.
betrothal practices also died out and the marriage age began to rise. The current minimum legal age with parents’ consent is sixteen years for females, which was raised from fourteen in 1961\textsuperscript{16} (Mayer, 1961:65). For males it is eighteen years, and for females and males without parental consent the age is twenty-one (FWRM, 1994).

There was debate over the issue of consent as women did not legally have to appear before the magistrate to register their marriages in the late 1920s, to early 1930s and could be represented by male kinsmen. This was done under the directive of the Secretary for Indian Affairs, J. R. Pearson, who thought it would be popular with Indians thus encouraging more registration of marriages (Kelly, 1989:380). Other colonial officials were alarmed at the spectre of a form of purdah being introduced which they thought would further prevent the ‘penetration of law and order into the Indian social world’ (Kelly, 1989:380). Today both parties have to give consent by law and this ‘must be real and not forced’ (FWRM, 1994). How much choice people have depends on their circumstances, family relations and social pressures. Respondents’ own experiences and views on this will be explored in following sections.

Kelly (1989, 1991) gives an interesting analysis of the different perspectives taken by protagonists in these debates, demonstrating the variety and complexity of their positions. The struggle between sections of the Indian community was in part a response to indenture and the racism of the Europeans as groups sought franchise and legal recognition of their beliefs and customary practices. The marriage ordinance debates were also about regulating and controlling women’s

\textsuperscript{16} The \textit{Fiji Times} reported that a discussion paper on \textit{Family Law Reform} by the Fiji Law Reform Commission (1998) recommended that the minimum legal age of marriage with parental consent be raised to eighteen years for girls. The \textit{Times} quoted the commission as saying ‘in a number of communities, especially Indians, girls were thought of as a burden to parents, causing parents to marry off their daughters at very early age... the present provision deprived girls of an opportunity to complete their education and build a career. ‘Moreover, when the marriage is arranged by the parents, the girl rarely has any inputs as to who she wants to marry... At the age of 16 she lacks the maturity to decide whether her arranged marriage is appropriate for her. Another concern is that a girl of 16 years is not prepared for all the responsibilities that are associated with marriage. Therefore, there is a need to change the law to obtain parity between the minimum legal age for male and female’’ (\textit{Fiji Times}, 29 April 1998).
sexuality and general autonomy. Shameem (1990) emphasises this aspect of the debates, asserting that patriarchy was the underlying ideology that allowed Fiji at that time to work through the legal wrangle of marriage laws.

Eventually all groups were catered for; the exception of course being women! Nowhere was there an opinion asked of women regarding their ideas of marriage and divorce. It was assumed by groups of European men - the government officials as well as the missionaries - that men should decide the rules for marriage and divorce and impose these upon women. They depended upon Indian men to fine-tune the details of legislated oppression and exploitation of women. Indian men were only too pleased - they were busy reconstructing their identity in Fiji and the domestication of women was a necessary part of the reconstruction ideology (Shameem, 1990:409).

While Shameem (1990:39) notes the resistance and autonomy Indian women asserted within the exploitative practices of indenture she asserts that there was constant pressure from European and Indian men on women to act out their designated 'feminine' roles as obedient docile domestics. This was finally achieved with the move to farms and women's withdrawal from paid employment, resulting in their complete 'domestication'. This curbed any autonomy that women possessed as they were trapped within the confines of marriage, family and social protocol yet their labour still contributed to the profit accumulation of CSR (Shameem, 1990:361). The marriage debates were part of this process which Shameem sees as a collusion of European and Indian patriarchy. For Indian men it gave them back control of their marriages, particularly when the gender ratio evened out, on legal and religious grounds, as well as providing a more secure basis for the development of kinship relations that ultimately favoured men.

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17 The emphasis put on women's sexuality in the political debates of the time are reflected in concerns with female virtue prevalent today. In the present study respondents placed great emphasis on a girl's/woman's chastity. Ideally she should be a virgin at marriage. For a discussion of sexual morality in the present study see the following sections on marriage age; reputation and mobility; and expectations.
Shameem has a tendency to polarise marriage/domesticity with paid employment which does not leave much space for a variety of experiences and expectations, for example those women who desired the socio-religious sanctions of marriage and a life on their own farms. The Marxist approach Shameem uses as part of her theoretical framework would undoubtedly interpret this as a form of ‘false consciousness’. Shameem combines Marxism with a radical feminist perspective that attributes women’s exploitation to patriarchal ideology, in particular conceptualisation’s of ‘femininity’. Both directives of capital wealth accumulation and male control are pitted against working class Indian women. As noted, Shameem by no means envisages women as purely victims and documents their resistance and negotiations. This may be a simplistic reading of Shameem’s paradigmatic approach as she also utilises other theoretical guides such as Third World feminist literature that emphasises ethnicity in constructions of identity and racial subjugation. However, I would venture a generalised critique of radical feminist/Marxist theories as being too reductionist in attributing gender inequality to a combination of just patriarchy and capital especially in monolithic formulations (see Kabeer, 1994:40-68).

There is no doubt CSR exploited the hopes of men and women to have their own family farms in order to reduce labour and other production costs, but was this any worse for a lot of women than life on the lines? Obviously different women and men would have varying interpretations; it is not the intention of this thesis to compare indenture with farm life. I suggest though, that the resistance demonstrated by women that Shameem outlines on the plantation continued on the farms albeit in different forms. Shameem (1990:409) comments on CSR’s role in the marriage debates:
Despite it having been complaints against the CSR for not permitting Indians to marry\(^{18}\) that had started the whole question, the company officials offered few comments as debates progressed. The CSR farming scheme was dependent on some permanency of personal relationships but the activities of Indian men, government officials and the Christians freed the officials from taking more than a cursory interest in the matter. . . if CSR could not get the labourers they need from India, then a substitution had to be accepted and the marriage of Indians suited the small farmer and contractor schemes for cultivation.

It is relevant to note that initially cane contracts were only given out by the CSR to men who were married (Jayawardena, 1975:76; Shameem, 1990:412). Thus CSR changed their perspective on marital relations in accordance with their different production strategy. This implicitly signifies a change of attitude toward children, unlike its predecessor, slavery, indenture did not rely on the reproductive capacity of labourers. Short term contracts did not require the regeneration of workers, rather a constant supply of able adult labour (Lukere, 1997:173). Marital relations and children were regarded as a hindrance to productivity, indeed women were unwelcome by planters as inferior workers. It was only Colonial Office policy that forced Fiji to take a ratio of 40 women to 100 men (Lukere, 1997:172). However, smallholder farming relied on family labour and as stated in Chapter One, CSR was counting on succeeding generations to provide a labour pool for harvesting and mill operations.

Today there is only one Marriage Ordinance law for all people in Fiji which recognises the different types of religious marriage ceremonies as long as they are certified by a marriage officer. This means many religious practitioners are also marriage officers and registration has become incorporated into Hindu marriage practice (Kelly, 1989:381; FWRM, 1994).

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\(^{18}\) The control CSR had over indentured labourers extended to charging employees who had not asked their permission to marry, particularly between free and indentured labourers. ‘CSR officials were in the practice of refusing their labourers permission to marry. Many Indians married anyway but when found out were taken to court by the CSR’ (Shameem, 1990:394).
Religion

I have already noted the importance of the *bhakti* rhetoric in the demise of indenture and will further explore these religious ideals in relation to notions of family, as religion is an integral part of life for the respondents (cf. Wilson, 1979). Hindu teachings have permeated daily life, folklore, and popular culture to become an essential part of Hindu Fiji Indian identity.

Sacred ideals and stereotyped female images are transformed and internalised through ritual, festive occasions, song, popular literature, folk tradition, Hindi films and the dramatisation of the great Hindu epics (Lateef, 1985:21).

All the Hindu respondents, with the exception of one family who were Arya Samaj, followed the Sanatan Dharm and participated regularly in *Ramayan* prayer meetings that were rotated on a weekly basis around a group of households. I attended several of these prayer meetings and *saadi* (wedding) as well as major Hindu festivals such as Diwali and Raksha Bandhan.

The Sanatan Dharm form of devotional Hinduism based on the *Tulsi Das Ramayan* became the predominant form of Hindu worship amongst Fiji Indian Hindus (Kelly, 1991:43). This was not without challenges however and Kelly (1991) has traced the debates from 1929 to 1932 over religion and the marriage laws between the Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharm. These debates predominantly focus on sexual morality, inheriting the rhetoric of the indenture period. Kelly (1991:43-44) offers this explanation of these forms of Hinduism,

*Bhakti* devotionalism is one of many systems of discourse and practice internal to “Hinduism”; it could be opposed to systems, such as that of the Arya Samaj, based on *jnana* (knowledge) and systems based upon an ontology of fateful actions (*karman*). In *bhakti* systems, such as that of the Fiji Sanatan Dharm, the relationship between god

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19 The Arya Samaj have a relatively small following in this area.
20 Diwali is one of the largest Hindu festivals, known as the festival of lights, it celebrates Ram rescuing Sita from her kidnapper Ravan. Houses are lit with candles and lights (if electricity is available) and fireworks are displayed. See page 129 for an explanation of Raksha Bandhan.
and devotee supersedes any other natural or moral law (*dharma*) and is a relation made not primarily by the knowledge (*jnana*) of the devotee but by the intensity and purity of the devotee's desire to find God. While many *bhakti* discourses portray the world and its relations as disintegrated when this longing becomes intense and divinity is realised, the Tulsi Das Ramayan emphasises dutiful worldly practice as part of the search for divinity (Kelly, 1991:43-44, emphasis added).

Kelly (1991:236-237) concludes that Sanatan Dharm essentially dominated because their devotionalism offered a model for resolving their predicaments. In their exile from caste and community in India, within the colonial capitalist markets (including those of their own devising and control), they were not abandoned by, and did not have to abandon, a *saguna* ("embodied") god. Devotion to him could be expressed by carrying out the duties of householders in the new alien contexts, just as the problems of women could best be solved by securing and protecting their chastity (*satitva*) . . .

The relationship between Sita and Ram can on one level be interpreted generally as devotee (Sita) and god (Ram) but they are also the ideal married couple so the

marriage relationship itself becomes a primary devotional relationship. For the wife, the husband is to be worshipped . . . They are transformative of the self, the two
people becoming permanently connected. The hierarchical relation between them enjoins duties upon both, but especially upon the wife, whose chastity and social nature are completely and newly defined. For the husband, protecting the wife becomes one of the duties of his ongoing life; for the wife, the husband is an instantiation of divine form (Kelly, 1991:232).

Young (1987:78-79) analysing the Ramayan says that the epic stresses ‘the feminine orientation of stridharma with its emphasis on loyalty, chastity, docility, and humility, but also strength, which arose out of tapas.’ A woman’s devotional behaviour embodied in her feminine loyalty to her husband not only accrued her good karma that allowed for a better rebirth or even the possibility of salvation, it also gave strength to her family and community (Young, 1987:78-79).

When Wilson (1979) surveyed Fiji Indian respondents in the early seventies he found that the predominantly young respondents emphasised duty to parents, elders and teachers, though the reciprocal aspect (love of parents for children) was also mentioned. The Ramayan received special mention as it ‘portrays an ideal family’. In discussions with older people it was often the duty of parent to children and teacher to pupil that was stressed (Wilson, 1979:99).

There is a strong expectation among the Fiji Indians in the present study that people will marry and adhere to prescribed roles within the family that are socially and religiously sanctioned. The following section examines the ideals and realities of ‘getting married’ through the expectations and experiences of the respondents.

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21 Stridharma is a Hindu text on the ideal behaviour of women (Young, 1987:72). Tapas are a form of self-denial that is thought to create positive energy that can be transferred to another individual for their welfare (Young, 1987:76).
Marriage in the Contemporary Context

Marriage age

Devika who was approaching twenty-one was worried about when she should get married. She told me that in this area twenty-one was the oldest a girl should be before she got married, after that she would find it difficult to get a husband. Her parents, especially her mother, were often talking about marriage and although they would not force her the pressure was there. When I started asking people about age and marriage there was a general consensus that girls should be between sixteen and twenty-one, and boys around eighteen although early twenties was more common and there seemed to be no discernible upper limit for them. The minimum age for marriage has increased over the years; a respondent who was in her sixties had been married at twelve, which was not unheard of for older women. A local male high school teacher commented,

about twenty for girls they have to be married or else people gossip which is what the parents worry about “what’s wrong with this girl etc”. For the boys it doesn’t matter when, he said. This is more in rural areas than urban and he said it is changing slowly (Fieldnotes 6 January 1997).22

The implications that there may be something wrong with an older unmarried girl are extended to her sisters and therefore can damage their reputations too. This can also be the case if a sister divorces (Praveen Sharma, FWRM, pers. comm. 1997).

Ronita is Salen’s daughter who was sixteen at the time of field work and now at seventeen has just recently had an arranged marriage. The following conversation is between Ronita, Salen and myself;

22 Some respondents talked about rural/urban differences on a number of issues but I am reluctant to generalise within these geographical boundaries. There is a stereotype of the traditional, conservative, uneducated country person verses the modern, Westernised, educated town dweller which does not bear out of course. However the thesis is concerned with people’s perceptions, and stereotypes persist used as reference points, explanations and generalisations.
Ronita: When girls are sixteen they should get married.
Sue: What about for the boys?
Ronita: Eighteen.
Sue: It’s so set isn’t it?
Salen: It’s our religion, now we have change, just recent extend the thing, twenty, twenty one boys, seventeen to eighteen girls. That’s better to get married ah.
Sue: Why has it gotten later?
Salen: It is better for the boys and the girls to extend the thing ah.
Ronita: Maturity.
Salen: They can better understand more, mature yeah.

Legal, social and religious protocol determine acceptable parameters of marriage age, particularly for women. What then are some of the factors that change social attitudes?

**Arranged, love or ‘arranged love’ marriage?**

Marriage is predominantly patrilocal with exceptions being made if the man does not have any land and the woman’s father has available land. Respondents talked about two types of marriage, love or arranged marriage. A further category has been defined by scholars as ‘arranged love’ marriage whereby the couple love each other but the parents arrange the wedding (Lateef, 1985:3).

In this generation, especially with secondary education growing more frequent and romantic Hindi Film movies a part of general social life, ‘love marriages’ have become a serious challenge to arranged marriages, and an emergent norm is the ‘arranged love marriage,’ in which the parents meet to arrange the marriage after the girl and boy have chosen each other (Kelly, 1991:231).

In my study I consider that what other authors refer to as ‘arranged love’ marriage is what respondents in the present study were mainly referring to as love marriage. The essential difference between love and arranged marriage was that the parents are not initially involved in a love marriage, highlighting the
couples' agency to choose each other. The boundaries around these categories have become blurred as restrictions about actually seeing each other before an arranged marriage have disappeared and there may even be chances to become acquainted - chaperoned of course. The parents are still involved in 'wedding arrangements' with a love marriage, elopement being extremely rare here. Shireen Lateef in, Marriage: Choice or Destiny? The case of Indian Women in Suva (1985) points out love marriage is usually within strictly defined parameters of 'religion, ethnicity and class' and should not be confused with Western perceptions of love marriage.

The couple often do not have intimate knowledge of each other, dating is uncommon, as is living together prior to marriage, and in general, the couple have not spent much time alone together (Lateef, 1985:3).

To find a prospective spouse for an arranged marriage it is usually the father who will start making enquires with people the family knows, friends of friends and possibly a mutual friend of both families may act as an intermediary while the arrangements are being made (cf. Mayer, 1961:64). A male respondent, Anil, explains;

Anil: He [girl's father] will ask his [boy's] parents, first thing he will ask is does the boy want the marriage or no marriage ah, they will not force ah . . . they search, if its okay then they arrange. Sometimes it takes about one year, two year searching for a husband.
Sue: So who mainly does it, the bride's father?
Anil: The bride's father.
Sue: Not the aunts involved?
Anil: Yeah, [means they are not involved] one to two years sometimes they search ah.

Mayer (1961:64) found that the mother was just as involved in the searching. This was not obvious in the present study as men's freedom of
movement made it easier for them to visit new places.\textsuperscript{23} The decision making process on the suitability of candidates depends on the relationship between husband, wife and the child getting married. Love marriage meant the ability to choose your own partner and was especially favoured amongst the younger unmarried respondents. The majority of the parents were in favour of arranged marriages where they could have more control over the kind of son-in-law or daughter-in-law they wanted. A female respondent commented that this could also mean the parents had more control over the daughter-in-law because if it was a love marriage her husband might be more inclined to side with her against the parents.

**Education**

It soon became evident during discussions on marriage that education and paid employment were determining factors in marriage age and the type of marriage (cf. Lateef, 1985:2). Parents generally wanted their children to stay at school and then possibly go on to further education. Education was a major financial burden for all the families in the study, but they encouraged their children to go ‘as high as you can go’. None of the families discriminated on the basis of gender, encouraging girls as much as boys to continue with education. However Fiji Indian girls were particularly targeted as marriage candidates once they left school and were around sixteen years of age onwards. If they continued with some form of tertiary education and/or went into paid employment they gained some control over when and who they would marry. Shayal translated her grandmother’s comments on arranged and love marriages;

> She says the educated ones are good ah, because they look for their own husband if they are educated, but the ones [who] do not go to school, stays at home, does not know a lot, so they have to arrange a marriage. She said that nowadays love marriage

\textsuperscript{23} Jacqui Leckie (pers. comm. 1998) pointed out in her research on Fiji it is usually the mother, grandmother and aunts who initiate enquires and that the issue of mobility would be dependent on how well the families of potential partners knew each other.
is better... she said they do not have much trouble because now days the children are getting educated they can look for their own husband and wife.

I asked Shayal what her mother thought about this subject as she had previously told me she thought arranged marriage was better,

She said that now I am schooling ah, I may fail and stay at home, if I stay at home then they will arrange the marriage. But now I am schooling they say you can look for the one who is educated ah.

Another consideration is poverty, besides being socially appropriate that a girl should marry, the family may not be able to afford to look after her (Praveen Sharma, FWRM pers. comm. 1997). Education alone was not always enough to give a daughter more autonomy as the following case study demonstrates.

Shashi’s story

Shashi is thirty-one years old and lives on a sugar cane farm with her husband, three children, mother-in-law and her husband’s brother’s family. She grew up with her eight brothers and three sisters on the family cane farm which is situated near town. Her parents’ farm is 50 acres, which is relatively large as most smallholder farms are around 10-15 acres. She regards her parents as wealthy; “Everything I had, everything my father gave me.” While living at home Shashi was expected to help with domestic work and subsistence agriculture. Two of her brothers and hired labourers worked in the sugar cane fields.

Shashi is very disappointed about the missed opportunities in her own life and regards her present status as a come down from the life she was born into. Educated up to Form 7 she then went on to do a year long stenography course. When it came to applying for jobs her father considered working as a clerk unsuitable. Undeterred she applied to be a flight attendant with Air Pacific
but her father would not sign the consent form as she was under twenty-one. He was concerned about a recent plane crash and considered the job dangerous. Still hoping for a career, Shashi successfully applied for nursing,

I had to go for nursing and in those days we had two intakes, one was in February and the other one was in July. So when I was to go in July and my father, he didn’t believe me, he said I was to get married on the 16th July, he didn’t believe that I had to go into nursing.

Her father arranged for her to be married because he thought this would be the best life for her and it was his responsibility to pass her on to the care of a husband and his family.

Shashi: Those people, old age people they said “married life is good”, they think that the girls when they are out of sight they are out of their woods.
Sue: He doesn’t have to worry about you any more, he wanted to marry you off.
Shashi: Yeah, yeah, then when I got married he would have thought all okay. I really cried for the work and still I don’t go well now. I didn’t eat food for I think about a week, [after her father told her she couldn’t go nursing] just drink water or anything, very bad.

Her father also considered her eligibility would decline with age, she was twenty-one. "Yeah and in those days when the girl is over twenty-one they said ‘oh she is old, no one will ask her so we will marry her’, that is the old people from India, when they are twenty-one they say it’s very old, old age.” When I asked what her mother thought Shashi replied “Yeah, my mother regrets but my father said no, I was twenty-one and he said she should be married.” I asked her if she thought the people around this area had the same attitude.

Yeah same thing, the girls should be only educated up to class eight, [age thirteen] then keep two or three years home, stay home, just get some education in cooking food and how to put their houses and then seventeen, eighteen they marry.
Employment

Even though the rise in education had made love marriage more acceptable, particularly among younger people, it was estimated by a male respondent that ninety percent of Fiji Indian marriages in the area were arranged. Devika surmised that there would be more love marriages in urban areas where women were working, which gave them the opportunity to meet prospective partners as well as the economic status which gives them more autonomy. Bimla Singh from the Labasa Women’s Crisis Centre (WCC) reiterated this when I asked about arranged and love marriage trends in the Labasa area and Suva:

Seventy five percent should be arranged, twenty five percent [love], because I am talking about those boys who go to school teachers, nurses and some office workers who find a girl . . . working and education . . . like working boys and girls can choose their own. Otherwise the girls will stay home, never mind the boy is working, most of the time it is arranged with a working boy, you know if the boy doesn’t arrange himself, he doesn’t find a girl himself they will arrange . . .

Sue: I know it’s hard to generalise what about say Suva and places like that?
Bimla: Mostly now days they working, some places they will find work even like domestic workers, I mean the house girl they look for their own now.24

In this area it is more difficult for people to find off-farm work and the jobs that are available such as forestry and mining are only for males. For females the main opportunities are clerical, teaching and nursing which involves tertiary education and are generally cost prohibitive for poor families. There is also semi and unskilled work such as retail and service industry jobs in Labasa but the travel distance and cost make this option very difficult.

The majority of marriages in the present study are arranged marriages which supports the correlation between education, paid employment opportunities and autonomy in marriage choices. Females are generally

encouraged in education but if they do not go on to tertiary education and/or some form of paid employment it is expected they will marry before the age of twenty-one. The younger and less educated they are, the more likely it is that their marriages will be arranged. For men, far more paid work is available and there appears to be a correlation with education and higher paying jobs and more opportunities for love marriage. This area warrants further research but my impression was that educated men working in professional jobs also chose educated women who are possibly also working. As most of the male respondents in the study were farmers and labourers, none of whom had any tertiary education, most of their marriages were arranged. However, there was an increasing trend, (or desire) among the younger respondents to choose their own spouses. It is suggested that economic and social status engenders a change in attitudes but this still usually has to be played out within the context of family relations and community protocols.

Reputation and mobility

Mobility is another consideration for girls in determining whether they have an arranged or love marriage, especially those who stay at home because they do not have many opportunities to meet prospective spouses (cf. Lateef, 1985:4). However, opportunities can arise through school, religious and social gatherings. Bimla Singh explains,

Another thing is at a wedding or gathering and there is a boy at the gathering and from some [other] place there is a girl comes in the gathering, they don’t [know each other] yet but that boy will see that girl, or that girl’s parents will see that boy and then they ask who that boy is from where, or that boy will ask who that girl is, he will tell his parents find out who that girl is, from where, I want to get married to that girl.

Girls are usually chaperoned and their behaviour is closely monitored by family and neighbours. They should be accompanied even when going to a
neighbour's farm. Reputation within the community was very important because the friends or relatives of a boy looking for a wife would not initially go to the girl's family but ask neighbours about her and her family. If she was seen talking to boys at the river while doing her washing for example, or talking to them on the bus her reputation could be ruined forever.

Anita: These people [from] the boy's side will ask the village people there and if she was talking around with that boy there they will say "oh I saw her talking to that boy she is not a good girl".

These attitudes towards female sexual morality stem from the same socio-religious ideals that were played out to such effect during indenture when the threat to Indian women's virtue contributed to its demise. Control of female sexuality was also a central issue in the Marriage Ordinance debates where concerns over marriage age, polygamy and betrothal were focus points for the tensions between customary and civil practice.

Expectations

The ideal qualities of a wife fell under two main criteria; her physical appearance and her work skills. A woman should be hard working and knowledgable about domestic work, particularly cooking and taking care of the family and in this farming community the ability to do farm work is very important, as few poorer farmers can afford to hire farm labourers. Devika's appraisal was typical;

Sometimes they see how good looking they are, secondly they look if she is in rural areas they are looking for a housewife, then they should be a good housewife able to do farm work, able to look after children if she has any, if she gives birth and good cook, helps the in-laws, supports the in-laws, look after the brother-in-laws and sister-in-laws.
Looking after the family involves having the right attitude, respecting your husband and in-laws and not answering back, as part of the dutiful behaviour expected from a wife. A woman's propensity to act in this way can only be gauged from her personal reputation as well as that of her family. As discussed above her chastity is paramount and is an indication not only of her purity but that she is a good dutiful daughter. Physically the women should be attractive and preferably have a fair skin colour. Anita said "They will go and see if the girl is fair, look nice, she can do the work like that, she is fit for a family or not, then they will say yes, if no then no." Not everyone of course is swayed by looks as Devika explains;

Devika: It depends on some people, some people like not their skin but their personalities and attitudes and some people don't go for face they go for their intelligence . . . Like if a person wants to really get married with a South Indian and she is really dark but she is a school teacher and she has got knowledge and everything he will go for her education but not for the face.
Sue: They like the lighter skin ah?
Devika: Yeah, they don't like dark skin, that's the main problem here, even you are so highly . . . people, you are dark no one will care for you. I don't know what's wrong with this. [people who think like this] . . . They see a fair girl then they will talk about their marriage, dark girl they never talk.
Sue: Do you think that is changing Devika or it's still there?
Devika: It's increase now, it's in maximum now. Through my experience I saw that, plenty girls I know, I have seen it.
Sue: They're dark?
Devika: They're dark and the man really dark but he wants the girl to be fair.
Sue: So what about the other way around they don't like the dark boys?
Devika: No, hardly things of this nature happen . . . for the girl yeah, because they think that females are something that they will accept, they don't have any rights of choice or anything like that, whatever they have they have to accept it . . . the girl will accept even if the boy is dark. But sometimes educated girls they . . .
Sue: They are fussy.
Devika: Yeah, but not in all the cases.
Education can override skin tone but in this area colour still acts as an arbiter for the desirability of a woman. Mayer (1961:65) also cited this as a factor among ‘country people’. Jayawardena (1971:112) did not mention skin tone but did note that the ‘[y]oung men in Nadroga had a personal preference for girls from villages in the vicinity of Nadi, Lautoka, Ba and Suva who are considered to be better educated and more sophisticated.’ The appearance of the boy was almost inconsequential, to the girl’s parents anyway. What was important was his assets, reputation and his ability to work hard. A girl’s parents want to know that she will be provided for and well treated.

Shayal: [asks her mother and grandmother] They said if your husband knows how to go and work in the plantation, he has bullocks or not, he knows how to plough the land or not, he is working or the whole day drinking and whole night going around. They don’t want.

Sue: So you are both looking at the work that each other can do?

Shayal: They don’t want lazy, they want that these two can live a successful life.

A man’s personal reputation was not so much concerned with his sexuality but rather his respectability and work ethic. Drinking excessive amounts of *yaqona*, methylated spirits and alcohol that resulted in laziness and frequent absence from home were understandably not admired attributes amongst the female respondents.

Devika: Sometimes it happens like that it’s because of this grog [*yaqona*] thing the husband keeps on drinking and doesn’t care about the family and doesn’t support the children. The wife has to go around to look for money to support the children looking after the health and education programs for the children. So they are looking for good son-in-law who can support the daughter. Who has so far good status, like they see if he has got a big house, big farm, van, a tractor anything like that . . . his status in society.
Devika explained to me that there are two senses of what status is. One was money and material possessions and the other was behaviour. In Devika’s view material status was not important whereas being a ‘good respectable person’ was.

**Devika: You know Sue money is everything now . . . Poor people think of status as a good respectable person and rich people they see status as material things. Any person who has got everything is in an elite position. But for poor people any person who is helping the needy people is at the top, he is the person they will consult every time. . . Poor people don’t respect rich people because they know they will go for the money and poor people they don’t have money.**

**Sue:** Do the poor people feel like those rich people have made the money from them?

**Devika:** Yeah, like some robbery or something like that.

Other respondents also expressed a mistrust of wealthy people citing their misplaced faith in material possessions over goodness and respectability. The reputation of a potential husband is ascertained in much the same way as a woman’s, by canvassing relatives and neighbours. I asked Devika to further explain what a good respectable man is;

**Sue:** What makes you respect someone?

**Devika:** How is his behaviours like some of the people in society they drink a lot, some people when they drink have disorderly behaviours, they swear, beat the wife, throw stones at others’ place, something like that . . . how is the status in your family.

**Sue:** If I was an Indian man how could I make my status go up in the community?

**Devika:** You must respect the old people, you must help your society like schools going on, there is a poor family, they find some funds for them . . . help to maintain the road anything like that . . .

**Sue:** Community work.

**Devika:** How you behave at your place, because elders they want respect from us ah . . . if you are a respectable person you respect others . . . So they will know, they will go and tell rumours, rumours will be spread . . .

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25 Sunita said she would not like her son to marry a girl from a wealthier family because she may always be complaining and not want to work.
Community works as well as a virtuous home life are qualities Devika admired in a good man. A hard worker comes under these concepts and portrays a man who will treat his wife and family well and provide for them. Others chose to include material possessions in this assessment but all agreed a good hard worker was the ideal man and besides the house the most important possessions mentioned were work related like bullocks and tractor.

The social standing of the woman’s and man’s families coincides with their personal reputations. The measurement of community involvement that Devika outlined could probably be more ascribed to the father rather than the son because of age and resources. Other examples of standing in the community are participation in Ramayan groups and hosting ceremonial functions, for example weddings. As mentioned above caste is no longer a factor in the present study. But how does a woman show good status in the community besides her chaste and virtuous home life?

Devika: She will be well respected, well mannered.
Sue: Will she be the same as the man doing all that community work or won’t she...
Devika: She will organise, she will be a member of a religious group like the Ramayan, she will be a co-ordinator for some developments or projects, project in schools, helping poor.
Sue: Do women and men have the same opportunities to...
Devika: Yeah they can but like they need backups from men, if a wife wants to do something and the husband ‘oh you can’t do it, you have talked with that man’, ‘you have to go to that ladies place’, ‘you have to go and see this member of that and then you can do that, build the shelter for the school.’
Sue: Are they not as free to roam around to different places?
Devika: It depends on the husband, if their freedom is restricted then how can they move around?
Sue: Right, so it’s down to personalities again and freedom?
Devika: Yes, if the husband is a good person then ‘oh you can do that, you can prove that you are my wife.’

See pages 124-125 for Jayawardena’s (1971) and Kelly’s (1991) comments on the relationship between status in the community and wedding ceremonies.
Sue: In the community like if they see this women going to this house and that house, they are not going to gossip and say she is roaming around or anything or is it...
Devika: That is one of the main problems, if one wife is working then they have to support her, normally they will do psss pss. [gossip] . . . that is the problem with the ladies too, they didn’t have to do that [gossip] they have to support her . . .
Sue: So it is easier for the men to do it, but some women still do it?
Devika: Some women do it, if they have the courage and they think they have got equal rights as men.
Sue: Is there many in our area like that?
Devika: Hardly ever you can find that, in rural areas you hardly ever find that.

Marriage negotiations

In an arranged marriage, after the initial contact is made between families the boy and his family will come over to the girl’s house and take tea with them. A respondent said this is a chance for them to see each other if they have never met before and for the girl to show off her domestic prowess (cf. Mayer, 1961:65). She may cook a meal to serve to the guests and I have heard that girls who are doubtful of their own ability might induce other females in the household to help her in order to impress. This is the time for negotiation and if the marriage is agreed upon they will discuss the wedding arrangements.

Anil: Father [girl’s] will come the first day, see the house and go away, then the whole family will come one day and if the things okay they will put the date for the marriage.
Sue: Then the boy gets to see the girl?
Anil: Yeah, first time.
Sue: What happens do they just sit down and have a cup of tea?
Anil: Yeah something like that, sit down, the family will sit down here, the girl will come with the tea and sweets and sit down there and talk. But the girl and the boy they will never talk. [laughs] Go and ask Anita what she did? [everyone laughs]
Anita: No, you can ask him what he did?
[They do not tell me, their arranged marriage has worked out well, as Anita said once, they both like to tell people it is a love marriage.]
Anil: That way everything is fixed, they will fix one date for the marriage, after that the court marriage and then they will have their traditional marriage. That will take time, sometimes it takes two months for preparing. In Indian marriages every step pretty
tough ah. First they have to go and cut some timber, firewood, making sheds, have to pound grog one week before.

A lot of preparation goes into hosting a wedding and the family is helped by relatives and friends in the community. The women do a lot of the food preparation but a man may be hired as chief cook and consequently the main dishes are cooked by men (cf. Mayer, 1961:79). Two of the Fiji Indian male respondents were renowned for their curries which they cooked on special occasions.27

Money matters

Historically the Fiji Indians moved from the practice of brideprice to dowry when the gender ratios began to even out as dowry was ‘more proper for high, refined people’ (Kelly, 1991:227). Kelly makes the point that the changes in marriage practice demonstrate that ‘the marriage system was under pressure and in flux’. The loosening structures of caste law allowed lower castes to adopt higher caste practice and in the fledgling Indian settlements new lines of community relations were being set up. Jayawardena (1971:110) notes that as ‘ex-plantation labourers came gradually to feel masters of their own households, if not of other circumstances, the customary wedding became the medium through which each household established its value and standing in the area.’ Kelly (1991:227-228) also notes that weddings became major social events and in doing so became,

difficult to negotiate, occasions that put cane growers into long-term debt. Marriages not only required decisions about what kind of officiant and ritual to employ, but revealed local lines of boycott by presences and absences. One reason for the high

27 My experience was that men usually only cooked on special occasions and women provided all the daily household meals as well as preparing food for these occasions. This links male participation in cooking with prestige events which takes it out of the realm of women’s daily work (see Chapter Six), therefore legitimising the task as suitable for a man to do.
expense was that the absence or noninvitation of anyone local implied that the person was boycotted (Kelly, 1991:227-228).

Mr Taba who is the manager of the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) in Labasa said that Fiji Indians take personal loans out primarily for weddings whereas Fijians use personal loans for funerals (pers. comm. 1997). It takes poor families a long time to pay off these loans and sometimes the marriage can be over before it is paid off. As Praveen Sharma of FWRM said, “imagine a young women only a year after the marriage with a child and her father is still paying off the wedding, there is a lot of pressure to stay and make it work” (pers. comm. 1997). Presently the average cost of a wedding in this area for the girl’s family is between F$3-4000, whereas it will only cost the boy’s family F$1-1500.

The different responses to questions about dowry practice not only reflected personal preferences but also emphasised the relationship between the bride and her in-laws. One family denied there was any dowry, asserting the goods that a girl brings into marriage are her own;

Sue: When she comes to the family what does she bring with her...
Anil: Table, chair, draw, everything now days, a video or something like that. Whatever they can afford they give ah.
Anita: Up to the money.
Sue: Yeah, so that comes from the girl’s side and she will bring all that with her.
Anil: The jewellery...
Sue: So that’s hers?
Anita: Yeah
Sue: So if she wants to leave the boy can she take it with her?
Anita: Take it, if the boy divorce then she will take it.
Anil: She will take it.

Bimla Singh (WCC) stated that dowry was still practiced and the type of things given are household goods, livestock, jewellery and money. I asked who had control over that money and she replied that it should go to the in-laws but
"the bride has to take it and give it to the mother-in-law. But now some understanding mother-in-law they just give it back, that's yours because you brought it from your parents' home, that's yours." Devika also agreed dowry was being practiced and commented on the unscrupulous nature of some men,

They give [dowry] but some of the boys they really go for the property of the girl. If she is the only one in the family . . . she got the house, she got the land, whatever the contents of the house, bullocks and all expensive things will be hers.

There can be an element of competition amongst daughter-in-laws if one brings in relatively more dowry than another for example,

Sue: I remember you saying to me in our other interview, say there are several sons there and the daughter-in-laws, if one daughter-in-law brings more things with her . . .

Bimla: Then more respect, . . . she is a good one, never mind she doesn't do any work in the house but she brings in things.

Expectations of dowry are then very much up to the families involved and in Chapter Seven I will be discussing family relations in connection with resource control and distribution.

Ceremonies

As discussed above the civil marriage ceremony has became incorporated into customary practices with the licensing of religious officiates as marriage officers. Before a couple marry they have to give notice of their intended marriage at the Registrar's Office who then display the banns for twenty-one days. If no objections have been registered the couple may obtain a marriage licence. The legal ceremony has to be carried out within three months from the issue of the license and can be performed anywhere as long as it is conducted by the Registrar or marriage officer who in this case may also be the pundit (FWRM, 1994).
Figure 8. A groom at his tilak ceremony.

Figure 9. Pundit about to recite a prayer.
The order of the ceremonies are the tilak, thalwaan, bhathwaan and finally the saadi (wedding day). The following gives a brief overview of respondents' comments on the various ceremonies and is by no means meant to be a comprehensive analysis of ceremonial structure or theology.\textsuperscript{28}

An indication of the flexibility of ceremonial schedule as well as economic and pragmatic concerns was the different times the tilak can be held. Anywhere from a week to two days before the saadi, whereas in the 'old days' it would be held one month before the wedding. Mayer (1961:66) says that the tilak is usually held a week or two prior to the marriage 'but could occur on the day of the ceremony itself at less expense to the parties'. In the present study this is now common practice, Devika explained that "nowadays just to save time and make things easier (you know modern way) and save, we have the tilak on the first day, the thalwaan." The tilak ceremony involves the bride's family, particularly her brother or close male cousin, taking money and gifts to the groom's place to invite him to the wedding and thank him for accepting his sister.

Bimla Singh: Tilak is the first thing before the wedding, when the engagement is done, like a few days before the wedding that thing happens the tilak. The girl's family will take a coconut, a pair of clothes for the boy, a dhoti in Hindustani and a handkerchief, little bit yoghurt and oil and everything to the boy's place. They will go there and there will be a pundit there, so he will perform one religious ceremony. The money they should take, like some give F$100, F$150 depends how rich.

Anil said the amount of money is usually around F$100 which has been collected from relatives and friends who give whatever they can afford. Anil's wife said it has gone up to F$200, even F$300.

Anil: It's upon their family, this time all the families they help, some give them F$5, some F$10, the village people.
Sue: So the boy's family when they get that money they are not worried how much money that is?

\textsuperscript{28} See Mayer (1961) for a more detailed account of Sanatan Dharm Hindu weddings in Fiji.
Anil: No, no

The role of the bride's brother is important in this ceremony and highlights the special connection between brother and sister. The brother is supposed to protect the sister and this relationship is celebrated yearly at Raksha Bandhan. The sister gives her brother gifts, especially a rakhee [wrist amulet] as a sign of her love for her brother and in return he offers his protection.²⁹

At both the bride's and groom's places the same ceremonies are held two days before the wedding day. The first ceremony is thalwaan and involves aunties and sisters massaging them with oil. A punja (prayer ceremony) is held and guests are served food, tea and grog. The day before the wedding is the bhathwaan ceremony and this involves the bride and groom being rubbed down with turmeric (hardi), even the clothes they wear are stained yellow. It is expected that all the family will attend the bhathwaan which is particularly important for the brides family as it is the last ceremony before she takes her vows at the saadi and leaves her parents' place. Both ceremonies are regarded as a form of purification as well as beautification. Again a punja is held and guests are entertained.

On the wedding day the groom and his entourage will go to the bride's place where the wedding ceremony is held. I was fortunate enough to be invited to one respondent's home when he brought his bride back and they repeated the saadi ceremony there. This was the first time that the bride had been to her new home. I asked Anita and her two sister-in-laws how they had felt on their wedding days and they said that they were frightened.

²⁹ Veena Das (1993:218-219) referring to Punjabi kinship relations says that the brother is entrusted with the care and protection of his sister and 'it is up to the brother to avenge any attacks on her honour.' Although the husband and his kin are responsible for protecting the women after marriage the ties with the brother remain. Das (1993:219) concludes that it is only the brother who can 'protect a woman against her husband.' I never discussed this with the families, but did hear several stories to this effect and in one incidence the brother actually hit the husband.
The 'handing over' of the bride to her husband and his family is called *Kanya Daan*. This involves the bride's father going through rituals that signify the transfer of his daughter going from the care of her own family to the care of her husband and his family.

Bimla Singh: Once married husband is everything, husband and the in-laws whether it's an extended or a small family they are everything the in-laws, they are your world, you die there.

During the *saadi* the *pundit* will ask the bride and groom to take seven vows or steps which can literally involve taking steps and are considered components of an ideal marriage. These steps can be titled: 1. Love and Loyalty; 2. Mutual respect and understanding; 3. Health; 4. A sufficiency of food; 5. Fruitfulness; 6. Wealth; 7. Peace of mind. Bimla Singh described them to me as:

Bimla: . . . they will tell both the groom and the bride, this is duty now, from now on this is both of your duty and you should follow those steps, it's like counselling I mean that is a good part, they just tell the good things like respect the in-laws and don’t talk back.

Sue: To your in-laws?
Bimla: Yeah . . . from now on they are your parents the in-laws, they are your family members.

Sue: So that is part of the seven steps?
Bimla: Yeah, and whatever, whether you are happy or sad, sick or whatever they are the ones, you will look after them, you have to look after . . . respect your husband’s parents and your husband’s relations and bear good children, you are good parents you will . . . always follow your religion, if you follow your religion and you are religious people you will bear that kind of children . . . like from generation to generation.

Devika summarised what the *pundit* is saying during the ceremony;

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30 *Kanya* means daughter and *Daan* means gift.
31 Mayer (1961:76) in his comparative analysis of Hindu wedding ceremonies conducted by Indians of North Indian and South Indian descent points out that in weddings of the latter 'parents took little part and did not ceremonially 'give away' the bride; that bride and groom took a more equal part in the rites . . .'
The pundit is saying that married life, partner comes first in the life ah, the partner, plus you have to, anything you do be truthful to yourself, your husband, look after mother-in-law, in-laws, like being a good wife or a good husband is not matter of just having old clothes, like you got old clothes you can throw that and get a new one ah. Life partner, choosing a life partner and getting one is not like that . . . in the name of god you make oath and promise like that. Good husband, true husband dutiful to my wife something like that . . . be faithful to each other and everything like that.

The concepts of dharma, mutual love and respect, fertility and a healthy prosperous life whilst always adhering to religious duties are the predominant messages. For the bride her duties also extend towards her in-laws as she will now be part of their family and it is considered very important that she obeys and respects them. This is a continuation of a child’s relationship with their parents and a general respect for older people. They in turn have a duty to provide for her and love her as their daughter. The bride will return to her parents’ home the following day where she stays for about two weeks until her husband comes to get her.

Conclusion: Fijian and Fiji Indian Family Relations

Chapter Three and Four set out to discuss the processes surrounding marriage to explore what they may reveal about the construction and maintenance of gender ideology and family relations as it is primarily within this complex that family farms in the present study are operated. Labour organisation and control, resource generation, distribution and prioritising at the household level are predominantly dictated by kinship protocols that are culturally and religiously sanctioned. The wife/husband relationship was identified as a vital nexus for household relations providing, along with generational relations, the main organising principles. The expectation of bearing children, emphasised in the ceremonies, is pivotal to the continuation of family life and consequently family farming. The interaction of farming families
with the local economy and sugar industry and the consequent impact on farm socio-economic life will be discussed in the following chapters.

These chapters were contextualised within the relevant literature which focused on historical analysis and various ethnographic studies. The literature highlighted Fijian and Fiji Indian responses to colonisation and their subsequent reconstructions of family life. Fijian constructs of gender and family relations have been influenced by the incorporation of Christianity into vakaviti. Historically this emphasised the subservient role of the wife, which is still the current view of Fijian respondents. Colonial legal codification of chiefly hierarchies, marriage and property laws favouring patrilineal descent have all contributed to present day marriage and kinship practices. Despite the constrictions of codification, practices demonstrate diversity and dynamism as people negotiate and adapt social relations. For example, in the present study Fijians no longer have arranged marriages and the virginity test has become increasingly rare.

