28

ARE FIJI'S TWO MILITARY STRONGMEN POPULISTS?

Thomas A. J. White

This chapter inquires into the 'conceptual overstretch' of a comparative populism (Sartori, 1970; Moffit, 2016, p. 13) and its relevance for political description in Oceania, specifically in the nation-state of Fiji. To date, the politics of the island nations of Oceania have not so much as made a scratch in global populism studies. For example, with the exception of Aotearoa New Zealand, *The Oxford Handbook of Populism* (2017) makes no mention of Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian states, and the polities of this region go missing again in *The Routledge Handbook of Global Populism* (2019). Moreover, while populism studies have paid scant attention to the politics of Oceanic states, in Fiji at least, this indifference has been mutual. Through fifty years of independence from British colonialism, Fiji's racially-charged politics of coups and serial constitutions have included behaviours that appear populist. Yet this term is rarely used to define or critique such a politics. The most common use of this term in Fiji's national newspapers is found in Reuters reports in the World News sections, describing populist leaders, regimes, and movements *elsewhere* in the world.[1]

What insights then does a populist analysis provide to understanding Fijian political behaviour? Or alternatively, what blind spots does it create? Does its local non-use for denoting populist-type activities invalidate any such theoretical intervention? At the least, it cautions that a focus on populism in Fiji may overwrite more probing, alternative explanatory accounts. Variously pitched as a thin ideology, strategy, discourse, performance, and even the grounds of 'the political' itself, the polysemy of populism led Peter Wiles (1969) to state fifty years ago: 'To each his own definition of populism, according to the academic axe he grinds' (p. 166). Far from scuttling comparative populism, however, this observation returns us to the core objective of social inquiry: to understand human behaviour, rather than defend conceptual forts. The task at hand, therefore, is to assess how the various theoretical approaches in the populist studies tool kit might advance or hinder our understanding of Fiji's politics.

This chapter evaluates the analytic merits and costs of applying a populist reading to Fiji's two most significant contemporary politicians: the Indigenous military strongmen, former coup-makers, and repeat-elected prime ministers Sitiveni Rabuka and Voreqe Bainimarama. While these two leaders are not necessarily the most *populist* of all Fiji's political figures—the

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003160014-32

2000 coup-leader George Speight could probably best advance such a claim—they remain ideal cases for thinking through the contemporary relevance of a comparative populism in Fiji. First, the two leaders have been politically pre-eminent in Fiji across the last thirty-five years. Speight, by contrast, is twenty years into a life sentence for treason and never took control of the state. Second, both leaders have clearly employed populist-like speech and behaviour in their politics, and yet they are rarely described as populists. These two leaders' more ambivalent relations to populist description offer greater nuance for specifically evaluating the analytic value of populism for interpreting Fiji's politics than a hard case would.

The following analysis is split into four parts: (i) an overview of the two leaders' political careers, summarizing Fiji's last thirty-five years of political division; (ii) the utility of a populist description for these two leaders; (iii) an analysis of what a populist description misses in these leaders' politics; and (iv) an alternative account for interpreting the populist characteristics of Fijian political behaviour.

The political careers of Rabuka and Bainimarama

Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka burst onto Fiji's political scene in the country's first military coup on May 14, 1987. Storming parliament with masked soldiers, Rabuka ousted the month-old Coalition government, comprising the newly-formed, multiracial Labour Party and the National Federation Party, the traditional party of the Indo-Fijians (Lal, 1988, pp. 1–2). Ruggedly handsome, a lay Methodist preacher, military officer, and former national rugby player, Rabuka was the archetype for Indigenous iTaukei (Fijian) masculinity (Teaiwa, 2005). Rabuka claimed to be of *bati* (warrior) rank and presented himself as defending the honour of Fiji's chiefs (Scarr, 1988, p. 56). Indigenous support rallied behind his military takeover with slogans such as *Noqu kalou, noqu vanua* (My God, my land) and *Rerevaka na kalou ka duka na Tui* (Fear God and honour the chief) while Rabuka claimed Fiji for Jehovah, the chiefs, and the Indigenous iTaukei, over and against *heathen* Hindu and Muslim Indo-Fijians and the *intellectuals* in Fiji's capital, Suva (Norton, 1990, p. 139).