Girmitiyas' experience of indenture challenged their former Indian social relations in a number of ways. The previous organising principal of caste could no longer be pragmatically maintained and eventually diminished, even as a criteria for marriage. Fierce debates surrounding female sexuality were part of the process of the Indian community reconstructing themselves as they sought to end indenture and establish political and religious franchise. The emphasis on female chastity and purity were in part reactions to the systemic violence of indenture that was perpetuated by CSR and other European colonists. The racial and class/caste dynamics of this situation are crosscut with gender relations as Indian women negotiated with both Indian and European men for the right to survive.

The Marriage Ordinance debates were part of the Fiji Indians reconstruction process and also served to reinforce the ideals of Indian womanhood such as satitiva and dharma to parents, husband and in-laws.
While arranged marriage still dominates in the study area there is a changing attitude towards female autonomy as many girls are encouraged towards further education and possible employment opportunities which could give them more agency in choosing marriage partners. There is also evidence of varying attitudes towards dowry, where the bride's in-laws may give her control (possibly in conjunction with her husband) of any assets she brings into the marriage.

The framework for examining the husband/wife relationship and consequent family relations in the present study is situated between the interplay of ideals and realities in the marriage process. The ‘ideals’ are demonstrated through ceremony and respondents’ expectations which were found to be tempered by the reality of living in the smallholder environment. The behind the scenes negotiations and people’s observations and experiences of marriage further illustrated the realities of family life. The ‘back stage’ tended to highlight the active participation of women, which is in tension with the ideological promotion of patriarchy acted out in the ceremonies. For example in Fijian ceremonies the men may be the major performers but it is often the women who are involved in negotiating the marriage, a mothers’ rejection sometimes resulting in vakatevora. There is indication of some generational tensions between parents and children as young Fijians may ‘go for the face’ carried away by love rather than ‘what is behind the person’ and Fiji Indian youth generally favoured the autonomy of love marriage (although this is still rare).

A further site of tension is concerns over female sexuality which is conceptualised and monitored in terms of reputation. Particularly for Fiji Indian girls this curbs their mobility and freedom of association as any implication of impropriety can damage their chances of marriage. The underlying issues of fidelity and paternity, so threatened by indenture, have been (re)layered over with religio-cultural concerns of purity, virtue, sacrifice and duty, which is exemplified by ‘Sita’ and contributes to Fiji Indian constructs of ‘woman’. The sexual reputation of Fijian women is also very important and is informed by
conservative Christian concepts of premarital chastity and ideals of womanhood. Fijian and Fiji Indian girls are under the protection of their father and brothers, which includes protection of their chastity until marriage, when their protection is officially transferred to their husbands families.\textsuperscript{32}

The major themes common to both Fijian and Fiji Indian ceremonies are duty, respect, care, fertility, abundance, religiousness and love. These ceremonies are set within kinship frameworks that promote male dominance, respect for seniority and clearly defined expectations of family life. It was found that qualities people in the present study identified as desirable were influenced by pragmatic as well as these more idealistic concerns. The wife should obey her husband in a hierarchical relationship where they should endeavour to work hard and provide for the family in their own domains. For example the woman looks after the children, the housework, daily food, the in-laws, visitors, and farm work. The man looks after the farm work, cane harvesting and house construction and maintenance. He should be able to provide a good house and living for his wife, children and if applicable, members of his extended family. There is a bargain implicit in the marriage ceremony that is not just between husband and wife but also between their two families. Marriage is a pivotal event in peoples' lives, particularly for a woman as she literally changes families and enters into a new set of relations which demand her obedience and competency.

While the primary focus has been the bride (and to a lesser extent the groom) attention has also been paid to the diversity of women's encounters with marriage, not just ethnically but also dependent on individual families and their positioning within the family. Age, particularly in terms of seniority, along with 'relationship', for example mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister, daughter and bride, mean women have different experiences of the marriage

\textsuperscript{32} However, there are ongoing relationships of protection with both Fijian and Fiji Indian women with their natal families, particularly with brothers. For example brothers may still act as their sisters protectors if she is having trouble with her husband or his family.
process and of family life at different times in their lives as discussed in following chapters.

Wider implications for social relations are also expressed in the marriage process as kinship relations are affirmed and maintained and social standing in the community is demonstrated. For example, in a show of hospitality and resources, such as food and various material transactions enacted in Fijian ceremonial exchange and Fiji Indian wedding ceremonies. Debates over the association of the bride with exchange objects was also discussed. The interpretation I have gained from respondents is that for Fijian women exchange goods are not seen as payment for the bride but rather a sign of respect for her, and are contextualised within a network of kinship exchange.

The economy of marriage is integral to the economy of the farm, it is an event which may take precedence over other work in terms of both labour and expense. The obligations of parents and extended family to contribute to marriage ceremonies are part of what people work for. For example, Fijian women provide a major contribution to exchange ceremonies by spending hours weaving mats and preparing masi. Fiji Indians may take out personal bank loans for marriage expenses which can contribute to long term debt. The labour and resources involved during marriage ceremonies can be extensive as religious and social concerns out weigh any ‘rational’ economics. The affirmation of ‘family’ takes precedence because this is what life is about. Marriage ensures the continuity of family structures which also affects the ongoing dynamics of the family farm economy and is the basis of discussion for the following chapters.

33 ‘Rationality’ is a highly debateable concept, and has been used in Western economic discourse to justify some economic actions and discredit others. In the present study some commentators were critical of what they perceived to be the wasted time and resources of farmers and labourers who attended social functions and contributed goods and services apparently beyond their means. But is this necessarily economically ‘irrational’ when kinship networks and community relations act as safety nets in times of hardship and offer access to labour and resources? The point the present study emphasises is that social relations direct all economic relations and people organise and prioritise their labour and resources according to what they believe is important.
Chapter Five
Farms and Families

Introduction

To continue the narrative thread from the previous chapters, this chapter follows the bride to her husband’s smallholder sugarcane farm and explores the environment she has come to. The discussion views the constitution of ‘farms’ and ‘families’ from several perspectives and aims to provide a context for the following chapters, which examine work and resource negotiation within the smallholder complex. Maintaining the focus on gender and generation relations this analysis of Fiji’s sugarcane smallholder farm system teases out legal, physical and social relationships with regard to land tenure, cane contracts, farms, families and households. The conceptual framework for this chapter is a sense of ‘place’, in terms of both physical and social location.1

First, in legal terms, statutory and customary practices are examined to determine the legal rights a bride may have in her new home in regards to land. Land tenure is one of the most contentious issues in Fiji, but the way it effects different members of the family is seldom addressed (see Bolabola, 1986; Jalal, 1993, 1997). This section also examines the legal contract for smallholder farmers to grow and sell cane to FSC in terms of differentiation among household members and the possible implications for access to financial resources.

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1 For a discussion on the ways geography (and anthropology) use the notion of place see Linda McDowell (1999). Regarding geographies recent debates about ‘place’, McDowell notes the concept of a fixed, defined ‘piece of territory’ has been challenged and ‘place’ is now seen as ‘contested, fluid and uncertain... Places are made through power relations which construct the rules which define boundaries. These boundaries are both social and spatial - they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience’ (McDowell, 1999:4).
Secondly, the case study farms and the environs are described physically (with the help of photographs) so the reader can envisage where people live and work. Unfortunately it is not within the scope of the present study to look at spiritual and symbolic meanings invested in the land and buildings other than to mention in passing spatial concepts related to gender and hierarchy (see Ravuvu, 1983; Sahlins, 1962; Subramani, 1995; Toren, 1991).

Thirdly, the environment is explored in social terms with a discussion of households, kinship relations and expected ‘place’ within the household. Finally, negotiating your way around the place as a young bride is considered, and female respondents relate experiences of orientating their way within their new home.

**Land Tenure and Cane Contracts**

To grow and sell sugar cane in Fiji, one must first obtain land to grow cane and, secondly, enter into a contract with FSC concerning the terms and conditions of producing and selling cane to them. The first part of this section is concerned with land tenure arrangements and the second part with cane contracts. Underlying this discussion is the question of what statutory and customary practices concerning the leasing of farms and contracting with FSC reflect about the status of women on these farms? Two authors have addressed this question in Fiji, with the notable exception of Cema Bolabola (1986). Debates around land tenure tend to focus on ethnic divisions, administration, concerns with economic development and some discussion on class differentiation. I do not wish to minimise the relevance of these aspects by emphasising gender, rather the intention is to highlight another area of the debate that has rarely been acknowledged.

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2 For a discussion on women and land rights see for example Bina Agarwal (1994) who has emphasised the importance of examining the gendered aspects of land rights. She has found that the property rights of women in South Asia, especially in regards to land, are a critical factor affecting their economic, political and social status.
The lay of the land

The land tenure situation in Fiji is complex and has been extensively written about. The contemporary situation is that approximately 82.5 percent of Fiji is owned by indigenous Fijian tribal groups; 9.5 percent is State land and 8 percent is freehold. Because the present study only involves the first category, known as ‘native land’, the discussion is confined to this type of land tenure.

The majority of Fiji then is native land owned by indigenous Fijians and almost since the Deed of Cession in 1874 has been inalienable, with the exception of a period under im Thurn’s governorship between 1905-1909 (Lal, 1992:30). Kamikamica (1997:268-9) states that the Deed of Cession that enabled ‘Fiji to become a British Crown Colony, was more of a land charter than a normal document of formal transfer of sovereignty.’ The literature discusses Fiji’s first governor, Sir Arthur Gordon’s interpretation and implementation of the Deed of Cession, which culminated in polices that were designed to protect and preserve the Fijian way of life. Foremost was the issue of land ownership, as European claims threatened to overwhelm Fijian land. Thus soon after Cession land was deemed inalienable and a series of Native Land Commissions (NLC), notably in 1880 and 1905, were set up to arbitrate on European claims and define the land rights of Fijians.

The NLC recorded and demarcated Fijian land owning groups based on land ‘owning’ patterns and social organisation from the eastern side of Viti Levu, Vanua Levu and the eastern islands (Kamikamica 1997:267). The structure can be outlined as Matanitu, Vanua, Yavusa, Mataqali, Tokatoka and Vuvale. This is in descending order with a high chief heading the Matanitu which may consist of several Vanua, the Vanua may have several Yavusa; the next

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4 Between the period 1987-1998 Fiji was not a member of the Commonwealth and therefore Crown Land became State Land.
grouping is *Mataqali* and is the most prevalent ‘unit’ of land ownership consisting of closely related people; *Tokatoka* are smaller ‘units’ of extended family and may also be a grouping used in land transactions; finally *Vuvale* is the household. For a more detailed account of these classifications and their hierarchical structures see Kamikamica (1997:266-7). To formally record indigenous Fijians land owning rights, Fijians are registered in the VKB (Register of Birth, see pages 53-54).

France’s (1969:165-167) detailed historical account reveals the procurement of this definitive Fijian social structure, reported by G. V. Maxwell on June 1913 in his capacity as Native Lands Commissioner, was elicited through Procrustean means. Diverse and dynamic social relations were compressed into a ‘series of pyramidal structures of unambiguously inter-related social units’ (France, 1969:167). The impact of this codification of Fijian social structure and the consequent demarcation of land owning groups continues to be extensively discussed in the literature.

Bolabola (1986:15-16) criticises the processes of land codification for being biased in favour of males. First, it was senior men who predominantly gave evidence of ownership at the NLC enquires. ‘Women were seldom called to give evidence and then only to verify relationships rather than assert actual land claims by the *mataqali*’ (Bolabola, 1986:15). Secondly, the NLC uniformly declared patrilineal inheritance despite some groups, for example in Macuata, being matrilineal in descent (Bolabola, 1986:15).

Fijians are registered in the VKB under their father’s *mataqali*, with the exception of illegitimate children who are registered with their mother’s *mataqali* (Jalal, 1997:96). Consequently matrilineal land rights for descendants,

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5 This patrilineal criteria was also applied to citizenship; previously the Fiji Constitution stated that a child born overseas was only entitled to be registered as a Fijian citizenship if their father was a Fijian citizen. There was a provision for registration of children with a foreign father through a grandparent who was a citizen and an illegitimate child of a Fiji female citizen was eligible for registration (Jalal, 1997:96). The Constitution Amendment - 13 of 1997 (Chapter 3; section 12(1)) has changed this and states that: ‘A child born outside Fiji on or after the date of
other than this exception, are limited to vasu rights. Statutory law gives equal ownership rights to all members of the mataqali. However, the Native Lands Act (cap. 133) allows for customary practices 'according to native customs as evidence by custom and tradition' (cited in Bolabola, 1986:21). The questions raised by the inclusion of customary practices are how does this impact on Fijian women's property rights and how does it reinterpret the statutory notion of equality with regard to mataqali landowning rights? What are the land rights of Fijian women living on their husband's mataqali land?

In the present study it appeared that a wife's rights are limited to usufruct, with no legal ownership rights. Fijian women's land ownership rights were in relation to their own mataqali land, and living away from their natal home diminished their ability to control land. However, their customary rights on their own mataqali may also be limited to usufruct according to Bolabola, with the primary control of land residing with male kin. She asserts the customary rights of a woman to have a home in pre-contact times were defined 'through her father or husband, never as an individual, and, usually, as a subordinate partner' (Bolabola, 1986:12). This has resonance with contemporary practices and is highlighted when a Fijian woman is widowed. Members of her own family will often come to her and perform a ceremony, ai lakovi (request to return) to ask her to come back to her own mataqali (cf. Bolabola, 1986:14). This custom was certainly practiced by the Fijian respondents' families. Whether a widow decides to return or not to her natal family depends on the circumstances.

6 Bolabola (1986:13-14) briefly explains vasu as rights transferred 'as a by-product of affiliation' on the proviso certain traditional obligations are met. 'It was customary for the husband's group to present the couple's children to the woman's mataqali and village with a formal presentation and exchange of traditional goods. The kau ni mata ni gone (take the face of the child) custom gave the women's children the right of vasu which allowed them to exercise land rights in her village' (Bolabola, 1986:13).

7 Unfortunately it is not within the scope of the present study to discuss the land rights of women in pre-contact Fiji and the development of contemporary customary practices in relation to land (see Bolabola, 1986).
When a Fijian woman becomes separated from her husband she is able to go back to her family. Legally (as well as customarily) she is entitled to live on her own *mataqali* land. This provides an important alternative for these women (and their children) who wish to leave their husbands and are possibly escaping domestic violence situations.

Agarwal’s (1994) discussion on the differentiation between ownership and control of land is applicable to some Fijian women, particularly those without chiefly rank. While obviously situational, the decision making processes regarding land use by *mataqali* and *tokatoka* and the way resources from land are distributed are predominantly determined by seniority within the group. This may include a gendered aspect as one *tokatoka* in the case study demonstrated. A female respondent said that when members of the extended family living in the surrounding area used to meet to discuss how they were going to run things for the year, women attended. But with a change in the head of the *tokatoka*, the meetings were only attended by men. This excluded both the in-marrying women as well as the women with rights to this *mataqali* land.

Respondent: Just the men, we don’t know what they are thinking about. . . Before, the one before was good. Just the men know, the mother know, some of our mothers thoughts are good.

Sue: So they can speak publicly?

Respondent: Yeah, that’s right, now days this man here, he can’t call us all, the women, the children and the husband, now days they collect only the men, he said it’s none of the women’s business to come in here and those sort of things. Women just know about the food.

In the smallholder farm situation, there is the additional legality of the lease. For Fijian cane farming families the land may or may not belong to the husband’s *mataqali*, which would have a bearing on his rights to the land, (or indeed the lease may not even be on native land). It should also be remembered that some Fijian cane farms are leased on the wife’s *mataqali* land. The decisions concerning land are only partially in the hands of indigenous owners as ‘native
land' is administered by an independent body, on their behalf, called the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB). The Native Land Trust Ordinance of 1940 provided the legislative foundations for the establishment of the NLTB in 1946. The contemporary responsibilities of the NLTB are to administer leases on native land and distribute rents to the Fijian land owners; involvement in the assessment of rents; to administer compensation on the reversion of leases; to administer the reservation and de-reservation of land; to make available undeveloped native land for development, keeping in mind the interests of the landowners and the development needs of Fiji (NLTB).9

There are essentially two types of native land, reserve and non-reserve land. Reserve land was identified as necessary for the support and maintenance of Fijian people and can only officially be leased to Fijians (known as Class J land). In the present study, Fijian respondents were leasing on their own mataqali land which came under classifications of both 'reserve' and 'non-reserve' land. The lease titles were held by senior male members in the family and the rent paid to the NLTB was distributed back to the whole mataqali where families decide upon how this rent will be shared among them. All rents from native land leases are distributed as follows:

25 percent [of the total] goes to the NLTB for administrative costs, of the rest;
5 percent goes to Turaga i Taukei;
10 percent goes to Turaga ni Yavusa (Turaga ni Qali);
15 percent to Turaga ni Mataqalia;
70 percent to the Land Owning Unit members
(NLTB Information Booklet n.d.:19) Table no. 1

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8 The formulation for the assessment of rents on agricultural land is a contentious issue and central to the current debates surrounding leases which are discussed below. For a discussion on contemporary rent assessment see Stephen Michell (1988). The Fijian Association Party, who form part of the government elected in 1999, have proposed reforms to rent assessment that are outlined in To renew or not to renew, (Daily Post, 12 August 1999).

9 For a discussion on administration of native land generally see Kamikamica (1997).
With the relatively small amount of freehold land available the majority of cane farming land is leased. The Fiji Indian respondents with leases in the present study rented native non-reserve land and the title holders were also senior male family members. Nationwide by far the majority of lease title holders are males, with the exceptions predominantly being women who have been widowed, or Fijian women leasing their own mataqali land for their ‘foreign’ husbands. A woman not having her name on the title legally means she has no right of ownership and effectively control and use of the land have to be negotiated within the farming family. This also has implications for the distribution of matrimonial property in divorce settlements as the distribution is based on a monetary notion of ‘economic’ contribution to the marriage. Jalal (1997:92) states that,

The ultimate effect of this is often that dependent wives who have spent years raising children, looking after the home and producing food from subsistence agriculture and fishing are disqualified from any claim to a share of property once the marriage ends, and despite having custody of the children, are left homeless. The only exception to this would be the rare case of a woman’s name being on the title to the property alongside her husband’s or where a wife is earning and is able to secure her interest with a caveat and thereafter prove economic contribution.

This is particularly pertinent for Fiji Indian women who do not have any cognatic inherited land rights and tend not to be as welcomed back to their parents’ homes. In the study area Fiji Indian women who were widowed often did inherit their husbands’ land lease and cane contract which then went to the eldest son (cf. Jayawardena, 1975:212). Jayawardena (1975:213) states that by law all children inherit equally, however by

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10 See Bolabola (1986) for a discussion on this and vakavanua arrangements (informal ‘borrowing’ of another’s land), which by-passes the administration of NLTB. Also see Eaton (1988) on vakavanua arrangements and agricultural development.

11 For Praveen Sharma’s comments relating to this see pages 110,114,124-125.
custom, only sons and unmarried daughters share in the estate. The dowry (if any) and costs of the wedding are held to extinguish a married daughter’s claims. By the same token, a son who has been provided with a farm during his father’s lifetime, makes no claim. Similarly, sons who have left home and established themselves elsewhere, also make no claim, though they may be provided with some assistance in cash or livestock.

Customarily the daughters were expected to marry and live at their husband’s place. There were exceptions dependent on the circumstances of the family, for example one family only had a daughter. This family shared the lease with the younger brother and his family and she expected to inherit her fathers ‘share’ of the leased land and the house where they lived. In this type of situation or when there is a surplus of land on Fiji Indian farms, (and/or a corresponding lack of land from the prospective husband) a woman may live with her husband at her natal residence. This was not common in the present study but it did happen. The reasons why a couple may live at the woman’s family farm are not only based on economic considerations and land availability. Strained relations with the husband’s family, location and proximity of schooling and other amenities are among other factors. These considerations may also influence couples who move away from their extended families to start their own farms.

Non-inheriting sons, and those not able to attain land either due to finances or land availability may have little choice but to go into share-cropping arrangements with other farmers or rely on farm labouring. Jensen (1989:107) found in his study of Drasa Cane Sector that the ‘increasing number of landless and near landless households is due exclusively to inheritance’. This concurred with Jayawardena’s (1975:85-86) findings for Fiji Indian households,

Just as landless family heads are usually non-inheriting sons who left their paternal home to set up on their own, so their own sons will leave their home, sometime even before they are married, to seek their living elsewhere. Labourer fathers and sons seldom, if at all, maintain a single household by pooling their resources.
In the present study three of the leaseholds were divided among brothers in sharefarming arrangements, but of course with such smallholdings these divisions increasingly jeopardised the sustainability for each household. Thus families with more boys than could be sustained on the farm encouraged some of their sons to go into other occupations. Jayawardena (1975:213) notes that the responsibility of the head of household is to see the 'installation of females in suitable marriages and of males in adequate occupations.' Towards this end, the inheritor will receive all the assets so they may assume this responsibility (Jayawardena, 1975:213). In sharefarm arrangements this can cause tensions, for example when one brother who has legal title and receives cane payment (see Chapter Seven) may be withholding full payment to the other brother. Jensen (1989:93) observed '. . . FSC always pays the contract holder for cane delivered to the company. This implies that sharefarmers and sharecroppers alike, have to approach the contract holder to get their rightful income from the cane harvested.'

Jensen (1989:93) found that, whereas sharecropper's who had made legal agreements and therefore had a legal means of redress in the case of disputes, sharefarmers had no redress because it was illegal. Moynagh (1978:72) discusses the government proposal to legalise sharefarming in 1976. The consequent debates with NLTB resulted in abandonment of the idea as this could undermine NLTB services and require extra resources for supervision of sharefarming agreements. As far as I am aware the government has not legalised sharefarming, however I know of one man who sharefarmed with his brother who was intending on drawing up a legal contract so that he may fairly access the cane payment his brother receives.

Ward's (1997:257) research showed that sharecropping is prevalent in the Rewa area and elsewhere and notes that '[t]he legality of sharecropping agreements seems uncertain and may vary according to the specific wording of the agreement but as many agreements will be verbal it would [be] difficult to
check.’ There were three Fiji Indian households who did not have leases and sharecropped for Fijian families. The arrangements for these families varied with a calculated division of; profits from the cane; labour; land use for residence and subsistence agriculture. Families who have no legal rights to the land are in a potentially precarious position. However the working relationships as far as I could ascertain were good during the field work period. Respondents did recall previous sharecropping arrangements they had entered into that had not worked out so well. Because ethnicity is such a sensitive issue in Fiji I would like to point out that these arrangements were by no means just between Fijian landowners and Fiji Indian tenants, sharecropping is often between Fiji Indian families and I also met a Fijian couple who sharecropped for a Fiji Indian family.

A note on leases - expiry and renewals

While some of the leases to Fijian farmers in the study were on reserve land, the rest of the respondents were on non-reserve native land which was leased under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act (Cap. 270) (ALTA). The Act, which came into effect in 1978 and followed on from the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance (ALTO), granted agricultural leases for a period of 30 years with no right of renewal. The controversy during the fieldwork period was that the first of the ALTA leases were due to expire in 1997 and would continue to do so until 2024 (Fiji Times, 31 January 1996). There were, and at the time of writing (1999) still are, doubts about how many new leases will be issued to current tenants after the expiry of ALTA. This is because many of the land owning groups require their land for themselves.

The leasing of large tracts of some of the best arable land for long periods of time combined with population pressure has left some landowning groups

12 See Kamikamica (1997:275) for a list of the different types of leases the NLTB administers and a comparison of number of leases; rental income and area per type of lease.
13 The length of leases has been a major point of debate, in regards to the sugar industry see for example Moynagh (1981).
with a radical lack of land. Indeed the distribution of land amongst mataqali and tokatoka is by no means even and some groups have no land at all (see, for example Ward, 1985, 1997). In the present study a Fijian male respondent, who is the head of his tokatoka controlling 400 acres, leases land to three Fiji Indian tenants. He and his sons also lease land within this area to grow sugarcane. The three Fiji Indian tenant leases in 1997 only had two, five and six years left. He said that he will not authorise new agricultural leases and has told this to the tenants, offering them residential leases if they want to stay on their house sites. His reasoning is that he is thinking of his four grandsons whom he wants to give fifteen acres each.\footnote{In the case of formal leases, as opposed to vakavanua arrangements, this would be done in consultation with NLTB. I am unsure of the decision making processes of this tokatoka but know that this man’s opinion is highly regarded and respected. Eaton (1988:23-24) states in reference to vakavanua arrangements that ‘[t]he ‘controller’ of land may be a mataqali member who is an individual or tokatoka head with long established customary rights to a well-defined area of land. Though legal ownership is vested in the mataqali, de facto control often rests in the hands of such individuals or small sub-groups.’} The following is an extract from fieldnotes taken after a conversation with this man, illustrating the dilemma and the demands of population pressure,

[He is] really thinking about how his tenants feel especially after being on the land for such a long time [one family has been there for 70 years] but has to think of his family. He said when they first came to their settlement only four of them and now there are about thirty (fieldnotes 30 July 1997).

There is the argument that cites the protectionist policies of the colonial government as effectively having excluded Fijians from full participation in the cash economy. Many Fijians would now like to try cash cropping themselves, thus they do not want to consent to new leases on their land. This of course has major implications for Fiji Indian tenants, although there is also a proportion of Fijian families who lease native land which is not their mataqali land and this could affect them as well. The tenants concern is for secure, fair lease
arrangements and if not renewed, adequate compensation\textsuperscript{15} for improvements they have made to the land and structures left behind as well as possibilities for resettlement. The implications this has for the future of some of the respondents and some of the strategies they have considered are discussed in Chapter Seven.

There are gender and seniority aspects to land control that apply to both Fijians and Fiji Indians. I should note here that class is also a determining factor, such as the Fijian chiefly class and wealthier citizens of any ethnicity, including cane farmers with comparatively large holdings.\textsuperscript{16} However, respondents in the present study were neither of chiefly rank nor were any wealthy, and although there was some disparity on the basis of land holdings and wealth this was not significant enough to ascertain information on class differentiation. The legal entitlements to land through agricultural leases in the present study are overwhelmingly owned by men and within extended families, usually senior men. There were no female leaseholders among the respondents and the general evidence regarding other local women titleholders indicated they were predominantly there by ‘default’, either as widows, or enabling access to land, rather than as farmers in their own right. This is not to disallow or belittle the respect accorded women’s input into land use or decision making about land that goes on within families. However, the marked absence of women as legal lease titleholders suggests a lack of actual control over land and supports the ideological dominance of men as household heads and farm owners. It also disadvantages women in matrimonial property disputes.

\textsuperscript{15} Respondents and officials talked about problems with assessment of improvements as some tenants had not gone through the official channels to register improvements and thus were not entitled to compensation.

\textsuperscript{16} See for example Overton (1989; 1993/4) for a discussion on land accumulation and differentiation.
Cane contract

A cane contract to sell sugar cane to FSC is bound by the *Sugar Industry Master Award* and is administered by the Sugar Industry Tribunal. To apply for a cane contract and become a registered ‘grower’ one must prove title to the land to be farmed; ‘78.2.b the certificate of title, lease, sublease, agreement for a lease or sublease or other instrument of title relating to his estate or interest in that farm or that part of that farm;’ (Sugar Industry Act Cap.206 Rev. 1985). As the above discussion indicated, the lease titles are predominantly in men’s names, not surprisingly then, so are the majority of cane contracts. This is a result of (senior) male control over the legalised aspects of cane farms and the dominance of men in the sugar industry as a whole.

The registration of the grower involves recording the details of the land they propose to grow cane on and awarding of a ‘farm basic allotment’ (FBA). The FBA is the

... minimum amount of cane which may reasonably be expected to be produced on that farm as calculated on the basis of the average yearly production of cane on that farm over such period as the Tribunal thinks proper for the purpose of making such a calculation (Sugar Industry Act Cap.206 Rev.1985 84.1).

The aggregate FBA of farms in a mill area makes up the mill basic allotment and all FBA equals the national basic allotment. A percentage of the FBA is awarded to each farm every year and is called the ‘farm harvest quota’ (FHQ). This is the amount of cane that can be sold from a farm in a given year and is calculated as a corresponding percentage of the national basic allotment based on Fiji’s export deals and domestic market needs. In this way the purchase of sugar cane from growers aims to be fair with the same percentage of FBA in the form of FHQ allocated to all the farms.

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17 “grower” means a person who cultivates cane for sale’ (Sugar Industry Cap.206, 1985:8).
Cema Bolabola (1986:37) asserts that FSC gives only one quota (FHQ) per farmer (corresponding to registration as a cane contractor), and one reason why women are given quotas is because their husbands or other family members already have one. Respondents also conveyed that by registering another member of the family, such as a woman, gave that family additional quotas. Possibly it is FSC practice not to grant more than one registration per person? However, the Sugar Industry Act Cap. 206 72.4 allows for a person to be registered as a grower in respect to more than one farm, as long as they can prove title. Therefore rather than the quota being allotted to the farmer it is allotted to the farm, so that a person may have more than one quota if they can prove title to more than one farm.

Legally it makes no difference if a man is already a registered grower in respect to one farm as the only way to obtain additional quotas is by proving title to another subdivision of land deemed suitable for farming sugarcane. Therefore the decisive factor for women becoming registered growers and obtaining quotas is their ability to prove title, thus the advantage of Fijian women who are able to get leases on their own mataqali land, either reserve or non-reserve land.

The Farm Environment

Household relations are played out within the structures and environs of the smallholder farm and the purpose of this section is to provide a description of that setting. The following chapters will discuss household relations in terms of allocation and organisation of work and resources within this context. What is missing between the accounts of environment, activities and social relations is an explicit discussion on the symbolic uses of spaces and objects. This is an area that would benefit research on smallholder farms, by conveying a better understanding of social relations and how they are maintained and challenged in daily life. Ethnographic research with Fijians living in the village provides
ample evidence of their use of spatial concepts and building structures as an expression of social relations (see for example Toren, 1990). However the present study has maintained a different focus although some of this information is evident in the way people conduct social relations within their environment; such as gender segregation practices and gendered divisions of labour. The following discussion starts with a description of the farm and then moves on to houses, structures and amenities.

The study farms\(^\text{18}\) are on average around fifteen acres, the majority of land being planted in cane, with smaller areas used for growing rice and other subsistence crops. The tonnage of cane that farms produced varied from 30 to around 300 tonnes, with most households relying on between 100 - 200 tonnes as their main source of cash income in 1996. The staple foods are rice and root crops, with all farms involved in rice cultivation and all the Fijian households growing root crops such as dalo, tavioka, uvi and kumala. Some of the Fiji Indian farms grew tavioka and certainly professed a liking for the other root crops as an alternative to rice, but were generally unable to grow them, because their land was unsuited to such crops.

Along with the staples, households grew a variety of vegetables, fruits, herbs and spices which were estimated by respondents to account for anywhere between 50-90 percent of the weekly food intake. Other food could be obtained from neighbouring properties through sale, barter or some form of obligation such as lalakai\(^\text{19}\) or kerekere (see Chapter Seven). Otherwise edible goods could

\(\text{18}\) ‘Farm’ here refers to land leased by respondents including the land designated as ‘contract area’ registered under a grower for the purposes of producing sugar cane. As the above section explained a registered farm could be operated by more than one ‘household’ and in effect can be divided into smaller farming ‘units’. Another point to note is that Fijians farming cane on their own mataqali land may also have access to adjacent land they may utilise in accordance with their mataqali or tokatoka. While this land is not used for growing cane, Fijian respondents were able to utilise additional land for such things as growing and collecting subsistence crops, grazing livestock and obtaining wood and coconuts.

\(\text{19}\) Lalakai is a Fijian word which literally means a long flat tray plaited from coconut leaves which is used to carry food at a feast (Capell, 1991:111). In local usage the term means to take food to another household when they have visitors as a gesture to the visitor and also to help that household. For example when I first stayed at Raijieli’s house her sister-in-law in the neighbouring household brought over a plate of small fried fish that evening.
be brought at the sparsely located and supplied local shops or in town from the market or supermarket. FSC also sold rice and sugar at reduced rates to sugar cane contractors.20

Nearly all of the farms had chickens which are kept for eggs and meat and one household had ducks which were sold for their meat. All the farms had dogs which are used to provide protection and I never got far on to a property without being met by a few (occasionally terrifying) barking dogs. Most households had cats which were not so much pets but a very effective means of keeping down the rat and mouse population. People could hardly afford to keep these domestic animals merely for pleasure and generally only fed them scraps of food.

Many farms also had small herds of goats, anywhere from two to fifteen, which are used for meat, (I did not come across anyone milking goats) and to sell or exchange. Only the Fijian families raised pigs which are highly valued as magiti food. Certainly Muslims and most Hindus I met would not eat pork. Some families had one or two dairy cows, which again were not utilised for their meat by Hindus for religious reasons. Bullocks are still used by many farms in the area for ploughing and harrowing and for clearing tracks to lay portable rail lines in the fields for the cane ‘trucks’.21 Many families did not own cows which are relatively expensive and difficult to feed when there is limited land for grazing (which can also apply to bullocks, goats and horses) (cf. Ali, 1988). For instance one household only had 5.3 acres as the 15 acre farm is split between two brothers. A female respondent explains,

We don’t have that many animals at my place, we have one pair of bullocks but my father usually looks after them but when he is not here then I’m in charge of that. But

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20 In 1996 FSC sold up to four 50kg bags of rice and sugar to each cane contractor. The company charged F$48 for one 50kg bag of rice, compared to F$1.20 per kg retail in Labasa and F$20 for a 50kg bag of sugar which was usually sold at F50c per kg.

21 Small rail trucks that hold around three to four tonnes of sugar cane stems.
we don’t have cows or goats at my place because we don’t have enough space for them because we need an open area for them and we don’t have that much open area.

Horses are also used for ploughing but to a lesser extent than before. They are used by many of the men and boys as a form of local transport but this has also declined over the years with the availability of buses and van transport. Tractors are increasingly being utilised for ploughing and in this area are the only means of transporting the cane ‘trucks’ to the main rail line which takes them to Labasa mill.

Often compounds were a mixture of housing types that reflected the history of different families. Like ‘households’, the buildings people occupied were also dynamic as houses were added on to as fortunes improved and families grew, while other structures stood half finished or in disrepair as other priorities took precedence. Hurricanes and flooding destroyed more unstable structures and the wear of tropical weather and vermin meant bamboo houses in particular needed fairly regular maintenance.

Houses were made out of different materials, including concrete, wood and bamboo. The size and type of housing among respondents varied and was to some degree a reflection of their status and relative wealth. Older, senior members of families usually lived in the bigger concrete foundation houses with verandahs at the front. Many of the respondents lived in raised wooden houses of two to three rooms, while others lived in bamboo houses, consisting of only one room. A newly married couple could expect their own room (or space) within the husband’s parents’ house. If there was no actual room in the house they might live in an adjacent bamboo or small wooden house but still be regarded as part of the household and therefore be fully integrated into the household’s daily activities.
Figure 10. Hammering bamboo to split so it can be woven into walls for housing.

Figure 11. Weaving the bamboo into walls to repair the house.
Figure 12. House and compound surrounded by cane fields.

Figure 13. 'Lean-to' kitchen for cooking on open hearths.
Figure 14. There is piped water into most of the respondents' farms.

Figure 15. Fetching water from a well situated on the farm. Structure on left is for bathing.
The main house structure served as an area for sleeping, eating and activities such as sewing, mat making, doing homework and entertaining. Some of the bigger houses had separate indoor kitchen and dining areas and all the households had separate structures for cooking food on an open fire; either a ‘lean-to’ kitchen at the side of the house (see Figure 13.) or a small shed like structure that was also used for food preparation.

Other structures on the farms were pit toilets and shower ‘sheds’ built around the outdoor showers on Fiji-Indian farms. Fijian families did not usually bother with structures around the showers (people would bath carefully with their *sulu* on). One farm had a purpose built granary to store rice and several of the Fiji Indian farms had old rice hullers (cf. Anderson, 1974:120). Some of the farms also had shelters for their goats as well. Because people did not possess large pieces of farm equipment there was not the large array of sheds and farm buildings characteristic of New Zealand farms.

Several of the Fijian settlements had churches that serviced the surrounding community and these were in constant use. Some Fiji Indian households had private shrines within the house or special places on the farm to worship Hindu deities. The aesthetic tastes of respondents and the ways in which they decorated and arranged their houses are not discussed in this thesis and is an area that warrants further research. For example, the ways in which women presented the house were an expression of their feminine accomplishments and relates to their roles as wives, mothers and daughters. As discussed in the previous chapters domestic objects and furnishings can be associated with women through Fijian exchange and Fiji Indian dowry, whereas the house structure itself is something the husband is expected to provide. However, I do not wish to over simplify this relationship between gender and objects. While there is an association of certain objects with masculinity or femininity, often due to their use and maintenance by either gender, this does not necessarily correlate with regarding that object as male or female.
The amenities available to the households were extremely limited. There is no mainlined electricity and most families in the area do not have generators. Only one of the study households had a generator which was used very sparingly and only at night. Therefore there was no access to refrigerators for food storage which meant perishable food items, such as meat, fish, cooked food, vegetables and milk, had to be procured regularly (cf. Bolabola, 1983). Spring water is piped in to nearly all the farms, in the form of an outside tap and shower. No one in the case study had indoor plumbing, flush toilets or hot water. Up to four households in the present study may share one tap (in larger settlements this ratio could be a lot higher) and during times of drought the water often runs low or stops completely. Most of the farms either had a river running through them or had access to the river which was an essential source of water for farm and household uses.

The roading in the case study area was of minimal standard and poorly maintained. The dirt roads were subject to the vagaries of the weather and would become impassable with high rainfall, and then dry into large ridges and pot holes. The access roads on farms were often worse and this can cause real problems when trying to transport cane off the farms. The following section examines local definitions of ‘household’ and the social relations in the household and family in terms of gender and generation.

Households and Families

So how are smallholder farms organised in terms of living arrangements? Living in ‘households’ is one of the ways people organise their daily lives including labour and resources. This section defines what ‘households’ are in the context of the smallholder farm drawing on my research as well as other ethnographic literature. Then, some of the formalised aspects of intrahousehold relations are examined in terms of kinship and hierarchy. It should be noted that ‘households’ are not synonymous with ‘family’ as members of a household
may be unrelated. However most householders in the present study were related in some way; the pivotal relationship being that of the conjugal couple and then succeeding generations.

The *1996 Fiji Census of Population and Housing* (1998:17) defines a household as,

... those persons who usually eat together food prepared for them in the same kitchen and who together share the work and cost of providing the food.

Likewise Fiji’s *The Household Economic Activity Survey 1989-1990* (HEAS) defines a ‘conventional household’ as an individual or group of two or more persons who occupy a ‘housing unit’,

The general criteria are common house-keeping arrangements, sharing the principal meals in the sense that the household’s food supply is obtained for common consumption or paid out of a common budget, and having common arrangements for supplying basic living needs (*HEAS 1989-1990*, 1991:4).

Local definitions of a household in Fijian and Fiji Indian families focus on the hearth, that is each household operates their own kitchen. Resources may be shared among households and members from one household, particularly children, may regularly eat in other households. Generally a household ‘unit’, involving the management, production and distribution of resources can be determined by the criteria of the kitchen and who contributes and partakes of food. Food of course is not the only resource or necessity to be managed by the household but is taken here as a distinctive feature. The production and allocation of food is not solely determined by household members as social obligations are also an important consideration.

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22 Families in this area did the majority of their cooking using open fires. Those who owned gas ring cookers used them sparingly because of the expense of gas.
This concurs with Toren's (1990:39) definition of the Fijian households in her study of Sawaieke village on the island of Gau during 1981-83, as those who 'eat together daily and share in the products of each other's labour; they have access to all parts of the house and may sleep there'. She emphasises the importance of sharing food\textsuperscript{23} and states that this 'is itself definitive of kinship' and the 'most salient marker of household membership' because avoidance *tabu* require young men not to sleep at home but in peripheral buildings (Toren, 1990:39).

Lukere (1997) gives a good account of the historical background pertaining to colonial impact on Fijian family forms and living arrangements.

The vast majority of Native Regulations pertaining to marital, domestic and sexual matters bear the stamp of those values which church and government held in common. The belief that monogamous marriage was the basis of the family, and in turn that the nuclear family was the fundamental unit of society, was clearly expressed in the marriage regulation which insisted that each couple should be separately housed. A marriage licence, according to law, could not be granted to a man unless he had a house built - at least three fathoms long, two fathoms wide and of satisfactory quality - for the exclusive accommodation of him and his wife. [Native Regulation No.12 of 1877] Thus the administration supported the missionary endeavour to break down traditional patterns of accommodation such as sexually segregated residence and the men's house (Lukere, 1997:85-86).

Lukere (1997:87) states that in reality these Native Regulations were often not enforced by either European Magistrates, who 'were reluctant to implement laws that conflicted with custom', or Fijian officials. She cites the stipulation of a newly wed couple having their own house as a good example of a regulation that was often negated as the couple would use a house that had been expressly vacated only for the duration of the ceremony (Lukere, 1997:88). However, the missionary drive toward monogamy and houses for every couple did impact on household forms. This was further encouraged by the colonial government's

\textsuperscript{23} See Becker (1995) for a discussion on food and eating practices in Fijian culture.
campaign at the beginning of this century to upgrade and build more housing (Lukere, 1997:145). ‘The new accommodation was intended both to be healthier and a more fitting setting for the work of women as mothers and wives’ (Lukere, 1997:145).

Part of the new upgraded house was an outside kitchen which ‘made it easier to keep the inside of the main house free from grime and smoke sediment’.

Lukere (1997:146) notes that these outside kitchens doubled as sleeping quarters for post-pubescent boys who should avoid close contact with their sisters. This she proposes may have facilitated the passing of men’s’ houses by replacing some of their functions (Lukere, 1997:146). Interestingly Lukere (1997:146) also sees the promotion of separate kitchens as equating cooking with women’s work.

I noted in the neighbouring Fijian koro that unmarried adolescent boys would often congregate and sleep in a ‘boys only’ house. I am not sure how formalised this arrangement is, but sex segregation and gendered kinship tabu are widely practiced in this area. Toren’s observations also indicate that practices of sexually segregated accommodation were not abandoned in the village she studied during the 1980s.

**Fijian smallholder households**

While work by scholars on Fijian villages has echoes in the present study, there has been little qualitative research on Fijian sugar cane farming households as noted above. Existing research does not look at intrahousehold relations and tends to relegate the role of women to ‘domestic’ tasks and child care, while children’s labour is not explored at all. Most of the studies focus on the development schemes, notably the Seaqaqa Sugar Cane Development Project (SSCDP). The Seaqaqa scheme consists of approximately 800 smallholder farms operated by both Fijian and Fiji Indians. The scheme is located on Vanua Levu

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24 See Lukere’s (1997) discussion on the Hygiene Commission.
and was started by the government in 1974 as part of an initiative to expand the sugar industry and encourage Fijian participation (O'Sullivan, 1992:209).

John Overton's (1987, 1988a, 1988b, 1989, 1993/94) discussions on Fijian galala and the debates surrounding individualism verses communalism are elucidating (see page 54). He defines galala in his glossary as 'a person who is independent of the village and free of, or exempted from, communal obligations'. The galala movement was hailed by government and scholars alike as a process whereby Fijians could participate in the 'modern' economy and they were encouraged with schemes such as SSCDP. It should be noted that prior to 1967 the distinction between galala and villager was definable in terms of regulations and taxes imposed on galala. Overton (1988b) found that since the repeal of these regulations in 1967 the distinctions between galala and non-galala villager have become blurred and he questions the continuing use of the term and its implicit emphasis on individualism. Overton (1988a:11, 1988b:206) is critical of 'modernisation' theoretical frameworks,

Such a framework not only implies that traditional and communal are retrograde and conservative (and conversely, modern and individual are progressive and desirable), but also it assumes a linear pattern of transformation, it masks the complexity of change in Fijian villages, and it does not account for the ability of many to respond to monetisation and commercialism without fundamental changes in their society and culture (Overton, 1988b:206).

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25 In 1948 regulations were imposed to codify 'the galala process, regulating an accelerating flow of migrants out of the village' (Overton, 1988b:194). These regulations allowed Fijians to move away from their koro and be exempt from communal obligations, but attempted to stem the flow with harsh conditions. This was because the independence of Fijians from the village and thus the chiefs (who ruled indirectly for the British) threatened the power base of the chiefs. An example of the 1948 regulations was galala had to pay a special commutation tax as well as normal Provincial taxes and they had to earn a minimum of £50 per annum (Overton, 1988a:194-5). For a more in depth discussion of the regulations and the political context in which they were made see Overton (1988b).

26 See Overton (1988b) for a discussion on galala development and an examination of the similarities and differences between galala Fijian farmers living in settlement schemes and villagers.
Overton states that in the villages he studied the 'position of the household as the basic economic unit and the centre of labour relations has strengthened. Commercial and subsistence agriculture, domestic chores and a whole range of other activities are carried out at this level' (Overton, 1989:56). He does not go into the relationship between household and family other than to say that the majority of the households had adult children who contributed greatly to agricultural and domestic labour.

If household heads [male and female] and children [adult] are combined, and it is assumed that men stick to agricultural tasks and women mainly to domestic chores, it can be concluded that for every rural household in the sample, there are 1.5 units of full-time agricultural labour and 1.6 units of full-time mainly domestic labour. This incorporation (or absorption) of family labour into the household productive unit is the backbone of agricultural activity in rural Fiji (Overton, 1989:56-57).

The situation in settlement schemes is much the same, although Overton (1989:57) identifies the 'peasant household' as an 'even stronger economic unit than in the village' because 'land is leased by the household head and labour found from within'. However the household is not the only unit of production because it can not meet all the labour needs so wage labour, share arrangements and exchange of labour with neighbours takes place at peak times (see Chapter Seven). Overton found that while villagers did remunerate some labourers they were able to call on customary labour traditions, whereas those in settlements did not have access to customary communal labour or extensive kinship networks although there were some voluntary associations.

While Overton does briefly document the work of women and children (the implication is adult children) in the fields, his above assumption about the gendered division of labour detracts from his analysis. He does acknowledge in later writings that more research needs to be done on gender relations (Overton, 1993/94:102).
**Fiji Indian smallholder households**

There is more detailed ethnographic literature on Fiji Indian cane farming families that examines intra-household relations (see for example Mayer, 1961; Jayawardena, 1975; Shameem, 1990). Adrian Mayer (1961:31-33) uses a homestead model to describe the internal structure of the three Fiji Indian rural settlements he studied in 1951. A homestead was defined as any separate group of houses set in their own compound. He also utilises the notion of shared kitchen and resources.

Thus, ‘simple household’ will mean a group of people - of unspecified kin ties, if any - living in the same homestead with a common kitchen and budget, with only one adult wage earner, any other male being an unmarried youth (Mayer, 1961:31 emphasis added).

Mayer’s generalised assertion disregards women’s waged labour and obscures other economic activities conducted by the farming household, including exchange of goods and services and domestic and farm work that also contribute to the economy of the household. Instead, the defining member of a ‘simple household’ is a male wage earner who represents the male household head. Mayer (1961:31-33) goes on to define a ‘joint household’ with the same criteria, a common kitchen and a single budget but with more than one adult (male) wage-earner. The patriarchal organisation is again made obvious when he describes the possible combinations of kin in such a household as

Thus ‘agnates in joint households’ might include brothers living together, or a father living with his sons; affinal groups might contain two brothers-in-law or a man with his daughter’s husband (Mayer, 1961:33).

I do not wish to overemphasise Mayer’s own biases that led him to categorise in this way remembering the time at which he was writing. Males in the present study are also ‘ideally’ regarded as the household heads. Mayer does
point out later that women can take an active role in decision making and may openly dominate their husbands (Mayer, 1961:165; see pages 261-262 present study). The final category is 'house group', which is people living in the same homestead with several separate kitchens and budgets (Mayer, 1961:32). While acknowledging there may be unrelated people living in these homestead forms Mayer equates each type with a particular kinship unit.

The elementary family went with the household, the 'joint family' with the joint household and the extended family with the house group. . . . The more complex types of homestead were mainly composed of agnates and their dependents, a fact which was consistent with a society recognising patrilineal inheritance (Mayer, 1961:32-33).

Mayer (1961:34) points out the evolutionary nature of these homestead forms as they represent different stages in the developmental cycle of a family’s life.

Thus, the simple household of a couple and their children grows into a joint household when the couple's sons grow up and marry; later, these young men may either split to form several simple households in different homesteads, or may manage their own affairs in the same homestead, which then becomes a house group (Mayer, 1961:34).

Chandra Jayawardena's (1975) study of rural Fiji Indian communities conducted in 1961 and 1969 distinguishes between the smallholder farm household as an 'optimum' economic unit and the intended nuclear family that the farm size was initially designed for. Jayawardena's (1975:74) purpose was to explain the persistence of the extended family households among Fiji Indian cane farmers and

. . . [show] that participation in a modern economy does not necessarily lead to the predominance of the nuclear family; that a variety of factors economic, cultural, legal and political codetermine the familial composition of the household. It is the household rather than the family, that is directly related and therefore responsive to the economy, especially in respect of such of its features as size, sex roles, the division of labour and consumer requirements.
I concur with Jayawardena’s view that there is not a deterministic relationship between the ‘modern’ economy and family form and that there are multiple factors that ‘codetermine familial composition’. Following on from this I am mindful that household composition is not only determined by a combination of physical environs and economic requirements, but also by social relations and obligations. For example, Jayawardena (1975:82) observed that there was an ideal among Fiji Indian households of ‘the father keeping his married sons under his roof’. Although they may not literally be in the same household but living in separate houses on the farm with their own kitchens.

Extended family households thus spread out into a constellation of separate dwellings, each of which is associated with a component sub-group. This arrangement enables individuals to regulate their contacts with each other, to ensure a degree of privacy and to avoid friction that arises from constant unavoidable encounters (Jayawardena, 1975:83).

While households may be a dominant locus for the organisation and allocation of resources this must be set within the context of wider kinship and community relations as the previous chapters made explicit. In other words the household is not autonomous in its responses to the economy, and particularly family relations (both inside and outside the household) play a large role in ‘directing’ economic life. This is further expanded upon in the discussions in the following chapters.

Jayawardena (1975:83) classifies the households of two Fiji Indian villages according to familial composition and adds a disclaimer to allow for visiting relatives who may live with the family for varying lengths of time. The category ‘nuclear family plus parents and/or unmarried siblings’ denotes ‘families where the father has died or had definitely retired and a married son

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27 Mayer’s (1961) use of a ‘homestead model’ was sociologically neutral as he allowed for unrelated people to cohabit in the ‘household’. However, Jayawardena (1975) does not really allow for unrelated co-residence.
has succeeded to the headship, supporting his mother and unmarried siblings' (Jayawardena, 1975:83). He states that the terminology 'extended family households' are the same as Mayer's (1961) 'joint households' and refers to this type as 'an extension of the nuclear family to a third generation when one or more married children (almost always sons) and their families live under the headship of the father or (albeit sometimes nominal) widowed mother' (Jayawardena, 1975:83). The 'collateral family' is constituted by two brothers and their families. There are also categories for 'nuclear families plus affines' and 'others' such as childless couples and families headed by widows or unmarried males (Jayawardena, 1975:85).

From these typologies Jayawardena (1975:85) traces the development cycle of cane farming families.

Nuclear families mature into extended families and, after the death or retirement of the father, become 'nuclear families plus parents and/or unmarried siblings' . . . Usually the non-inheriting sons leave if they marry or find employment elsewhere, establishing their own nuclear family households. The rest tend to remain to form 'collateral families' with their brothers. However, despite the recommendation of tradition, this arrangement is infrequent because . . . land tenure rules prevent the recognition of coparcenary rights. . . The ['Others' category] . . . records the interruption of the process by the father's premature death before his son is adult or married.

The above review of localised literature on household composition, family categories and developmental cycles has similarities with the data in the present study. The conjugal household, along with non-familial members, goes through different stages as children grow, marry and have their own children. As stated some of the Fiji Indian farms were divided among sons as families expanded and these brothers split off into their own households and farm blocks within the leasehold. There are many variations in household composition for all the respondents, as for example when a divorced daughter returns home.
with her children; annual cycles such as sugar cane harvesting bring labourers to stay; or a relative's child may reside to be closer to appropriate schooling.

Settlement patterns such as Mayer's homestead model have some relevance to this study as it implies a small cluster of related households. However his definition of a homestead as houses sharing the same compound makes it problematic because in some 'homesteads' each household has a distinct compound, whereas others are not so defined. This becomes important in terms of spatial allocation of work as well as demarcations of 'property'. For example a fifteen acre farm, with one land lease and one cane contract may have three households living in different locations around the farm with their own compounds.

**Household Hierarchy**

As the previous chapters on marriage made clear, there are defined expectations of husband and wife which are contextualised within their kinship network, household and general environment. The present research and previous studies show that for both Fijian and Fiji Indians the 'ideal family' is oriented with the senior male as head of household and the predominant practice of patrilocal marriage. While the last two chapters investigated 'behind' this ideal, and discussions in the following sections will examine the lived relationships of daily life on these farms, this section attempts to describe the hierarchical protocols of common relations found within the household.

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28 Toren (1990:42) questions the notion of Fijian patrilineal descent. Because there are 'important connections through women, it seems more accurate to describe Fijian kinship as reckoned bilaterally'. She notes the *vasu* relationship and the importance of the mother's rank when claiming lineage. This is subject to regional variation.
Kinship relations within the household

Shameem (1990:414) asserts that kinship rules for Fiji Indians had to be reconstituted with the growth of families after indenture.

With expanding kinship, rules and regulation had to be set up for the monitoring of family relations. Guidelines for appropriate behaviour were constructed, and since women were most affected, these guidelines controlled and monitored their ability to associate freely with men. The pooling of resources through the construction of kinship relations enabled Indian men gradually to acquire more resources in the form of land or stock. Since this wealth had to be protected, rules of kinship had to be followed, again imposing particular and unique restrictions on women rather than men. Thus women's lives increasingly revolved around home and hearth as they were restricted from the public life of education, franchise and paid work (Shameem, 1990:414).

As stated in the last chapter Shameem (1990) perceived that women had more autonomy during indenture to pick and choose husbands and were not as curtailed by the patriarchal structures of family life which were more easily reinstated and controlled on the farms. However this was in tension with the subjugation of women on plantations and the violence of both European and Indian men. The previous chapter also discussed the importance of religion and the debates surrounding female sexual morality in the demise of indenture and the reconstruction of Fiji Indian identity, for example in the Marriage Ordinance disputes between European colonists, Arya Samaj and Sanatan Dharm (See also Kelly, 1989, 1991, 1997). What is evident in the reconstitution of family life after indenture is that religious, political and economic factors all played a part in the social practices and attitudes pertaining to marriage and family ideals.

This can also be said of the Fijian community as the interrelation of Christian missionisation, specifically Wesleyan Methodists in the present study area; colonial legal codification of kinship and land rights; European and chiefly control, all served to mould concepts of the family and roles in regards to gender and seniority. While these processes were more severely controlled in the past
with Native Regulations, it must be remembered that these codifications still had to be played out at the village level with varying degrees of stringency (see Lukere 1997).

**Wife and husband**

The wife/husband relationship was discussed extensively in the last two chapters which highlighted the hierarchical nature of this relation. This section expands on aspects of the underlying concepts that reinforce that hierarchy. In Chapter Three (pages 55, 86) I discussed Toren’s (1990:50-64) proposition that Fijian cross-cousin marriage led to a transformation of a relationship of equality to that of hierarchy, where the husband ‘takes the lead’ over his wife. Toren (1990:87) also discusses the notion that the Fijian household is mirrored in the wider Fijian community. She cites Sahlins’ assertion ‘that family life is “a miniature of the political community”’ as problematic and argues for the reverse - that the ‘political community is the household writ large’ (Toren, 1990:87).

Here Toren (1990:65) differentiates between the concepts *vakavanua* ‘the way of the land’ and *vakaveiwekani* ‘the way of kinship’ which are not oppositional but rather represent ‘different domains of reference and contexts of action’. *Vakavanua* refers to relationships between households and Fijian communities which comprise a mixture of equality and hierarchy in the interplay of ‘notions of neighbourliness and reciprocity . . . and the notion of one big household whose internal relations are ordered on the above/below axis’ (Toren, 1990:87). *Vakaveiwekani* is predominantly hierarchical, with the equality evoked in the cross-cousin relationship being transformed, in Toren’s thesis, to one of hierarchy within marriage. These concepts play out the tensions between equality and hierarchy and in this sense can be equated (Toren, 1990:87).

The household becomes the blueprint for the village which is seen as one big household and the chief as head of this household and so on. Toren (1990:87) quotes Hooper (1982:34); ‘a man is chief in his own house and this aphorism is
supported by the fact that the respect shown to the chief of a village or kingdom is only a more refined version of the respect shown to a head of household.'

Ravuvu (1987:324) states that the hierarchy affirmed within Fijian ceremonies carries with it the noble qualities of chiefliness such as 'love, kindness, respect, care and concern for others' (Ravuvu, 1987:324). A chief or leader has a responsibility to care for his people and reciprocity underlies ceremony, promoting unity and cooperation within and between *vanua* (Ravuvu, 1987:320). The idea of authority being conveyed with benevolence I think is to some degree mirrored in the ideals of household protocol, particularly in the husband/wife relationship where hierarchy is supposed to be enacted with respect and love and contextualised within complementary relations. I reiterate Lukere's (1997:73) quote ‘... his dominance was modified by respect for his wife, her domestic domain and her spirituality, and by their mutual humility before God ...’

This concept of the Fijian married couple and their household could be said to be overlayed with religious connotations as Lukere's research has found. She notes that early missionary notions of the family home saw it as analogous to a church, providing a sanctified space for sex and the husband, 'like Our Father, God in Heaven ... was the supreme authority in the family' (Lukere, 1997:73). I am not suggesting that husbands are seen as 'godlike', rather their authority has been and largely continues to be, religiously legitimated. Lukere (1997:73-74) posits that the idea of the household as 'a clearly defined, detachable unit' was especially important to the early missionaries as it demarcated a space for 'their own social and religious progress'.

What 'the family' could do for missionaries, it might do for Fijians too: facilitate a kind of disassociation from surrounding heathenism while affording a space for spiritual and

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29 See pages 55-56 for Ravuvu's discussion on ceremonial exchange as a blue print for ideal behaviour.
30 It is outside my concern here to theologically compare, for instance, the way Sanatan Dharm Hindu perceive the husband/wife relationship.
social betterment. The metaphor of the family went further. By becoming full Christians, in each their own heart, and in the heart's social equivalent, each their own family, these descendants of Adam who had strayed so far, could claim their place in the human family at large (Lukere, 1997:74).

Religious legitimation of the hierarchical relation between husband and wife is also evident in the Sanatam Dharm beliefs as outlined in Chapter Four. The virtuous, dutiful wife should obey her husband who reciprocates by being a provider and protector. There is a strong sense of complementarity in Fiji Indian marriage ceremonies where husband and wife as partners ensure the success of their family through their respective roles. The respondents echoed these ideal roles in their interpretations of a good husband or wife and the importance of reputation, particularly for a woman.

While the roles of 'wife' and 'husband' may be complementary they are not equal, as it is clear that the man is regarded as head of the household for both Fijian and Fiji Indian participants. This is also reflected in the predominance of men's legal ownership of land leases and cane contracts. A wife may be in control of her 'domain', specifically if she is a senior member of the household and generally have a certain amount of authority but this has to be negotiated within cultural, religious, legal and institutional forms of bias in favour of men and the role of 'husband'. The way a couple negotiates these 'roles', who does what and who decides what, is variable and may be influenced by other household members and the censures of the community.

**Children and parents**

Children are expected to respect and obey their parents and elders (cf. Mayer, 1961; Toren, 1990). Respondents' replies to questions about what they thought was important to teach their children tended to emphasise obedience and the correct behaviour. For example Anita said that it was "important to teach them how to behave, first thing is how to behave". Sharmila her sister-in-
law also thought this was very important and emphasised teaching them the proper use of language, particularly in their interactions with elders. Paulini specified in the home it is important "for us to teach them when we say something to do, like that by the time you say it, go and do it, obey". While Raijieli, a mother of three stressed the important of teaching them "our Fijian law".

In 'ideal' terms children were expected to be respectful and obedient and this relationship with elders continues into later life. However, the authority of parents in the day to day running of the farm declines with age as usually sons and their wives take over more of this responsibility.

**Siblings and in-laws**

In both Fijian and Fiji Indian kinship the eldest son has seniority over his siblings which incurs added responsibility as well as status. Where the eldest son in a Fijian family is preceded by elder sister[s] the intersection between gender and age shows some tension as 'men should lead' but elder sisters should be deferred to or at least consulted (cf. Toren, 1990:46).

Marriage to the eldest son therefore entails extra responsibility as well as authority as the senior sister-in-law (cf. Mayer, 1961:170). This could mean living with the parents and caring for them, rather than shifting to a separate house. In-marrying sisters-in-law are ranked according to the seniority of the son they marry. However, as with all kinship structures, the reality differs from family to family.

In Fijian and Fiji Indian kinship relations there is a *tabu* between father-in-law and daughter-in-law and between elder brother-in-laws and younger sister-in-laws (cf. Toren, 1990:43; Jayawardena, 1975:83; Mayer, 1961:166). This involves not speaking together or having any contact unless absolutely necessary. For Fiji Indians this did and still does in some families, involve women wearing the *ordhni* (veil) so the senior male relatives will never see
their faces. This has changed in the households of the present study; in the case of one family it changed after the marriage of the sons. Sharmila, the younger brother’s wife, said that because the brothers had been educated they told their wives that they did not have to wear the ordhni. Sharmila’s mother-in-law however, stated that she preferred the ‘old days’ in regards to the dress and behaviour of women.³¹ She said that men and women did not sit and eat together but now they do and the tabu on avoidance are not so strict. What is interesting in this situation is that the marriage of the sons marked a time of radical change in family behaviour, arising out of a recognition of their maturity, education and new status as married men.

Another respondent, Devika, demonstrated the demise of the ordhni using a cloth which she draped over her bowed head in the traditional way so you could not see her averted face, she then pulled it back slightly to rest on her forehead, then the back of her head, dropping it to around her neck and then throwing it over one shoulder in the most recent style. This was all done with a flourish and a great deal of laughter, as the veil seemed to transform, furtively, from necessity to accessory. This is not to imply avoidance tabu are still not practiced within Fiji Indian families in this area, as many families maintain practices such as segregated eating and social spaces. Even without the ordhni and with ‘freer’ association, there are still lines of protocol where deference and respect are shown to senior relatives and men and women should not become overly familiar.

Jayawardena (1975:83) noted in his fieldwork that the avoidance and segregation among Fiji Indians was said to allow for the ease of integration of the new bride into her husband’s family. This alludes to notions of female modesty and respectability. Mayer’s (1961:167) research found some people attributed the different relationships between a younger sister-in-law and her

³¹ Shayal told me that in Fiji Indian marriages a new bride should wear long clothes for about one week after marriage but that this “tabu is also changing because of modern influence”.

elder brother-in-law and that of the elder sister-in-law who may talk and joke
with her younger brother-in-law as 'a buttress to the authority of the older
members of the household.' This is because the eldest brother's authority should
not be threatened by accusations from a younger brother regarding misconduct
with his wife, whereas it is acceptable for an elder brother to admonish a younger
if things get out of hand. The former scenario threatens the stability of the
household and could cause divisions (Mayer, 1961:167).

When a Fijian couple marry their parent in-laws become tabu, particularly
across genders (cf. Toren, 1990:43-44). One family was able to circumnavigate this
to a degree as even though one of the daughter-in-laws, practiced avoidance with
her father-in-law, another daughter-in-law was able to speak with him. The
following is a conversation with the father-in-law, a Fiji Indian woman
neighbour and myself discussing avoidance relations;

Father-in-law: . . . like myself and [daughter-in-law], she can't talk. Not like kai
vavalagi, it's like father and daughter ah. Same with Indians. Another one you can't
talk in Fijian, say I got an elder brother and his wife, that one I can't talk.
Fiji Indian Woman: My husband's elder brother I can't talk ah.
Father-in-law: Same to the Indians.
Sue: Tabu ah
Father-in-law: Io, [yes] like this one [the other daughter-in-law], [her] mother is my
relation that is why I can talk to her. I bring that relation ah, not tabu....

Probably the most important relationship for a new bride coming to her
husband's home, besides that with her husband, is her relationship with her
mother-in-law. It is her mother-in-law that more than likely will be telling her
what she has to do on a daily basis. This is discussed in more detail below.
While the mother-in-law is still able, it is her responsibility to organise and
oversee the work of other women and younger children in the household.
Unrelated householders

Householders who are not related are assigned classificatory kinship status in accordance with their gender, age and if applicable rank, such as chiefly status for Fijians. I was addressed as ‘Aunty’ by children and adolescents which is a common term used as a sign of respect for unrelated woman. Older Fijian respondents tended to call me yalewa (girl or woman) which is also a common term of address for girls and younger women. I would call people corresponding kinship terms according to the relationship we had established. For example older Fijian couples who were regarded as close I called nau (grandmother) and maku (grandfather).32

With Fiji Indian respondents my relationship with the family was established as either the man’s sister or the woman’s sister. If I was the man’s sister I would address him as bhaiya (brother) and his wife as bhabhi (sister-in-law). Whereas if I was regarded as the woman’s sister then we would address each other as bhaini (sister, a common term of address used by women of contemporary age) and her husband as jeeja or brother-in-law. Otherwise people would use my name, but this was not usual and I rarely heard people addressing each other by their first names.

It is interesting to note the cross-cultural element not only between myself and Fijian and Fiji Indian respondents but also between these communities. As neighbours they often orientated their relationships around kinship protocols which acted as guidelines for appropriate behaviour and were underwritten by concepts of gender, generation and seniority.

This overview of common hierarchical relationships to be found within households portrays the ‘ideal’ or expected protocols based primarily on kinship relations. The household is organised around axes of gender and generation and corresponding notions of seniority, with the central relationship being that of husband and wife (cf. Mayer, 1961:165). This is particularly evident when you

32 This was in the local dialect and my understanding of these terms.
look at the management and allocation of daily activities. There is an ideal division of labour between genders that is organised by senior men and women which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. The accounts of daily dynamics, will, hopefully breathe some life into how these ideals are negotiated by household members.

Orientation and Fulfilling Expectations

This section looks at female respondents' experiences of arriving at their husband's farms and negotiating their way around the place, both physically and socially. Many women talked of first staying with their in-laws before shifting into their own house either within the patrilocal farm settlement or moving elsewhere. When I asked female respondents who showed them what to do when they come to their husband’s house they all replied the mother-in-law or sister-in-law (married-in or husbands real sister). Devika’s reply takes into account just how unfamiliar a bride may be with her new home;

Usually the sister-in-law is there, because she must be telling, she [bride] doesn’t know where the curry powder is . . . where is this room, where is the tap with the bathroom, because she is totally new. She will tell her what is where and because if she doesn’t know what to do at what time, because certain households they have certain timetables and certain routine work which we don’t have ah, it differs. So the mother-in-law will be there to tell her.

When a new bride goes to live with her husband’s family her day to day work is largely organised by her mother-in-law and/or senior female relations living in the household. Devika explained that “the mother-in-law is the boss of the house, sometimes the elder brother-in-law’s wife is”.

For some of the respondents moving to a farm proved to be a big change in lifestyle, they had to learn how to do farm work as well as adjusting to the routines of a different household and of course their new marital status. Women such as Venina and Sharmila had been brought up in an urban
environment. I asked Venina who showed her what to do when she first arrived she replied;

My mother-in-law, she helped me, teach me... she says if you don't know anything, the way we stay in a Fijian koro, myself when I was small I was born in town in the hospital and I stayed in town, from there get married to the village... help you dress up, it's important you have to dress in a sulu... before I was making the makeup, everything, earrings, I was working, when I get married in the koro...

Sue: Did you find the work quite hard?
Venina: It's hard, if you don't plant you won't eat. In town you work and get the money and you go to the shop to buy, here you plant everything, because you have got the soil, plantation, plant the food....

Venina referred to the stricter codes of Fijian protocol that are prevalent in village life such as the correct dress (cf. Bolabola, 1983:66). There appeared to be little distinction made between farm households and settlements and koro as far as ideas on 'proper' behaviour, although I was in no position to do any comparative analysis as I only stayed in the several koro I visited for short periods of time.

Sharmila, who was also brought up in an urban environment said that when her mother comes to visit she cries when she sees all the work her daughter has to do. The strenuous farm work adds to the already increased responsibilities of becoming a married woman, having children and running her own household. A major difference is having to grow and process much of the food rather than buying it.

This concurs with Cema Bolabola's (1983) paper Women in Villages: Femininity, Food and Freedom which explores the substantial differences between rural and urban lifestyles in regards to the demands on women's work. Although this is intersected with regional and class differences, women in rural areas generally spend more of their time in producing and procuring food and have to work harder at this than women in town. This is because they do not
have the same access to better cooking facilities, food preservation and storage, piped water and brought/convenience foods that many urban dwellers have (Bolabola, 1983:66-67).

The following excerpt from fieldnotes relates to a conversation with a Fijian male respondent regarding resources.

He said look at their place, him and his four sons built it but after the coups [1987] money became short so could not afford to continue doing things . . . people had become use to buying things rather than planting them and continued to do so even when the money became tighter. [He] later mentioned to me that the best thing for Fiji was for people to plant, never mind the money, they should plant more. I asked him in the koro did they plant vegetable gardens, cabbage, beans etc, he said no, he said they can but they don’t, easier for them to buy it. He said its easy to sit on a bus with clean clothes and buy in the market, kai valagi way and laughed. He said see that fishing net out there it won’t be there when I’m gone. About once a month he takes his grandchildren out fishing and teaches them, yet he still thinks they won’t bother fishing (Fieldnotes August 1997).

Even respondents who were from rural villages such as Mere and Raijieli were not necessarily used to the type of work they were expected to do on the farms. They had to learn about sugar cane and rice production as well as the extensive vegetable gardens. Raijieli had come from a coastal koro and was therefore proficient in utilising sea resources as well as some subsistence agriculture. Her husband’s family farm is comparatively far from the sea, and Raijieli had to readjust to the different emphasis on food resources that focused on crop production and some river fishing.

As a young adult Mere had had her own gardens, which her brothers planted to provide her with an income. She would clean and sell the grog, dalo and yams and tend to the gardens. The only woman in her father’s household, she was familiar with organising her own domestic routine. With marriage Mere’s life changed dramatically. She shifted to her husband’s family home and

33 Unfortunately for the urban poor a major disadvantage for them is that they have limited resources to grow and process their own food, see Fiji Poverty Report (1997).
there had to negotiate with other family members as well as the new work routine. After having been relatively autonomous in carrying out her work she found her independence compromised by the hierarchy of the household and the demanding routines of farm life, particularly during cane harvesting. Mere said it took her two to three months to learn what to do and this was a very stressful time for her.

The combination of a young woman's status within her new home and the rigours of farm life could be daunting particularly if they had not been brought up on farms. If, as daughter-in-laws and wives, women did not live up to the expectations of their new family, arguments could ensue. Shayal explains what could happen in Fiji Indian households:

Shayal: They want the girl to know about the household work. They see how she works in the plantation, or does the cooking, but for the Indian ones if you want to get married the wife should know how to cook, also do the household work and the farm. Sometimes when the bride and bridegroom they don't know how to do the work so the father's mother [bride's mother-in-law] sometimes they want to fight each other, “this girl doesn't know how to cook”, “this girl does not want to go on the farm and work”, they start to fight ah.

Sue: So what happens then in the family when you get the mother-in-law fighting with the daughter-in-law?

Shayal: So they take their daughter-in-law to her mother, like my mother they would take her to my grandmother's place and tell her “what have you taught your daughter she doesn’t know how to cook, she doesn’t know how to go on the farm and work, what have you taught her” they tell like that. But in our family that doesn’t happen, she [Shayal's mother] knows.

A few of the case study families have experienced problems between mother-in-laws (and sister-in-laws) and daughter-in-laws. In some situations this has resulted in psychological and physical violence, with the daughter-in-laws being abused, beaten and suffering attempted poisoning. This sort of domestic violence has resulted in much stress and pain for these women. In several cases the daughter-in-law and her husband have been forced, or chosen
to move away from the farm, although none are completely estranged from their husbands’ families.

Marital problems between husband and wife could also result in domestic violence. I do not wish to overgeneralise between Fijians and Fiji Indians but it appears more acceptable and easier for Fijian women to return to their natal homes if problems arise. If a Fijian woman does return to her family because of problems with her husband then depending on the circumstances it is up to him to bring her back. He may have to formally apologise with a bulubulu ceremony (see pages 71-74).

As a new bride, life with a husband and his family can be exciting but also challenging. For some it is not only relationships with new people that have to be negotiated but also a different lifestyle and the learning of skills and routines. Daily life for females (and children) is predominantly organised by senior women in the household and tensions can arise when expectations on both sides are not met. Marital problems can also occur as the newly weds in many cases start to get to know each other better. Of course these issues are dependent on the families involved and many respondents spoke fondly of how their mother-in-law helped them when they first came to the farm. It is evident that the autonomy a woman has is dependent on many variables but seniority and/or having your own household as well as the relationship with your husband stand out.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined what sort of environs a young bride enters into when she marries a man from a smallholder farm. By utilising the notion of ‘place’ I have attempted to draw together various aspects of the farm complex...

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34 Rinieta Ratawa from the Labasa Women’s Crisis Centre, said that it was mainly Fiji Indian women who used their facilities. They thought that this was because it was harder for these women to go home as their parents were not willing to take them back because deserting your husband brought shame upon the family (see Praveen Sharma’s comments page 110). She said that the Fiji Indian women did not have the same support networks that many Fijian women have.
that influences a young woman's social relations within the household and the material conditions of the smallholder farm. Both social relations and material conditions interrelate in influencing a woman's working life as well as their access to resources. Generally speaking their agency in these processes is variable depending on the seniority they have within the household which can be more quickly achieved if they move to their own households. Both younger women and men remarked on the relative freedom of no one telling you what to do in your own house.

The household was identified as a locus for the organisation and allocation of labour and resources but is not autonomous, particularly in an extended family farming settlement. The following chapters will examine this claim in more detail. This chapter established that kinship protocols in regard to hierarchy combined with legal title of lease and cane contract can produce hierarchical differentiation between households as well as within them.

While land ownership in Fiji is largely determined by ethnicity and patrilineal lineage the social axis of gender and generation also play a major role in determining ownership and control on smallholder farms. The predominance of men as lease holders and cane contractors and the corresponding lack of women reflects gendered notions of ownership and the control of land and the commercial production of cane. The transition to the smallholder system institutionalised certain structures that were predicated on European notions of family/household relations which reinforced Fijian and Fiji Indian constructs of family and household relations. This should be contextualised within the wider socio-economic environs, such as the influence of various colonial policies and religion. The present ethnographic research provided a glimpse of how these institutional structures relate to contemporary farming households.

The male head of household[s] was and is still predominantly the main point of contact between the smallholder farm and FSC. In legal terms he owns
and operates the farm. I suggest women predominantly own titles largely by default, as widows, sole inheritors or as access to land. The institutional structures and dominant social discourses do not encourage women to either inherit farms as their brothers do nor set out to become registered cane growers. That is not to say some do not, only to say in the present study this was still not socially acceptable. This reflects male dominance within the formalised structures of the sugar industry, it does not reflect their exclusive contribution to production as the next chapter illustrates.
Chapter Six

Labour and the Farm Economy

Like whatever I plant, in turn I must get something out of it. And I plant whatever I can with some objective, because I can’t just wash dishes, clothes and sweep and not do anything in the field, how would my parents feel? (Devika age 20 1996)

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a detailed account of work within the smallholder farm economy at the household level. Previous discussions of household relations and expected and experienced behaviour in terms of gender, age, kinship and seniority have provided a context for exploring labour dynamics in the present case study. The chapter outlines work, and importantly respondents’ experiences of work, in relation to the overall operation of the farm. The farm economy is viewed as an integrated whole that includes paid and unpaid labour as well as production of goods and services for own use, sale and exchange. Implicit to this discussion are questions about how do ideas about family relations orientate work on smallholder farms.

There have been no detailed accounts\(^1\) of Fijian women’s work on sugar cane farms and Shameem (1990) has written the only in depth description I have been able to find regarding the work of Fiji Indian women.\(^2\) Shameem’s (1990:377-382) thesis takes a historical perspective on the involvement of Fiji Indian women in the sugar industry and her contemporary portrayal of an average day for farm women during cane harvesting is used to further validate her argument of the past and continued subordination of Fiji Indian women in the sugar industry.

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\(^1\) See Bolabola (1986) for a brief description of Fijian women’s participation on cane farms.

\(^2\) Also see Shameem’s video series Fijian Praxis: An Illumination in Four Parts 1992, The University of Waikato, for accounts of rural women working on copra and rice farms.
Women on cane farms were not ‘idle’ but were an indispensable part of the farm labour force. Without their subsistence production (sometimes the surplus would be sold in the markets), and their labour for men as their handmaidens, cane production could not be a success. Men would find it impossible to grow their own food crops as well as undertake cash production. But men got paid for the work they did, whereas women were either not paid at all or had to account for every penny they spent. As women got older, they were given some responsibilities as befitting senior women, but this was always delegated by men. This situation was evident on the first cane farms set up by the CSR after 1915, and continues to be a feature of contemporary farms in Fiji (Shameem, 1990:382).

Peggy Dunlop-Fairbairn (1994:86) noted in her assessment of Pacific women’s changing roles and economic contribution to agriculture that ‘the work of women and children continues to be seen as ‘helping out’ (hence it is not recorded, acknowledged, or provided for in planning processes).’ The idea that farm work done by women and children is supportive of the main work which is done by men is a social construction that is discernible through the familial ideology that orientates the division of labour. The following examples demonstrate that rather than only being supportive, and the often implied secondary association of women and children’s ‘farm’ and ‘domestic’ labour, that these tasks are integral to the smallholder economy. The research in the present study consequently supports feminist arguments (see for example Waring, 1988) of women’s unpaid work being an essential part of the national economy.

The following accounts of work from the present study discuss how the various tasks that household members do are interrelated and contribute to the overall operation of the farm. Jane Guyer (1991:262-263) observed that defining and categorising tasks can be difficult as a task may have more than one purpose, be ambiguous and may change over time and in different contexts. Moore (1988:53) has noted that the content of ‘domestic work’ varies through time as for example technological changes alter activities. These definitional issues
challenge quantitative categorisation and highlight the importance of qualitative research and ethnographic fieldwork.

Through living on a farm for a year and consistently visiting other case study households I began to appreciate the labour involved in farm life. I observed respondents working and helped them when appropriate. They explained their work processes while they were doing them and taught me how to perform various tasks. For me it was a constant process of learning as I had never lived on a farm, let alone a cane farm that relied on subsistence activities for daily sustenance. The lack of electricity, indoor plumbing and domestic appliances (and farm equipment) made the most simple tasks labour intensive in comparison to what I was used to. It is this contrast to my own life, the newness, the learning and the difficulties that perhaps helps me to render, what respondents would regard as the most mundane activities, in such detail. I argue that the categorisation of tasks can mystify what people are doing and that attention has to be paid to their actual activities and local interpretations of these activities.

Work is broken down into various tasks that are described and analysed in three main ways; by allocation, process and time. The allocation of tasks is examined in terms of cultural expectations and the dynamics of operating a smallholder farm. Tasks are placed within the context of processes, such as producing, preparing and cooking food; planting, cultivating and harvesting sugar cane, in order to demonstrate how different tasks interrelate and are interdependent. Detailing a process also overcomes the problem of vagueness and ambiguity when alluding to terms such as ‘cooking’, ‘housework’, or ‘sugarcane production’ and specifies what this work involves for people in the present study.

The temporal analysis of tasks emphasises several factors. The amount of time individuals work and the way tasks are organised throughout a time frame such as a day or a month. A daily account brings tasks and ‘processes’ together
and further emphasises how work is integrated and contributes to the farm economy. This queries boundaries that circumscribe categories of tasks, such as 'domestic work', 'farm work' and I acknowledge that my own analysis of 'processes' is not exempt from the arbitrariness of categorising. Activities are interconnected and carried out in a complex and vibrant tapestry.

I would like to emphasise that each family is different and a generalised account of a typical day can be misleading as it would not allow for the variability of daily dynamics. However, the farms were run within the framework of annual cycles such as planting and harvesting, school terms, religious ceremonies and festivals. The work on the farms was also routinised to a degree and certain tasks had to be completed on a daily basis; time, resources and weather permitting. Therefore the experiences of different families is contextualised within this framework of acknowledged cycles, routines and necessities of daily living.

In the interests of clarity I have divided various aspects of respondents' work into different sections. The chapter begins with an inquiry into how respondents perceived the division of labour within the household and expands on the notions of 'wife', 'husband' and familial relations expressed in the previous chapters. The next section, *Why Women Get Up at 4a.m.* gives a generalised account of the work women do throughout the day. One of the main processes women are involved in is procuring, processing, cooking and serving food. The section *Making Dinner* highlights the integration of these many different activities in the production of food for the household. The following section on *Children* addresses both the care of children and children's work and concludes by drawing together connections made between formal education, work and parents' and children's aspirations for the future. *Sugar Production* examines cane cultivation and harvesting at the household level and focuses the argument on the utilisation of family labour in sugarcane production. Work is then analysed in terms of allocation, work load and leisure
time. The final section examines governmental discourses on work through government statistics which queries the different conceptions of work as economic activity.

**Women’s Work and Men’s Work**

The organisation of work within the household was primarily based around the conjugal couple who negotiated regimes that were often separate but also shared. Respondents generally talked about two spheres of activity, 'house work' and 'farm work'. The husband as head of the household delegated responsibility to his wife to organise the work women, girls and younger boys are expected to do (cf. Jayawardena, 1975:80). This primarily involved what was described as 'women's work', involving all the 'house work'. They also participated in 'farm work' which had a more ambiguous status, although specific tasks were seen as more suitable for women, children or men as will become evident from descriptions in the following sections. The senior man is responsible for the over all running of the farm, and ultimately the care and protection of his family. Extended family relations, employer/employee and other relations within the household and between households further differentiated this basic gendered organisation of labour.

I asked Shayal, her mother and (maternal) grandmother about tabu areas of work for Fiji Indian women and men,

Sue: Are there any areas of work where it's tabu for women, like if women have to, can they do the ploughing and things like that. Are there any areas where women should not do the work?
Shayal interpreting for Grandmother: Women mostly work at home, work on their own farms but they never do the ploughing or the harvesting.

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3 See Slatter (1984) for a general overview on the gendered division of agricultural labour in Fiji from colonial through to contemporary times.
4 For example, in sharecropping arrangements, members of the farm labouring family participate in work on the farm that is subsumed under this arrangement between households.
Sue: Are there other areas where men and women... like are men allowed to do the cooking and washing?
Shayal: No, they have not done the cooking like that.
Sue: What about this time now?
Shayal: In some houses it is like that... Mothers went out working, they work in town.
Sue: I am interested in how it is changing, so if you ask your mother and grandmother what they think some of the changes are they have seen?
Shayal: In the olden times the man don’t use to do the housework but now they are doing the housework. The mother-in-law in the olden times did not use to do the housework but now they do. The daughter-in-law use to do all the work but now the mother-in-law helps.

Shayal’s grandmother’s opinion is that changes in both gender and seniority are happening. While respondents agreed times were changing, individual households responded according to their circumstances and inclinations. During fieldwork I observed that the households maintained a broadly definable division of labour based on gender and seniority for the majority of the time. Women did not plough, drive tractors nor were they employed in cane harvesting gangs. However, many of the women said they had harvested cane during times of labour shortage and when there was pressure to complete harvesting. Farms that were not part of a gang system formed their own ‘gang’ with neighbours and utilised family labour, including females at certain stages of the harvesting. Unmarried women/girls would presumably only be involved with harvesting alongside other members of their family because of tabu relating to gender segregation and the damage it could do to their reputations. Women also have to cut cane to obtain cane stems for planting. Apart from a few activities and the different religious, ceremonial and community work that men and women are involved in, women were

5 Other researchers have found that women do not work in the cane fields in the areas they have studied, see Jayawardena’s (1975:80, 209) research on the Sigatoka Valley and Jensen’s (1989:102-103) findings for the Drasa Cane Sector, both of which are situated in the Western Division.
familiar with all the other aspects of labour performed within the household and farm.

Men did not generally do the daily cooking, food processing, cleaning the house, washing dishes and clothes or child care. However this needs to be further qualified by age and situation. A boy may help his mother in some of these activities although some families critique boys for being 'poofters' if the work was thought of as too feminine. In one family, an elder sister seriously commented that her younger brother was very good at doing the washing, although it was usually a job she, her sister and mother performed. Another male youth came from a family of all brothers, so they were proficient at many of the female 'designated' tasks and became even more so when sadly their mother passed away. In regard to child care, older children including boys may look after younger siblings and cousins and older men can spend a lot of time with their grandchildren.

This brief description regarding some of the divisions of labour illustrates that these categories have a certain amount of flexibility and dynamism in practice. However, the ideology of these gendered roles is still predominant in the organisation of daily life and therefore can create tension when people 'step out of the mould'. Boys and men in particular seem very protective of their masculinity and status when it comes to refusing to do 'women's work'. As Raijieli said, women's work is very hard and they work longer hours than men who have more time to relax. While a woman can do anything a man can do and if she wants to she can go and do this work, the men will not do the cooking and the washing as this is 'women's work'. The next section focuses specifically on what women do during the day.

**Why Women get up at 4a.m.**

I remember one local European consultant being incredulous when I told him women worked sixteen hours or more a day and regularly got up at 4a.m.
and sometimes earlier. When he asked "what are they doing?" his tone was one of cynical disbelief that they did, and if they did, that it was necessary. This section is specifically then, for those readers who cannot imagine what they are doing. These rountines apply to both Fijian and Fiji Indian women.

In the morning food must be prepared for breakfast and, dependent on householders' activities, also involves making lunches for men to take to the fields and children to take to school. During the cane harvesting season, cutters' gangs should be in the fields by 6a.m. or as otherwise required by their own Gang Agreement regulations. If a cutter is late they are often not allowed to harvest and therefore miss out on their piece rates for that day (see Chapter Seven). It is important that they leave in time to get to the fields, which could mean a thirty to forty minute walk. If the lunches are not prepared in time someone has to take this food to the men in the field.

Children may walk to school, depending on distance, bus timetables and if they can afford the fare. In the case study area the bus left the koro eight kilometres up the road at 7a.m. and came past the farm where I lived at 7.30a.m. The bus would pick up and drop off school children at the various schools along the way on its nearly two hour journey to Labasa, arriving between 8.30a.m. and 9a.m.. It should be noted that buses were infrequent and very few people owned their own vehicles which would either be a tractor or one local farmer had a van which he operated as a taxi.

Besides breakfasts and lunches to organise in the morning, clothes have to be prepared for men and children. For example, the local secondary school children wore pristine white uniforms, that had to be ironed with kerosene or fire irons. Uniforms had to be washed daily as the dry season red dust or the wet season red mud is unavoidable. Generally mothers washed the uniforms, although as girls became older they washed their own clothes.