Rabuka claimed that the Indo-Fijian community—primarily the descendants of indentured sugar plantation labourers (1879–1920)—had forgotten their place in Fiji's colonially constructed racial hierarchy. After release from indenture, Indo-Fijians had persevered as the backbone of Fiji's sugar industry but also came to underpin Fiji's local economy of shopkeepers and white-collar professions in the colony's growing townships. Colonial rule was careless of Indo-Fijian well-being. This left many Indo-Fijians destitute yet also comparatively free to incorporate, establish credit and labour unions and schools, and contest elections for the few Indian seats on the Legislative Council. By contrast, British policies of Indigenous protectionism sought to insulate the iTaukei from the human attrition of plantation capitalism by restricting commoners to their villages under the combined care of the Methodist Church and the chiefs, with the latter representing Indigenous interests to the colonial state through the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC). Indigenous Fijians widely perceived this *privileged* status of Indigenous culture and interests as continuing after independence in 1970, whereafter the Indigenous-led Alliance Party and the high chief, Prime Minister Ratu Kamisese Mara, held office for seventeen years. Mara's shock loss at the hands of iTaukei commoners and Indo-Fijians in the April 1987 elections upended a century of institutionalized inter- and intra-ethnic political hierarchies. It also led Rabuka and his ethno-nationalist supporters to declaim Indo-Fijians as making a grab for political as well as economic hegemony.

In the aftermath of the coup, Rabuka invited Mara back to lead an interim government, but then, from the safety of his barracks, publicly admonished Mara's rule whenever he perceived a backtracking on the coup's goal of securing Indigenous paramountcy. When Mara agreed to a power-sharing arrangement between his Alliance Party and the deposed Labour Coalition, Rabuka executed a second coup in late September 1987. Rabuka established his own Council of Ministers, abrogated the London-drafted 1970 constitution, and declared Fiji a Republic—severing Fiji's ties to the British monarchy. Having now turned against Mara and the chiefly elite, Rabuka allied himself with the nationalist wing of the Methodist Church, as well as anti-Mara nationalist politicians, such as Sakeasi Butadroka of the marginal Fiji Nationalist Party. Amidst a flurry of draconian military decrees, in early October, Rabuka instituted the Sunday Ban, which prohibited all non-worship activities on Sundays for Christians and non-Christians alike.

Rabuka's Council of Ministers lasted only two months before he again turned to Mara to save the economy and lead Fiji through a redrafting of the constitution. The new 1990 Constitution reserved top government positions and allocated a fixed majority of parliamentary seats for the Indigenous iTaukei, and exempted Indigenous affirmative action policies from anti-discrimination law. Still in his barracks, Rabuka continued to intervene opportunistically on political issues, adding to his folk-hero status as the man who saved Fiji from a government of *vulagi* (foreigners). For example, Rabuka chose to join the pickets of the 1990 nurses' strike against Mara's interim government, contrasting sharply with his military harassment of the trade unions during his coups (Keeling, 1991). In the lead-up to fresh elections in 1992, Rabuka officially left military life for politics and, despite his status as a commoner, won control of the newly-formed *Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei* (SVT) party, the new party of Fiji's chiefs, outmanoeuvring Mara's wife, Ro Lala Mara (a high chief in her own right), for the leadership. Still highly popular amongst the Indigenous masses and benefiting from the changes to the 1990 Constitution, Rabuka won repeat elections in 1992 and 1994, cementing his transition from rebel coup-maker to national prime minister.