Therefore the primary tasks for women in the early morning are cooking the breakfast and lunches and making sure the clothes are ready for men and
children. Nearly all the food has to be cooked, unless someone has brought bread or crackers back from Labasa. Open fires on a hearth are the most common form of cooking food here, gas or kerosene burners being reserved for special occasions. The wood for the fires is collected regularly and chopped for kindling, a job mainly done by women and children. Wood supplies can be a problem, particularly for Fiji Indian farmers who do not have access to mataqali land with tree stands.

The dirty dishes from the previous evening usually still have to be cleaned in the morning because women do this in the river or use a cold tap outside and it is too dark after dinner. Soap and potash are used with steel wool or coconut fibre to wash the dishes which takes considerable ‘elbow grease’ in cold water especially with the congealed fat on dishes. In larger families the morning tasks are shared out, a child or youth (most often a girl) may wash the dishes while the mother cooks the food or as in one family I frequently stayed with the two teenage daughters were woken by their mother to do these tasks.

Typical breakfasts for Fiji Indian families are roti and some sort of vegetable curry. For Fijians breakfast might consist of Fijian style scones and jam; grated tavioka and coconut bread; or porridge. Everyone would have sugary tea with milk if available or Fijian families might drink a traditional lemon herb tea. If there are any left-overs from the night they are used up as they will not keep for very long without refrigeration. The lunches for men usually consist of rice and roti with a curry and/or dhal or a root crop with vegetable soup. The Fiji Indian children liked roti with a vegetable curry for school lunches and the Fijian children would also have this or tavioka and vegetables. ‘Two minute’ noodles have also become a popular choice with children. Preparing this food takes time and most of it has to be cooked to make it edible. For example the roti dough has to be mixed, rolled out on a roti board

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6 Darkness falls abruptly between 5.30p.m. and 6.30p.m. depending on the season.
7 The scones I am referring to are made with sharps (unrefined flour), baking powder and lolo.
and then cooked. Vegetables, including root crops have to be collected, cleaned, chopped and boiled or fried. The hearths were only big enough to take a few pots at a time so there is a constant tending and controlling of the fire and rotation of pots and the hot plate for *roti*.

People may be eating at different times, particularly in a large family, and in those families who still practice gender and age segregation at meal times. This is dependent on the size of the family, their ‘time tables’ and attitudes (see following section). The men ate first and then went to harvest cane. When they are not harvesting they may work first in the mornings and then come back for breakfast around 9a.m..

After breakfast the dishes have to be washed again and the house and compound set in order. This involves making the beds, tidying and sweeping inside and out. Sweeping is done with a *sasa* broom which is made from the ribs of coconut leaves that are bound together at one end. The type of *sasa* broom used does not have a wooden handle which means bending over to sweep. With the dust and dirt a constant in this environment, even when people take their footwear off at the door, the sweeping of the house and compound is a vigorous daily task.

Most of the farms have some livestock which have to be attended to. Fences are unusual in this area, so goats, horses, cows and bullocks are tied up and shifted regularly for fresh feed. Who looked after different animals was subject to gender and generation to a certain degree but labour availability was also a factor. Because only males ploughed, the bullocks were usually tended to by them. Horses were no longer commonly used for ploughing and were kept mainly for transport. With the exception of my host mother, only men and boys rode the horses and usually looked after them. Goats appeared to be tended mainly by women and children. Older children were often allocated the task of shifting animals and taking them to the river for water.
Figure 16. Preparing breakfast for children before they go to school.

Figure 17. Grating tavioka to make bread.
Figure 18. Washing clothes in the river.

Figure 19. Planting subsistence vegetables.
Depending on the agricultural calendar\(^8\) a woman could spend anywhere from two to ten hours a day involved in agriculture. Women were generally only able to work longer hours on the farm if other female householders, including daughters, were helping with the child care and domestic work. Tasks may be shared among several households as one woman would look after the children while their mothers went to the gardens. Preschool children often accompanied their mothers or care givers to the fields where they played and began to learn how to help, fetching water, pulling weeds, planting and harvesting produce. When tasks had to be done at certain times like planting and weeding cane or planting and harvesting rice then this could really put the pressure on households in terms of labour demands.

Women may have their lunch in the field if they are some distance from the house. In the present study this particularly applied to Fijian women who were working in their bush gardens. During the winter months, May through to October, all the farms grew vegetables in their river gardens. Because the majority of males, from youths through to middle age, were involved in harvesting cane from June to the end of January, it was mostly up to the women and children to tend these gardens and any other plantations such as root crops. Older men and women would also participate in these tasks depending on their capabilities and health. This supports Claire Slatter’s (1984:29) speculation that it is a suspected though as yet unmeasured trend that an increasing volume of subsistence agricultural work is being done by women in Fiji... Male movement into

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\(^8\) The end of January is rice planting time, February to April cane fields are ploughed, hoed, weeded and replanted if necessary, although planting cane happens at other times of the year (see Chapter Seven). May is rice harvesting and also the time to plough the river gardens ready for planting. Cane harvesting starts in June and goes through to the end of December and often to the end of January. From June to October the river garden is utilised for subsistence crops such as cabbage, beans, cucumbers, maize, tomatoes, radish, and tobacco is also commonly planted. Except for maize the river gardens are finished in October which is also the time that tobacco is harvested. The tobacco is dried for one month and then it is ready for home use, sale and/or exchange. In December the rice seedlings are being prepared ready for planting in January. Tavioka is planted all year round while other root crops such as dalo, which prefers a wetter environment, is planted during the rainy season.
the wage economy and increasingly in cash cropping may be leaving women with a greater burden for subsistence food production than they held before.

In relation to the division of labour on the farm, Shayal emphasised that her father was responsible for the cane and both her mother and father did the rice while the vegetables were her mother's responsibility because she used them for cooking. A Fijian man, Jimi, mentioned to me that rice was women's work (cf. Jensen, 1989:103). Venina pointed out that her agricultural work load was dependent on the availability of her husband's labour and that during cane harvesting it was her duty as a wife to help him with the farm work,

I go to the teitei and plant cassava, bele, vegetables... during harvesting, just because at harvesting time sometimes they [men] when they come home their bodies are tired all the time now. That's why just one part of the work we have to do... so my duty is to help the men with the work [in the garden].

The washing of clothes may be done in the morning at the same time the breakfast dishes are being done or at other convenient times during the day, weather permitting. Washing was usually done in the river by most study households as it was relatively close to their houses and the flow of the river made it easier for rinsing. Several large stones would be positioned in the shallow part of the river, one to sit on and the other to place the article on while it was being soaped up and then scrubbed, often literally with a scrubbing brush. Fiji Indian women used a stick to beat the dirt out of the clothes and I saw some Fijian women using this method as well. Some of the older women had a problem with sore knees that Fijians called loki. I wondered if this was a form of rheumatism caused by hours spent in the cold water, in all kinds of weather doing the washing. The most common form of treatment in the case study area was massage.

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9 Loki means joint, such as knee joint, while lokiloki means lame. My understanding of loki in this context was a reference to aching joints.
Although nearly all the farms now had running water from an outside tap and shower, women preferred to wash in the river if weather conditions were not too dreadful and the river was not in flood. Besides the convenience of the current to rinse clothes the river also provide a space where women from different households could meet and chat. Cema Bolabola (pers. comm. 1997) found that newly installed concrete wash tubs and taps in a Fijian village were not utilised for this very reason. Women enjoyed a chance to catch up with one another while they were working. On smallholder farms women can be a lot more isolated than in the village and this can be a good chance to see neighbours without taking time out of a busy day to go visiting.

Often bathing is done at the same time as washing at the river and women and children would bath separately from the men. Raijieli said her children, who were at primary school, bathed in the late afternoon about 5p.m. before dinner. Many of the women said they started to prepare the dinner about four in the afternoon (see next section). After dinner women could be involved in a variety of activities. Helping children with their homework, getting them off to bed, preparing food and clothes for the next day. There is sewing and mending to be done and some of the Fijian women take this time to do mat weaving and craft work.

Incorporated into this daily routine are commitments of work for social, religious and community obligations. For example, the Fijian women’s Mothers Club are caretakers for their local churches which they clean and decorate. Community involvement can be tasks such as running barbecues, which is a popular fund raising activity at local events and several of the Fijian women respondents do this at the annual school bazaar. All the respondents were involved in preparations for their family celebrations and religious festivals. For example, Fiji Indian women spend hours making sweets for prasad which are offerings handed out to guests at all the Hindu celebrations I attended. I was fortunate enough to spend a whole day doing this and learning how to make
sweets like gulab jamun, lakaree and laddo. These are just some of the activities women are involved in besides the day to day running of the household and work on the farm. The next section focuses on the labour intensive processes of producing a meal and highlights the way many different tasks are interrelated.

Making Dinner

Procuring food was a primary task for most of the women. For example, Raijieli cooked for her husband and three children as well as her mother-in-law and father-in-law. The decisions about what was to be cooked would be made in consultation with her mother-in-law, along with requests from her father-in-law and her husband. The ultimate responsibility to prepare the food was Raijieli’s and she was very conscious of serving it on time and also said if people do not eat then they do not do the work properly.

Raijieli: I am to see the food in the kitchen, if no food, then that is a very big problem for me. If no food, because I am in the kitchen, I know all things in the kitchen, I do the cooking, if no food it’s very difficult. If no soap or anything else never mind, only the food because I am thinking of [mother-in-law] and [father-in-law] ah. I want to make the food quickly, lunch time, I want to eat at the right time.

This section explores what goes into the production of two common meals from the cultivation and processing of food to the cooking and serving. These examples illustrate the importance of subsistence agriculture and just how labour intensive food production is on the case study farms. While some food items are bought much of it is produced and processed on the farm. The two meals chosen are first, curry, rice and dhal which is Indian in origin, and the second is fish with lolo, bele and tavioka that is more typical of Fijian cuisine. The culinary crossovers and adaptations between ethnic groups including Chinese and European is a fascinating study in itself. In the study households

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10 Bele is Hibiscus manihot, Malvaceae, an erect shrub (Capell, 1991:8) and here refers to the young green leaves which are commonly eaten.
there was, to varying degrees, a maintenance of an ethnically identifiable diet. The Fiji Indians ate a lot of roti, curry, dhal and rice, while the Fijians ate root crops, lolo or water based ‘soups’ and lovo food at special occasions. However many of the Fijian families ate rice daily and frequently included curries and dhal into their diets and Fiji Indians used root crops and Fijian style dishes. Unfortunately it falls outside the present study to further investigate culinary trends and the social and nutritional implications.\textsuperscript{11}

For the first meal, rice, curry and dahl, I shall begin with a discussion on rice production. As stated above all the farms grew their own rice and the production and distribution of rice within (and between) farms was negotiated among households. The rice seedlings used are the wetland variety and planted on low lying areas during the rainy season. After harvesting, the processing involves winnowing and drying the rice and then milling it. There is a small commercial mill operated by a local shop keeper about fifteen kilometres away. Many people transport one or two bags of their unmilled rice to this shop on the bus, by van transporters or on the back of tractors. Two of the case study households still utilised the older style home mills for hulling rice in a ‘foot’ mill (cf. Anderson, 1974:120). After the rice has been dehusked by milling it is ready for cooking, although it still has to be checked first for stray husks and small stones.

This abbreviated account of rice production belies many hours of back breaking work planting, harvesting and processing rice. All available labour is utilised for planting and harvesting, while the winnowing is dominated by women and older children. I experienced just how tiring this can be during the first weeks of field work. In exchange for tractor ploughing women and children from two neighbouring Fiji Indian households came over to the farm where I

\textsuperscript{11} For example there have been numerous studies done on the relationship between diet and health indicators, notably the rise of diabetes and heart related diseases has been partially attributed to dietary changes including an increase in commercially processed foods. See A.A.J. Jansen, S. Parkinson, A.F.S. Robertson (1991).
was living to winnow the rice. There was one young unmarried woman from one household and another older woman with her four children, two boys and two girls from the other household. They started at nine o’clock and went through until four with an hour’s break for lunch. During this time they processed thirteen bags of rice, as the young woman said “the work is very hard and depends a lot on the wind and the sun.”

The children carried the bags of unprocessed rice over to the women and spread it out on tarpaulins. Using special winnowing trays the women, and sometimes the older boy and girl, would hold it shoulder height to one side and gently shake letting the rice fall on to a clear space of tarpaulin. The wind would blow the bits of chaff away. The same pile of rice would be winnowed several times and then the children would gather it up and lay it out on another tarpaulin to dry in the sun. This rice was then ready to be taken to the mill. It would be interesting to know if the labour involved in home mills was gender and age specific and if so how the introduction of small commercial mills has changed this. The final part of the processing of rice, cooking, is done by girls and women.

Curries range from different meat curries to a variety of vegetable curries such as potato, jack fruit, bean, baigan (eggplant) or baji (spinach). Meat was usually only eaten once a week and many households could not even afford that. The more commonly eaten meats are chicken, either home grown or bought in town, frozen or canned mutton and a variety of fish. Whether meat or vegetable, the same oil and spices are often used. A basic dry curry recipe involved sauteing onion in cooking oil and then adding spices; cumin, turmeric and curry powder and pounded chilli and garlic. This is sauteed for a few more minutes and then meat and salt are added and cooked for fifteen minutes.

A frequently used cooking oil is coconut, which is home processed by all the households and an important ingredient in daily cooking as well as personal
toiletries. People use it as a body moisturiser and Fiji Indians also use it as a hair oil. The other cooking medium used for curries is ghee (clarified butter) and while some households make it from their dairy cows, the majority of people bought it in town.

While all the spices can be bought at the market or supermarket many households, particularly Fiji Indian, processed their own spices such as turmeric, ginger, curry and tamarind. This is work mainly women and children are involved in. For example Ronita, who was sixteen at the time, explained the process for turmeric powder;

Pull up the matured plants and break off the turmeric root from the plant. Wash the roots and boil them for one hour. Then chop the tubers into fine pieces and lay out in the sun to dry. After they have completely dried out you grind the pieces to a fine powder in a hand mill. The turmeric powder should be stored in an air tight container and will last for five to six years.

All households had chilli trees as this is a popular ingredient and condiment. Garlic, onion and potatoes tend to be imported although it is possible to grow them in Fiji. It is interesting how vegetables are subject to trends, for example Unaisi said that people hardly ate carrots in this area twenty years ago but they have gradually been introduced into the diet and are now commonly grown by households.

Dhal is usually made from yellow split peas purchased in town or from home grown pulses such as ordi beans. These are cooked into a runny soup mixture with onion, garlic, spices, chilli and water. The consistency of the dhal in this area tended to be thinner than some of the thicker creamier dhal found in other parts of Fiji. The reason for this is apart from favoured cooking traditions, adding water also makes the dhal go further and cuts down on expenses. Making dhal with the ordi bean is another economic saving.

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12 Coconut oil is a popular item within the Fijian exchange complex.
13 I was interested to note that an imported New Zealand brand appeared to dominate the market.
Sue: What about other jobs too that I've seen you doing like . . . processing those other beans for dhal?
Devika: That is to save money the bean is the ordi. That is saving the money that would buy the dhal, the split peas. We have instead of the split peas . . . we planted with the new cane there, we have intercropping with the new sugar cane and that ordi.

The second meal, fish, bele and lolo with tavioka accompanied by chilli (rockete) and salt, is also commonly eaten without the fish, and the bele may be replaced by rourou (young dalo leaves) or other green leafy vegetables. To make the lolo coconuts have to be collected (or bought if not available), husked on a sharp spear in the ground, opened with a machete and then grated on a small metal serrated 'spoon' especially designed for this. When children are old enough they are often allocated the task of grating coconuts, which in large quantities can be an arduous job. The gratings are mixed with water (some used the coconut 'water') then squeezed by hand to extract the coconut fat. The used gratings are discarded and the result is lolo or coconut milk.

Although people fished in the local river, including collecting shellfish and fresh water prawns, most of the fish was bought. Either fresh, frozen or tinned fish such as mackerel was widely used. I did not explore the labour dynamics of fishing because it did not seem to be something that was regularly done by household members. The field site was a considerable distance from the sea and only one older Fijian man, made regular trips to go sea fishing.

Cooking in lolo suits fresh or frozen fish which can be cooked whole or in portion size pieces. The fish usually have to be scaled and gutted if bought fresh and also used quickly because of the lack of refrigeration.14 The bele is picked, washed and cut to be added to the fish and lolo which is simmered in a big pot. The Fijian dishes that women cook are usually pot-based soups and stews (cf. Lukere 1997:96) which are eaten on a daily basis. Men cook lovo food for special

14 People did smoke fish over fires to preserve them.
occasions and may take charge of organising pot cooking for *soqos* (see Chapter Three). Lukere (1997:97) notes that missionary influence on family forms in the nineteenth century and the roles of husband and wife meant that men became less involved in daily food preparation while women had to do more.

This shift may in part have been due to the shift away from polygynous and non-coresidential patterns of marriage to the monogamous and coresidential ideals. Mission teaching in fact made a religious ritual out of the family meal – with food prepared by women, and eating preceded by grace. With more men, perhaps, now married and spending more time in the family home, they probably spent less time tending the *lovo* and eating with other men (Lukere, 1998:97).

Prayer or *masu* was always said by Fijian respondents before any meal and I quickly learnt how to give the prayer when I was asked. To continue with the meal the staple food crop chosen is *tavioka*. Other root crops such as *dalo*, *uvi* and *kumala* are also popular but are more seasonal, whereas the hardiness and ability of *tavioka* to grow in poorer soils makes it a year round staple. Households either replanted as they used it, or would plant large stands at a time. For example, at one location their *tavioka* is in their bush gardens that are about a fifteen minute walk from the settlement.
Figure 20. The daily harvesting and planting of tavioka.

Figure 21. Winnowing rice.
Figure 22. Rolling out roti dough into circles ready for the hot plate.

Figure 23. Grinding split peas on a stone 'sil' in preparation for making 'stuffed' roti.
Figure 24. The finished product!

Figure 25. Cleaning up afterwards, doing the dishes.
The following extract from field notes recounts going to collect *tavioka* at this settlement,

We went up to the *teitei* (garden) five of us, representing three different households to get their *tavioka*. We had Fijian shoulder baskets, *arto dredre* to put the *tavioka* in... only about a ten to fifteen minute walk to the garden through bush and on quite a steep slope. Growing *tavioka* on little terraces with an average of three plants. They weeded with machetes, we pulled up the *tavioka* and redug the earth a bit and then planted with the stalks of the old plants. Note always have leaf nodules facing down. Found a pineapple which I replanted, take off top, strip lower leaves and then plant. Also got a pawpaw which the youngest *yalewa* got seeds for me to replant by the river. Took us about one and half hours to go and return from the garden, which they do every day. (Fieldnotes 22 July 1996)

The youngest girl on this occasion was still at school and the other three ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-one. These three were unmarried and lived with their families spending most of their time doing farm and household work. While they knew most of the tasks they had to do each day they were still under the direction of senior relatives, such as their mothers and grandmother. Once the *tavioka* is collected the roots are then peeled, washed, chopped and cooked.

**Serving the meal**

A Fiji Indian respondent said smaller families of about four people may eat together, otherwise in Fiji Indian families ‘the dads, *Aaja* or elders usually eat first. The children usually eat together. The women usually eat separately from the men.’ This spatial separation at meal times reflects the hierarchy within the household ‘which is based on the subordination of female to male and of younger to elder’ (Jayawardena, 1975:83). If women and children are eating separately they would eat in the kitchen area while men would be served in the main room of the house or on the verandah. Most of the Fiji Indian respondents sat on a tarpaulin on the floor made from large storage bags sewn
together (from bought flour and rice). It was a sign of prosperity to have table and chairs. Food is either served by the woman who cooked it or laid out in bowls for people to help themselves.

In Fijian families seating arrangements denote hierarchy and this was evident with respondents’ families. The woman who was serving the meal would sit at the ‘bottom’ of the eating table nearest to the kitchen. The other household members would sit themselves in order of seniority with the most senior at the ‘top’. Children often sat at the bottom but in some families young children would sit near a doting grandparent. The Fijian families I visited had a delegated space within the house where they would eat daily. The floor was covered with woven Fijian voivoi mats and a long table cloth would be spread out on the floor. Bowls of water and napkins were placed along the cloth for people to wash their hands. Sometimes food would be laid out along the table cloth, with the best food at the most senior end, for people to help themselves. Otherwise it would be served by the cook from pots at the bottom end.

This section was not intended as a comprehensive overview of local diet but rather a glimpse at the work involved in the production of two common types of meals. The majority of these foods are grown, collected, raised in the case of livestock or fished, and reflect the reliance on subsistence that all households had. Some of the ingredients are purchased, notably salt, sugar and sharps (or flour) which are commonly used. People seldom shop on a regular basis and usually someone will go to Labasa every couple of months. This depends on cash income and is largely dictated by the timing of cane payments, wages and in the case of mataqali members also rents and royalties (see Chapter Seven).

Seasonal variation and crop damage from flooding, drought and hurricanes such as Fiji has recently experienced during 1997 and 1998, all

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15 Fijian hierarchy and seating arrangements has been well documented in the ethnographic literature, see for example Toren (1990).
dramatically influence a family's subsistence base as well as prices at the local produce market. This is a volatile environment and families have to show flexibility and initiative to survive by making use of the resources available to them. However, this is not an equation for some sort of objective 'economic rationalism', social expectations and protocols orientate what is done and how it is done. For example mothers teach their daughters to cook properly and the correct ways of doing things from how to cut your vegetables to the making of the perfect dish. These are part of the 'expectations' of being a good wife, mother and daughter-in-law. The protocols around producing, serving and eating a meal enact ideas about social relations such as seniority, hierarchy, femininity and masculinity. It is also a time to express hospitality and care to relatives and visitors.

The historical formation of the smallholder system combined with ideologies of family roles, European, Fijian and Fiji Indian, while variable across cultures, location and time, has produced similar ideas and practices in regard to work roles in the present study. While the above examples highlight culturally orientated differences in food crops, cultivation, cooking practices, serving and eating arrangements the gendered and generational divisions of labour were very similar and varied more from family to family than between ethnic groups. The respondents have been neighbours, colleagues and friends for many years. While maintaining different cultural identities they also shared quite literally recipes, food preferences and crops and labour through barter and exchange.

Children

Throughout the present study age relations and notions of seniority and hierarchy have been discussed. Olga Nieuwenhuys (1994:24) notes that 'child' refers to a kinship relation and in terms of biological age does not necessarily
carry the same connotations cross-culturally.\textsuperscript{16} Throughout the present study I have used child to refer to both young and adult children in regards to kinship relations within the family. This section focuses more explicitly on children below the age of sixteen and in terms of work from two perspectives, first, the care of children and second, the work that children do. Most of the relevant literature on farm and family life in Fiji reviewed in the present study discusses or at least mentions child care (see for example Bolabola, 1986; Jayawardena, 1975; Mayer, 1961; Shameem, 1990; Toren, 1990). However, I could find no detailed accounts of the contribution younger children make to the farm economy. The present study seeks to advance research in this area and highlight children’s unremunerated work carried out within the context of the family farm.

Child care

A discussion on child care can cover a vast range of activities and theoretical perspectives. During fieldwork the questions that I felt were important to ask parents\textsuperscript{17} were; ‘How does life change for you after you have children? What is important to teach your children? What are your hopes for your children’s future?’. These are, needless to say, very broad questions which gave me an idea of people’s experiences of caring for children as well as their hopes and expectations for them. Previous sections have already incorporated some of the respondents’ answers, such as their desire for good marriages and expectations regarding the proper attributes and behaviour of young women and men.

How does life change after having children? It is interesting to go back to the wedding ceremonies and remember the emphasis put on fertility and a

\textsuperscript{16} The conceptions of ‘childhood’ from the Fijian and Fiji Indian perspective may be different from Western notions of childhood. I began to touch on this area when I inquired about different ceremonies young children were involved in and special birthdays. This information was not sufficient enough to include in the thesis and is an area that needs more research.

\textsuperscript{17} I predominantly talked to mothers about child care which is reflected in this section, but I did also have some conversations with fathers which mainly focused on their hopes for their children’s future.
bride’s role as a future mother. I could not really ascertain whether a woman’s status in the family changed considerably depending on her child bearing capacity. While it is conceivable that it would according to the ideology, individual families did not overtly state this. People did not personally see it as making a difference in the sense of status, or possibly some did not understand my questions concerning this. Someone did mention that after your first child you could move to your own house if you had been living with your parents/parent-in-laws. But if this was a general ‘rule’, it was very contextual and arbitrary.

Fijian and Fiji Indian women did have different work regimes during and after their pregnancies. Fijian women were expected to take on a lighter work load, especially at the later stages of their pregnancy, and after the baby was born they would stay inside caring for their new born for around three months. Fiji Indian women were expected to perform their usual tasks right up to the birth and then return to work shortly afterwards.

There was no obvious gender bias amongst the respondents regarding a preference for sons over daughters. Families tended to be getting smaller with people preferring three or four children rather than the larger families of a generation ago (cf. Booth, 1994:49). I did not inquire about contraception, but this could reflect the increased availability of contraception as well as changing attitudes towards having a large family.

The work load increased considerably for women after their children were born, but again this depends on labour availability and who is able to take part in child care. As described above the mother-in-law and sisters-in-law may share the child care, one looking after all the children while the others go to work in

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18 After reading Lukere’s (1997) doctoral thesis regarding the Decrease Report and the policies implemented by the colonial government in the early twentieth century to increase the Fijian population, I wondered how much these policies had impacted on current practices surrounding pre- and postnatal care for Fijians in the present study.

19 A Fiji Government health report released in 1998 confirms that women in Fiji ‘have increased the use of birth control and family planning to delay or prevent unwanted pregnancies, and now have an average of 2.9 children’ (Pacific Islands Report, Online, Archives 19 October 1998).
the fields. When children get older they look after their younger siblings and other young children they may live with such as cousins. Children in the settlements of two to four households tended to play together in large groups, the older children supervising the younger ones. Activities could also include work for example when older children were attending to the vegetable gardens, planting, weeding and watering crops, younger children would participate in these activities with them or be playing nearby. It is women who predominantly take the major responsibility in caring for children which not only includes physical work but also much of the mental and emotional work that goes into teaching children and ensuring their health and welfare. Men occasionally help with child care, particularly with teaching their sons, and they participate in major decision making processes concerning their children. It is interesting to note too that it is men who ran the local primary school committee.

Both Shayal and her grandmother\textsuperscript{20} made it explicit who the main care giver was when I asked ‘Are there different things that the father teaches the children, that the mother teaches the children?’

Shayal: She said the both of them use to tell how to work, educate the children, but the things the mother taught the fathers can not teach like that because the children are usually at the mothers side. They usually love more, but now it’s also like that, we love our mothers more than our fathers.

Sue: Because you are with your mother all the time. So the mother is the main teacher.

Shayal: Yeah the main teacher, she do the main things.

Sue: In an extended family with the mother-in-law there, is the mother-in-law more the boss of the children, does the mother-in-law have a say in ....

Shayal: [asking grandmother] She said the mother-in-law is good but most of the times the mothers use to beat the children. But in some of the families the mother-in-laws are very bad. Use to ill-treat. Said that her mother-in-law does not take care of the children.

\textsuperscript{20} I asked Shayal to interpret for her grandmother.
Figure 26. Looking after young children while preparing a meal.

Figure 27. Bathing the baby.
The respondents emphasised the importance of teaching your children to obey elders and follow traditions (see above) which impart ideas about seniority, authority, cultural identity and appropriate social behaviour. Other replies to the question, 'What is important to teach your children?' were to teach them to do your own work and to not rely on others. Sharmila, who has two young daughters, felt that;

Sharmila: Always keep brave, never try to get back ah always try to be ahead, never think that you can’t do that work ah, always try our best, to be better.
Sue: It’s easy to say no I can't do it.
Sharmila: But you must try, the main thing is that you must try ah, always tell them you must try to do that work. If you try then you will do it.

These respondents considered the qualities of honesty, self-reliance, bravery and endeavour important attributes to live and work by. The following sections discuss children’s work and the relationship between formal education and respondents’ aspirations for their children’s future.

Children's work

Ben White (1996) states there is a view in child labour debates that assumes,

... working for one’s parents, at home, without pay is more acceptable than working for others, outside the home, for money; and also that work in small-scale enterprises (like family businesses or peasant farms) is less harmful than work in large-scale enterprises (like factories or plantations) (White, 1996:6).

The most common form of child labour in the world is the ‘unpaid labour of children working for their parents, whether in housework, the family farm or some other family enterprise’ (White, 1996:5). Nieuwenhuys (1994:10, 12) traces the conceptualisation of ‘child labour’ to newly industrialising Europe and
children's involvement in factory work. She notes that the emphasis on exploitative practices of children in remunerated work overshadows the unpaid work children do, particularly within the confines of the family. For this reason Nieuwenhuys prefers to talk about 'children's work', rather than 'child labour' to broaden out the discussion to all forms of work.

... the notion of child labour conveys the idea of an abstract and sexually neutral child doing economically valued but undesirable work, and is therefore too restricted. For all practical purposes, I have adopted the more inclusive definition of work proposed by Schildkrout, for whom it is: 'any activity done by children which either contributes to production, gives adults free time, facilitates the work of others, or substitutes for the employment of others' (Schildkrout, 1981:95 cited in Nieuwenhuys, 1994:27).

In general terms the invisibility of much of the work that women do within the family is also applicable to children for the same reasons. It is mostly unremunerated and it is normative, not only in terms of gender but also age and seniority - children should help their parents and family. Work carried out within the context of familial obligations has predominantly been viewed as part of socialisation, training, helping and consequently is morally unquestioned by many social analysts (Nieuwenhuys, 1994:10). The idea that children are 'just helping' (like a wife helps her husband) can demote the importance of work that children do.

In legal terms a child's rights are the same as an adults under the Fijian Constitution and there are laws specifically aimed at child labour\(^{21}\) (see \textit{Situation Analysis of the Children in Fiji} 1991:3). The Government of Fiji has ratified the \textit{United Nations Child Rights Convention} (\textit{Fiji Times}, 2 February 1996) and has an ongoing commitment to the articles of that convention. There is then,

\(^{21}\) Fiji has labour laws that are specific to children. Mr Wing Kangwai who is Chief Labour Officer in the Labour Department was quoted as saying 'no child under 12 years of age could be allowed to be employed unless in a family business. Children above 12 but under 15 could be employed on a daily basis, but not permanently. Any young person under 18 years but over 15 was not allowed to carry out dangerous or unsuitable work... no child was allowed to work over six hours on a daily basis' (\textit{Fiji Times} 24 February 1997).
judicial, constitutional and international standards by which a child’s well being can be determined. Nieuwenhuys (1994:10,12) points out that the legalistic approach to children’s work focuses on remunerated labour and protection from exploitative practices in the employer/employee situation. The possibility of exploitation is only conceived in this type of work relationship, whereas the family provides the protective mantle of parents and care givers. Here ideology on family can obscure work relations within the household.

White (1996:11) also notes that the child labour debates have been too reductionist over the ‘child labour/child work’ issue,

It is impossible to draw a clear and unambiguous line between ‘child work’ (the more acceptable forms of children’s work, which are relatively unharmful and in cases may even be beneficial) and ‘child labour’, the unacceptable, exploitative and harmful forms of children’s work . . . (White, 1996:11).

White (1996:12) proposes a more useful way of thinking about children’s work situations is in a continuum from ‘worst’ to ‘best’ rather than a ‘simple dichotomy between neutral ‘work’ and detrimental ‘labour’. Thinking by degrees takes in more complex considerations of the ways in which work may be problematic and if it is possible to resolve these issues. The questions that White (1996:12) gives as examples to determine the nature of a child’s work situation are useful for the present study,22

Is it, for example: the physical nature of the work itself, which makes it unhealthy or dangerous? Or what is foregone as a result of work -- for example because of long working hours which bar children from access to (or sufficient) education, recreation and social life? Or the work relationship, which makes it ‘unfree’ and/or exploitative? Or, as often happens, a combination of more than one of these? (White, 1996:12 emphasis original).

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22 White (1996:12) acknowledges that a universal criterion for child labour is improbable and is dependent on the local context.
But how do these standards relate to the local context and unpaid work carried out within the context of the family? How do parents, care givers and children perceive and determine a child’s rights and well being? How is unpaid work articulated to the cash economy? These are expansive questions that the present study only begins to touch on and deserve much further research.23

The central question that concerned me was 'when does the work that children do become exploitative and detrimental to a child’s well being?' By what standard should this be determined? During fieldwork the issues that began to emerge were, the work load that some children were expected to do, that is the type of work as well as the amount. Whether this interfered with their schooling by taking days off to work; not having enough time to do homework; leaving school at too young an age in order to help on the farm.

I realise that these criteria appear to prioritise formal education over the education received in the home as well as the variety of benefits home life can provide. This is a dichotomy I would like to avoid. What is of concern to me is the issue of agency when considering the correlation between continuing formal education and more choices in not only marriage but also work opportunities. As stated above this is only in general terms and individual agency always has to be negotiated within the constraints of family, community, socio-economic and employment environment.

The 'work relationship' between parents, care givers and children is very complex as it is contextualised within kinship relations and expectations of obedience, duty and respect as well as familial love. There is also the lived reality of surviving day to day and the necessity to carry out tasks (cf. Nieuwenhuys, 1994:201). None of the respondent families could afford to allow their children to do no work.

23Nieuwenhuys (1994:205) calls for more research to be done on a whole range of children’s activities including leisure, play and learning before typology’s can be determined about what is desirable and undesirable activities in terms of a child’s development.
I contend that the work that children in the present study do on the farm is a tremendous contribution to the farm economy and consequently to the sugar industry. Young children from about the age of three or four years onwards start working by running messages, fetching and carrying things, and in the gardens weeding, watering and planting while they accompany their care givers, progressively acquiring more responsibility for tasks as they learn to accomplish them. They help to tie and water the livestock, often taking on this task completely when they are old enough.

As mentioned above girls and boys are taught gender appropriate skills that will be expected of them as men and women. Girls help their mothers with cooking, washing and housework and are taught to be proficient at these tasks fairly early on. Boys are taught to plough and little boys as young as two can be seen playing with small machetes that their fathers have given them. This is said to be a man’s main tool and boys are taught to be adept in their use. Girls also have to learn to use them skilfully as they are used daily in farm life, for example, in weeding, cutting grass, halving coconuts and chopping meat.

There are many variables that determine the work load of each person in the household such as size of the household, labour availability, agricultural calendar, family and community obligations and so on. Shayal, who was in the fifth form wrote down what she did on a typical school day:

5.00 Wake-up
5.00-5.10 Brush [teeth]
5.10-5.15 Light fire
5.15-6.00 Help mother in cooking
6.00-6.20 Have shower
6.20-6.30 Iron the clothes
6.30-6.50 Have Breakfast
6.50-7.00 Get ready for school
7.00-7.20 Set the house [tidying, making beds, sweeping]
7.20-7.30 Wait for bus
7.30-8.00 Reach School
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.30-4.15</td>
<td>Wait for bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15-5.00</td>
<td>Reach home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00-5.30</td>
<td>Tie the animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.30-6.00</td>
<td>Have bath [wash uniform]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00-6.30</td>
<td>Have dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30-10.30</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30-10.40</td>
<td>Have prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.40</td>
<td>Go to sleep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above routine is a good example of what the other five girls around this age (thirteen to sixteen) in the study did during a school day. The information was obtained through extensive participant observation during stays with their families, their accounts of 'typical' days as well as some use of time diaries.

How much time children had for homework depends on a combination of their study load, as well as their and their parent’s/care giver’s attitudes towards study. The study environment in homes were difficult for many children, with cramped conditions, poor lighting and not enough money for pens, paper and books. A sixteen year old boy in the fifth form said that he has been cutting cane in the weekends and in the holidays since he was twelve, which is relatively common in this area. But when he attends the sixth form he will not work harvesting cane because he has to study for exams. He is doing all sciences and would like to be a teacher.

Venina’s youngest children are at primary school and she discussed the homework routine she has established for them emphasising the need to study hard and do additional revision at home,

Sue: Are you just going to keep them going as long as they ...  
Venina: Yeah as long as they want. Those two boys if they want to go to school for every year, so I told them you have to study hard ... everything in school at home ah, you’ve done best at home then you can do the same thing in school. Because
everything at home right, we learn at home, do your best here and I told them from 7-8p.m. it’s a good time to stay silently, take your own book, one hour to revise their own homework. I told them from 5 o’clock I chase you people to the river to bath, from there you come home, change your clothes . . . [dinner] plenty study book there, sit down quietly and try to revise.

A Fijian female respondent whose two eldest daughters left school in class 8 and class 6 said;

... I told them, you stay home, you help me. I asked them, you want to go to school? They said “no mum I don’t want to go to school”, all right, if you want to stay home, you know how work we do, mothers ah. We don’t give up no, they said yeah, if we go to the farm we have to do it, if you go to the teitei you have to do it . . . I told them you have grown up, one day you will become a mother, and from that time I don’t want you people to go and you know kerekere from this side, we want the food from there, no cassava ah, the people we don’t sit down like this [like we are during the interview] and get the money, get the food . . . This you have to learn from me and from your father.

This example illustrates not only what work this mother expected her two daughters to perform if they stayed at home but also what she thought was important to teach her daughters for their future roles as mothers and wives. Her reference to the practice of kerekere used in an abusive way is contrasted with a message of self reliance and determination. This respondent really appreciated the work her daughters did as it lightened her load considerably and meant she could spend more time doing other things, like going to the teitei.

Boys and girls destined for farm life often left school earlier, or, as the case used to be, were not sent at all. Many of the elderly women had not been to school, but most of the middle aged women downwards had some formal education. However, one respondent in her early twenties had never been to school. This was primarily because of travel distance and the prohibitive cost of uniforms,
books and fees as her family was extremely poor. All of the males in the case study had some schooling but this also varied considerably.

Another Fijian female respondent’s two eldest boys had left school at classes six and eight and were now working full time on the farm. The eldest, who was then fifteen, worked full time as a cane cutter and his younger brother, at twelve, had tried to work full time but the sirdar had sent him home saying he was too small. He was going to try again the following year. Their younger siblings, a girl and a boy were still at school and are encouraged to continue on with their education. The youngest boy is expected to find a job off the farm as there is insufficient land available for him. The daughter is expected to marry and move away from the farm.

How do children feel about the work they do? I did not interview children under thirteen, although I did have conversations and spent many hours with them. I think to even begin to comprehend the dynamics of children’s work from the child’s perspective you have to contextualise their motivations, resistance and negotiations within their own processes of child development and the influences of their care givers and general environment.24 The most in depth response I obtained regarding the relationship between parents, child and labour was from Devika, who was twenty at the time. Devika has worked on her parents farm since she was a young girl and as there are no sons in the family she expects to inherit the farm from her parents. Her reasons for working on the farm are not only from a sense of duty or obedience but more for her families survival and an expectation of investing in her future,

Sue: How important it is for you to feel you are getting something out of what ever you are doing?
Devika: Mmmm but I have to do it because I'm not doing anything, I can't just sit home and relax. I can't.
Sue: No, because you want to help your parents?

24 See Nieuwenhuys (1994) for discussion.
Devika: No, I have to do it, it’s not like helping the parents, I have to do it because I’m not doing anything. I have to do it ah, because if this cane is being harvested and all the weeds growing and growing . . . father will be free in December. [end of harvesting] By then this thing [weeds] will be up there and the weeds will be a 100 feet...
Sue: You have to do it to survive as a family.
Devika: I have to do it, actually through any source I’m not earning anything. Then I have to do that, how will they feel if I keep on staying home and doing nothing. Washing dishes and washing clothes everybody does that.
Sue: Okay so you have to help with the farm work.
Devika: Ha, [yes] I have to do it, it’s not a kind of help I have to do it. It’s like my own, there is nobody here that owns it, it’s mine. Actually it’s mine.
Sue: I see you don’t feel like it’s just your parents, it’s yours as well.
Devika: It’s mine, because they don’t have any boy so that they can give it to them, it’s mine.
Sue: I see so this is like for your future, you can become a cane farmer, or you are a cane farmer aren’t you?
Devika: [laughs] Actually I am a cane farmer and I am adjustable, you know I am quite good at my education too and quite good at farming too. But few of the children if they do get educated they forget about the farm work. See I am adjustable I can do anything, any job they give it to me now.

Devika is quoted at the beginning of this chapter as saying ‘what would her parents think’ if she did not work on the farm as well as doing the domestic work (which interestingly she takes for granted as ‘everyone does that’ which firmly places this type of work as secondary to farm work). In the many conversations I had with Devika it was obvious she had a lot of respect and love for her parents and within this context her labour was not through fear or coercion but concern that she could do her best for them as well as herself. Being the sole child and inheritor has shaped her view of the farm and involvement in it and quite possibly her relationship with her parents (although we never discussed this) as she felt a deep sense of responsibility to look after them. In Fiji
there is minimal social welfare and the elderly, particularly the poor, are reliant on their children or other relatives to take care of them in their old age.  

A commonality the case study households did share was an expectation and reliance on the labour of their children. This was dependent on factors such as the children’s age, capabilities, commitments (for example not working because of school and homework) and application as well as the disposition of parents and care givers, combined with seasonal and social requirements. Ideas of duty, obedience and respect for the mother and father (and elders) were espoused by nearly all the parents. Children were expected to obey when elders asked them to do something or they would be reprimanded or punished in some form. The skills they are taught not only prepare them for adult life, (remember the expectations of a ‘good’ spouse) but the tasks they perform become an integral part of the farm economy and the consequent survival of poor families. Class obviously has an impact on the work children do at home. Wealthier families can afford to pay farm labourers and domestic workers if they so wish, whereas poorer households are totally reliant on the labour of the family.

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25 In discussions with Mr Kolinio Ulakia, a Social Welfare Officer in Labasa (11 July 1997), he said that elderly are taken care of for free in old peoples homes if there is no one to care for them. At the time I did not inquire further how many homes there were in Labasa. He said that there were cases of elderly parents, or widows being pushed off the farm by their children, usually the sons and their wives. At Labasa Social Welfare they currently had fifteen cases of that nature and these situations were on the rise. He attributed it in some instances to a vying for power between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and the son will side with his wife. This usually only happens in Fiji Indian families. At that time the maximum destitute allowance was F$80 a month and this Mr Ulakia acknowledged was not enough. He said 80 percent of their clients were farm labourers and 65-70 percent were Fiji Indians as they did not have the same family support systems Fijians did. When I asked him about opportunities for women to earn money, he said a lot of women do work as farm labourers and are paid in kind.
Figure 28. Brothers rounding up the goats to take to fresh pasture.

Figure 29. Always doing something! Sorting through rice for stray husks before cooking.
Figure 30. A secondary school student helps her younger cousins with their homework.

Figure 31. Children with toy trucks they have made.
Aspirations and Education

The relationship between child labour and formal education is variable and complex. Children may leave school earlier for a variety of reasons, either they are not doing well, or they and/or their care givers wish them to stay at home. Transport and financial difficulties are prohibitive in regards to which schools children can go to and their continuation of schooling. The respondent who left school after a few years because of continual illness raises questions concerning facilities for special needs children. Working hard at home and at school was encouraged in most families, however this could produce some tensions as daily chores competed with study time and weekends and holidays were also dominated by house and farm work. I did note that some children were kept home to help at times when the households were really under stress and/or had labour intensive activities to perform such as the rice processing outlined above.

Families were also aware of the better job opportunities available through formal education and for children who could not or did not want to work on the farm this was really their only hope. There is a gender variable as there is more paid work opportunities for males in this region. Marriage can also impact on women differently than men, as women are expected to be the main care givers in the family which can prevent their pursuit or continuation of paid employment.

Parents aspirations for their children's future work appeared to be based on a combination of the child's academic achievements and the child's own ambitions along with some projections from parents. It was interesting when I asked women if they had had any ambitions to have a career when they were at school, most of them said that they did and they either wanted to be teachers or nurses. Often their daughters wanted the same career but what combination of parental projection and/or a reflection of the very limited job choices that are thought 'appropriate', is impossible to say. Other popular choices for girls are
clerical and retail occupations. Many of these career choices conform to gendered notions of suitable jobs for women and substantiate the ideals of women being caring and supportive.\(^{26}\)

However, some of the children had different ideas. Anita said her eight year old daughter, wanted to be a nurse, (a career she had desired herself), when Anita told me this, her daughter interrupted and said “no, I want to be a doctor”. A Fijian respondent who was fifteen and attending school was adamant she wanted to be an agricultural officer.\(^{27}\) Some of the boys also wanted to work in agriculture but not necessarily on their own farms. They were interested in research and development aspects and working for MAFF&ALTA in various capacities.

In the same family some children may leave school early while others go on to higher education and the prospect of getting jobs off the farm. Girls leave school early for a variety of reasons, several in the present study left because they had failed exams and did not want to repeat. On the whole, girls were staying at school longer than their mothers (although not always!) and certainly a lot longer than their grandmothers, many of whom had had no schooling at all. While the women in the case study had not had the opportunity to pursue career ambitions it still remains to be seen if some of their young daughters will have more options. Generally education is regarded highly and seen as very important, particularly for possibly securing a good job and leaving the farm.

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\(^{27}\) The local secondary school offers an agricultural course in their curriculum which interested many of the students I spoke to. This is part of the Ministry of Education’s move to include more practically relevant and vocational content in school curricula. This is an attempt to combat ‘high unemployment and underemployment rate of secondary school leavers, the “educated unemployed”, and the high wastage rates, particularly among Fijians’ (Situation Analysis of Children in Fiji, 1991:14). Ministry of Agriculture Forest and Fisheries and Agriculture Landlord and Tenants Act (MAFF&ALTA) is also promoting more female field staff as this organisation has begun to realise the importance of women’s contribution to agriculture.
This is a sentiment Paulini, a Fijian respondent, expressed when discussing her three young sons;

Sue: As far as education goes what are you thinking for these children? How far would you like them to go with their schooling?
Paulini: My husband told me that they can, when they are in school, if they can't [do the school work] then they can stay at home. But he works because he wants to find money and all things like that to buy their books and for their school fees. He wants them to go up, [go on in school] but not stay home.
Sue: You don't want them working on the farm?
Paulini: No, this time he told them, because he find out staying home is hard working in the farm. ... This one [second boy aged six years] who started school this year, if you work at school and you go up to form 6, form 7 what you want to do for a job? He said I want to be a veterinary, because every day he tie the bullocks, "I want to become a veterinary [officer]." [she is very proud of him]

There are logistical concerns such as which son(s) would inherit the farm. For example Fiji Indian families who were not able to acquire enough land for their sons' to farm and/or were concerned that they would not obtain new leases, encouraged and supported their children to find work off the farm. The cost of training and tertiary education was prohibitive for some families who were consequently more reliant on local, unskilled (or semi-skilled) jobs such as cane harvesting, farm labouring and forestry. As stated above the opportunities for paid labour for females in the area were almost non-existent. There were possibilities to work locally as teachers, nurses, police and MAFF extension staff. But these positions required extensive training and expense, were competitive to enter and to obtain scholarships and there was no guarantee once trained that local jobs would be available. Other jobs were located in Labasa which raises considerations such as travel expenses and the viability of boarding away from home. Two of the respondents who were at high school are now in Suva looking for work after completing training courses. One, who is a Fiji Indian girl
is staying with relatives, which is the only way her parents would have allowed her to go there.

Peoples' attitudes towards farming combined with an assessment of their options was a factor in parents' and children's aspirations for the future. What many parents stressed when I asked them about their hopes for their children's futures was that they would be happy and have a better life than they had themselves. People mentioned goals like making good marriages (particularly for their daughters) and becoming educated and getting a good job. These two goals are not mutually exclusive for girls, many parents and girls wanted both. The correlation between education and more choices and autonomy has been argued for above, although this is by no means assured as Shashi's story in Chapter Four demonstrated.

Sugar Cane Production

What does the planting, cultivating and harvesting of sugar cane entail for farming families in terms of work? The previous sections have gone some way toward explaining the integration of other smallholder activities with cane production. This section specifically examines the production processes involved and starts from the beginning, preparing the land and planting, through to harvesting. This is not intended as a detailed cultivation guide but rather as a means of giving examples of how families produce sugar cane for milling.

Cane is grown either from the existing root system, that is ratoon crop or replanted with cuttings harvested from standing crops on the farm or purchased in the case of starting up crops and new varieties of cane from FSC or other farms. Anil said that on their farm they replant every six or seven years. The decision to replant depended on a combination of cane variety, whether the cane
was still producing a good harvest\(^{28}\) and cost considerations. The best time to plant is between March and May because weather conditions are more favourable for good growth. The *Master Award\(^ {29}\)* stipulates that only cane planted by the 31st October may be harvested the following year (*Master Award*, Regulation 3.1 1989:11). The cane is ready for harvesting from twelve to sixteen months dependent on cane variety and rainfall distribution.

To replant, the old roots have to be removed and the soil tilled by ploughing. Draught animals are still predominant but tractor work is used whenever affordable as it is difficult to take out the old roots with bullocks. As stated above ploughing and harrowing work is done by males, both boys and men. In the present study one family owned a tractor which was hired out for ploughing work and used during the harvesting season to transport cane ‘trucks’ to the rail depot.

The cuttings for replanting are cut into approximately 30 cm lengths and placed into furrows on their side so they overlap slightly with the next cutting to prevent gaps. Hoes are used to work the earth and cover the furrows. Women and youths often get the job of planting, especially during the harvesting season as men are away cutting. But who does this work ultimately depends on labour availability. For example, both Devika and her father plant their cane as they are unable to afford to hire labourers.

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\(^{28}\) FSC recommends not to grow cane beyond three crops of ratoons to maintain good sugar juice levels, although this is dependent on cane variety, weather conditions and cultivation practices. However, because growers are paid by weight and not sugar content this is not of such concern to some of them. For example one farmer who used Ragnar cane had a ratoon crop that had been going apparently for thirty years.

\(^{29}\) The *Master Award*, also known as the *Sugar Industry Master Award*, is an agreement in accordance with Sugar Industry Act 1984 that has been facilitated by the Sugar Industry Tribunal. The agreement outlines the arrangements between the Fiji Sugar Corporation Limited (FSC) and registered growers (*Master Award*, 1989:3).
Figure 32. Harvesting cane stems for planting.

Figure 33. Weeding a cane field so sugar cane plants can thrive.
Peni outlined the program on their farm after planting, he said that it takes two weeks to weed in among the new cane and after weeding the field will be ploughed, then fertilised, then ploughed again to put the fertiliser back into the ground. After three or four weeks growth the cane is then sprayed with weed killer. The task of weeding around the newly growing cane is predominantly done by women and children using machetes and hoes.

The weeding needs to be done as quickly as possible so the young shoots are not strangled by weeds. A short but intensive period ensues where many hours can be taken up doing this task. For example Roshni, a Fiji Indian girl, happened to be keeping a time diary for me during such a period. At the age of fifteen she had left school earlier in the year and was working full time on the farm, where her family are farm labourers. She is the eldest of four children, the others were still at primary school. Her paternal grandmother lives with them and it was Roshni, her mother and grandmother that weeded the cane fields, while her father was harvesting. I do not know the hours that her mother and grandmother worked weeding, but over a two week period Roshni did an average of eight hours a day for six days a week. This was besides other chores, that brought her working day to an average of fourteen hours a day.

The cane fields are fertilised by whoever is available and strong enough to carry bags filled with fertiliser. South Pacific Fertilisers Ltd (SPF) was commissioned to supply the fertilisers which are sold through FSC. For ease of application the fertiliser is divided into Blends A, B and C which are applied to the sugar cane at different times. Spraying of weed killer appears to be a job only done by boys and men. Respondents used a copper back pack with a hand pump to spray herbicide. No one wore masks or made any effort to cover up and I was always concerned at what the long term toxic effects might be. After the

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30 SPF started mixing fertilisers in mid 1991 to produce three types of blends for sugar cane. "They are:- Blend A contains phosphorus and nitrogen which is applied as basal dressing while planting; Blend B contains nitrogen and potash. It is applied to plant crop when the crop is 10-20 weeks old; Blend C contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. It is for ratoon crop and is applied within six weeks after the harvest" (Sugar Cane Cultivation technical notes from FSC 1996a).
initial weeding, fertilising and spraying the cane fields can be left to mature until it is ready to be harvested. The way harvesting gangs are organised is subject to variation and quite often a lot of debate. I will briefly outline the types of gang organisation the respondents utilised.

Basically farms join together into a gang to harvest each others' farms. They are headed by a gang committee and a sirdar whose job it is to coordinate the gang and liaise with FSC. The gang signs a MOGA (Memorandum of Gang Agreement) which is an agreement between members that alludes to rules set out by the Sugar Commission. Gangs may also make up separate agreements through a lawyer establishing conditions between farmers and labourers, including payment and provision arrangements (see Chapter Seven). The gangs in the present study only had the MOGA, any other agreements concerning cane cutters were verbal.

Nine households in the present study, including 'my' household, belonged to a gang of nineteen 'growers' or cane contractors. Five of the other households were in another gang of contractors. Both these harvesting gangs were comprised of Fijian and Fiji Indian growers and were 'portable line' gangs. Currently FSC allots each contractor a FHQ based on the farms previous three seasons (Master Award, 1989:20). The cane on a farm is usually cut in two separate rounds, in accordance with the MOGA. This means the gang will cut approximately half the cane on one farm before it moves to the next farm. The way the gang with nineteen contractors decided who should be first on the second round is based on a reward system where the contractor, or his labourer 'substitute', who cuts the most in the first round takes priority on the list for the

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31 As stated above households may be sharing one cane contract as in the case of two brothers who split the acreage of the farm in effect operating it as two separate farms. However, for the purpose of the cane contract this is legally counted as one farm and one of the brothers will have his name down as the registered 'grower'.

32 Also known as 'tractor/trailer' gangs denoting the mode of transport used to deliver cane. These gangs use small rail trucks that are delivered between the field and rail depot by a tractor with a winch trailer. Several sections of portable railway line are used in the cane field to move the truck along while loading cane. The other mode of transporting cane is by lorry which is used by contractors whose farms are situated to far from the railway network.
next round. It is desirable to finish harvesting your farm as soon as possible, firstly because no one wants 'standover' cane left on the farms at the end of the season which they will not get payment for. Secondly, the sooner harvesting is finished the sooner the next crop can be either replanted or the ratoons left to grow in time for the next season.

The gangs in the present study stipulate that for every 100 tonnes of cane a contractor is supposed to provide one cutter. The contractor may replace his own labour with a 'substitute' cutter as well as hiring additional labourers. If the contractor does not provide another cutter, then he is penalised with deductions from his payment. In the present study most of the men who were cane contractors were also cutters and their brothers, sons or other male relatives acted as extra cutters in the gangs, depending on the tonnage. Those contractors who did not cut were either too old or had other paid employment. The reliance was then mainly on family labour to provide cane cutters (see Chapter Seven for further discussion).

It was generally perceived to be difficult to find cane cutters and some people talked about a labour shortage. Others said there was no shortage of labour, rather a lack of willingness to harvest cane. As one respondent said, young men would rather work as packers in the supermarket than be cane cutters even if they got paid less. There was more prestige working in town, and essentially it was easier work than slogging away in a hot, dirty cane field for hours on end. One cane cutter called harvesting 'a prison without a locked door'. A harvester has to repetitively perform a bending, swinging action, cutting at the base and cutting the tops off, stripping the cane stalk of leaves and tossing it onto the line ready for loading onto the rail truck. 'Shit cane' as Esala, a young Fijian cane cutter, described it was infested with rats that gnawed at the stalks, hornet nests and tangles of weeds and the long leaves of this grass easily

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33 It goes up to 140 tonnes for one cutter and then after that another cutter is supplied.
cuts the skin. Nobody likes harvesting towards the end of the season, from November onwards it starts to get unbearably hot and humid. The rainy season starts in November and the torrential rain can make fields into muddy swamps, so it is difficult to work, to get the rail trucks loaded and out of the fields.

The organisation of harvesting labour varies and both of these gangs changed their organisation during the field work period to overcome various problems. For example in 1996 one of the gangs was organised into four groups, in order to economise on travelling distances. During this season they found that some of these smaller groups were not doing as well as the others. This applied particularly to the group that was mainly comprised of young and inexperienced cutters. While several cutters in this group were older and had extensive experience they were not able to motivate the younger ones. Consequently there was high absenteeism and people constantly arrived late into the field. This was in part due to not being penalised for being late, as they would still be paid for the truck that was being cut and loaded. This also meant that this gang was missing their quota which could result in a lowering of their overall quota by FSC. To solve this problem the following season (1997) the gang formed back into one large gang. This seemed to work well as the following comments from my field notes reflect after a conversation with one of the young cutters,

In the big gangs it's easier - psychologically as laughing and joking more but also physically as easier to fill trucks with a whole lot of you. That, plus stricter working hours means they cut a lot faster and get much more money around F$100 to F$150 [three weeks pay] whereas these young men hardly get anything F$9 - F$26 (Fieldnotes, 5 January 1997).

34 The MOGA stipulates that cutters are to be paid bonuses for fallen and tangled cane. The bad condition of the cane is why cutters prefer to harvest it after burning the field (see Chapter Seven). 35 As stated above other gangs would not let late cutters work after 6a.m. as this would mean they were being paid for work they did not equally participate in.
The psychological motivation was dramatically brought home to me one morning as I lay in bed sick, too ill to go out to the neighbouring field and video what I could hear.

Been sick the last two days - vomiting and ve'a va'a levu [diarrhoea a lot] or co'a is running stomach. Had a terrible night on Monday - restless, shitting, lua-ing [vomiting] etc. . . Lay in bed yesterday morning listening to the cane gang - about twenty of them all in a line, singing, yelping, ya-hooing. Song in Hindi - one guy sings and the others cheer him on (a game of provoking and response with a lot of teasing) and sometimes in Fijian, it sounds amazing and like they are enjoying themselves but as Esala says it is to 'block it' - the work. This big gang works faster . . . (Fieldnotes, 9 July 1997).

Generally the two gangs in the present study worked from Monday to Saturday as they both had Fijian and Fiji Indian cutters. Fijians do not work on Sundays because of religious convictions, whereas, an all Fiji Indian gang may work on Sunday as well. There were variables though to this six day working week as weather conditions, mill breakdowns, strikes, truck allocation and family obligations all delayed harvesting during the field work duration (see Chapter Seven). These factors could stop cutting for a few hours, days or weeks. It is beyond the present study to examine the dynamics of gang labour in any detail and is an area that is very under represented in terms of qualitative research (see Frank Ellis, 1983, 1985).

Nearly all the women said they had harvested cane for milling, usually as a result of a labour shortage and the pressure to harvest before the end of the season to reduce the amount of cane left as 'standover'. Venina said that she and the children cut the cane for the extra money. The women and older children often harvest the cane for cuttings to plant, Devika describes her experience;

Sue: So have you actually done any harvesting yourself?

36 While I enjoyed the singing it reminded me of chain gangs and slaves which made me feel even sicker.
Devika: Yes I have done. At one time the mill was about to close then we didn’t have enough labourers to cut the sugar cane. I help my father in loading and harvesting too. Usually when we have to plant new cane we have to harvest it and through the bullocks we have to take it to the field [where planting]. I harvest with my father, the seedlings I harvested with my father because we don’t hire the labourers then.

The above discussion noted that the work load on household members increases during harvesting time. Apart from the absent labour of men involved with harvesting and the pressure of preparing their meals and clothes on time, the household may actually expand with substitute cutters coming to lodge with the family. There were a variety of lodging arrangements in the case study. For example at Jimi and Unaisi’s house two to four extra cutters lived there during part of the season. The cutters were not all for this household’s cane contract but were substitute cutters for two other family members households who had contracts. They lived there when cane was being cut for them and neighbouring farms, moving to another household when that area was being harvested. This arrangement was primarily because of transport problems and possibly because all but one cutter were close family members and a more flexible living arrangement could be entered into. Food supplies were organised between two of the households involved and cutters received a reduced rate in lieu of lodging (see Chapter Seven).

A Fijian couple had two cutters live with them during the 1996 season as the man was now too old to cut. One of the cutters, would come from his koro three days a week to harvest for them. He has been in gangs since he was fifteen and at that time was in his forties. This cutter had reduced his hours from six days a week, preferring to work more in his own gardens. The other cutter, Seru, comes from the same village but lived in with this couple, who he was related to, during the 1996 season. Many of the Fijian cutters recruited in the present study were relatives from nearby koro.
Figure 34. Cane harvesting gang by a rail truck they have just finished loading.

Figure 35. Tractor used for transporting cane to rail depot.
When cane is being harvested on a farm this also increases the work of householders as the gang expects tea (and sometimes food) at morning and afternoon breaks and at lunch time. This depends on terms decided by the gang committee at the beginning of the season. Devika describes her extra work load when the gang is at their farm,

Devika: When the gang is here I will not have any spare time.
Sue: What will your routine be then?
Devika: I'll be getting water, washing plates, preparing for the afternoon tea and if any shortage of things my father will call from the cane field and I have to run back to him.
Sue: So you're on call constantly?
Devika: [agrees]

This brief overview of sugar cultivation and harvesting demonstrates the involvement of family labour and the interrelated nature of sugar production with other aspects of the farm economy. Women and children are actively involved in the cultivation of sugar, with some participation in harvesting particularly under pressurised circumstances. Boys from around the age of twelve onwards regularly cut cane out of school hours and in the holidays and several boys in the case study had become full time cutters by the age of fourteen. The subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry is predominantly done by women and children during the harvesting season. This produce not only feeds the family but also contributes to exchange networks and cash sales (see Chapter Seven). The domestic work is almost all done by females and involves a large variety of tasks including child care and care of the sick and elderly. Sugar cane indeed would not be able to be produced in a smallholder system without this extensive labour network.

Time and Work

Some of the male respondents complained that because of cane harvesting commitments they did not have enough time to spend on their own farms.
Five of the households, which belonged to the same harvesting gang, were trialing a new system of organising gang labour in 1997, so that men would have more time during harvesting season to tend to their own farms.

There is no doubt harvesting sugar cane can be hard, back breaking work. However men on the whole have far more leisure time than women, whose work hours did not have the same demarcations as men’s. For example Joni outlined a man’s routine when he was not harvesting cane, he also stated how hard women work,

Women’s work is very hard, cane farming not easy life . . . Man has to be up by 5 or 6 o’clock, ploughing until about 9a.m. then come for breakfast, after breakfast some planting or weeding until dinner 12 o’clock, 2p.m. ready for ploughing until 5 then finished...

A differentiating characteristic of the way women’s and men’s work is organised, is that much of men’s work can be clearly located and temporalised as farm work. Men finished harvesting or working on the farm for the day and then relaxed in the evenings while women continued on into the night processing and cooking food, caring for children and other household members, sewing, weaving mats and baskets. That is not to say men were not involved in tasks too, but generally they had much more time to pursue leisure activities such as sport, or to talanoa (to talk, tell stories) around a bowl or two of ‘grog’.

The activities of men should not be over simplified and are dependent on age, status and responsibilities. Some of the grog sessions in the evenings were also meetings of gang committees, school committees and religious meetings. The younger males, especially those who were unmarried and therefore with less responsibilities, tended to have more time and inclination to play a game of soccer or sevens rugby after harvesting. Church activities such as choir competitions could take up several evenings a week, in addition to the usual prayer meetings, in practice sessions. These were attended by both men and
women and were very popular amongst Fijian youths in the present study. Issues such as mobility and reputation discussed in the previous chapters are relevant, as it is much easier for males to attend different activities and walk around at night time. It is considered dangerous for girls and women to be out at night unaccompanied and only appropriate if there is a specific purpose such as a wedding, Ramayan recital or church activity.

For men, visiting friends in the evening is common and often involves a few drinks. Respondents thought that there was an increase in yaqona drinking which meant that people of different ages and status, including more women were drinking it; that people were drinking it a lot more frequently, often every night rather than just on ceremonial occasions; and that during grog sessions people would drink a lot more, not just one or two bowls. This trend is having a variety of impacts which would make for a very interesting study in itself and is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, because yaqona has become a daily part of many respondents’ lives I think it is worth making a few observations. On the one hand yaqona is providing a profitable alternative cash crop which has the potential to become even bigger as there is increasing global interest in the properties of this plant (Johnston, 1997:18). The sedative effect is relaxing after a hard day’s work and some men will drink it by themselves for this very reason.

As with any ‘substance’, over indulgence has its price and combined with late nights, grog induces people to sleep late and feel lethargic the next day. Venina expanded on why women do not want a lazy man who drinks grog,

Sue: Do you think it can be a problem sometimes like that?
Venina: Yes, one drunk and two lazy, drunk in the morning, you drink the whole night from about eight o’clock to twelve o’clock, sometimes one, two, three. From that time in the morning you come [home], in the morning you can wake up around

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37 The drinks were yaqona, daru (locally brewed rice whisky) or methylated spirits. These drinks are readily available and relatively cheap. Men would buy beer or what they referred to as ‘hot stuff’ that is spirits, from town if they could afford to.
about ten o’clock, eleven. From that time if you don’t take grog, from that time you
could plant fifty cassava, you plant dalo by that time . . . I hate those people grogging,
I hate it, just because the way you see them, they feel lazy, their eyes are different . . .
their eyes are all red.

This means the work load falls on other household members. Venina
notes the contrast in work routines in her experience,

I mean a woman does a lot of the work in the farm, the men they can just be in the farm
for a few hours, not hours a few minutes only, from that time they spend on the grog,
they go here and there, the woman when they left home in the morning, no, I mean
early in the morning if one daughter at home she does the cooking, the mother will go
to the farm. In the morning from six to ten, ten o’clock she come back home to have
her breakfast. From ten she can just have a rest for one hour . . . from two o’clock
goes back in the field. . .

It may also lead to increasing tension in the household as grog drinking
habits become a contentious issue, particularly between wife and husband. In
this area it was not customary to eat before a grog session so a man may want his
dinner at midnight and many of them expected their wives to get up and serve
their food at whatever time. This is perceived as part of a wife’s duty, to provide
daily meals and to serve them to her husband, but not all wives were happy with
the continual late nights and broken sleep. While cultivation of yaqona can be
profitable this is not possible for many households who do not have the
available land or the right growing conditions. The purchasing or bartering for
grog can be a strain on an already limited household budget.

The amount of leisure time a woman had would also depend on her
status and responsibilities within the household. An older woman can delegate
tasks to her daughters and daughter-in-laws and is freer to go visiting. Elenoa
mentioned this advantage when her eldest son got married. Her daughter-in-
law was able to take over many of her tasks giving her more time and mobility
as she was not so tied to the regimes of the household such as meal times.
Whereas a young mother with three pre-schoolers, an ailing elderly relative, her husband cutting cane full time and no one else to help her is overwhelmed with work. Women in this situation tended to work longer hours, from when they got up to the time they went to bed.

I often observed that girls and women were constantly doing some form of work even when it appeared they were sitting relaxing, such as sorting through home grown rice for small stones and unhusked rice, sorting bundles of beans for sale, mending and so on. The actual number of hours women worked was taken from the time diaries five respondents kept, interviews and my own participant observation, sixteen hours a day was common.

There were rest times, usually after lunch in the hottest part of the day and there were also occasions to visit neighbours and have a cup of tea. A lot of women’s socialising was done while doing tasks, particularly down at the river washing, at the teitei, weaving mats and during preparations for ceremonies and community work such as school bazaars. In reply to questions about what they enjoyed doing, female respondents mentioned activities such as reading, craft work, netball, volley ball and flower gardening.

Indicative of the constant nature of the type of labour women do, is the lack of clear delineation between one task and the next, and consequently the tendency to do simultaneous tasking. This is in contrast to the work that men do which generally focuses on one thing at a time. The following is an extract from field notes that recounts a conversation with Anita,

Talking to Anita while she was doing the dishes - keep asking her if I can help and she said she can do it. I said I know you can and we had a good laugh. She has said several times that “ladies do much work”. I asked her if she thought men worked as hard and she said they do one thing at a time - implying women do more tasks at once and more variety from when they get up until they go to bed (Fieldnotes 11 November 1996).
A classic example is when a woman is looking after children, answering their questions and teaching them skills while she is working in the fields attending to crops that are utilised for both cash and subsistence needs. It is interesting to note in this common scenario how these tasks are categorised by government statistics. Child care presumably comes under the nebulous domain of 'domestic duties' and is not counted at all unless it is remunerated. Agricultural work is differentiated into cash cropping and subsistence. The sale of crops,\(^{38}\) notably sugar is seen as vital to the national economy, while subsistence has only recently been recognised as part of the 'hidden' economy (see below regarding HEAS 1989-90; 1996 Fiji Census). The arbitrary and biased nature of what is and is not counted as 'work' that contributes to the 'national economy' is highlighted below. The following section looks at recent Fijian governmental categorisations of work through statistical surveys and makes for an interesting dialogue with respondents' experiences.

Statistical Queries

There is a growing body of literature on Pacific women that examines labour issues including the status of rural women.\(^ {39}\) Women's labour contribution on and off the farm is well documented in this literature which focuses on an advocacy approach, informing governmental policy, aid agencies and non-governmental organisation's (NGO) assistance programs. Many of these authors have critiqued official and scholarly ideas of labour which do not account for unremunerated work. For example Unaisi Naikatini (1993) has pointed out that the discrepancy between males (21.25 percent) and females (2.72 percent) noted as economically active in the agricultural sector in the 1986 Fiji Census was due to the recording system. The category of 'housewife' is

\(^{38}\) Cash cropping can also have an ambiguous status as some crops are grown purely for sale, such as sugar cane, while other crops are grown intentionally for subsistence as well as cash, or barter depending on household demands and surplus produce.

considered economically inactive and 60.7 percent of women were classified in this way (citing C. M. Sofield's study *Review of the Present Status of Nutrition and the Role of Women in Agriculture Development in Fiji* (1990) Naikatini, 1993:7).

The 1996 Fiji Census of Population and Housing goes some way towards rectifying the categorisation of 'economically active population'. This sector is divided into the employed and unemployed. The employed category is further differentiated into paid employment and self-employed. What is interesting is the way this census defines self-employed and is worth quoting at length,

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\ldots \text{includes all persons engaged in the production of goods and services for own and household consumption. In other words, all persons whose main activity during the reference period was farming or fishing for own or household consumption (subsistence work) are included in the category self-employed.} \ldots \text{It is particularly important that under the 1982 ICLS Labour Force definition, many women who before would have been classified as homemakers and therefore as not economically active are now included in the labour force. Consequently, the contribution of women in the economy is better recognised under this definition.}
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Furthermore, unpaid family workers are also considered as self-employed, irrespective of the number of hours worked during the reference period. In many cases, workers in this category are women. Once again, inclusion of these persons in the category self-employed recognises their contribution to the economy (*1996 Fiji Census*, 1998:20).

While this does make a considerable difference which is reflected by the statistics, 41.9 percent of women are defined as 'homemakers' in 1996 as compared to 60.7 percent in 1986, it still does not challenge the notion of domestic work being economically inactive. A puzzling phenomenon is how the categorisation of 'labour' and 'non-labour' arbitrarily divides a task or tasks in

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40 This census utilises the definitions of the Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) 1982. The economically active population is regarded as "all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour for production of goods and services as defined by the United Nations System of National Accounts and Balances during a specific time reference period" (cited in *1996 Census*, 1998:20).
a process. For example under the category 'subsistence' one can cultivate a
vegetable garden, harvest and collect produce and thus be economically active,
but as you carry your rourou and tavioka into the kitchen and begin cooking it
for the family's lunch you become a 'homemaker' and therefore economically
inactive according to census terms (cf. Waring, 1988:25).

The category of 'unpaid family labour' goes some way to acknowledging
the work done by family members. The criterion indicates that these people
often work in a family business or farm, and 'are members of the family who are
provided with food and lodging and share in the benefits of any profits which
arise from the joint family work but do not receive cash on a regular bases' (1996
Fiji Census, 1998:30). This should cover many of the respondents in the present
study.41 However, the criterion for age, fifteen years and above, and the
omission of 'domestic duties' means much of the work done to operate the farm
is officially unrecognised.

What do the current categorisations of labour tell us about what men and
women do? A comparative analysis of the 1996 census data in terms of gender
shows there are dramatic discrepancies in labour force participation and access to
paid work. Of the total population aged fifteen and above, which is evenly
divided between males and females, 59.4 percent are classified as participating in
the labour force. Within this group 67.2 percent are men and 32.8 percent are
women. Of those not in the labour force 25.9 percent are male and 74.1 percent
are female. The categories for not being in the labour force are 'Not looking;
Homemakers; Students; Disabled; Retired; Others' (1996 Fiji Census, 1998:21). As
mentioned above 41.9 percent of all females over fifteen are classified as
Homemakers, this compares to 1.02 percent of the males.

Within the labour force criteria there is provision for those who are doing
subsistence, whether combined with 'money work' or not and 50.2 percent of the

41 I do not know how people in the present study responded to the questions on economic activity in
the 1996 Census.
labour force carry out subsistence activities. From the total number of labour
force participants, 29.7 percent combine subsistence with 'money work' while
20.5 percent are involved purely with subsistence. I would expect members of
the farming households in the present study to fall under these categories as they
are all involved in subsistence work, while access to 'money work' is variable.
The gender discrepancy is striking when you analyse these categories; of those
who combine remunerated work with subsistence, 81.5 percent are men and
only 18.5 percent are women. The division of those doing only subsistence is
60.5 percent female and 39.5 percent male. This indicates men have more direct
access to money although it does not tell us how that money is distributed and
controlled.

This analysis of specific aspects of the 1996 Fiji Census of Population and
Housing highlights the need for a more detailed account of what women
actually do and questions the usefulness of terminology such as 'homemaker'.
Alexander Stephens (1993) in her review of an United Nations Food and
Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
(RAPA) initiative to develop better data collection methods of women's work in
rural areas states that the pilot surveys demonstrated the inadequacy of

exclusive definitions (those which exclude women) and concepts such as are in current
use relating to work and worker, agricultural labourer, economic activity, head of
household, holding and holder, main/primary activity, formal and informal, productive
and reproductive, public and private (Stephens, 1993:52, emphasis original).

The report from the Fiji government's Department For Women and
Culture by Heather Booth (1994) called Women of Fiji: A Statistical Gender
Profile notes that there is a need in statistical data collection on farm work to
distinguish;

- Farmers by sex, by race by age, occupation and educational level
Farmers and household population by sex, by race, by hours spent on farm, hours spent fishing
For farms farmed by women: size of farm by actual land use by tenure and crop and livestock activities.
Farms by sex of farmer by farm labour by sex by remuneration
Time-use by sex by race
(Booth, 1994:68)

The Fiji Bureau of Statistics (1991) *Statistical Report on The Household Economic Activity Survey 1989-90 (HEAS 1989-90)* gives an insight into contemporary governmental thinking about categories like 'economically active', 'informal/formal', 'domestic work'. Shankar (1991) notes in the preface to the report that deciding upon operational definitions along with the application of terminology can be difficult and that this was corrected when identified. One of the main objectives of *HEAS 1989-90* is to provide information on the households contribution to Fiji’s National Income,

to determine the types of economic activity carried on by Households; to obtain data on the value of gross output, net of inputs and other operating costs, and of capital formation of the household sector . . . (*HEAS 1989-90*, 1991:2).

The report goes on to recognise the importance of the ‘informal’ sector to the economy,

1.2.3. In Fiji, as in many island and developing countries, the informal sector of economic activity comprises a significant proportion of all economic activity in the country. A considerable amount of the agricultural production and its allied activities, such as growing of crops, animal husbandry and fishing, are carried out by the informal or household sector. Even in the case of non-agricultural products many activities such as processing of agricultural and fishing commodities, manufacture of products based on locally available materials, handicrafts, smallscale quarrying, retail

42 A secondary objective was to document ‘some demographic, education, social and economic details about individual members of the household’ which are comparable to the 1986 Census (*HEAS 1989-90*, 1991:2).
trade, repair services, professional personal and community services, are carried out on a household basis not only in the rural areas but also in the urban areas.

1.2.4. As most of these households based economic activities are invariably not registered, it is not possible to include them in the establishment type surveys (called the organised or formal sector) of economic activity. To the extent this source of data collection is available we have removed these households from the frame (universe) from which households to be surveyed have been selected (HEAS 1989-90, 1991:2).

To qualify for the second stage of the HEAS 1989-90, at least one household member had to be involved in an economic activity based on the household within the last thirty days. There were certain exceptions, namely those activities which were registered through licensing, presumably because they would show up in formal sector surveys. What is interesting is the way economic activity and economically active persons are defined. Economic activity is the production of goods and services 'for its own use only, for sale to other economic activity units or to other households or partly for home consumption and partly for sale or exchange' (HEAS 1989-90, 1991:5).

An economically active person was defined in terms of age and activity. In both the HEAS 1989-90 and the 1996 Fiji Census fifteen years of age is used to demarcate between children and adults and consequently defines the recording of their economic contribution. In the HEAS 1989-90 children who were not full time students, were asked 'the number of days worked, the industry of that work and the employment status'. Unfortunately this data has been excluded from the main tables. The economic contributions of people who were full time students, including those fifteen years and over is excluded (HEAS 1989-90, 1991:5) as the statistical categories here only define a person as having one main 'activity'.

The 1996 Fiji Census only recorded the economic activities of those persons born in 1981 or before. They also chose not to record the work of full time students fifteen years and over, even though the enumerators' guide book did acknowledge some students worked in their holidays (Instructions to
Enumerators 1996:29). The school children in the present study contributed considerably to the operation of the farm on a daily basis as well as working full time on the farm during their school holidays, which questions the validity of their exclusion in those surveys.

These exclusions are made explicit in 'Table C: Economically and Not-Economically Active Population and Unemployment Rate by Division (As per survey)' (HEAS 1989-90, 1991:11) where students, housewives and others - not working are tabled under 'Not Economically Active'. The range of activities listed as 'economic activity' is extensive and I think provides for some very useful information, particularly on the variety and complexity of the 'informal sector'. As with the 1996 Fiji Census, the domestic work that 'housewives' do is classified as economically inactive. The conceptual block that relegates 'domestic duties' as not contributing to the economic well being of the nation obscures the full extent of women's work and their contribution to the economy. These tasks are not seen as productive yet when they are transferred out of the familial context to the monetary market they immediately become recognised as 'producing goods and services'. Some studies have tried to calculate how much a 'housewife' would be paid for all the tasks she does by basing the pay rate on comparable work in the market place, such as a chef, a manager, a cleaner, a nanny, a teacher and a laundry service. Many feminists have argued for the recognition of unpaid domestic work, notably Marilyn Waring (1988) who critiques and questions the fundamentals of the United Nations System of National Accounts (UNSNA) that most countries base their data collection and economic analysis on, including Fiji.

As Stephens (1993) points out the categories used currently are misleading and invariably marginalise women. I would also add children. For example one of the consequences of not recognising domestic labour as economically

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43 I also recognise that men perform 'domestic tasks' but believe in general the majority of this work is expected of, and left up to, firstly women and then children.
active has dire results for predominantly women in the awarding of matrimonial property. The Matrimonial Causes Act, Cap.51, s.86 and common law determine the distribution of matrimonial properties in a divorce (Jalal, 1993:32). As discussed in Chapter Five this is calculated on the basis of economic contribution which is only measured in terms of monetary input. The unpaid work that women do in the home, raising children, caring for relatives, working on the farm that contributes to the households economy as well as making it possible for their husbands to be involved in paid work is not counted. This can obviously have devastating effects on women (and often their children if they get custody) who divorce, particularly considering it is the man who usually gets possession of the matrimonial home.

This section has examined the government’s discourse on work in terms of statistics and the national economy. The ‘government’ is not a homogenous entity with one view but a collection of different agencies that may be in tension with each other. For example the Department of Women and Culture has called for more comprehensive statistics on the activities of rural women (see above). These concerns about rural women’s involvement in agriculture and as unpaid family workers is to a certain degree reflected in recent statistical surveys. MAFF&ALTA has recognised the part women play in agriculture and consequently are beginning to sensitise staff to gender issues and recruiting more women as field extension officers. How does FSC, which is 67 percent government owned, view family labour? The beginnings of the smallholder cane farming system outlined in Chapter One give some indication of the historical context of FSC organisation. Chapter Seven addresses the contemporary relationship between farming families and FSC and highlights the contrasts between discourses and practices of ‘work’ on smallholder cane farms.

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44 This statement is based on interviews with MAFF extension staff and senior personnel at the Labasa office in 1996.
Conclusion

The above discussion of labour on case study farms incorporated a variety of perspectives in an attempt to convey the dynamics of operating these smallholdings. To summarise, the chapter aimed to make visible the work of women and children and to explain the way daily tasks are interrelated and contribute to the overall running of the farms by examining the organisation and allocation of tasks. This account explored the ways work allocation is informed by ideas on gender, age, seniority and kinship relations and how this plays out in the daily lives of families/households. Throughout this discussion respondents' experiences and comments on farm life provided glimpses of what that work means to people and how they feel about what they do.

Labour allocation of tasks is complex and dynamic and although it is informed by gender and generational constructs there are also considerations such as labour availability and needs (cf. Fairbairn-Dunlop 1994:85). While quite rigorous protocols and socialisation processes define ideals of masculinity and femininity, these ideals have to be played out within the contingencies of daily life. However, I do not want to overstate the fluidity of daily life on the farms. From my own perspective, the segregation of work (and leisure) in terms of gender, seniority and age seemed quite well defined and certainly routinised. It was only after some time that I realised these boundaries were not so fixed and that the maintenance of them appeared to be more on the men's side rather than the women's. By this I refer back to Raijieli's comment that women can do all the work but that it is men who refuse to do 'women's work'.

The processes of teaching children skills and expectations of the tasks children will perform is orientated by gender, age and seniority within the context of labour availability and family attitudes. Families in the present study expected children to work hard both at home and at school. Younger children though did appear to have considerable time to play. The leisure time of older children and teenagers was variable and I started to notice the gendered aspects
of labour and mobility meant girls were more constrained in their freedom of movement and they were very involved with the constant demands of domestic work.

The purpose of including governmental classifications was to provide a linkage with national discourses on work and the economy. This highlighted how that which constitutes 'economic activity' is socially constructed and informed by ideas on social roles. This relegates many of the activities carried out by family members as economically inactive because they are perceived as part of family life and familial obligation. Thus the categories 'housewives' and 'children under fifteen' or 'full time students' specifies groups of people who do not contribute to the economy. I argue that the work women do as 'housewives' and the work children do outside of school is economic activity. Under the definition of providing labour for the production of goods and services, all their tasks, including those that are categorised as domestic involve this. Many feminists have argued that domestic and other forms of unpaid work done by household members is an integral part of the economy (for example Bolabola, 1994; Emberson-Bain, 1994; Jalal, 1994; Sachs, 1996; Shameem, 1990; Sharma, n.d.; Slatter, 1984; Waring, 1988).

The Fijian Bureau of Statistics has gone some way toward recognising unpaid labour and have recently tried to account for the work women do in subsistence agriculture and family businesses. Since Ester Boserup's (1970) seminal work, the 'counting' of unpaid labour done by women on family farms has occupied feminists in different academic disciplines, institutions and activist organisations. Theoretical turns in feminism have taken the 'counting' from issues of visibility to phenomenology and experiential accounts.45 I think visibility is still extremely important, although I concur with observation's such as Sachs (1996:12) that an official recognition of women's work does not

necessarily correlate with a change in their circumstances. Legislation and application can be vastly different as attitudes are not contingent on law. The law has the possibility to influence attitudes and to effect material change, for example with the Matrimonial Properties Act in Fiji (see Jalal, 1993, 1997).

What people actually do on the farm and the way it is officially accounted for highlighted the problems of defining and categorising ‘work’. Respondents themselves talked about doing the housework and the farm work in terms of different kinds of activities. Yet on closer examination respondents’ perception and performance of tasks is far more complex than these two spheres first suggest. ‘Housework’ refers to tasks such as sweeping the house, making the beds, dishes, washing and general tidying and cleaning. People also talk about cooking, child care and looking after relatives and visitors as work women are very involved in. The sewing and craft work such as weaving mats and baskets was regarded as very important women’s work for some Fijian families. Rather than the term ‘domestic work’, there is an idea of ‘women’s work’, which feminises many of these activities. But this of course is not all that women do and on the case study farms they were expected to be very involved with farm work, including both subsistence agriculture and cash cropping.

While different tasks involving farm work were gendered at certain times, for example; women weeded; used the hoe more; winnowed rice and maintained the vegetable gardens during the harvesting season; while men ploughed with bullocks and tractor and harvested cane. This has to be contextualised within the agricultural calendar and the issue of labour availability. There was no strict dichotomy between men participating in cash crops while women provide subsistence produce. Men are generally very much involved with subsistence crops and the sale/barter/exchange of surplus crops when they are not harvesting cane. Women and children play a major role in the cultivation of cane and tend crops for home use as well as for sale/barter and exchange (see Chapter Seven).
Several of the female respondents emphasised personal interest in different aspects of their work. Some took extreme pride in cooking and presentation of the house, while others preferred to be working in the fields and delegated housework and child care to others such as daughters as soon as they were old enough. It is perhaps time to make explicit what I mean when I use the term domestic work in the present study. The planning, processing, preparation and cooking of food, collecting (and chopping) firewood and water, cleaning, tidying, washing, ironing, sewing, mending, maintenance and making household items, emotional, organisational, intellectual, physical work in caring for children, spouse, relatives, other householders, visitors and self. This should not be confused with respondents' conceptualisation of 'housework' or 'women's work', nor is it necessarily what the Fiji Bureau of Statistics means by 'domestic duties'.

Categorising work can obscure what is actually going on and the way different tasks are interrelated. The 'category' can over simplify and detach activities from complex contexts as well as imposing hegemonic constructs. This criticism applies to social science discourse as well and it is a constant dilemma of how to signpost descriptions and explanations. I hope by providing a variety of perspectives as well as a detailed description that the present study will contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of working and living on these smallholder farms.

Integral to production is consumption and the next chapter explores the decision making and control over resources by household members. The chapter broadens out from intra and interhousehold relations in this respect to look at local and global negotiations with the sugar industry.
Chapter Seven
Negotiating Resources

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on production and the work respondents did. This chapter expands on the way gender and generation orientate the household economy and looks at the negotiation of resources. Labour too is a resource, and the above discussions of how it is organised within the study households are integral to this account of the allocation and control of resources. The chapter draws together some of the points that have already been discussed concerning exchange, subsistence and sale. I explore how these different household forms of production interrelate and are linked with local, national and global economies, with a focus on the sugar industry.

The chapter begins the discussion of negotiating resources at the intrahousehold level and I highlight respondents' attitudes to some of the main resources such as food, land and money. I then look at interhousehold negotiations in the form of exchange and sale of goods and services. A glimpse of how households are socio-economically situated in relation to neighbouring households gives a more comprehensive picture of how farms operate on a daily basis. The delineation of 'household' is questionable at times as people and goods ebb and flow constantly through 'it' in a variety of complex networks. This highlights the dynamic nature of any grouping and is also a reminder that 'households' are not autonomous units nor are they homogenous entities as they are internally differentiated (see for example Kabeer, 1994; Moore, 1988, 1994).

The chapter broadens out to look at the way the household economies intersect with local, national and global economies. I examine respondents'
relationships with the sugar industry and their negotiations with FSC both individually, as members of ‘growers’ households and as part of the represented collective of ‘growers’. I have primarily focused the relationship around the sale and purchasing of cane and sugar. The payment cane contractors receive for sugar cane is first examined within the context of established protocols and the issues impacting on production during the fieldwork period. Secondly this is examined in terms of Fiji’s sugar sales and the overseas preferential trading agreements which directly impact on the income of smallholders. Third, I examine negotiations over knowledge and effective production in terms of growers contact with FSC extension services and the area of research and development. Underlying these sections is the question of the relationship between family labour, the smallholder farm economy and the sugar industry.

**Intrahousehold Negotiations**

The above discussions on marriage and hierarchy within the household and between extended family households give a good indication of authority and control over resources. When a young bride comes to her husband’s farm and lives with his parents, decisions about her labour contribution and the resources she will receive such as food and clothing have already been considerably predetermined by local cultural norms and the socio-economic environment she comes to. However, more importantly will be the disposition of household members she is coming to live with, and the relationships she develops with her new family. Moore (1988:56) writes,

> The control and allocation of resources within the household is a complex process which always has to be seen in relation to a web of rights and obligations. The management of labour, income and resources is something which is crucially bound up with household organisation and the sexual division of labour.
This is also crosscut with notions of generation and seniority that orientate peoples authority and control over various resources. In the marriage chapters the religious ceremonies and expectations of respondents expressed a fundamental obligation between husband and wife. Their ‘roles’ were perceived as complementary and their marriage was a commitment to honour their obligations to each other, their families and their children. How is this played out in regards to other resources besides labour? How does familial obligation and commitment perpetuate exploitative relationships not only within the household but also between household members and the wider economy? This section begins the discussion by highlighting some of the negotiations that take place within the households of the present study.

In both Fijian and Fiji Indian households women and children were expected to leave the best food for men. Ideally, men are supposed to consider that others have to eat after them and not consume everything (cf. Ravuvu, 1991 for Fijian cultural tradition). In an interview, the local health nurse said that malnutrition among children was more of a problem in the past and was not that common in this area now (see A. A. J. Jansen et al, 1991). Two Fiji Indian women, who were related to respondents’ families and had had problems with their husbands and in-laws, said that they and their very young children had been withheld food at times. While there is no way of knowing how widespread this is, it is a disturbing form of control.

The allocation of food during a meal is also dependent on the occasion and type of food. If there are guests the food may be laid out and people help themselves or on more informal occasions they will be served as part of the family. As a guest I was treated to the best and generous helpings, which often embarrassed me. The ethos of care and sharing in Fijian culture has been discussed by authors such as Ravuvu (1991) and Becker (1995). The calls of mai

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1 I was interested to note that in many of the houses I visited there were posters on the wall that depicted food groups for healthy nutrition. The children had been given these at school.
'ana (invitation to ‘come and eat’ in the local dialect) to people passing by are part of this ethos. In pot based cooking of Fijian style soups an extra cup of water spreads the soup out and a big pot of tavioka can cater for more people. Viliame and Mere said that Fijians will call out mai ‘ana even if they have hardly anything to give. My experience of Fiji Indian hospitality was that people went to a lot of trouble to make their guests feel welcome and were very generous with what resources they had. For all the families, food is often the only thing they can give people.

Access to land in terms of ownership and use have been discussed above (see Chapter Five). An interesting aspect of Fiji Indian intrahousehold land use was when children spoke of having their own gardens where they mainly grew vegetables for family consumption. An extract from fieldnotes outlines the different gardens family members were working on one afternoon when I visited Roshni’s place on my way home from visiting other farms.

Excellent timing as got there about 4.15p.m., Roshni was watering her cabbage patch, across the road her nine year old brother was harrowing a field with bullocks with the help of a friend [a slightly older Fijian boy]. This was his garden to plant beans in. About a ten minute walk down the road the mother and grandmother were planting tobacco. The two younger kids were playing along the road but when I came they came to the field with me and we helped with watering and planting. Water supply comes from a small creek at the back of the tobacco field, cabbage field and check bean field. Is it natural or part of an irrigation system? Also ask if they own everything they produce off this land. [they do] They will sell the tobacco they grow, the father also smokes it. It takes about three months to grow and not sure how long to dry. After a cup of chai [tea] I returned home about 6p.m. . . . (Fieldnotes, 22 July 1996).

Devika, who was not yet married and lived with her parents also liked having her own vegetable garden. Their whole river garden seemed to be divided up into areas that different household members had planted. However, this did not translate into personal ownership as the produce was used generally

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2 Roshni, a Fiji Indian girl was fourteen at the time.
for family consumption. Devika said it gave her a sense of satisfaction to see how 'her' garden was going. It reminded me of having a plot in the vegetable garden when I was at school and I wondered if this is a system for planting and cultivation that these Fiji Indian families use to encourage their children to farm. In Roshni's family case, they sell quite a lot of vegetables and the children may have also been growing these vegetables for money.

The arrangements in regard to the management and control of money varied between the households. Sharmila explained to me the arrangement between herself and her husband,

Sue: You were telling me before just thinking about between men and women, you and your husband share the . . .
Sharmila: Mostly I have to look after the family, most of the time I have to buy all the goods.
Sue: Do you control the money?
Sharmila: Most of the time I control the money.
Sue: Do many Indian women do that or is it mainly the men?
Sharmila: Indians less ah, only some . . . whatever he wants I do for him ah, I never stop him for drinking or anything. If he wants the money he can take it but only when he gets his pay he gives to me to run the family.

Some of the other Fiji Indian women respondents who were not living with their parent-in-laws also took care of the household budget. Major decisions over finances and spending were still primarily in the control of their husbands. However, for all the respondents it depended on the couple how much negotiation over financial decisions there was. Mayer (1961) also found in his study of Fiji Indian smallholders that personalities come into play when looking at family decision making processes.

The basic household relationship was, of course, that of a man and his wife. This was one of public dissociation, both ideally and usually in practice. Spouses seldom showed any emotion towards each other, and addressed each other in the third person. Though outwardly the husband had complete control, this by no means always
represented the actual balance of power between spouses. Wives might have considerable influence over their husbands, though women took no part in public associations or in factions, and though men arranged all important transactions with outsiders. In most households the women were given care of the money, hiding it in some place about the house, and giving their menfolk the amounts they asked for. This was because women stayed at home more than men, and so could watch the family treasure more effectively. But women in some households also controlled the amounts of money spent, and over-rode their husbands on matters of economic policy. In one or two of these households the women did not attempt to hide their dominance, and argued with their menfolk in front of visitors (Mayer, 1961:165).

Venina, a Fijian women with five children explained how the finances are organised in their household. The lease money the whole family receives as mataqali land owners is divided between her and her husband. For example if they get F$2000 for six months then they take F$1000 each.

Venina: I told him that the money you give me I know where I spend it, the money I’ve got, he told me, that money I use for the whole family. The money he use to give me, that money I use to spend on their clothes, shoes, everything that is not in the house I have to give. The money he keeps, if there is no sugar here or flour or something, it’s like that.

Sue: So he does the shopping in town?
Venina: Yeah
Sue: So you don’t do the shopping in town for that sort of thing?
Venina: No, the goods he does, for the food. I use to write a list.
Sue: You do the clothes...
Venina: Clothes, pillows, mosquito net yeah . . . I have to see everything inside the house. . . . That’s my work and his is if no more flour or sugar I have to tell him, “no flour, no sugar, no tea” and he says “I am going to town tomorrow write a list down so you can give it to me.” I see it’s much better for us, if both of us will keep the money, myself I don’t use it to keep the money because I’ve got a husband and he is the head of the house ah.

Venina said she buys clothes for the family just two times a year, in June and December. She often buys material for her three daughters, spending about F$20 for each girl.
I have to give the material to an Indian lady to sew, after sewing they need the money, F$4 for one dress, I cannot give at the same time those three different materials, so I just give one and another day another daughter.

Generally while some of the women managed the household budget and identified the needs of the family, their husbands had control over the money and had more disposable income to spend on themselves (cf. Kabeer, 1994:104). This must be seen within the context of family commitments and obligations (see section on exchange below) and peoples' perceived rights and needs, the cost of family celebrations, religious and community commitments and farm and family expenses.

The costs of producing cane can take over half of a household's cash income. Production costs per tonne of cane are estimated to be between F$25-$35 depending on transport costs and marginality of land (Fiji Times, 14 July 1997:6). Anil said that fifty percent of their cane income goes back to FSC to buy fertiliser, one bag cost F$19.50 at that time and their farm used sixty bags of fertiliser to around 250 tonnes of cane for the 1996 season. Transport is a major cost for growers and Anup stated that it cost him F$4.50 per tonne to have his cane taken by tractor from his farm to the train depot. Hemraj Mangal, Chief Extension Officer at FSC, said that the cost of production had been rising by F$1.60 per tonne from 1992 to 1996 (pers. comm. 1997).

Other ongoing expenses for respondents besides farming costs, buying food, fuel, clothes and household items were rent, education and health costs.

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3 In a paper delivered by the Chief Executive of the SCGC, Grish Maharaj, at the Sugar Industry Seminar in 1996 the costs of cane production for growers are outlined. Maharaj (1996:6) acknowledges the variation in costs, for example harvesting and transport; a portable line gang situated near the main rail lines costs about F$12 per tonne while a distant lorry gang can cost as high as F$22 per tonne. An average estimate of F$29.50 per tonne for total costs is given which is 'exclusive of family and labour' costs.

4 Other people said the price was F$18 or F$18.50 during mid 1996. So I am not sure if Anil's figure represents a price increase at that time, the interview is dated 28/10/96.

5 Note this is transport costs only and does not include paying for harvesting.

6 For example, kerosene for lamps; gas for cookers; diesel for tractor and generator.
The smallholder farms in the present study rely on a combination of cash income, exchange networks and subsistence living to meet their needs. The goods and services produced by unpaid family labour, including domestic work are integrated within all these modes of production.

When I asked respondents to estimate how much they relied on cash bought food stuffs from town and how much on subsistence their answers varied widely. The households with the least amount of cash income relied heavily on subsistence, one Fijian couple stated they only spent about F$5-6 a week on articles such as salt, sugar, flour and soap and 90 percent of their food would come from subsistence. However, circumstances changed when this couple had a child because the child could not be breast fed and they had to buy milk formula in town, an additional F$16 a week. With the future support of their child in mind the couple were planning to increase their cash income.

A Fiji Indian household who relied mainly on the sale of their 112 tonnes of cane said that around 70 to 80 percent of their weekly food intake would come from their own land. They supplemented their income with sales of surplus produce and were frequently exchanging goods and services with neighbours. Other families estimated that they would buy half of their food stuffs and produce the rest themselves. These were mainly Fiji Indian families whose food preferences required that they buy more sharps, dhal, spices and ghee in town (cf. Jensen, 1989:100). There was an impression among some of the Fijian respondents that the Fiji Indian way of life costs more money than the Fijian. Further research needs to be done detailing smallholder household income and expenditure utilising cash, subsistence and exchange. The following sections give a qualitative account of respondents' involvement in exchange and cash negotiations.

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7 See the Fiji Poverty Report (1997) for a comprehensive survey and discussion of data pertaining to household income and expenditure in Fiji. Also see Ali (1986) and Jensen (1989) for quantitative analysis of smallholder cane farming and farm labouring households.
'Exchange' and the Household Economy

The term 'exchange' is used in the present study to cover a variety of transactions including exchange at ceremonies, obligatory gifting of goods and services and bartering goods and services. The distinctions between 'gift' and 'barter' have been debated in the anthropological literature (see Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones, 1992 for a good discussion). Marilyn Strathern (1992) who has compared the two in the context of her research in the central Highlands of Papua New Guinea, has noted the similarities between gift and barter transactions. Both rely on the perspectives of the trading parties and their perceived value of the other's object[s]. It is the social standing of the group that the object belongs to that gives it its value. The key difference between barter and gift transactions is agency. Focusing on the process of extraction Strathern perceives Melanesian gift exchange as based on coercion and persuasion. 'People must compel others to enter into debt: an object in the regard of one actor must be made to become an object in the regard of another' (Strathern, 1992:177). The coercive element is in placing the recipient into debt, having established mutual interest they are obligated to accept the gift and to reciprocate. It is the perspectives of each party that are traded, not some essential value of the objects, thus the two objects exchanged may not necessarily be dissimilar, for example a pig for a pig (Strathern, 1992:170, 181).

Bartering is to some extent a freer exchange than gifting as the participants are able to negotiate over what they will exchange. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones (1992:7, 18) say that interest categorises bartering where each party already desires the goods of the other and 'this is the only situation in which one will accept an object'. They refute the stereotype of bartering as a purely economic exchange made on the basis of preconditioned human needs (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992:2). All bartering takes place within the context of cultural relations. As with gift exchange, there is no inherent value in the
objects that allow them to be compared and traded, rather it is the value that the participants place on the objects.

Humphrey and Hugh-Jones (1992:2) emphasise that there is no one definitive definition of bartering and that it has to be understood within the social context that transactions are conducted.

Although we see barter as separable from other types of exchange - gift exchange, credit, formalised trade and monetised commodity exchange - there are not always hard and fast boundaries between them: barter in one or another of its varied forms coexists with these other forms of exchange, is often linked in sequence with them and shares some of their characteristics.

As demonstrated by the marriage ceremonies, outlined above, many different 'types' of exchange can be happening conjointly, contributing to the one event. Exchange, including gift forms, happens cross-culturally and is not bound within the confines of one ethnic group. The following discussion contextualises different exchange 'styles' to explore the various ways exchange is part of the farm economy. My aim is to describe the different types of exchange that went on between households, extended families and the community, the prevalence and the reliance on these forms of exchange. The discussion begins by looking at Fijian and Fiji Indian ceremonies and then moves on to forms of exchange such as *kerekere*, *laliki*, and barter. Monetary exchange is explored in the following sections.

I have already discussed Fijian exchange networks above in regards to marriage ceremonies. There are many other ceremonial occasions where exchange takes place, the most notable being funeral ceremonies. I did not attend any funerals but was told that they can be extremely large affairs with kinfolk coming from miles away to pay their respects. This involves bringing animals, particularly cows and pigs, to be eaten at the funeral, other food stuffs such as root crops; *yaqona*; *tabua*; kerosene; mats and *masi*. 
Figure 36. Drums of kerosene and beef to be distributed among mataqali members.

Figure 37. Weaving a voivoi mat.
Figure 38. Women in kitchen preparing food for Ramayan evening.

Figure 39. Preparing sweets for prasad.
I remember one evening staying at Joni's farm, when he said the family had three funerals and could not afford to contribute to all of them. The male members of the family had a meeting that night to decide which funeral they would go to and what they should take. Joni's wife was an excellent mat weaver and with her two daughters-in-law, who were also very skilled, made mats for ceremonies as well as home use. Raijieli, one of the daughters-in-law, said she only had time to weave at night because she was too busy during the day. She regarded mat weaving as a very important attribute for a Fijian woman and would begin teaching her daughters when they were about twelve. When I asked Raijieli if she thought there was a decrease in women weaving mats she replied that women in town do not weave as much and their families have to buy the mats. However, not all the Fijian women respondents wove mats and so had to buy them.

While kinship relations, which contextualise a lot of exchange networks are predominantly made up of either Fijians or Fiji Indians there is some intermarriage. Perhaps more prevalent though are forms of community exchange that support the more formalised ceremonial exchanges, whereby neighbours will help each other prepare for ceremonies and provide services and goods.

The Fiji Indian respondents participated in many ceremonies that had underlying expectations of reciprocity. These included, for example the Ramayan prayer recitals that circulated around Sanatan Dharm households. Each household, when hosting these evenings where fifty or so people could attend, would provide food, sweets (prasad), tea and yaqona. As far as I could ascertain the household shouldered the majority of the cost of these goods, the reciprocity lying in the circulatory hosting. However, in terms of labour, preparing, cooking and serving the food extended family members as well as neighbours would help. At the Ramayan I attended it was the women who
prepared all the food, as opposed to the Hindu weddings where men were in charge of cooking the curries.

Another interesting point is that Fijian neighbours, predominantly the men, attended all the Ramayan I went to and indeed most of the other Hindu ceremonies I attended such as weddings, Diwali and Raksha Bandhan. Gender segregation is the norm for both cultural groups and this of course has a bearing on what men and women did at these ceremonies and why some were present. For example at one Ramayan only the Fijian men came, attending after the prayer songs to drink grog with the Fiji Indian men. At another Ramayan, several Fijian women neighbours who were good friends, helped with the preparations, cooking and dishes, and their whole families attended throughout the ceremony. Quite a few Fijian men also attended without their families. This reflects the mobility of men to go out at night and socialise with their neighbours.

The marriage chapters provided in some detail the meanings ceremonies have for family relations and kinship networks in the present study. While ceremonies are an expression of cultural, religious and kinship relations they also provide an opportunity for neighbours and friends to get together and celebrate with the hosts. It would be interesting to explore this further as obviously these relationships also involve alliance, obligation, status as well as camaraderie and enjoyment.

A main obligation for Fijians was soli, (giving) to the church. This included gifts such as food and mats to the minister as they were solely supported by their congregation. In daily life on the farm, Fijian forms of obligation such as kerekere and laliki regularly take place. As discussed above these forms of obligation help to maintain and support kinship networks. Kerekere goes beyond kinship obligations though as Fijians may ask for goods

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8 See page 198 regarding the Mothers' Club providing caretaking and cleaning services for their local church.
(and labour) from neighbours including Fiji Indians. While this can be a way of maintaining relationships and act as a buffer in times of need, the overuse and abuse of kerekere can cause problems. There is supposed to be an element of reciprocity in the transaction that is stored away for future return, although if you give you do not necessarily expect something in return. In a conversation with Jimi and Apenisa they said in the old days you gave and then bided your time to ask for a favour in return. They emphasised that kerekere is a form of obligation, it is not charity. Jimi said that you can get really annoyed if you get asked more than once by the same people as they have gone around everyone else and come back to you if they can not get anything.

There was regular exchange between some of the households. For example at Joni’s farm the two extended family households would give each other food if requested in the form of kerekere or if one of the households had guests in the form of laliki.\(^9\) Sometimes the households would eat together combining resources but predominantly they operated two separate kitchens which defined them as two households. The cash resources were also shared in an arrangement between the households. For the sake of the respondents’ privacy I have decided not to expand on the details of their financial arrangements.\(^10\)

Neighbours would exchange in the form of barter or gift goods and services. For example Joni’s Fiji Indian neighbours would give them rice and they would give cassava and dalo. When Joni went fishing he would bring them back some fish. When I asked Anup about the interaction between neighbours he said “We help each other, they help us, friendly way.” Helping

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\(^9\) See Chapter Five footnote 19 page 151 for an explanation and example of laliki.

\(^10\) The questions I asked respondents about money were very reserved as I did not wish to offend them although no one told me that this would be offensive. This was undoubtedly due to the tabu on inquiring about a person’s financial situation in my own Pakeha culture, where it is considered rude. I obtained estimates in percentages or approximations of what respondents felt about their income and expenditure patterns. It certainly would be valuable to obtain quantitative data on the farm economy, however the qualitative type of information I did obtain contributes to an understanding of how the smallholder farm economy operates and why people make the decisions they do.
neighbours, or giving them food need not necessarily imply an expectation that the favour would be returned. Interaction between neighbours can have a variety of dimensions, for example in a recent letter from Anita, she tells me her young son who is two will spend the whole day at the neighbours. As stated above, children would often float between households, eating there and being under the supervision of adults or older children. This type of interaction between neighbours is a largely invisible part of the farm economy as child care falls under the category of 'domestic work'.

The different 'forms' of exchange are partially demarcated by a factor of time. Mauss (1954:34-35) notes this,

In any society it is in the nature of the gift in the end to being its own reward. By definition, a common meal, a distribution of *kava*, or a charm worn, cannot be repaid at once. Time has to pass before a counter-presentation can be made. Thus the notion of time is logically implied when one pays a visit, contracts a marriage or an alliance . . . Now a gift necessarily implies the notion of credit. Economic evolution has not gone from barter to sale and from cash to credit. Barter arose from the system of gifts given and received on credit, simplified by drawing together the moments of time which had previously been distinct.

Barter necessitates negotiating the terms of the exchange which is to be returned within a short time frame, as opposed to a stored up obligation. An example was when Milika immediately gave a Fiji Indian woman cabbages in return for scraping coconuts. This can be contrasted with Seru cutting cane for his Uncle. Although he is paid in cash to do this, he also does it as a favour to his Uncle who needs a substitute cutter. Seru said the only reason he does it (he could make more money tending to his own gardens at the *koro*) is because it is a form of obligation, his Uncle had asked him and he knows he can ask a favour from his Uncle in the future. Family obligation is directed by seniority - it is difficult for this young man to refuse his Uncle, and also this transaction is directly linked to the cash economy. In fact many of the Fijian smallholders
relied on extended family from neighbouring koro to work as cane cutters during harvesting.

Besides the sugar cane harvesting gangs, groups of labourers are formed to carry out seasonal agricultural tasks. For example during the first week of my stay at the farm in May 1996 the rice was being harvested and a group of about twenty people from surrounding farms and the neighbouring koro came to help. The reciprocity in this type of arrangement is negotiated either as returned farm work, (in this case tractor work) payment in kind, such as getting some rice or other produce or as a form of kerekere where the favour is to be returned at some later date.

The HEAS 1989-90 report does recognise exchange under the category Transfer in Kind. This category is differentiated as transfer in kind; to landlord; to labour; as gifts or loan. The analysis indicates that 'five percent (5%) of all household based gross output was issued as gifts or loans' (HEAS 1989-90, 1991:13). Transfers in kind to labour account for 0.4 percent of gross output and to landlord is 0.3 percent. The 1996 Fiji Census does not have a category for exchange activity within economic activity but it does recognise that persons may be paid in kind 'i.e. food and lodging' (1996 Fiji Census, 1998:22) under the category of unpaid labour in the section Employment Status. This census also mentions in the same section that people who earn a living by sale may not always be rewarded by cash (1996 Fiji Census, 1998:22).

Some respondents thought that there was less exchange in the form of barter going on between households now than in the past. As one Fiji Indian respondent put it, in the old days there was more barter because people did not have as much money so they could not buy things (cf. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992:4). This brings up the question of class differential and this respondent actually said that the rich people do not need to exchange goods and services (for the daily operation of the farm) because they can buy goods and hire labourers. Fijian respondents said their Fijian customary exchange was going on
as much as ever. Joni said that Fijian customary exchange would bring in the same amount as cane sales and market gardening combined. He stated that “you will not see Fijians very poor like some people” because their Fijian custom means people can ask for food and goods when they need it. “Fijian never hungry no, new life and old life are going slowly ah, that is why Fijians don’t change very fast ah.”

Obligatory forms of giving were part of all the respondents’ religious, family and community life. It was part of who they were and how they related to the others around them. There was also a form of gifting that did not necessarily entail obligation and expectation of return, people would help each other out. Exchange in the form of barter was in part a response to poverty where labour and goods could be negotiated with neighbours. It was also a convenient way of organising larger groups of labour. The following two sections examine respondents’ sources of cash income through the sale of products and labour.

**The Sale of Products**

The main source of cash income for the majority of respondents’ households was sugar cane sales (see sections below). Respondents estimated that between 70 and 90 percent of their cash income was from cane with the exception of two households. One young couple who had obtained their lease the year before and had only 30 tonnes of cane, had relied on sales of baskets and *yaqona* for cash income and would continue to do so until their cane tonnage was increased. The other household was a Fiji Indian farm labouring family who relied 50 percent on cane and 50 percent on market gardening, particularly on local sales of tobacco, chilli, beans, tomatoes and cabbage.

Only three of the households had people who had off-farm employment which contributed considerably to their own and their extended families income. In one family the father and son both worked in forestry while the mother and
other teenage children looked after the farm. In the other two households, two respondents had public sector employment.

Other sources of cash income for Fijian families who are mataqali landowners are rents and royalties from selling logs and river gravel. Venina was the only respondent I discussed this with in any detail (see above). I did not ask how much they earned and can not say what proportion of a household’s cash income comes from these different sources as it differs for each household depending on the number of people and the way the money is distributed to members.

There was also money made from the sale of goods including vegetables, ducks, goats, tobacco, yaqona, sewing and craft work. None of the households had big market garden operations and sales were mainly from surplus crops that were grown for subsistence. However, some respondents had focused on marketing vegetables to obtain extra cash. For example when I asked an older Fiji Indian woman to reflect on the work she had done over her life, her daughter-in-law interpreted her answer,

She has done much of the work because she had plenty of children and then there was no income and if you can’t have the bank balance ... they had to work too much on the farm to get the money ah ... they didn’t have this house, just like a bure, can’t be staying in that one, after the hard work they make this house.

This woman preferred working in the fields rather than domestic chores. When she was first married about fifty years ago her main tasks were agricultural work while her mother-in-law did the housework. As she and her husband had children and the family grew up her eldest daughter was able to take over the housework which allowed her to spend the majority of her time in the fields. The reason she liked to grow vegetables was not just for her family’s own subsistence but also as a source of income from local sales and selling wholesale to market vendors.
Figure 40. Sorting beans into bundles to sell to vendors at the market.

Figure 41. Weaving a basket from meremere for sale.
The farms in this area mainly sold or exchanged their produce locally as they found it unprofitable to take their goods, particularly small amounts, into Labasa market to sell to the vendors. Seasonal vegetables, could flood the market making them very cheap and consequently not worth the trouble of selling. As Devika stated,

It is very hard. Even when we take it to the market the ladies say make it down, make it down. You know you have seen us digging up the beans, bundling it, putting in the bag, tying it, taking to the road, putting in the carrier [on the bus] then taking it to the ladies selling in the market, it's very difficult and on top of that a low price. It's becoming very competitive.

The women from the farm settlement I lived on made baskets from *meremere* to sell locally and at the market. Arieta makes ten to fifteen baskets a week to sell depending on the supply of *mere* (a vine) and how busy she is. This means she usually produces more outside of the cane harvesting season. The baskets are priced according to size and range from F$5 to F$25. She said she receives orders through word of mouth.

Another Fijian respondent, makes beautiful fans and animals from *voivoi* which she sells at bazaars, predominantly for fund raising for her church. The Fiji Indian women respondents in the present study did not sell any craft work. There is a cultural difference in the type of craftwork Fijian and Fiji Indian women do. Fijian women in the case study made articles out of *voivoi, teria* and *mere*, such as baskets, trays, fans, decorations and mats. They used fabric stencilling on *sulu*, pillow cases and table clothes. A popular craft among Fiji Indian women was crochet, to make amazing bedspreads, tablecloths and doilies. Some of the doilies were starched with *cassava* paste into three dimensional forms of animals, fruit and flowers.11 Both Fijian and Fiji Indian

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11 These different craft traditions and aesthetics are not within the scope of the present study but is an area I personally find fascinating. I did hear of another women ethnographer (I was asked if it was me and unfortunately no one knew her name) who was living in a *koro* studying weaving. Her
women sewed and while none of the respondents offered tailoring services there were quite a few women in this area that did.

The Sale of Labour

Because the families in the present study were relatively poor, few of them could afford to pay labourers to work for them on the farm apart from cane cutting arrangements. As outlined in Chapter Five three of the households had sharecropping arrangements with the cane contractor. The sharecropping family does much of the work on the farm, particularly in regards to cane and consequently shares the profits from sugar. In one sharecropping arrangement, the family who owns the farm were also respondents. They still participated in all aspects of cane production, but they also had more time to divert to other work and activities. In this particular arrangement the sharecropping family received half of the proceeds from cane and were able to utilise land for the production of their own subsistence crops.

It was difficult to ascertain how much casual farm labouring went on that was paid for in cash. As outlined above labour was exchanged for goods and services as well as in the spirit of helping out. Bhanmati and her husband did go around other farms and perform casual farm labouring jobs but I am not sure how they were paid. Shayal, whose family sharecropped, acted as an interpreter for her grandmother who talked about farm labouring when she was younger. Shayal’s grandmother had married at twelve and had separated from her husband because of ill treatment by the time she was twenty-two. She moved back to her parents, who were not well off, and with two young children to care for she used to travel around farms doing work for cash,
Sue: . . . was it easy for her to get work on different farms, was it easy to find the work and ask her [grandmother] did they pay her with cash or did they pay her with rice and things like that?
Shayal: They use to pay with cash, only on Saturday they use to go to town and buy their things and from Monday to Friday they use to work on the farm.
Sue: Now with your mother does she do work on other farms besides this one?
Shayal: No, we do our own farming . . . when my mother grew up she told me how she used to go with my grandmother to work on the farm. Plant vegetables, sell in the market for money. Very difficult that time.

In the study area there were few opportunities for females to obtain waged work (see above). Except for one respondent who became a police woman no other women was in paid employment, with the exception of a few women who earned cash through casual farm labouring, including harvesting cane when there was a labour shortage. Women would primarily earn cash through the sale of their produce and craft work. For men the main source of paid employment was associated with the sugar industry.

The formation of cane harvesting gangs was discussed in the last chapter. As stated, most of the cane contractors harvested their own cane with the help of their brothers (who may share the contracted farm), sons and substitute cutters if need be. The necessity for substitute cutters would depend on a correlation between the available labour in the household and the tonnage to be cut. The wages of contractors’ sons who were still living as part of that household may contribute to the household income. Jimi explained to me how cutters are paid in their gang of nineteen contractors.

Jimi: . . . we pay our labours $7 [per tonne they cut] that’s it, we supply the food, grog and the shoes, knife, but see the other farmers when they contract other labourers, it’ll be they will come and they will supply their own food and all that. So they will pay between $10 and $12, that is apart from the $7 they will get they give them $6.
Sue: I see they will make up the difference to $12.
Jimi: Yeah, they will up the difference to $12, from their own pockets, when they do that that’s when they go to a lawyer to do up a contract, because sometimes people get
a bit smart and they will lose out. You know if you don’t have any binding contract
down, in a couple of weeks they will get the money and sometimes usually just before
cutting they’ll say “I’ll take $300 buy my knife, my first lot of food stuffs, so the flour
and dhal and all those things.” Sometimes they do, and sometimes they just go and if
there is no contract down there is nothing you can do. . . If you don’t supply cutters
[their MOGA rule is a contractor should supply one cutter per 100 tonnes of their
contract] then the gang will supply . . . if you want to use the gang labour, you have to
pay $10 to $12.

This example illustrates two of the ways cutters are paid. Frank Ellis’
(1983) study of the earnings and employment of cane cutters illustrates the
variation with which growers organise payment of their cutters and the
differences in wage rates. Cutters are paid every three weeks by FSC and this
money is later deducted from the cane payments cane contractors they harvest
for receive. In addition, substitute cutters may also receive bonuses and living
costs informally from the contractor who has employed them or receive
boarding arrangements as in the case of Jimi’s gang. One of the major problems
for cutters in the present study for earning enough wages is the allocation of rail
trucks for them to fill (cf. Ellis, 1983:19). Ellis (1983:18) attributes this problem to
the fragmentation of gangs and the splitting of rail gangs into smaller groups
thus causing ‘severe pressure on the capability of FSC to manage the daily
allocation of harvesting quotas to gangs’.

Joni was one of the many growers I spoke to who complained about the
condition of the trucks in terms of maintenance; consequently harvesters were
not able to fill them up properly; and in regards to truck allocation which meant
that cutters were not able to earn much. “You can get $60 in one week, this time
you get three weeks payment you only get $112 to $120 for three weeks, twenty-
one days. [laughs] Yeah that is maybe why so many people do not like cutting
cane.” Jaganath Sami the general secretary of the Fiji Cane Grower’s Association
(FCGA) is quoted in the Fiji Times (13 September 1997) saying that:
Cane cutters are some of the worst paid people in Fiji, earning an average of less than $50 a week, and that only for six months a year. Those who live on farms might also get about $30 a week as casual farm labourers during the growing season.

Another source of income directly related to cane is from tractor work. One farmer owned a tractor which he operated for cane haulage and ploughing which he said increased his income considerably. The following section examines how cane contractors get paid and some of the variables that effected respondents' sugar production during the field work period. Both the 1996 and 1997 harvesting seasons will be referred to as the present study encompasses all of the 1996 harvesting season (June 2nd 1996 until January 1997) and part of the 1997 season (June 15th 1997 - September 17th). I shall endeavour to contextualise these two seasons with other years and generally discuss trends.¹²

**Sugar Production and Cane Payment**

FSC pays contracted growers, their assignee or nominee *(Masters Award, 1989 reg. 19.7)* for their sugar cane in a schedule of four 'cane payments' throughout the year.¹³ This money is calculated from the net proceeds of sales of sugar, molasses and other by-products and is divided between FSC and cane contractors. The determinants for the "net proceeds" take into account various certified expenses, shared industry and Corporation costs and are set out in the *Sugar Industry Tribunal Master Award and Report 1989* and *Sugar Industry Master Award (amendment) Regulations 1990.*

¹² For statistical analysis refer to Annual Reports of the *Sugar Commission of Fiji* and the *Sugar Cane Growers Council* and for discussion of economic trends and social impact see authors Akram-Lodhi (1996, 1997); Forsyth (1998); Grynberg (1995); Grynberg and White (1998); Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997).

¹³ FSC may subtract authorised deductions such as advances (plus interest) made by the Corporation for cultivation and harvesting costs *(Masters Award, 1989 part XIII).*
The sharing of the net proceeds between FSC and growers is calculated in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Sugar Produced</th>
<th>Growers' share</th>
<th>The Corporation's Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 325,000 tonnes</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every tonne over 325,000</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tonnes up to 350,000 tonnes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growers' share</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For every tonne over 350,000</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tonnes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Master Award (Amendment) Regulations, reg. 20.2 1990:461)

Table no. 2

In 1996 the cane payment schedule to growers was amended. In the previous payment schedule the gap between the December and January and the end of April payments was perceived as very long by many of the growers. At this time of year they needed extra cash flow to pay for school fees and harvesting costs such as paying advances to substitute cutters (Rejen Prasad, SCGC pers. comm. 1997). A payment scheduled for the end of March alleviated many growers cash flow problems and was welcomed by respondents. As Joni said “That is why the cane farmer always have to make a loan ah, loan from the bank and loan from the shop and see the more loan the more interest.”

Contractors are paid per tonne of sugar cane they produce. The issue of paying by weight, rather than by the amount of sugar that the cane produces has been an ongoing debate in the sugar industry and is encapsulated in the phrase ‘quality versus quantity’ with regard to cane. During the fieldwork period the indicators were that the industry would eventually have to change to payment for sugar content and many of the industry leaders were calling for this. It was

14 Jensen (1989:70) states that the first payment made to contractors is ‘earmarked for the repayment of debts to FSC’ which may be more than half for the first payment. Additional loans from banks and individuals using the cane crop as security; ‘crop lien, guarantees the repayment of a loan from the first cane payment. The consequence is that farmers rarely see much of the first payment. Instead they have to raise new loans to survive until the next payment’ (Jensen, 1989:70).
hoped this would ensure farmers supplied higher quality cane thus increasing the sugar yield per tonne of cane crushed. When I asked respondents about what they thought of a change from paying for tonnage of cane to sugar content their response was that it would be much better.

Concurrent with farmers providing cane with good sugar content is the ability of mills to crush it efficiently. Other important factors are the prompt harvesting and delivery of cane to ensure that cut cane sugar levels do not deteriorate and the mills are supplied with a steady flow of cane to operate efficiently. This raises a host of issues such as mill operations and maintenance, cane cultivation, harvesting programs and practices, quota allocation, gang organisation, industrial relations, transport costs, road accessibility, truck and rail maintenance and so on. I will examine some of these issues as they relate to the 1996 and 1997 seasons and their impact on sugar production on the respondents' farms. The discussion starts with the vagaries of the weather as this significantly effects not only cane growing but also harvesting and transport to mills.

The weather

The 1996 winter, when the industry aimed to do most of its harvesting, was unusually wet with cane districts sometimes receiving more than twice their normal monthly rainfall (Fiji Times, 26 April 1997). A report from the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) partially attributed the poor cane quality to the weather and stated 'The 1996 season average quality and cane purity figures were the lowest since 1990 and for the Labasa mill they are the lowest on record' (cited in Fiji Times, 26 April 1997).

Heavy rainfall also caused trouble with cane access roads and transporting the cane out of the fields and on to the main road. The rail trucks filled with three to four tonnes of cane would become bogged down in the muddy field and

15 The sugar industry expresses 'tonnes of cane to tonnes of sugar' as TCTS.
16 Sugar cane needs a 'cool dry season during May - July to facilitate crop maturity and build up of sucrose content' (SCGC Annual Report 1995).
the tractor used to haul them to the rail depot would sometimes become stuck. The dirt access roads on the farms were supposed to be graded before every harvesting season. The contractor pays one third of the cost towards this and the government assists with the rest. Even the main road became treacherous at times, especially as harvesting continued into the summer wet season that starts in December continuing through to April. The sugar industry aims to stop harvesting cane about December but delays can push the harvesting program on in to January as it did in the 1996 season.

During the wet season there can also be problems with flooding. Sometimes it is impossible to transport cane across flooded rivers and families can become isolated until the river goes down. This is also the cyclone season and on the 7th and 8th of March 1997 cyclone "Gavin" swept through the study area as well as other parts of Fiji. The cyclone caused damage to their cane crops and nationally caused damage to between 10-15 percent of the 76,200 hectares under cane (Fiji Times, 14 June 1997). Cyclone damaged cane becomes 'lodged' and difficult to harvest, which will be discussed below. Mere lost her 'lean to' kitchen and other families suffered damage to their houses. The cane access roads were damaged by the flooding the cyclone caused, which delayed the beginning of the harvesting season in Labasa for a week. On the case study farms near the river the water came up unusually high causing damage of nearby cane fields and vegetable gardens. Anil showed me around their river gardens explaining how high the flood waters had come up. It was incredible and only just missed the house.

Even more drastic was the drought that started in 1997 and continued on into 1998 causing massive hardship and resulting in only 12,000 of the approximate 22,000 registered cane growers being able to harvest their crops. This drought was the worst recorded and was probably a result of El Niño weather patterns. While I was not in Fiji during 1998, letters from respondents and news reports of the drought left no doubt about the difficulty it caused many
families. It was not unusual for the piped water on respondents farms to dry up during the winter dry season, making them solely reliant on the river. However, when the river becomes very low this jeopardises their source of water for drinking, washing, watering animals and watering subsistence crops.

**Burning cane and mill operations**

An issue that is very relevant to the quantity verses quality debate is the practice of burning cane before harvesting. This is a major problem as the sugar content decreases rapidly in burnt cane as well as producing inferior sugar *(Master Award (Amendment) Regulations, reg.15.1 1990:454)*. To discourage growers from burning cane there is a decreasing scale of payment that imposes penalties the longer this cane takes to get to the mill (see *Master Award (Amendment) Regulations*, part XV 1990:454-458). Conversely farmers are paid a bonus for the green cane they supply which comes from the money not paid out for burnt cane. FSC retains a certain amount of this penalty money to cover processing costs and the loss of sugar.

Respondents burned cane that was difficult to cut because it was ‘lodged’, standing at angles, and entangled in weeds. Burning removed the excessive undergrowth and cane leaves, making it easier to harvest. Hornet nests could also be a problem and burning flushed them out. It was reported in the media, sugar industry literature and by respondents that some farmers burnt their cane to place themselves higher up in the harvesting program queue, particularly if they thought their cane may not be harvested that season (known as ‘standover’ cane). This form of queue jumping can be due to delays throughout the

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17 ‘In 1994 burnt cane average was 40 percent while TCTS was 7.9 and last season [1995] burnt cane was 47 per cent and TCTS 9.1’ *Fiji Times* quoting Jonetani Galuinadi Managing Director of FSC, 17 April 1996. The TCTS figure means that, for example it took 9.1 tonnes of sugar cane to produce 1 tonne of sugar. Natural occurring micro organisms are able to more easily penetrate burnt cane and in particular the bacterium *Leuconostoc mesenteriodes* decomposes sugars to dextran. High dextran levels cause problems at both the crushing and raw sugar refinery stages. As Fiji exports raw sugar to be refined, high dextran readings can be detrimental to future sugar sales. Fiji primarily relies on both the high quality of this sugar and dependable delivery as selling points (see *Sugar Cane Farming News*, No. 17 October 1991).
harvesting season caused, for example, by mill breakdowns, strikes, gang disputes, weather and cane delivery problems. Grish Maharaj, Chief Executive of the Sugar Cane Growers Council (SCGC) stated that 'mostly rail gangs were involved in indiscriminate burning of cane. . . insufficient quota [of rail trucks] supply by the Fiji Sugar Corporation had caused panic among some rail gangs forcing them to burn cane' (*Fiji Times*, 8 September 1996). Some farms were burnt by arsonists, thus penalising the grower if the cane could not be harvested quickly. A grower is not penalised if they can deliver burnt cane to the mill within 24 hours (*Master Award (Amendment) 15.4(a) 1990:455*), but this is impossible if large stands of cane have been burnt and the gang is not able to harvest that farm straight away. There have also been incidents of cutters burning against the farmer's wishes because it is easier for them to harvest.

In 1996 the Managing Director of FSC Jonetani Galuinadi was quoted as saying FSC loses F$15 million annually, 'a result of large quantities of burnt cane continually being supplied to the mills' (*Fiji Times*, 29 November 1996). In the same article grower representative Mohammed Subedar from the National Farmers Union (NFU) pointed to poor mill performance and the extended crushing season due to industry stoppages and mill breakdowns as contributing to FSC losses (*Fiji Times*, 29 November 1996). In fact all the growers representatives cite poor mill performance, breakdowns and delivery problems as a major issue. In October 1997 Maharaj and the SCGC board asked for the Sugar Industry Tribunal to audit the four mills as their weekly outputs were 10-20 percent below average (*Fiji Times*, 10 October 1997).

In the *Fiji Times* (27 October 1997) Maharaj said that 'operation problems forced the Corporation to cut back quota supply to gangs. He observed that problems in the rail transport system affected delivery of empty rail trucks to harvesting gangs and pick-up of loaded rail trucks.' The SCGC had been urging farmers to control their burning. In 1997 a combination of factors such as delays in the harvesting program due to the strike (see pages 289-290), mill
performance, lack of quotas, and the hurricane damage to cane led to increased burning of cane early on in the season.

In FSC's defence Galuinadi states that since FSC took over the milling operations in 1973 there has been a 66 percent increase in sugar production. At that time the four mills could only produce 300,000 tonnes of sugar and now they were capable of producing over 500,000 tonnes. He is cited in the Fiji Times (30 April 97) as saying that 'the increase was a reflection of the FSC's continued commitment to increase efficiency at the mills. The FSC has invested more than [F]$300 million since it took over the mills.' Labasa mill in particular has had its share of breakdowns that has caused a lot of cynicism and frustration for respondents.

As stated above, respondents complained about not receiving enough quota and the erratic delivery of rail trucks. They cited truck allocation as one of their main problems and criticised FSC mill breakdowns that reduced quota and delayed the harvesting program. Respondents also criticised the Corporation for not maintaining the rail trucks or lines causing delays and spillage's (cf. Fiji Times, 22 February 1996; 21 August 1996), while FSC accused cutters of overloading and damaging the rail trucks. In 1997 FSC was calling for between F$40-50 million to upgrade rail system which growers say they should have been maintaining all along.

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18 Jensen (1989:64-66) had similar findings and also discusses corruption in the process of truck allocation.

19 For an overview of the transport system see report by Dr Bill McWhinney who was appointed by the Sugar Commission in 1995 to do a Technical Review of the Sugar Cane harvesting and transport systems (SCGC 1995).
Figure 42. Gang harvesting burnt cane.

Figure 43. Labasa mill and lorry loaded with cane waiting in the que to deliver to the mill.
These issues illustrate some of the tensions between miller and growers and is indicative of the 'them' and 'us' mentality that has grown out of the CSR structured sugar industry. The historical development of growers' unions along political lines means there were factions among growers' representatives. The SCGC was formed in 1985 after the Sugar Industry Act of 1984 established several bodies to facilitate coordination throughout the industry and 'promote goodwill and harmony between the bodies' (FSC, 1995:57). The purpose of the SCGC was to 'unite and represent growers under one umbrella' (FSC, 1995:57) with representatives from all the unions elected every three years to the Council. However, the unity hoped for has not happened and the SCGC itself comes in for a lot of criticism from other growers' unions that are played out in debates in the media.

There were many calls by sugar industry leaders and politicians for everyone to work together and stop confrontational attitudes for the sake of the whole industry. In 1997 this was particularly in response to a sixteen day strike by the Fiji Sugar and General Workers Union (FSGWU) at the beginning of the harvesting season. Of the four mill worker unions this is the largest and their walk out caused the mills to close for the duration of the strike. I am not in a position to debate the dynamics of the strike but it is illustrative of the complex relationships between different factions within the industry and with the government. Essentially the government sided with FSC management and the arbitration of the Sugar Tribunal. A move the FSGWU has heavily criticised them for. Meanwhile some of the growers' representatives criticised the FSGWU and FSC for not sorting it out before harvesting began and effectively penalising cane farmers, cutters (and their families) as 25,000 tonnes of cut cane was left in the fields and the delays caused massive losses to the industry.²⁰ It

²⁰ Eventually FSC was persuaded by growers' representatives to accept the cut cane that had been left in the fields from the beginning of the strike. The farmers were paid but the sugar content in the cane had dried up meaning the revenue from this cane was lost. The Corporation lost money through keeping mills in preparation for the end of the strike; farmers through delays in the harvesting program and maintaining live-in cutters; cutters lost out on the income they would been
was pointed out that while cane contractors and cutters (and FSC) rely on sugar production, mill workers receive a wage.

These are some of the main issues that dominated the 1996 and 1997 harvesting seasons and impacted on sugar production and consequent cane payments. In 1996 cane contractors received F$44.82 per tonne of cane and in 1997 F$44.05 per tonne. This is a drop from around F$50 a tonne which contractors were receiving throughout the nineties (Bureau of Statistics, 1996:24) and was effected by the sugar production issues outlined. The majority of households in the present study produced between 100 to 200 tonnes of cane in the 1996 season. Considering this was the main source of cash income for most of them it placed them well below the ‘basic needs’ poverty line in terms of cash resources (Fiji Poverty Report, 1997:34). The following section briefly examines where Fiji sells its sugar, for what price and how global trends towards trade liberalisation may effect farming families in the present study.
The Politics of Selling Sugar - Preferential Trading Agreements

Sugar and its by-products are sold through the Fiji Sugar Marketing Company (FSM) which is the marketing agent for FSC and is government owned. About 95 percent of the sugar produced is exported overseas annually (Bureau of Statistics, 1996:24) as the domestic market is very small. Around half of the sugar exports are sold through preferential trading agreements while the rest is sold on the world market (Viliame Savdu, Senior Marketing Officer, FSM pers. comm. 1996). The preferential trading prices are substantially higher than the world market prices and are discussed below. The proceeds from the preferential agreements and the world market are added together and the calculations for miller and grower payments are taken from this pool (Master Award, Part XVIII, 1989). This section discusses the importance of preferential trading prices for smallholders and the strategies respondents identified in response to trade liberalisation and the possibility of a drop in the sugar price Fiji receives.

The most significant preferential agreement for the Fiji sugar industry is the Sugar Protocol which is annexed to the Lomé Convention. This protocol is between sugar producing states in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Union (EU) and replaces the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement (CSA) of 1951. When Britain joined the European Community they requested that their trading arrangements under CSA, with former colonies, be continued within the context of EC trading relationships. The Lomé Convention ratified a series of preferential trade and aid agreements between fifteen EU and seventy-one ACP countries. During the fieldwork period Lomé IV was in place which was signed in 1990 for a term of ten years with provision

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24 FSC, growers' and government representatives all sit on the board and the chairman of Sugar Commission of Fiji is also chairman of FSM (FSC, 1995a:58).
25 Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:3) state that only one percent of domestic production is locally consumed.
26 The number of countries belonging to the Lomé Convention has increased over the years as more countries join the EU and ACP States.
for a mid-term review in 1995. Lomé IV is due to expire on the 29th February 2000. The negotiations for what was to happen after Lomé IV were being very seriously considered by the Fijian government, the sugar industry, private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) by 1996/7.

While the terms of Lomé may change, indeed during 1996 and 1997 there were concerns that it might not be renewed, the Sugar Protocol does have a life of its own. Under Article one

The Community [EU] undertakes for an indefinite period to purchase and import, at guaranteed prices, specific quantities of cane sugar, raw or white, which originate in the ACP States and which these States undertake to deliver to it (Lomé IV Protocol 8.1.1 1995).

If the Lomé Convention ceased to exist there is provision for the EU and contracted ACP countries to ‘adopt the appropriate institutional provisions to ensure the continued application of the provisions of this Protocol’ (Lomé IV Protocol 8 Article 8.2 1995). Article two does however provide a framework for review and change;

1. Without prejudice to Article 7, no change in this Protocol may enter into force until a period of five years has elapsed from the date on which the Convention enters into force. Thereafter, such changes as may be agreed upon will come into force at a time to be agreed.
2. The conditions for implementing the guarantee referred to in Article 1 shall be re-examined before the end of the seventh year of their application.

Grynberg and White (1998:66) state that the Sugar Protocol is foremost a Tate and Lyle protocol as this large British company brought the majority of sugar from ACP sugar producers, including Fiji. The ACP countries ‘could not afford to take too many liberties’ and it was Tate and Lyle’s negotiating abilities during the transition from CSA to Lomé Sugar Protocol in 1975 that brokered such favourable conditions.
Thanks to the support lent by the various British governments, concerned by the possible consequences of the closures of refineries in zones already affected by unemployment such as London and Liverpool, thanks also to the paradoxical support of militant pro-third world circles, Tate and Lyle managed to maintain an illogical compromise in the face of all odds (Chalmin, 1990:474-5 cited in Grynberg and White, 1998:66 note 1)

The development of the European sugar beet industry has meant that the EU has a surplus of sugar and indeed today is one of the major exporters of sugar in the world. The EU's own sugar industry is linked to the ACP producers through the Sugar Protocol as the price ACP sugar exporters receive is reviewed annually and has to be within the range of that obtained by producers in the EU (Lomé IV Protocol 8 Article 5.4 1995). Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:6) note that

\[ \text{... subject to certain provisions, it is possible to state that as a consequence of the Protocol the European Union (EU) applies its internal sugar regime to ACP sugar exporters. Arising out of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU's sugar regime determines production quotas, producer price guarantees and export subsidies.} \]

Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:7-8) point out that the preferential quota arrangement under the Sugar Protocol and its linkage to the EU internal sugar regime offers both a higher and more stable price than the world market.

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27 See Jensen (1989:51-56) for an overview of the development of the continental European sugar industry and the United Kingdom's sugar industry.

28 Between 1975 and 1991 'the world price of sugar varied year by year around its average price on the order of 41 per cent, the European Union's price of sugar varied year by year around the average internal sugar price by only 8.7 per cent' (Herrmann and Weiss 1996 cited in Prasad and Akram-Lodhi 1997:7-8). See the website About ACP Sugar page on The World Market for Sugar (http://www.acpsugar.org/no11prices.htm updated 5th January 2000) which points out that 'world sugar prices, 'that is, those quoted on international futures markets, are characterised by two basic features: volatility and levels far below average costs of production. These two features are as one would expect given the residual nature of the international market.' Speculator activity, currency and interest rate factors make it 'economically irrational for policy-makers to seek to align EU and ACP sugar prices with prices for world market sugar... In the case of sugar, world market prices are a wholly inappropriate benchmark, and if these prices are used as a benchmark in the forthcoming "Millennium Round" of WTO negotiations, this will severely damage the world sugar economy. It may be justifiable to use average production costs adjusted for currency and interest rate factors and differing levels of social and environmental protection.'
EU’s CAP objective is to ‘stabilise the living standards of Europe’s farmers by providing support to agricultural production, distribution and marketing . . . In the early 1990s the Union’s price was roughly double that of the world market price’ (Prasad and Akram-Lodhi 1997:7). This combined with the guaranteed access and quota has been extremely beneficial to Fiji. In 1975 Fiji was allocated a proportion of the total ACP sugar quota that was equivalent to 163,600 metric tons of white sugar (Lomé IV Protocol 8.3.1 1995). During the fieldwork period a quota of 175,000 raw value tonnes of sugar was to be exported to the United Kingdom under the Sugar Protocol (Maharaj cited in Fiji Times, 3 August 1996; also see SCoF 1994:13). The following analysis by Barrack and May (1996:4) contextualises the contribution of the Sugar Protocol in terms of Fiji’s Sugar exports;

For the period 1990/91 to 1995/96 Fiji’s shipments of Protocol sugar amounted to an average of 41 percent of the country’s total sugar production and 45 percent of the country’s total sugar exports. During this period Fiji’s quota under the Sugar Protocol accounted for 65 percent of total sugar revenue (Barrack and May, 1996:4).

In 1995 Fiji, as part of the ACP, obtained a further preferential deal with the EU under the Special Preferential Sugar (SPS) agreement. The SPS was instigated when Portugal joined the EU in 1986. The ACP requested that they provide the raw sugar deficit to the Portuguese sugar refineries which resulted in a European Commission draft proposal for supplies in 1992, known as the ‘non-paper’. This agreement is for a specific term from 1 July 1995 until 30 June 2001. The quota is negotiated annually and the price is 85 percent of the price the ACP receives through the Sugar Protocol (see About ACP Sugar, Online, Accessed 4

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29 See Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997) for a discussion on the benefits of the Sugar Protocol to EU sugar producers and refineries.
30 If an ACP producer is unable to fulfil all their quotas the deficit is given to the other ACP producers as per Article 7 of the Sugar Protocol.
February 2000). For Fiji this has meant around a further 25,000 tonnes to be exported annually under preferential prices.\(^3\)

Grynberg and White (1998) and Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997) have recently discussed the impact of the Sugar Protocol in particular on Fiji’s sugar industry and economy as well as the social benefits. Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:8) state that the economic impact of price stability and sales security has promoted increased production, increased employment in the farm and mill sector, increased incomes for landowners, growers and millers, and the attendant impact that such income increases have had on living standards in the sugar community.

This essentially has been a form of development assistance from the EU through trade, which in regard to the Sugar Protocol has transferred three times as much to Fiji than it gives as concessional aid\(^3\) (Prasad and Akram-Lodhi 1997:8). Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:9-10) propose the key beneficiary of the Sugar Protocol has been smallholders, as the increased revenue has allowed many of those who are below the poverty line to sustain their livelihoods. Grynberg and White’s (1998:56) analysis of the financial benefits of EU sugar preferences to the average cane contractor in 1996 is very relevant to the present study. The average farm contract was approximately 184 tonnes, slightly more tonnage than the majority of respondents’ households were harvesting during the field work period.

In 1995/6, in large part because of the improved access that has resulted from the Special Preferential Sugar, Fiji became even more dependent on EU sugar preferences. In 1995 Fiji sold 60 percent of its sugar exports to the European Union receiving prices of F$875 per tonne compared to F$383 per tonne on its remaining contracts. The decrease in income for the average cane farmer of the loss of the sugar preferences

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\(^3\) ‘In 1997 the EU will take 183,700 tonnes under Lame and 30,000 under special preferential agreements’ (Fiji Times, 14 June 1997).

\(^3\) See Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:11-14) for a discussion on the ‘trade versus aid’ debate.
would result in a decrease in net income from an average of F$4,300 (US$3,000) to F$165 (US$120). In effect this would render the average sugar farm subeconomic (Grynberg and White, 1998:56).

Grynberg and White (1998:57) also assert that preferential prices has allowed the continuation of labour intensive practices, which has distributed the benefits to farm labourers and cane cutters (cf. Prasad and Akram-Lodhi, 1997:10). However, they also note that the Sugar Protocol has ‘resulted in lower productivity and inefficiencies in land use and industry structure’ (Grynberg and White, 1998:57). The preferential prices encouraged the expansion of cane farming into marginal land which in aggregate figures has decreased the tonnes per hectare (Grynberg and White, 1998:57). Farming on marginal land further away from the mills also increases the transport costs for growers.

The threats to EU-ACP preferential trading

Grynberg and White (1998) outline the threats to the EU preferential agreements with the ACP which come from both internal and external pressures to the EU. External pressure from the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which has set out a schedule of annual reductions in subsidies and tariff on agricultural commodities that the EU is committed to. Prices are predicted to fall by 25 to 30 percent by 2007 which would directly effect the prices ACP sugar-producers receive (Grynberg and White, 1998:53). Also a decrease in import duties means that the EU will regularly trade ‘with other countries apart from those that have special arrangements with the European Unions’ (Grynberg and White, 1998:53). Prasad and Akram-Lodhi (1997:15-16)

33 See the website About ACP Sugar on The WTO and the EU Sugar Regime (http://www.acpsugar.org/wto.htm) for the details of EU compliance with the Uruguay Round. It is interesting to note that the EU’s ‘schedule of commitments include a single footnote to the effect that the export commitments “do not include exports of sugar of ACP and Indian origin on which the Community is not making any reduction commitments” . . . The EU sugar regime was carefully adapted in 1995 with the purpose to comply scrupulously with the outcome of the Uruguay Round. The WTO restrictions on import tariffs and export subsidies are very real and could possibly lead to lower prices and/or quotas as early as in 2000/2001. Thus it is completely inaccurate to state, as some do, that the EU sugar regime has “not been reformed” as a result of the WTO agreement.’
have observed that under the Uruguay Round of GATT the amount of tariff quota access to the EU is identical to that of the Sugar Protocol so that in effect ACP countries market access is locked into

WTO-consistent access to EU sugar market. The locking in of market access under agreed tariff schedules means that under no circumstances will the access be reduced; it can only be enlarged. Thus, ACP market access to the EU sugar market is now independent of the Sugar Protocol itself (Prasad and Akram-Lodhi, 1997:16).

Another possible threat could come from third party protests of discrimination to the WTO (Grynberg and White, 1998:53).

Grynberg and White (1998:54-55) outline the internal pressures on the EU CAP that are likely to result from the inclusion of previous Eastern Block countries into the EU and the calls for agricultural reforms from environmental, economic and political lobby groups. Prasad and Akram Lodhi (1997:16) speculate that industries within Europe that use sugar in ‘value-added commodities’ will apply pressure to the EU sugar regime as they become increasingly reluctant to buy the higher priced internal sugar and look to the world market.

Both internal and external pressures place the long term likelihood of preferential trading agreements in some doubt. The global trend toward trade liberalisation propelled by world institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank appear inevitable. Although the Seattle fiasco in December 1999 at the WTO conference and demonstrations in Switzerland at the World Economic Forum by anti-globalisation protesters in January 2000 were examples of the strong feelings against these trends. The ACP want to continue as long as possible with preferential trading and has been vigorously lobbying and negotiating with the EU and WTO to maintain preferential quotas. The Chairman of the Sugar Commission of Fiji Gerald Barrack summed up why it was still important for
Fiji to have some protection for sugar and is quoted in the Fiji Times (14 June 1997) as saying,

“Regardless of deregulation, free trade and the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade, there is no such thing as a level playing field in countries like ours,” Mr Barrack said. “We are a small island with climatic constraints such as cyclones. We don’t have large tracts of land that are easily mechanised, we don’t have a large domestic market, and we are remote from our markets so it costs to transport our goods. Larger countries must recognise this and must realise that we need to have access to them.”

The present study does not discuss the negotiations between the ACP and EU in regards to the Lomé Convention or the WTO talks. However, it is interesting to note that increasingly the EU conditions are tied to political and moral issues. Key phrases such as human rights and good governance are prevalent in their dialogue with the ACP (see for example the EU Green Paper, 1996). Preferential trade and aid assistance come with strings and a feature of the negotiations is not only debating how much, but under what conditions.34

The EU is politically committed to gender-sensitive development and articles in the Lomé convention espouse this. There is a particular commitment to empowering women in the agricultural sector (UNIFEM, 1997:2). A discussion paper35 prepared for the ‘Pacific NGOs Consultation on Lomé 2000: May 20-21, 1997’ examines how this translates to EU assistance in the Pacific and the implementation of development programs by both parties EU/ACP. The paper concludes that although the rhetoric is there this does not guarantee implementation (UNIFEM, 1997:16).

However, much is wanting in terms of the allocation of development projects for the social sector. While the Lomé IV is quite progressive in terms of its concern for human development and gender equity, with women as priority sector, the actual

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34 See references to websites in bibliography for documentation on Lomé negotiations.
35 This paper was commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM): Pacific Regional Office.
implementation of projects in the Pacific countries did not carry that orientation
(UNIFEM, 1997:11 emphasis original).

The report identifies the priority given to economic development in
Pacific countries and states that 'the formal sector of the economy has benefited
much from the Lomé Convention. Fiji’s GNP has considerably increased by the
trade arrangements of the sugar protocol' (UNIFEM, 1997:11). Preferential
trading with the EU has greatly benefited Fiji’s sugar industry, especially
smallholders, farm labouring families and cutters. It has raised the standard of
living for families, although it must not be presumed that the allocation of
benefits has been evenly dispersed within the household.

Fiji does have another preferential agreement with the United States
under the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) which guarantees a duty free
preference on an annual quota of sugar. This has usually amounted to about
10,000 tonnes a year for Fiji. In the 1995/6 season the quota was increased to
17,946 tonnes of raw sugar value as there had been a shortfall in the US (Fiji
Cane Grower May/June 1996:6). Fiji also has some guaranteed access
agreements. For example a three year extension of the Long Term Contract with
Malaysia guaranteed 90,000 tonnes a year over the period 1996-1998 (SCoF,
1995:14). The proceeds Fiji receives from this contract are very similar to the
world market price (Maharaj, SCGC pers. comm. 1997).

Predictions about the future of sugar prices in 1996 and 1997 were still
largely speculative. Savdu (FSM), in an interview with me in October 1996
estimated a drop in price of anywhere between 5 to 15 percent over a period of
time. Price erosion was inevitable with pressure from GATT, but on the positive
side there had been a stabilisation of the world price over the last few years at
between 8clb and 15clb. If everyone was trading on the world market then the

36 A conference on the Asia-Pacific region in 1997 outlined the emergence of this area as a trading
partner for Fiji and stated that 'current markets include Malaysia, which buys 90,000 tonnes,
Japan 60,000 tonnes, Singapore 20,000 tonnes and China 20,000 tonnes' (Fiji Times, 22 October 1997).
price would stabilise. Savdu said that the EU sugar beet growers will pressure internally for maintaining prices which would benefit ACP sugar producers whose prices were tied to them.

Maharaj (pers. comm. 1997) was also optimistic about prices in the short term. He thought that another SPS agreement would be negotiated for a further five years and that there would be some sort of successor to the Lomé Convention. It is the EU consumer that subsidises the higher EU prices paid for sugar through the EU sugar regime that ACP producers are allied to. While some might argue why should the consumer pay more, Maharaj thought that the consumer would pay for quality. This ties in with the importance of Fiji being able to guarantee a constant supply of high quality sugar.

At the time of writing (February 2000) the negotiations for a new twenty year agreement between the EU and ACP were completed on the 3rd of February. The agreement will be renamed the Suva Convention, as it is to be signed in Suva in May, and is based on 'three interactive pillars: the political dimension, the development strategies, and economic and trade cooperation' (Europa, Online, Accessed 10 February 2000). In regard to preferential trading there is a scheduled approach to the implementation of trade liberalisation that takes into consideration difficulties ACP countries might be experiencing. Here the emphasis is on difficulties of industries in ACP states being economically competitive enough in the free trade environment. This assessment should also be based on development and political concerns in the area of poverty eradication, human rights and gender issues in line with the spirit of the Agreement. The schedule of the Agreement states that;

ACP States and the EU will negotiate and conclude, by 2008 at the latest, new WTO-compliant arrangements by phasing out barriers to trade among themselves and by bolstering cooperation in all trade related fields. In 2004 an evaluation will be made of
the situation of those countries (except for the LLDCs\textsuperscript{37}) which have decided that they are unable to negotiate partnership agreements. The EU would then study the possible alternatives in order to offer those countries a new trade framework equivalent to their existing situation in compliance with WTO rules. The economic partnership agreements will be implemented over a transitional period starting at the latest in 2008.

At the February session the parties resolved all the issues relating to the trade arrangements during the preparatory period and envisaged maintaining the current market access arrangements for eight years. The EU and the ACP States recognised that the liberalisation processes under way at bilateral and multilateral levels are eroding the ACP countries’ preferences, thus affecting their competitiveness, so they have agreed to evaluate the impact of this liberalisation with a view to taking remedial measures (Europa, Online, Accessed 10 February 2000).

This should apply to the Sugar Protocol and SPS as the EU’s compliance with WTO trade liberalisation affects their CAP and internal sugar regime which the ACP preferential prices are tied to. As Prasad and Akram-Lodhi predicted in 1997 Fiji’s sugar industry will maintain preferential prices in the short term, but global trade liberalisation will mean a drop in sugar prices in the medium to long term. Fiji’s preferential market access to the EU seems assured for the next eight years and the FSM has negotiated non-preferential marketing opportunities in other regions, especially in Asia and the Pacific. So how would farming families who were mostly reliant on sugar as their main source of cash income cope with declining sugar prices?

Will smallholder cane farms survive?

During the field work period I was interested in first, the extent to which respondents were aware of the Lomé Convention and Fiji’s preferential trading agreements. Second, what would be their strategy if the price for sugar dropped significantly? As the estimates varied widely at the time about how much and

\textsuperscript{37} LLCDs stands for 'Least Developed Countries' and refers to thirty-eight of the ACP countries (Sarno, Online, Accessed 10 February 2000). I have been unable to ascertain what the extra 'L' means as both terms LLCDs and LCDs appear in the literature in reference to 'Least Developed Countries'.
when sugar prices would fall I asked respondents what they would do if prices dropped, possibly by as much as 30 percent.\textsuperscript{38}

Only one of the respondents was specifically aware of the Lomé agreement with the EU. He was a sixth former at the local secondary school and had recently done a project on sugar. Some of the male respondents who were cane contractors mentioned overseas agreements but were unaware of Fiji’s preferential trading arrangements. They commented on the vagaries of the sugar price over the years and were used to fluctuations as every year the price was different.\textsuperscript{39} However, they thought if the price dropped by as much as 30 percent that this would force them out of cane farming.\textsuperscript{40}

In answer to the question about what they would do if the price dropped significantly many replied that they would diversify into other cash crops. They would extend their production of rice, root crops, vegetables and crops such as tobacco and \textit{yaqona} (if land was suitable) for sale on the local market. They recognised the possibility of flooding the local market with produce and driving down the price. They would also increase their subsistence base to cut down on spending.

One male respondent whose family had been heavily in debt had been required to pay 75 percent of the income from cane sales to the bank and had been relying on selling vegetables and goats. Livestock was not generally cited as an alternative form of cash income although one family did sell ducks and others sold the occasional goat. Bullocks and cows were also bought and sold on

\textsuperscript{38} See Grynberg and White (1998) for statistical analysis on four possible reactions by FSC and the Fijian government to the withdrawal of preferential agreements.
\textsuperscript{39} As discussed above the fluctuations in price would have been considerably more if Fiji had been only selling on the world market.
\textsuperscript{40} I was asking these questions during 1996 when there was relatively little media attention given to the upcoming negotiations for Lomé and the implications for Fiji. During the later part of 1996 onwards there was an increase in media coverage about preferential trading agreements and sugar prices as the negotiations between ACP/EU gained momentum. Literature from the sugar industry such as the \textit{Fiji Cane Grower} published by the SCGC, and \textit{Fiji Sugar} the official newsletter of the SCoF, did discuss preferential trading, particularly the Sugar Protocol in 1996. However, none of the respondents received these publications or indeed much literature from the sugar industry (see below).
a small scale as no one ran herds because of lack of grazing land (see above). Generally people had animals for their own use and to use for ceremonial occasions and exchange networks.

Jimi, who was farming on his mataqali land, said that rather than looking for off-farm employment he would utilise the land. He would grow more yaqona, dalo and tavioka for sale. Jimi said that their subsistence base would be responsive to sales of produce as he probably would not increase subsistence production if the sales were going well, but would if they were not so good. Sharmila said her husband might try and look for jobs in forestry or building. As stated, the opportunities for off-farm labour in the study area were very limited.

Women would try to increase cash sales from their craft work, vegetables and looking for casual farm labour. There is a possibility that some or all of the family would have to move to seek work. It is not inconceivable that women, children and the elderly would be left to take care of the home and farm while men migrated. The whole family, particularly farm labouring families who may find it increasingly difficult to get work could be forced to shift nearer to urban centres to obtain work. Suva already has substantial squatter settlements. A decrease in cash supply would also increase farming families' debt, which is considerable for many of them, and limits funds for requirements such as health care and education costs.

Of concern to Fiji Indian respondents was their lease arrangements. Uncertainty about getting another lease had forced many to think about alternatives to farming. This combined with hopes for a better life for their children through achieving good employment drove the impetus for education. They saw life on the cane farm as hard and many wanted their children to take up other occupations. Generally this applied to girls as well as boys as most of the parents encouraged their daughters to go as high as they could in education. Social pressure for Fiji Indian girls to marry before the age of twenty-one was
very strong in the study area and consequently only the girls who were able to complete their schooling and find finances to continue with tertiary training were more likely to have the opportunity to find off-farm employment.

Anup: Yeah, I have only one daughter she is schooling in class 1, I would like to educate her you know because it is a very hard life for Indians, most of us it is very hard. . . if I get help from someone, a scholarship like that. I want to educate her more, I will try my best to send her overseas, if she can get more help then she might go. In Fiji it is very tough life, because for Indians, no where job for us, only the Fijians, government favours them, for us they don’t help us like that.

Two Fiji Indian female respondents who were schooling during the field work period left school shortly after and married. One of the respondents in particular was encouraged to continue but felt ashamed after having failed a year and did not want to repeat. In continuing correspondence she tells me she is really enjoying married life and motherhood.

Adeep and his family in 1996 had six years left on their lease. He said that during that time he would try to save as much money as he could because he did not know if the lease would be renewed. Always thinking of the future, he had encouraged his children to continue with their education and was hoping his son would obtain a scholarship for tertiary training. He saw educating his children as the most important requirement for giving them a better life, as time was running out for him. If they could not continue farming there then he and his wife could go and stay with their son if he had a good job. It has traditionally been the responsibility of children, especially the eldest son, to look after their parents when they are old and with minimal social welfare provision this continues to be the case (cf. Anderson, 1974:129; Jensen, 1989:103). The drive for education can be viewed as a response to the security of the whole family as well as parents wishes for a good life for their children.

Fijian respondents who were mataqali land owners did not have the same concerns over lease renewal but still had to consider if there would be enough
land available for their expanding families (see above). Families generally placed an emphasis on education as they encouraged children to realise their ambitions. Again many of the families encouraged their daughters to further their education but the fulfilment of ambitions could be very difficult. For example financially the expense of school uniforms, books and bus fares became prohibitive for poorer families (cf. Jensen, 1989:103). I was told that school fees only had to be paid after the fourth form which could prevent the continuation of schooling for some children. Other constraints were the cost of tertiary education and accommodation away from home.

Some of the Fijian teenagers wanted to follow what they called the 'village way' and were not interested in continuing formal education. There were both Fijian and Fiji Indian boys who wanted to work on the farm and generally left school quite early at the age of twelve to fourteen to farm full time. However, some who intended to be farmers continued on to the sixth form and a few of the adult male respondents had been educated to this level (as had some of the women). There is then a complex relation between what children want to do, what their parents and families want for them, social pressures to conform to various occupations and socio-economic constraints.

In regards to financial constraints smallholders who were in debt to banks were experiencing added financial pressure because issues relating to the sugar industry were effecting banking policy, resulting in a tightening of their loan conditions to cane growers.\textsuperscript{41} The main issue the banks appeared to be concerned about was the uncertainty of ALTA and the possibility of cane growers not being issued with new leases. To ensure they recouped their loans to contractors whose leases were due to expire soon the banks were raising their recovery rates on those loans.\textsuperscript{42} The SCGC Annual Report for 1995 stated;

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item In 1992 farmers nationally owed F$160 million to the banks and by 1996 they owed F$100 million. The banks had been able to recover F$60 million in four years (Rejen Prasad, SCGC, pers. comm. 1996).
\item This information is based on interviews with loans officers and senior personnel at ANZ, Westpac, Bank of Baroda and FDB in Fiji.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The issue of bank loans to cane growers and grower indebtedness is a matter of grave concern to the Council. The impending expiry of leases and the uncertainty over the issuing of new leases has caused the Commercial banks to adopt a restrained attitude towards cane grower lending (SCGC, 1995:12).

Banks generally assessed growers loan conditions according to lease terms and farmer productivity. The maintenance of productivity was important to ensure farmers were able to earn enough capital to repay their loans. The concern of banks was that some growers were not investing in their farms because of fear their leases would not be renewed. These growers were concerned they would not be compensated adequately for standing crops and farm improvements and were consequently letting their farms run down (see for example Fiji Times, 14 July 1997). Another concern, expressed by several of the banking personnel interviewed, was Lomé and the future of sugar prices.

**National sugar industry response - the gaps**

In Fiji there was considerable anxiety about what the trends in trade liberalisation would mean for the sugar industry. This prompted calls for increases in productivity to accommodate the gradual decline in preferential prices and to make Fiji competitive on the world market. In 1997 the Sugar Commission of Fiji commissioned a strategic restructuring plan, authored by Australian consultant Peter Verasdonck which was later accepted by the SCoF for discussion by the industry as a whole. The plan identified strategies to implement four goals necessary for global competitiveness;

- Increasing sugar tonnage on farms by 20 per cent from the current tonnage.
- Raising farm productivity by growing up to 20 per cent more cane per hectare.
- Raising mill capacity by 15 per cent.
- Lowering controllable farm and mill production costs by 15 per cent.

(*Fiji Times*, 10 August 1997)
It is not the purpose of this thesis to review the debates in the sugar industry over how to increase efficiency and lower production costs. The above section on production gave an indication of some of the issues the industry and particularly smallholders face. What is missing in the public media debates and discourse of industry leaders is the dynamic that made smallholder cane farming viable in the first place - family labour. Granted the direct involvement of women and children with cane husbandry is said to have declined, particularly in the Western Division, having been replaced by paid labourers (see page 314). But for poorer farming families, particularly in the North where there are fewer opportunities for off-farm work to supplement the household income, their unpaid labour is vital to the continuation of the farm. Neither the money from cane sales, nor the rents and royalties received by respondents who are mataqali land owners, provide a sufficient family income and certainly not enough to pay labourers on a regular basis. The work of women and children in cane cultivation; subsistence agriculture; domestic labour; exchange networks; selling craft work and services, enables the smallholder farming households in the present study to survive. The integration of paid and unpaid labour within the context of the ‘family’ was one of the major strengths of smallholder farming for CSR. This familial context provided unpaid family labour which allowed CSR to pay contractors less than if they had to pay individual wages. At the same time CSR was able to off-load many of its production costs onto the farming families.

My overwhelmingly impression while reading through media reports and sugar industry literature was that family labour on smallholder farms was given cursory attention. References to the number of people working in cane production not surprisingly report the ‘economically active’ population; smallholders are represented by the number of registered growers and paid farm labourers, specifically seasonal cutters (15,000 in 1996). Women and children (under fifteen) are hardly even regarded and when they are it is predominantly
as dependents. I argue that they are active agents in the smallholder operation and suggest if the sugar industry is to become more efficient and production costs for cane cultivation are to be lowered then the smallholder farm must be seen in all its complexity. The following section examines the interaction between smallholders and FSC in the area of farm practice and productivity.

**Negotiating Knowledge - FSC Extension**

This section discusses the way knowledge about cane cultivation is negotiated between FSC and farming households. It is not my intention to give a comprehensive overview of FSC extension services, but rather to focus on the control and access of knowledge. FSC is responsible for all the research and development of sugarcane cultivation and harvesting and has a Sugarcane Research Centre at Lautoka on Viti Levu.\(^43\) This was previously the Agricultural Experiment Station operated by CSR and taken over by FSC in 1973.\(^44\) The research centre is responsible for developments in cane breeding such as new varieties of cane, disease resistance and yields. The other main function is to disseminate this information and methods on productive farm management to cane growers through FSC field and extension staff.

The main point of contact between growers and FSC is the sector Field Officer (FO) and the Farm Adviser (FA). At the sector office there are these two personnel plus the Sector Clerk whose job is administration. The FO heads the sector and provides guidance and technological back up to the FA who is FSC’s extension personnel in the field. The main job of the FA is to disseminate information on developments in cane production and answer growers’ queries about aspects of farm practice. As stated above the Farm Adviser in the case study area had 806 farms to visit. His program was to visit eight to ten farms a day and organise various meetings for grower education throughout the year.

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\(^{43}\) Growers contribute financially towards research and extension services (FSC, 1995:58).

\(^{44}\) CSR had made 'substantial investments in research' (FSC, 1995:39) and also had access to the research developments from its’ Australian operations (see Moynagh 1981).
Respondents had limited contact with FSC extension services. A few saw the FA about once a year but most of them had not seen him for years. Joni said that when they started cane farming in 1968 the Farm Adviser would come around and give them advice which he found very useful especially on farm management and costing. However, the FA stopped visiting after the first five years. This was in 1972 and approximately coincides with FSC’s take over from CSR. CSR had a very ‘hands on’ approach by all accounts and used to monitor the farmers closely (see Chapter One). Presently, respondents said they usually had to initiate the contact with the FA by going into the sector office or sending a message there for him to come. Anil commented that he did not have very much contact because he did not have time “to be running to FSC” but that the few meetings he has attended he found helpful. The meetings respondents were invited to were fairly sporadic. Jimi said the last Field Day\(^ {45}\) in the area was twelve to fifteen years ago.

The respondents agreed that when the FA did come or conduct information days it was worthwhile, one example being with the recent change in fertiliser (see above) they were taught about application. The large sector the FA had to cover made it very difficult for him to visit all the farms on a regular basis. The FO said that to be efficient there should be one farm adviser to every 300 farms. Out of the 806 growers they would personally visit 70-80 percent throughout the year but this is only one visit in a year with no follow up.

The contact between FSC and farming households is through the cane contract holder and other males such as brothers who may share the contract, and sons who are involved with harvesting.\(^ {46}\) The FA said that he usually

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\(^{45}\) Field Days are organised by FSC to exhibit trials and displays to a large group of farmers. The FA in the present study sector said that the purpose of Field Days was to show farmers results of trials and to prove the effectiveness of new husbandry practices. Many of the growers tended to follow the traditional ways that they had inherited from their fathers and could be cynical of new ways. Other events were organised such as Information Days which were done on a larger scale of which there was about four to five a year. About eighty smaller group meetings were conducted by the sector throughout the year.

\(^{46}\) To ascertain the involvement of women contract holders with FSC extension would take further research.
talked to the grower and their sons and very occasionally the whole family. Sugar is very much men's business, they make the decisions and receive the money from sales and harvesting which they largely control.

I observed that much of the planting, weeding and fertilising of cane happens throughout the harvesting season (June to December/January) when the majority of men are busy harvesting, so they delegate this work to other family members (see above). The female respondents had no contact with FSC, they did not participate in any of the formalised structures of the industry but were, along with many of the children, actively involved in cane cultivation. The women viewed cane as men's business and their work as helping their husbands, fathers and brothers. For example, Sharmila said that when she was free from her work she would help her husband "Make his work easier, I am always helping ah. If you live alone it's hard ah."

When I asked the FO about family labour he commented that many of the growers did not want their children working on the farm and that 60 percent of the children go off the farm. He observed that farm labouring families found it difficult to educate their children. He did however agree with me that there are women working in the cane fields and that extension services targeting them could be a good idea. However he said that it was difficult enough to get the growers to the meetings let alone the 'ladies'. The FO said that part of the problem had been that there is nothing new said in the meetings and the growers do not think that is worth going. It is particularly difficult to get grower attendance at meetings during the harvesting season when growers are very

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47 The FA supported this observation when he said planting should be between December and June but few are doing this and the late planting means cane is only getting 12 months of growth time instead of fourteen to sixteen months. For him the timing of operations was paramount.

48 An inference could be made that women would find it difficult to attend because of local gender constructions of appropriate behaviour. As stated above sugar is regarded as 'men's business' and some women could be restricted by family and community censor as well as their own sense of propriety and interest in farm practice in regards to cane. Women's work commitments including child care could also be prohibitive factors.
busy. During the off season he can conduct two to three meetings a week and finds the smaller groups more effective.

Hemraj Mangal, the Chief Extension Officer of the Lautoka Research Centre has devised a new extension program called the Extension Support Group (ESG). When I interviewed Mangal on the 27th of January 1997 they had piloted the ESG in the Legalega sector in the Western Division for nearly a year with great success. Trials had started with several other sectors in the West but had not started in the Northern Division at that stage. The program involved forming a group of around twenty-five growers’ leaders (who would be the sirdar of their gangs) plus five FSC field staff. This group meets every six weeks to discuss a theme with the intention that information learned from these meetings is passed back to the growers’ groups. The vital difference from previous extension programs is that this group of growers is encouraged to actively participate. Rather than being lectured to, growers were encouraged to contribute and voice ideas on their experience of farm practice. Mangal described how he envisages the process;

... so every six weeks we go with a theme, themes like we [in our interview] have already covered like establishing good plant cane, effective weed control practices. All thing like that, so we take them, we call to this farm, we get their ideas, everybody puts in ideas, we put everything on the board. After everything has been put in we, the extension officer [at the] back of the scene would have visualised or would have done his research, he would have put in a discussion paper with all those things that the growers would have come up with, but if he has missed any in his discussion paper then he will put that in. He will say look at all this you know but we still have problems, he says ok, this is good, this is good, this is good, and he will say how to go about achieving that way. There is going to be a lot of discussions and at the end of the session they come up with what we call an extension package for that particular theme and they say all these are agreed and if your doing this and if your doing that now you have to do both and then you are going to improve. After it is all done the practice is decided, these leaders are suppose to go and hold a meeting with their own growers in the locality. The Farm Adviser is supposed to attend about 40 percent every round [of these meetings every six weeks]... We found out, at least where our trial
was, it was very effective at least if this guy [grower leader] was not going and telling them formally, he was telling them informally through the grog bowl, he is telling them piecemeal basis but the message was going on. Then on top of that this guy became our model farmer in the area and people see his results.

Mangal developed this program after a visit to South Africa where he became interested in their extension program. South Africa has a smallholder system of 43,000 growers on two hectare plots producing yields of around 110 tonnes a hectare compared with Fiji's 50 tonnes a hectare. He could see the possibilities of adapting their extension system to the Fiji environment. He recognised that growers had a lot of local knowledge that was not being tapped into and envisaged a feedback system to overcome the difficulties in knowledge dissemination.

Over the years because our growers have inherited the farming and when we inherit something, I believe he has at least a 100 years of experience see, and this grower tends not to listen. Not to listen to this guy [FA]. This guy [FA] does not have, this guy who has left school maybe form 6 level, he does not have the know how, the communication skill to convince this grower, so eventually these things that he may be telling to field growers and a majority of them he may not be passing it on because he knows that they won't accept it, he knows that "I will not be able to convince him" see. He listens to him rather than he telling the grower.

Mangal went on to say that tradition plays a vital role in their research;

We are using this inherited knowledge from growers to develop better or improved farming techniques which can improve the growers production without increasing the cost . . . This becomes a forum, the ESG and it is very formally established, it gives you a very good feedback system.

This is a change from the paternalistic approach that has lingered from the CSR days. Mangal said that "in this case what we called extension all those years in FSC, we call it top to bottom extension and now what we are saying is that it is
participatory or in fact more like bottom to top." With more active involvement the meetings hopefully would have more meaning to participants and be a more effective way of learning for everyone including FSC field staff. The ESG would complement the work of the FA, Mangal said, so that the sector size would no longer be an issue.

The FA in the case study sector also recognised the local knowledge of farmers and commented on the importance of combining farmers with differing abilities at meetings so they could learn from other growers. He also said it was important to give the not so productive farmers individual attention. The extension service officially does this through the Target Farmer Project, whereby farmers or gangs with yields below 50 tonnes a hectare attend meetings with local growers who have sustained high yields over several years to share knowledge (Sugar Cane Research Centre Annual Report 1995:26).

I asked Mangal about dissemination of knowledge to the whole family, as I was concerned that the information the grower was receiving was not always being passed on to other household members who were doing the work. Mangal replied that,

That is our biggest drawback in fact, the whole family is involved in the farming and only one guy gets the information and doesn't go and pass the information on.
Sue: I guess the first step is with this support group is just to get it out to all the farms let alone to the family.
Mr Mangal: In fact what South Africa has done, South Africa most of the farming, small farm holding is done by ladies and their leaders are ladies and then you will find when information given to the ladies it passes very quickly, men? reserve even in our society [we laugh] and I'm encouraging to start off to get some good ladies in our extension support group. After all they do a lot of work, at least in Labasa.

I asked him to expand on the differences between family labour in the Western division and in the Northern division on farms. He said women and girls were not working on the cane farms in the West and he largely attributed
the change to the introduction of garment factories through the Tax Free Zones in 1989 (see Harrington, 1998). The factories, located in Nadi and Lautoka, employed local women and he thought that at least "one lady per family would be employed out" from farming families. Even in the weekend the "lady will not come to do the cane farm".

Several other trends in the Western division Mangal noted made me wish I had been able to do a comparative case study in the West. Because family labour was less available growers in the past had pooled together in groups of three or four to help each other with planting and cultivation of cane, like a 'barter system'. Mangal said this trend has given way to growers employing more farm labourers.49 “That is not in Labasa at the moment but what the West is now going through is that family labour has stopped and barter system is stopped, is now commercialised, we are hiring people.” I thought this indicated more affluence and off-farm opportunities in the West. Mangal agreed, but observed that for many farmers paying for farm labour was a necessity as family labour was not available and that this was incurring a cost some of the growers, especially those producing under 200 tonnes, could not afford. He thought that growers' sons in the West who were educated up to form 6 level thought they were too good for the farm and were looking for opportunities elsewhere. This is an interesting set of generalisations and poses questions about attitudes towards cane farming, labour patterns and migration.

49 These trends correlate with research conducted in the Western Division, see for example Ali’s (1986) research in the Yaladro Cane Sector and Jensen’s (1989) work on the Drasa Cane Sector. Ali (1986:137) states that since the mid-1970s 'reciprocal self-help systems have become problematic and seem to have begun breaking down because of increased mechanization and monetization of labour.' He found an increasing reliance on hired and family labour (Ali, 1986:137 emphasis mine). Jensen (1989:116-117) identifies farm size and cultural orientation as factors determining whether households hired labour or relied on household and extended family labour. Jensen (1989:117) found that in an environment that had become extensively commercialised, Fijian cane growers were still more likely to participate in reciprocal labour arrangements with friends and family than Fiji Indian growers who had changed to hiring labour. This he attributed to cultural factors such as the difficulty of a Fijian demanding wages from a fellow Fijian (see Jensen, 1989 for further discussion).
The SCGC also plays a role in disseminating information to growers about cultivation practices. What was encouraging was the relationship Mangal was building with SCGC so that they were working together on extension publicity. The SCGC had agreed to print the information he gave them in their growers' journal the *Fiji Cane Grower*. As Mangal commented, the growers read this more than FSC pamphlets. This implied to me that the growers were more receptive to information from SCGC than FSC, perhaps a reflection of the miller/grower split.

There are many other facets to the dissemination and negotiation of information in the sugar industry and I have just touched on one area. It became apparent that although different institutions had programs to offer advice to farmers, such as the Fiji Development Bank Farm Management Course, FSC extension, SCGC and MAFF extension there had been until recently very little co-ordination. I do not want to advocate a dependency mentality for farming families, as part of this complex issue is that they have a certain cynicism about some of these institutions. In the case of FSC this is partially attributable to the colonial legacy left by CSR including the continuation of a paternalistic approach by FSC. The ESG marks a turn around in the Corporation's approach to growers. The contribution of family labour in poor farming families I suggest needs to be more carefully considered in extension schemes and Mangal's comments on the participation of women were encouraging. These women should at least be given the choice.

50 In the case study area I was not aware of how much other growers' unions were disseminating information on farm practice.
51 Both SCGC and FSC are printing more information in Fijian and Fiji Hindustani which makes literature a lot more accessible. The main media that respondents accessed their information from was the radio. This was the most accessible and frequent source of information for all the farming households. Mr Mangal does do a weekly radio show and there were other programs on farming news.
Conclusion

This chapter sought to link the case study households with the wider economy and explore how householders negotiated resources and envisioned strategies. Negotiations within the household and between household members and their neighbours, extended family, local community, FSC and global sugar market were discussed. The negotiations were found to be orientated by gender and generation as well as determinants such as ethnicity, nationality and class.

The households were internally differentiated in access, control and allocation of resources. For example some of the women manage the household budget where they are expected to meet the needs of the family, but the husband as head of the household predominantly had authority over allocation and tended to have more disposable income. This has to be seen within the context of the different dispositions of respondents, seniority of household members, their interpretations of family, religious and community obligations and requirements of operating a smallholder farm.

Households were dynamic groupings where members participated in a variety of forms of production and transaction. The articulation of different 'modes of production' in agrarian communities and particularly smallholder farms has been well documented. Respondents engaged in subsistence, exchange networks, barter and sale of goods and services. They also helped each other out in times of need which did not necessarily entail a form of obligation. These transactions were orientated by culturally determined interpretations of needs and rights. Family, religious and community obligations and transactions went towards defining who respondents were and where they belonged as people.

The historical context of land tenure and the sugar industry have contributed to the way respondents acquire and organise their smallholdings. The control of land and money from cane growing is dominated by senior men. Ethnicity and inheritance play a crucial part in the access and control over land and cane as the negotiations over ALTA highlight. Sugar cane's dominant
contribution to cash income in the study households can be attributed to the historical development of the sugar industry and the wider economic development in the Northern Division. There is considerable investment in the current sugar industry with its infrastructure, personnel, expertise and marketing that make alternative cash crops look less viable, particularly exporting on such a large scale basis. This concurs with Jensen’s (1989:99-100) research in the Drasa Cane Sector in the mid-eighties;

No other product came even close to offering the same profitability. Even if several of my informants stated that they in 1986 could have made more money by cultivating other crops, for instance pineapples or vegetables, they kept on producing cane because of the marketing arrangements. Cane offers them a guaranteed market, and a good price. The price fluctuations experienced by other crops make venturing into such production a gamble.

Many of the respondents’ households have supplemented their cash income derived from cane by selling produce, craftwork and labour. Off-farm labour opportunities are limited in the present study area, being situated some distance from Labasa, the nearest urban centre. Men have far more options than women to earn cash, firstly in the sugar industry as cane contractors and cutters, farm labourers, tractor drivers or employed in forestry and goldmining. The limited opportunities of women are due to gender stereotyping of what is considered appropriate paid employment for women (cf. Emberson-Bain, 1994:9) along with restrictions on their employment outside the home which could be seen to conflict with their roles as wives and mothers.

The household’s reliance on cash varied and changed over time according to householders requirements. Treating sick relatives, a wedding or a funeral, school fees and books can all put strain on an already stressed household budget. Respondents meet their needs in a number of ways, many relying heavily on subsistence agriculture to save money as well as bartering and selling goods and services. Obligatory exchange networks were very much a part of respondents’
lives and although culturally orientated there was interaction between Fijian and Fiji Indian neighbours and friends.

For FSC, the smallholder farm is fundamentally viewed as a supplier of cane for its milling operations. The Corporation's contact with the farm is through the cane contractor and the formalised structures of the Master Award and Sugar Industry Act. The land lease, cane quota, cane payment, harvesting gang, transport and extension services are focal points between FSC and smallholders. Growers' representatives, FSC management and the Fiji Government have negotiated these and many other issues over the years.

Women are noticeably absent from all the negotiations, debates and formalised structures of the industry. Women and children are relegated to the world of family where they are simultaneously regarded as labour and as dependents. There is a perception among some industry leaders that women and children no longer participate in the direct cultivation of cane. This perception may be influenced by trends in the Western Division and is also prevalent among wealthier growers in the North. But even for those women and children not directly involved in cane cultivation and harvesting, what of all the subsistence/exchange/domestic work they are involved in? This work enables the farm to operate and allows men to work in harvesting and transporting cane. All these activities are integral to the economy of the smallholder farm and consequently to the production of cane.

The extra money cane contractors have been receiving through preferential agreements has been vital to respondents. With rising living and cane production costs these people would have found it extremely difficult without this money. The money from the Sugar Protocol and now SPS has been an effective form of aid to smallholders, although by no means accessed evenly as there is a difference between the tonnage quota of cane contracts (see Grynberg and White, 1998:56) and internal differentiation within the household.
The demise of preferential agreements through trade liberalisation will hurt small producers such as the respondents. I felt that sugar was a means to an end for these people rather than something they identified with. They will find alternatives, but they are constrained by the physical and socio-economic environs. For example some of their alternative strategies to cane farming for cash could be jeopardised by flooding the local market with produce and the competition for off-farm labour. Taking into consideration the negotiations over ALTA many of the Fiji Indian respondents may have to move elsewhere. Many see the education and employment of their children as an important future strategy. All the respondents wanted their children to have a good life which was defined in different ways, and sometimes varied between parents and child. For girls this could mean having a career as well as a good marriage and raising a family. For boys, their access to land was very important in determining if they could be farmers in the future. For both boys and girls their ambitions for a career was largely determined by their parents attitude, academic ability and finances. However, employment opportunities were gendered and local cultural ideas of appropriate roles for women meant that nearly all of the female respondents were restricted to a full-time occupation of performing the multitude of tasks required in this smallholder context.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the dynamics of contemporary smallholder cane farms with particular focus on the participation and experiences of women and children in the farm economy. In doing so the study queried conceptions of economic activity and the categorisation of processes of production. The study also sought to go past the formalised structures and discourses of the sugar industry and situate the production of cane within the socio-economic processes of the smallholder farm. The production of cane was found to be (inter)dependent on other production processes in the smallholder context and this study examined how these different processes are interrelated. The thesis has been an exploration of how social relations, specifically gender and generation, orientate these economic processes. Ethnographic research undertaken during 1996 and 1997 with twenty farming households provided the foundations of the study. The experiences of respondents were contextualised with historical, socio-economic and comparative literature on Fiji and linkages with the sugar industry at local, national and global levels.

This chapter draws together the theoretical threads outlined in Chapter Two and developed throughout the thesis and summarises the findings of the study. The discussion begins by situating the model used here with recent theorising about women, family and socio-economic relations. I then summarise how the theoretical ideas I have used apply to the findings in the present study.
Theoretical Paths

As stated in Chapter Two this study has been influenced by feminist theories on gender relations and the political economy. To situate my own theoretical analysis it is necessary to follow a path through this literature that highlights some of the major debates and theoretical developments. I will begin in the 1970s when the predominant questions occupying feminists were 'why are women oppressed' and 'what are the mechanisms that perpetuate their oppression'? The debates ranged from ideological explanations and theories of socialisation through to economic, materialist accounts. Harriet Bradley (1989) gives a good overview of these debates, particularly in relation to women and work, which were first framed in terms of patriarchy verses capitalism. Bradley (1989:57) states that most of these early Marxist feminists concluded that Marxist categories were gender neutral and that by adding in gender analysis it was possible to explain gender divisions.

... some believed it was possible to do this within the basic framework of class theory. Marxism needed rewriting rather than transforming. Thus women's position was analysed in terms of their specific role within capitalism, employing the existing vocabulary of 'labour power', reserve army', reproduction' and so forth (Bradley, 1989:57).

This culminated in the 'domestic labour debate' where 'women's subordination was explained in terms of what capital gained from the unpaid work of women in the home (for example, Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Seacombe, 1974; Gardiner, 1976)' (Bradley, 1989:57). This approach has been widely criticised predominantly because women's position is only explained in terms of the needs of capital. Bradley (1989:57) says that 'there was insufficient recognition that men, as a social group, might also profit from the inferior position of women in employment or their assignment to domestic duties'.
At the other extreme radical feminists postulated that patriarchy was the cause of women's oppression and rejected the focus on production in Marxist accounts (Bradley, 1989:57). Rather male dominance pervaded society and was seen as rooted in the family and in particular in women's reproductive role. In contemporary societies sex inequality is seen to be perpetuated by the institutions of monogamous marriage and heterosexuality, by ideologies of sex differences and masculine superiority, by psychological differences arising from childrearing practices within the nuclear family (Bradley, 1989:57-58).

Bradley (1989:52-58) discusses the ambiguities of the term 'patriarchy' and notes the usage by radical feminists was criticised for tending towards a universalistic and ahistorical concept that does not account for variations in gender relations across time and place. Nor does an explanation of women's oppression based on 'patriarchy' take account of other forms of differentiation that intersect with gender such as ethnicity, class and age. Another concern is how easily this leads into a form of essentialism whereby 'biology becomes destiny' as women's role in biological reproduction seals their fate (see page 27). Bradley (1989:58-63; 1996:87) goes on to examine how theorists negotiated these poles by merging analysis of class and gender in a 'unifying theory' or maintaining a 'dual systems theory' that theorised gender and class separately taking into account the interconnections.

However, the focus on class and/or gender overlooked the importance of ethnicity and racial constructs that affected women and men of colour (Bradley, 1996:98). The assumptions of a shared commonality underlying the category 'woman', were rejected, especially by 'feminists of colour, feminists from the developing world and lesbian feminists' (Moore, 1994:11). Moore (1994:11) notes the feminist trends towards historically and culturally specific analysis was a response to
critiques of universal theories about 'woman' that did not recognise the historical and cultural variability. Moore (1994:11) states that

[what is interesting about this crisis is that it generated a simultaneous move towards pluralism and specificity. An enormous range of empirical outcomes and theoretical positions were produced as a result of having to reduce the scope of any model or analytical statement to a particular situation. We now recognize this development as part of a general critique of universalizing theories, metanarratives and totalizing typologies. The current debate is, of course, one about whether we locate the origins of this movement in post-structuralism and deconstructionism or in feminism.

These theoretical concerns underlie the localisation and specificity of the present study. There is for example a vast literature on peasants and smallholders and more specifically smallholder sugar cane farmers in mainly African, Asian and Caribbean countries. I have not engaged with this literature outside of the Fijian context for two reasons. Firstly, I recognise the specific historical development and multicultural context of Fiji which situates the social and economic relations of smallholders there.

Secondly, the focus of the thesis was on respondents experiences and their engagement with the particular parameters of Fiji's sugar industry. The global was brought into the local (Abu-Loghuod, 1993:8; see page 26) with an exploration of preferential trading agreements and respondents' possible strategies with trade liberalisation. However the thesis was not about the world production, trading and consumption of sugar per se (see for example Mintz, 1985). Nor was it about a generalised notion of smallholder production (for discussion see Netting, 1993) or the mechanisms of the 'peasant' household.

Many authors have critiqued the relativist extreme of post-structural theories that exclude generalisable comment and consequently collective action about widely experienced forms of oppression such as sexism and racism. I have taken the
position, as many others have, of recognising diversity and specificity while retaining the idea that within a historically and socially contextualised locale you can identify trends and make generalisations. This is because of the intersubjective and interexperience (see page 24) nature of constructing realities and the influences of a shared environment. The smallholdings in the study were representative of cane producers nationwide in terms of the size of holdings and the tonnage of cane. What was notably different were regional opportunities and constraints in education and off-farm employment.

This study then takes on post-structuralist concerns while retaining a legacy from Marxist and feminist frameworks that seek to integrate an analysis of gender and economic relations. Indeed I do identify marriage as the linchpin between the familial relations that legitimated unpaid labour and the industrialised aspects of the sugar industry that relied on the production of cane. The primary link was the marriage of the (predominantly) male cane contractor to his wife and their subsequent offspring. In this sense I concur with feminist neo-Marxist arguments that point out capital is able to exploit the unpaid labour of women (and children) through their relationship with men. However, this transformation process must be situated in the local context, taking into account the cultural and economic variables, and not seen simply as a co-opting of women's reproductive labour.

The use of Engels dualistic conception of the material base 'involving the production and reproduction on the one hand of things, and the means of existence, and on the other of people, the propagation of the species' (Bradley, 1989:52) set up the framework of production and reproduction. I have critiqued this framework in the thesis for firstly not adequately explaining what goes on in the farm context. Farm and family commitments require women's and children's involvement in all the labour activities on smallholdings including gift and barter networks, sale of goods and services and cash cropping. Much of this work has been labelled
productive and blends into 'reproductive' work in the performance of tasks which makes distinctions arbitrary and I think conceptually obscures what is going on (cf. Sachs, 1996:130; see page 42). As Sarah Whatmore (1991:2) notes,

... the concepts of orthodox Marxism, including PCP [petty commodity production], present major difficulties for the analysis of family enterprise and household production because they are founded upon an opposition between political economy and domestic economy which such forms of production confound. They are embedded in a dualistic conceptual framework which counterposes family and economy, reproduction and production and assumes that, under capitalism, home and work represent two functionally and spatially separate domains.

Allied to this is a second concern that reproductive labour has become conflated with 'women' and 'domestic' work and consequently 'women's' relation to production is seen as somehow different to men's (see Moore's comments page 41). It should also be remembered that 'reproductive' work is also done by men and children and takes place outside the household as well as within it.¹

In Chapter Two I questioned whether it was analytically useful to maintain a distinction between reproductive and productive labour in the smallholder context. The study has demonstrated that paradoxically while reproductive work in terms of 'maintaining the labour force' has some explanatory power in highlighting the transformation of women's unpaid work to capital accumulation for the sugar industry, including cane contractors, it also obscures what is actually going on in terms of work. The dualistic framework serves to maintain a conceptualisation of this work, that is regarded mainly as women's domestic work, as somehow distinctive from other types of work. What is distinctive are not the tasks but the context in which they are performed. As feminists have pointed out

¹ For example the care and maintenance of the 'labour force' which relates to health care and education. Another example is the food products that are made outside the household and either bought to use in the household or consumed elsewhere (Ransome, 1999:135).
household/family relations subsume these tasks under duty, obligation, responsibility, altruism as well as love and emotional attachment. It is the conceptualisations of this familial context that enables the relegation of much of the work women and girls do to the economically inactive category of 'domestic duties'. It also enables FSC and growers' representatives to officially ignore the contribution of women and children's unpaid labour to the smallholder system and address cane production as if it is somehow separated from other parts of the farm complex.²

This emphasis on conceptualisations of the 'family' goes further than a concept of 'patriarchy' in examining familial relations and explaining disparities. Rather I have used a gender relations approach intersected with generation that shows how females and males experiences differ within the household according to age and kinship relation as well as gender. Patriarchy does recognise age and seniority in the authority of older men over younger men, but it does not allow for women having more power in some situations. Power relations within the family/household are more complex and nuanced than the concept of 'patriarchy' suggests (cf. Bradley, 1996:93). This fits in with contemporary feminist thinking which rejects the view of 'women' as passive victims (Bradley, 1996:93).

Different kinship relations within a family denote particular obligations and responsibilities, for example respondents' expectations of a good 'husband' and a good 'wife'. This relationship is partially constructed on notions of complementarity, which extends to ideas about the gender division of labour. Joycelyn Linnekin (1997:112-113) notes that complementarity is 'one feature common to the gender division of labour in Pacific societies... the division of labour facilitates the enactment of perceived differences between social categories -

² However, in 1995 in the Northern Division different bodies (predominantly government) formed a task force through an FDB initiative to address farmers issues with contributions from their various angles (Mr Movoa, Manager FDB Labasa, pers. comm. August 1997). This group comprised the Commissioner Northern, NLTB, FDB, FSC, SCGC and the Ministry of Agriculture.
high/low, young/old, and male/female'. The use of familial 'roles' in this study is similar to Moore's (1994:90-93) concept of 'social identities' which utilises a categorical understanding of identities to explore the connections between the household, institutions and macroeconomic and political processes. Differentiation within the household draws on 'normative understandings and practices which are linked to accepted power differences and ideologies' (Moore, 1994:91). These normative understandings are socially reproduced not just through the household but throughout society,

Conjugal arrangements, residence rights, inheritance laws - all of which are relevant to household analysis - not only describe sets of social and economic relations, but also encode ideas about gender ideologies, and about the different natures, tasks and roles of women and men in society (Moore, 1994:92).

As outlined in Chapter Two, gender relations become embedded in institutions. Yanagisako & Delaney (1995:16) state that Foucault's ideas of discursive formations has the advantage of forging connections between forms of knowledge, institutional structures and regimes of power. Cultural analysis of the 1960s and 1970s tended to overlook these connections, even while noting the cultural and historical specificity of systems of meaning. The insights of Foucauldian discourse analysis have contributed to feminist cultural analysis an awareness of the connections between gender meanings and structures of inequality.

Moore (1994:92) makes the important point that, gender ideologies are not 'just ideas, cultural beliefs and notions which are somehow attached to economic and political processes' but are constitutive of them. These processes serve to socially reproduce gender disparities, along with other forms of differentiation based on ideas about generation, ethnicity and class (cf. Moore, 1994:92).
deconstruction of discursive formations that have become dominant discourses provides a strong analytical tool to see how ideas about a person associated with their age, gender, occupation and so on, may serve to advantage or disadvantage them in any given situation. A caution comes from Micaela di Leonardo (1991:25), who warns against post-structuralist theory which becomes discourse theory where 'only discourses may be studied'.

The logic is this: since we culturally construct social and material realities, to study the "material world" in addition to or instead of discourse on material life is to consider a fiction (di Leonardo, 1991:25).

The underlying paradigmatic framework of the study as outlined in Chapter Two suggests that it is useful to study both discourses on material and social life, and the relations between the physical environment, daily activities, socio-economic practices and social constructions. These relationships are envisioned here as mutually constitutive as the physical environs and human 'necessities' influence peoples beliefs and practices in dynamic and diverse ways. I also think there are ways of knowing that are outside language (or texts) and come from being embodied in a sentient body in a physical world. This can be allied to practice theories (see Ortner, 1984 for discussion) such as Bourdieu's (1978), where daily routines are at once grounded in cultural concepts and perpetuate these concepts through enactment. Both in terms of 'public observation and discourse' (Ortner, 1984:154) and also at a personal level.

The gender and development (GAD) literature in particular has emphasised the necessity of still being able to say and do something about gender disparities and not falling for the extremes of relativism. Kabeer (1994) gives an excellent overview of the development literatures approach to 'women' and the current emphasis on gender relations. Her concept of social relations expands out the Marxist concept of
social relations from production of commodities and objects to the production and care of people. ‘It entails the theorization of the relations of everyday life and their interconnections with the relations of re/production in the changing local and world economy’ (Kabeer, 1994:65). This idea of social relations looks at the way people mediate ‘structural forces’ in daily lives and utilises an ‘inductive mode of analysis’ that relies on a localised and historically situated account. This theoretical framework also takes into account other social variables;

The use of gender relations as a category of analysis also shifts the focus away from the earlier one on women. A focus solely on women tended to imply that the problem - and hence the solution - could be confined to women. A focus on social relations extends the analysis from women - and men - as isolable categories to the broader interconnecting relationships through which women are positioned as a subordinate group in the division of resources and responsibilities, attributes and capabilities, power and privilege. Moreover, treating gender as one aspect of social relations reminds us that it is not the only form of inequality in the lives of women and men. While ‘gender is never absent’, it is never present in pure form. It is always interwoven with other social inequalities, such as class and race, and has to be analysed through a holistic framework if the concrete conditions of life for different groups of women and men are to be understood (Kabeer, 1994:65).

The idea of socially constructed ‘institutions’ was also utilised in this study. An ‘institution’ is regarded here as a categorical tool to identify a set of beliefs and practices and denotes an umbrella term. An institution therefore incorporates discourses and praxis which may be circulated locally and/or codified through legislation, religious texts, or corporate protocols for example. Marriage is an institution which I refer to as the ‘marriage complex’, denoting an array of local, cultural customs, religious ceremonies, discourses on family as well as legal procedures (cf. Ortner, 1984:148). Kabeer (1994:xiii) examines recent attempts by feminists to
ground the concept of gender relations within an institutional framework in order to make it more amenable to empirical analysis. Such a theorization of gender and development focuses on the construction and reinforcement of gender inequalities through rules, procedures and practices of the key institutions through which development policies are formulated and enacted.

FSC as an institution presents more identifiable structures and codified procedures, however peoples beliefs and the implementation of practices make talking about the Corporation as an cohesive ‘entity’ problematic. Like marriage, some codified procedures remain relatively static and are predominantly followed. Dominant discourses orientated certain beliefs and practices but these may also be applied differently as people interpret, challenge or simply change things. The notion of institution here sits between a static rule-bound structure and a more dynamic concept that indicates a locus of related phenomena. This is similar to Linda McDowell (1999) observations on the notion of ‘place’;

It is important, however, not to be too carried away by the fluidity of this conceptualization and representation of relational place, as customs and institutional structures clearly persist through time and ‘set’ places in time and space as it were. . . . This notion of a regime to refer to a relatively stable set of social relations that are maintained despite minor alterations and variation, but which are subject to periodic upheavals, often in times of crisis which may be related in particular to economic changes, is also a useful way to think about gender relations (McDowell, 1999:5-6).

To go back to the household, this study has illustrated that indeed households are not homogenous and autonomous groupings, but rather internally differentiated and interactive with social and economic institutions outside the household. There is a two way (or multiple way) relation where ideas about familial relations expressed in terms of gender and generation impact on wider
institutional structures, which in turn influence family/household relations. However, this is no straightforward process as I think this study has shown.

In summary the theoretical model developed in this study specifies the importance of examining how social and economic relations are developed in a particular locale. This recognises the variability and diversity across time and place and the particular cultural dynamics that contribute to the way people perceive the world. Culture is retained as a concept to denote a historically developed and collective set of beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices are in flux, changing in response to interpretation, circumstances and cross-cultural interaction.

The study was concerned with the interconnections between beliefs and practices and was orientated by a 'social relations' and 'social location' approach. The way people relate to each other can be influenced by discursive formations of 'social location' or 'social identities' which relates to ideas on gender, ethnicity, age, kinship, occupation and class. This list of social indicators is not exhaustive and this study only focused on gender and generation relations. This was not supposed to be a comprehensive account of the smallholder household/family as I think it is vital to recognise the extreme complexity and nuances of these social relations. Expectations and normative understandings of social location in any given relationship was seen as a mechanism by which uneven power relations were legitimated and exercised. This was by internalisation of concepts as part of ones identity as well as accepting hierarchies of authority and peoples different needs and rights. These power relations could also be exercised by community pressures, coercion and violence.

The 'social identities' outlined in Moore's categorical way should be viewed as just that, 'categories'. They are reference points, as well as political ideas used to decipher social relations. As concepts they are dynamic and interpretative, able to be modified and challenged. Normative understandings such as those about family
and gender are constitutive of institutions and become embedded in organisational structures. This had social and material implications in the allocation of labour and resources and the ownership and control of resources.

The dualist frameworks of 'Western' social science discourse are hard to 'shake-off' and many of these theories are based on a Cartesian mind/body split that is manifest in radical social constructivist verses materialist debates. Theoretically I maintain an integrationist approach, suggestive in concepts of embodiment (see for example Gatens, 1996; Moore, 1994). However I do stress the importance of social values in orientating economic values and organising economic relations.

The question of why there is differentiation in social and material status is to some extent implicit in how constructs are legitimated, interpreted and enacted. To look for origins in monolithic frameworks of patriarchy and/or material relations is to deny the variable, complex and dynamic nature of these relations.

**Interconnections: Theorising the Findings**

The smallholder system developed out of the colonial government and milling companies' desire for a cheap, plentiful labour supply and a production system that would provide quality cane at low cost to the mills. How 'family labour' was a suitable replacement for indentured labour has been an underlying question in the present study as it throws into relief notions about 'family' and 'work'. While ethnicity has not been a major focus of this study I should reiterate that ethnicity was also a major factor in these European conceptions of a cheap labour force, as racism incited ideas that Indian settlers could somehow live more cheaply and did not need as much as European planters (Narsey, 1979:105-106). This should also be viewed in relationship to colonial policies relating to Fijians and the wider socio-economic context of the colony.
In order to explore notions of 'family' and the way these relations directed the farm economy I started at a pivotal point in family life, marriage. The conjugal couple are a primary relationship in the continuation and formation of new households in the smallholder context. Household members are differentiated by gender and generation which are the main orientating principles in the control and allocation of work and resources. While family is not synonymous with household, non-related householders were still guided by gender and generational constructs in their relations. The marriage process provided a way of examining the ideology and practice influencing the formation, maintenance and changes surrounding these relations within the family at the intra and interhousehold levels.

Present day family relations are influenced by a myriad of factors and the historical development, particularly the impact of colonialism and indenture, was discussed to contextualise Fijian and Fiji Indian family forms. For both peoples the legal, political, social, economic and religious developments that were initiated with the European arrival in Fiji, cession to Britain and the implementation of indenture, then smallholder systems for sugar production, have had lasting consequences for the country.

For Girmitiya the violence of indenture and the consequent development of the settler community melded together old with new concepts of Indian family and community relations. Of interest to the present study was the emphasis on the appropriate treatment and moral behaviour of Girmit women which significantly contributed to the demise of indenture and promoted the virtues of Indian womanhood epitomised by Sita, the devoted wife of Ram. Taken from the Ramayan epic, which Fiji Indian respondents who practice Sanatam Dharm Hinduism followed, this ideological doctrine provided a moral blueprint for appropriate behaviour. In this form of devotional worship, the husband is likened
to a god, and the wife as devotee, worships and obeys. Within this acknowledged hierarchical relationship the marriage ceremonies stress the complementary commitment of wife and husband in forming their new life together.

The Fiji Indian respondents' expectations, or 'normative understandings' of marriage partners for themselves and their children expressed these complementary concerns within the context of smallholder farming. A woman should be able to look after the house, cook and clean and take care of the children and relatives and be able to do the farm work. The man's family should have a good house, he should be hardworking and prosperous. In the arrangement of marriages, a prospective bride's virtuous reputation is vitally important. Any hint of impropriety can tarnish her, and possibly her sisters, jeopardising their chances of a suitable marriage. Proper deportment, for their reputation as well as protection, means that Fiji Indian girls are restricted in their mobility and freedom of association because of family and community pressure. This highlighted the social and physical constraints perpetuated by gender constructions.

The dynamic nature of culture was exemplified by intergenerational tensions as parents wanted arranged marriages for their children, while many of the younger respondents preferred the idea of love marriage. Parents sought to retain control of who their children would marry particularly if they were young and uneducated as they did not consider them mature enough to make a suitable decision. Respondents wanted their daughters to go to good homes and to ensure potential daughter-in-laws would be competent, compliant and respectful. There was found to be a correlation between education, employment and autonomy in marriage choices for Fiji Indian girls. Education provided more opportunities for paid employment and females in this position were perceived to be mature and independent enough to make their own decisions. However, most marriages in the study area were arranged.
The Fijian family form was influenced by Christian missionaries, particularly Wesleyan Methodism, along with European colonial authorities notions of family. This was combined with a codification of ‘traditional’ Fijian kinship structure into land owning groups and legislation to control and protect the ‘Fijian way of life’. Missionaries promoted the nuclear family and tried to change living arrangements by banning men’s houses and promoting legislation that a newly married couple should have their own house rather than extended family arrangements. Appropriate occupations for men and women emphasised women's role in the home as carers of the family involved in domesticity and reinforced male authority in the household. Precolonial Fijian ideas on gender and generation, of which there was considerable regional variation, became entangled with colonial legislation and ideology as people negotiated the new environment. Enactment and demeanor that conveys respect are upheld by the notion of the chiefly way and are indicative of ideal conduct within the Fijian household. Respect for seniority also means wives should obey husbands and children should obey parents. Conversely, those in authority should respect and care for those under their protection.

The expectation of a good husband was that he could provide well for his wife and family. Productive capacity, evident in an abundant plantation, was emphasised as this meant there would be enough to eat. A man should also have a house or the potential to build one, whereas a wife must be able to take care of the family, look after visitors and take care of the daily food requirements and housework. Mat making was considered an important skill for Fijian women in some families, as mats were a significant part of the exchange networks at traditional ceremonies.

A Fijian man and woman’s reputation was also considered, but for different reasons. Both should not be ‘roaming around’, going ‘here and there’, insinuating for a woman, that her chasteness would be in question and, for a man, that he was
spending too much time drinking and socialising and not attending to his work, a sentiment expressed mainly by women. This was also a concern of Fiji Indian women. While Fijian marriages were not arranged, some young couples did elope as they fell in love regardless of their parents' criteria.

Although there are differences between Fijian and Fiji Indian protocols, there are some transcultural threads that express similarities. I found that expectations of a good 'husband' and good 'wife' for both communities articulate ideas about a person's qualities, skills and demeanor that incorporate ideals of femininity and masculinity reflected in complementary 'roles' in the marriage. These 'roles' required specific skills to suit the rural context with an emphasis on both women and men being competent at farm work. Farm work was an important necessity on smallholdings and women who did not come from a cane farm would be taught new skills. This was a big change for both Fijian and Fiji Indian female respondents who did not come from cane farms. It was desirable for example, for Fiji Indian men to own farm equipment and draught animals such as plough, bullocks or a tractor which reflected masculine tasks. This also highlighted the differences in technology utilised by men and women on these farms as women mainly used hoes. Machetes were ostensibly a mans' tool but were also used by females for a variety of tasks. This illustrates social constructions of gender and kinship relations and how the material parameters of smallholder farms were negotiated by respondents' constructs.

The designation of 'wife' or 'husband' for respondents specifies both ideas of occupation and position within the smallholder complex. Their complementary relationship is hierarchical as the husband is senior to the wife in authority. Within extended family households generation crosscuts gender in the orientation of relations. For example patrilocal marriage practices emphasised the role of
daughter-in-law in working under the direction of her mother-in-law or other senior female relatives.

Religion was very important to the respondents and the religious doctrines were integral to cultural constructs of family, literally sanctifying the hierarchy between husband and wife. The 'ideal' conjugal couple explored through religious ceremonies and respondents' expectations are to some degree challenged by 'behind the scenes' negotiations. This was demonstrated both in the marriage process negotiations and in the accounts of daily life where women played a more active role in decision making.

However, the culturally constructed gender and generational orientations in daily life are very real. Seniority in terms of age, kinship relation and gender, combined with legalistic and institutional inequities serve to disadvantage younger women in particular within the smallholder farm. The unequal distribution of resources within households is legitimated through cultural practices such as patrilocal marriage and patrilineal inheritance. This has meant that women and children have been disadvantaged in their access to cane payments and other resources which are predominantly controlled by senior men.

This is an example of how cultural perceptions become embedded in institutional and organisational structures. For example the colonial codification of land rights and CSR administration of the smallholder system has resulted in legal entitlement to land leasing arrangements and cane contract being predominantly in the name of senior men. Young men may obtain a lease and contract when they establish their own farm, conditional on factors such as land availability and finances. Women, on the other hand, seem to only be title and contract holders by default, either because they have access to land as in the case of some Fijian women mataqali members or widows. Nationwide this may be quite an unfair assumption and needs further research. These ideologies had implications for marital laws
which at the time of fieldwork disadvantaged women in divorce settlements where they did not have joint title to leases and could not demonstrate monetary economic contribution.

Within any of the formalised structures of the sugar industry, including the growers’ unions, women were not represented at all to my knowledge, except as administrative staff. During the course of research I noted the general exclusion of unpaid family labour in the discourses of the sugar industry. Sugar is men’s business, however it is not just men’s work. The research in the present study demonstrated the involvement of women and children in the cultivation of cane and juxtaposed this to their access to cane payments and FSC extension services.

In the locale of the study opportunities for off-farm labour were few and cane was still the mainstay of cash income for most of the respondents. Their low tonnage of cane only provided part of respondents’ needs, householders utilised a variety of interrelated production processes including; domestic, subsistence, exchange, barter and sale of goods and services. Without the complex integration of many different tasks carried out within these smallholder farms, households would find it difficult to survive or to produce cane.

As families struggle to exist in this environment and meet their requirements it is expected that every member will work. Children are expected to help their parents as wives help their husbands. The unpaid work family members perform within the context of the family/household is morally unquestioned, it is not regarded as exploitative. This work is effectively hidden behind the expectations of family relations within and between households. Much of this work has become naturalised (cf. Redclift 1988:444) as part of what it is to be a ‘wife’, ‘daughter-in-law’, ‘mother’, ‘child’ and so on. Normative understandings and practices of these familial relations involve duty, destiny, obedience, respect, love,
emotional attachment, responsibility, care and so on which were expressed in the marriage ceremonies and by respondents.

Children are taught gender specific skills which become more entrenched as they get older. Men generally were more defensive of their masculinity in terms of refusing to do work they regarded as ‘women’s work’ and generally had more authority to refuse to do these tasks. Many of the women took great pride in feminised skills such as cooking, sewing and house presentation but they also had to be competent on the farm. Indeed, subsistence agriculture was an integral part of the process of feeding the family. Women were more flexible in the work they would do, and except for ploughing and tractor work, were familiar with all aspects of the farm. This reflected the demands of their ‘occupation’ and generally their lesser ability to be able to refuse to do this work, especially as younger women.

It was found women generally work longer hours than men as their work and leisure time are not as clearly delineated. While men identify the farm with work, the house is more a site of leisure where they can relax after a days labour. For women who are involved with both house and farm work and most of the care of children and relatives their labour requires a complex integration of tasks throughout the whole day. They have less time to relax and their leisure time only increases with age and seniority within the household. As children grew, daughters take over some of the domestic tasks including caring for younger siblings. Both sons and daughters help with subsistence farming and animal husbandry which becomes more onerous during the harvesting season when many of the men are cutting. When sons marry and bring their wives home, daughters-in-law provide some further respite from the continuous work. Labour availability, the farm calendar, social and family commitments were all factors that influenced the work household members did and could blur categorisations of gendered labour practices (cf. Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994:85).
How government and development agencies perceive labour and resource allocation is extremely important to their policy planning process and has material consequences for communities, and is a particular focus of the women/gender and development literature. The study examined how contemporary Fijian government economic discourse in the form of statistical categorisations obscure much of the work of women and children by relegating these tasks as part of familial obligation of being a wife, mother and child. This is expressed as housewives doing domestic work and children under fifteen, or for those over fifteen still in formal education as full time students. The 1996 Fiji Census has gone some way to including activities in subsistence and exchange that were previously unrecorded in recognition of the under reporting of unpaid work, which particularly affects women’s work on the farm. However, there is still a conceptual block with domestic work, which is by no means isolated to Fiji.

As well as being ‘invisible’, this work is not conceived of as creating a product in financial market terms. Domestic labour produces goods and services that are of utility and when placed within a market framework have exchange value, for example chef, house keeper, nanny and laundry service. If the negative case were to be examined; there were no meals on the table, no clean house or clothes and the children were not being looked after or elderly relatives cared for then this would be considered of negative ‘value’ - women would pay a ‘reverse’ price if this was to happen. This illustrates that what domestic labour produces are valued products. Children’s unpaid work on smallholder farms needs to be acknowledged in statistical accounts. Children combine schooling and work at home during the school week, and work during the weekends and school holidays. There are

\[3\] I owe the ‘negative case’ scenario to Peter Wilson (pers. comm. February 2000).
children who leave school before the age of fifteen who are working full time at home. I agree with Nieuwenhuys’ (1994) criticism that their work is often only regarded as helping out, training and socialising by parents and social analysts. More research is needed on the impact of work on children’s lives and how this relates to their development and future opportunities. The work women and children do on the study farms was integral to operating the smallholdings and to meeting family and community commitments.

For CSR, smallholder farming successfully replaced the indenture labour system, in part due to cultural constructs of gender and generation that shaped household relations. Under the auspices of familial obligation and the survival needs of the household, women and children provided labour in addition to that of the grower and other remunerated farm workers. It is this juncture between marriage, family, farming and cane production that is expressed in the title *Cane and Commitment*. CSR was certainly able to maintain profits as long as they controlled and maintained a favourable split in sugar revenues with growers (see Narsey, 1979). At present, the approximate 70/30 split between growers and FSC respectively is much fairer than what growers ever received under CSR.

Respondents did experience socio-economic constraints in the size of their holdings, the low tonnage, cost of cane production and of living, as well as growing families, combined to make money earned from sugar barely enough to meet their cash requirements. The respondents survived by employing a variety of production processes that utilised unpaid family labour in the cultivation of cane and subsistence agriculture, exchange networks and domestic work which made the smallholder system a viable although often precarious way to live.

In Fiji some smallholders have expanded and with larger holdings have done well out of cane farming, aided with the diversification into other businesses. However the smallholders in the present study were more representative of the
average farm size and tonnage in Fiji and were further constrained by regional opportunities. For example the tourist and manufacturing industries situated in the Western Division would presumably give farming households there more options for off-farm employment. In the Northern Division, particularly for those located further away from the urban centre Labasa, there were fewer opportunities. This was notably gendered as the main jobs were in forestry and gold mining which employed men. This emphasises the importance of examining the smallholding as a complex of socio-economic relations situated within locales that present specific physical, social and economic opportunities and constraints.

As stated the articulation of these farming households with the cane production system was dependent on unpaid family labour performing a variety of tasks and processes. This includes family labour in sharefarming and sharecropping households who are not individually remunerated for their work. Even when the organisation of cane cultivation is transferred to paid labourers, there are hidden costs of production as other production processes such as domestic and subsistence work support the production of cane.

Conversely cash proceeds from cane are integral to householders requirements. The cash provides for farm operations, family needs and obligations, whether they be for extended family members, local community, religious groups or for health and education. This is what people work for. Therefore, I propose that the production of cane within these smallholdings should be seen within the context of family and community life. Social relations and social values orientate the way labour and resources are organised at the intra and interhousehold level. These relations are negotiated within local interpretations of 'family' and 'household' and the institutional and physical parameters of the smallholder cane production system. The thesis highlighted the dynamic nature of these negotiations as peoples interpretations and practices challenged and responded to dominant
cultural 'norms', the political and socio-economic context and their physical environs.

The reliance on a variety of forms of production was further highlighted when I asked respondents about what strategies they would undertake if the cane price dropped dramatically. Subsistence agriculture, market gardening and bartering of goods and services would increase as they tried to compensate for the decrease in income from sugar. Currently Fijian women respondents made baskets for sale and some families were involved in small market gardening operations where produce was sold or bartered locally. Only three of the households had members employed in other occupations. Some of the Fijian respondents who had secure access to more land would endeavour to utilise the land in some other way, for example with forestry or other cash crops like yaqona. Others would look for off-farm employment or possibly move elsewhere for work. Fiji's preferential trading agreements have enabled the respondents to continue with cane farming. However, the seemingly inevitable erosion of these agreements driven by an ideology of trade liberalisation questions the continuation of producing cane for these people if their production costs continue to rise and meet decreasing market prices.

Of more pressing concern to some respondents was land tenure with the expiry of ALTA leases. For some Fiji Indian tenants this caused a lot of anxiety and uncertainty over their futures. On the lessees' side many mataqali members have been unable to access their land for long periods of time and require the land for their own family needs. This is a delicate and ongoing issue in Fiji which, at the time of fieldwork was being reviewed and negotiated case by case. I did not inquire how respondents felt about rents they paid or received but in the national context rent evaluation and distribution is an important issue in the land tenure negotiations, as is the length of leases.
Respondents’ aspirations for their children involved wanting a good life for them. This had varying meanings and sometimes differences between what children and parents wanted. For many parents this meant fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities towards their children by seeing them well married (especially daughters) and establishing them in their adult lives. Generally there was an emphasis on educating children which is by no means new, but in the present study both Fijian and Fiji Indian girls were more often encouraged to be educated than were their mothers and certainly grandmothers. Boys who did not want to farm and who were uncertain of inheriting farms were also encouraged into other career options through education as formal education was an important criteria in obtaining a well paid job. There was a tendency, especially among Fiji Indian respondents to want their children to get jobs out of farming. This was due to a combination of wanting them to have a better life than they themselves had with opportunities to make more money and even possibly emigrate overseas. Uncertainty over leases and their own futures prompted parents to encourage children into other employment. This applied particularly to sons who were expected to take care of their parents in their old age.

Constraining factors were the expense of continuing education and training costs, regional variation in employment opportunities, and occupational segregation in terms of gender. For those children who were not doing so well at school there was little option but to continue with farm life or seek work that did not require qualifications. Some children of course wanted to continue with farm life.

I hope that the study has demonstrated some of the complexities of respondents’ lives on smallholder farms as they negotiate cultural, legal, economic and physical environs. I have tried to demonstrate how their experiences are differentiated by gender and generational relations that permeate through
households, legislation, customary and institutional practices. The thesis explored how constructs of familial relations have become embedded through codes of conduct, access and control of labour and resources. Ideas about rights and value are premised by these cultural constructs in conjunction with other social variables such as ethnicity and class. These ideas are dynamic and respondents' experiences show some of the ways they accommodate, challenge and maintain notions of family and household relations within the smallholder context.
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Appendix II

House Group and Household Composition by Family Relationships, Current Education Status of Children – 31st July 1997

House Group A: 4 Households
Household 1: Grandfather and Grandmother
    Son and wife (married 1997)
    Granddaughter who had left school
    Cane cutters: 2 young men, related

Household 2: Daughter and Husband
    2 teenage sons who have left school
    1 son and 1 daughter at primary school

Household 3: Male cousin to Grandfather in Household 1 and Wife
    2 teenage girls who had left school
    1 daughter and 1 son at primary school

Household 4: Sharecropping family for Household 3
    Husband and Wife
    2 daughters at high school
    1 daughter and 1 son at primary school

House Group B: 2 Households
Household 5: Grandfather and Grandmother
    Granddaughter of eldest son
    second Son and Wife and their
    2 daughters and 1 son at primary school
    Cane cutter: nephew

Household 6: third Son and Wife
    2 sons preschool
    2 son at primary school
House Group C: 4 Households

Household 7: Grandfather and Grandmother
   Daughter returned home with
   1 son and 1 daughter at primary school
   1 son left school
   During cane harvesting her eldest daughter and her husband and
   their two preschool daughters would come and stay to help out

Household 8: Grandfather’s Brother and Wife
   Female relative and her two children
   1 son preschool
   1 daughter at primary school
   Cane cutters: nephew during harvesting and man from nearby
   koro three days a week

Household 9: Eldest Son and Wife
   1 son left high school 1996
   elderly male friend
   1 female researcher
   cane cutters: 3 teenage boys during harvesting

Household 10: Second son and Wife
   1 son preschool

House Group D: 3 Households

Household 11: Grandfather and Grandmother
   Eldest Son and Wife
   1 daughter at primary school

Household 12: Second Son and Wife
   1 daughter preschool
   1 daughter primary school

Household 13: Second Daughter and Husband
   1 preschool daughter
House Group E: 2 Households - only 1 in study
Household 14: Eldest Brother and Wife
   1 daughter

House Group F: 2 Households
Household 15: Grandfather and Grandmother
   Eldest Son and Wife
   2 sons at primary school
Household 16: Second Son and Wife
   2 sons at primary school
   1 daughter preschool

Non-House Group Households
Extended Family Household 17: Grandfather and Grandmother
   3 Sons at High School
   2 Daughters at High School
   1 Son and Wife
   1 granddaughter baby

Extended Family Household 18: Grandmother
   Son and Wife
   1 daughter who left high school in 1996
   1 daughter and 2 sons at primary school

Extended Family Household 19: Grandmother
   Eldest Son and Wife
   2 daughters preschool

Nuclear Family Household 20: Mother and Father
   1 son and 1 daughter at high school
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