Rabuka's ethno-nationalism tempered during his time in office, and by 1997, he had shifted towards ideals of statesmanship, pushing through parliament reforms to the 1990 Constitution that promoted multiracialism and reframed Indigenous paramountcy from an ideology of political dominance to one of cultural defence (Lal, 2000). The multiracial compromises of Fiji's 1997 Constitution scandalized many iTaukei while, conversely, many Indo-Fijians attacked the new laws for falling short of full political equality. During his premiership, Rabuka's programmes for Indigenous economic uplift suffered unprecedented graft and nepotism, haemorrhaging huge sums from unsecured, defaulting loans (Robertson, 1998, pp. 139–143). Rabuka's 1999 election coalition with the Indo-Fijian National Federation Party, which stood with Rabuka in solidarity for the 1997 Constitution, suffered a humiliating defeat to a resurgent Labour party, which gave Fiji its first Indo-Fijian prime minister, Mahendra Chaudhry. Rabuka resigned his parliamentary seat and left party politics. He did not return until 2016, to stand as the principal political opponent to the ruling Fiji First government led by our second leader for analysis, Voreqe Bainimarama.

Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, or Frank, as he is referred to in Fiji, is likewise iTaukei, a commoner and a military man, and became Fiji's military commander in 1999. Bainimarama was soon thrust into the political spotlight when he assumed control of government in response to the parliament hostage crisis in 2000. On May 19, businessman George Speight led a rebel company of elite soldiers into parliament and held captive Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry, along with the ministers of his one-year-old Labour coalition government. The

siege lasted eight weeks and sparked an epidemic of violence and looting, especially in and around Suva (Robertson & Sutherland, 2001; Trnka, 2008). Speight's coup was distinctive for its chaos and its mobilization of Indigenous villagers, who set up camp in the parliamentary complex itself, establishing a civilian shield preventing the military from attempting a rescue (Field et al., 2005). Roaming bands of young iTaukei men would sortie out from the complex and pillage Indo-Fijian shops and farmsteads. The 2000 coup was also remarkable for its intra-ethnic conflict. As law and order collapsed across the country, rival *mataqali* (fraternal clan-groups) settled scores, and contending noble chiefly lineages rebelled against the hegemony of then-President Ratu Mara's Lauan establishment based in Eastern Fiji.

Whereas Rabuka's supporters claim he saved 'Fiji for the Fijians', Bainimarama's intervention in the 2000 coup was broadly fêted as saving Fiji from inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic anarchy. Bainimarama negotiated the release of Speight's hostages, then later arrested Speight and his supporters for weapons violations of their amnesty agreement. Speight was convicted of treason and imprisoned for life. Bainimarama subsequently returned to the barracks and installed an iTaukei banker, Laisenia Qarase, as Interim Prime Minister to steward Fiji back to fresh elections and explore revisions to the 1997 Constitution, including new affirmative action policies for the iTaukei. Chaudhry's Labour government was never reinstated. Bainimarama, however, was drawn back into national politics in November 2000, when he narrowly escaped assassination in an army mutiny by soldiers supporting Speight. Some mutineers had been released from prison as part of Qarase's evolving policy of Christian forgiveness for those involved in the coup, as advised by ethno-nationalist chiefs and Methodist churchmen. Much to Bainimarama's disgust, instead of stepping down before the 2001 elections, Qarase used the resources of the state to help secure victory for his newly-formed Indigenous unity party, *Soqosoqo Dua ni Lewenivanua* (SDL). While Qarase persevered with customary practices of apology and reconciliation for Fijians involved in the 2000 coup, Bainimarama publicly demanded a zero-tolerance approach, driving a growing wedge between Qarase's SDL government and Bainimarama's military.

Bainimarama's leadership style developed in the context of leading his near-exclusively Indigenous military into increasing conflict with Qarase's Indigenous-privileging SDL government. Purges and tests of personal and institutional loyalty were combined with a latitude towards high-ranking officers, upon whose support he felt assured. Bainimarama's political values also took new form in his antagonism to the Qarase government. Whereas Qarase deferred to the chiefs and commissioned a new building for the Great Council of Chiefs, Bainimarama came to view the majority of chiefs as corrupt, uneducated, and racist, infamously remarking that they should 'go drink homebrew under a mango tree' (Lal, 2009, p. 32). While Qarase drew on customary values and Christian institutions for public events and policy-making, Bainimarama came to emphasize modernization, economic development, and later, secularism. When the SDL was re-elected in May 2006 and Qarase sought to remove Bainimarama as military head (Lal, 2009, p. 30), Bainimarama initiated his 'clean-up campaign', seizing control of the Fijian state via a coup in December 2006. In an interview with Maori Television several years later, Bainimarama justified his takeover by stating:

> In Fiji, you don't come up with your own vote. Your vote is dictated by the chiefs, it is dictated by the Great Council of Chiefs, it is dictated by the [chiefly] provincial councils, and it is dictated by the [Methodist] Church. So it's not your vote. So don't tell me that's democracy.
>
> *Robie, 2009*

Bainimarama's initial logic for his coup was anti-corruption and natural justice, whereby the professional soldier would hold corrupt and incompetent chiefs and politicians to account, but its mission parameters quickly expanded. A prompt return to elections would merely re-elect the still popular but deposed SDL government. As such, Bainimarama began a top-down programme to reconfigure Fijian democracy and free Fiji from its toxic 'politics of race'. A new project of sweeping liberal social and political reform offered the rationale for postponing elections and for dismantling the political base of the deposed Qarase government. Bainimarama abolished the 'colonial' GCC, harassed the Methodist Church leadership, and purged the civil service of anti-coup dissidents. Key vacated positions, such as the regional development positions of divisional commissioner, were then awarded to loyal military officers (Ratuva, 2013, p. 172). Following his regime's abrogation of the 1997 Constitution in 2009, Bainimarama introduced a series of military decrees that clamped down on free speech, free assembly, and free association, giving the regime increased control of the media to push through its anti-racism agenda. Fiji's judges were replaced, Qarase was imprisoned for minor corruption offences, and political opponents fled the country.

By 2013, Bainimarama's military regime had drafted a new constitution that centralized executive power and rejected the consociational multiracial compromises of the 1997 Constitution, favouring an integrationist approach, returning Fiji to a winner-takes-all Westminster system, and removing systems of separate Indigenous representation. Many post-coup military decrees were simply absorbed into the new constitutional order, such as heavy regulation of the press and restrictions on organized labour. Government media outlets trumpeted Bainimarama's new ethnically-blind constitution with the catchphrase 'We are all Fijians' and heralded the dawn of Fiji's first 'genuine democracy'. These reforms, however, were often received by Indigenous Fijians as an all-out assault on their cultural integrity. For example, all new political parties were required to register under an English name, and English became the mandatory language of parliament. Any protests against these reforms, moreover, were quickly rebranded by Bainimarama's regime as perpetuating the racist, chiefly politics of divide and rule. With the trauma of the 2000 Speight coup still etched deep in the national psyche, Bainimarama's zero-tolerance, anti-racism strategy resonated with many Fijians across the ethnic divide and his Fiji First party won the 2014 elections emphatically. In addition to the overwhelming support from Indo-Fijians, Bainimarama received a substantial percentage of the urban, middle-class iTaukei vote, attracted to his vision of a 'modern and progressive' Fiji. Bainimarama was re-elected in 2018 by a much tighter margin following Rabuka's political return to lead Fiji's main Indigenous opposition party, SODELPA, the successor party to Qarase's SDL. Rabuka is likely to be Bainimarama's primary opponent again in the 2022 general elections. This time, however, Rabuka will lead the newly-formed People's Alliance Party, a name that harks back to a halcyon pre-coup era of Mara's Alliance Party and signals a more consensus-oriented, multiracial approach, conceived in opposition to the authoritarian one-nationism of Bainimarama and his Fiji First government.

The utility of populist description in Fiji

The details in these biographical accounts repeatedly gesture at political behaviours that we *could* call *populist*. But what does a *populist lens* actually add to interpreting the politics of these two leaders? The most significant advantage is enabling an analysis that transcends their enmity and policy differences, instead highlighting their *shared* populist discourse instantiating 'the people versus a malign other' (see, for example, Hawkins, 2009), as well as their

matching populist political styles (Moffit, 2016, pp. 27–37). That is, despite being on opposite ends of Fiji's dominant political spectrum of race, we may see how during their coups and in their post-coup governments, the early Rabuka and the contemporary Bainimarama adopted the same populist-type speech and behaviour to seize and hold onto power.

In terms of their common populist discourse, both leaders operationalized a partisan rhetoric that conceptualized the Fijian people in opposition to either *racial others* (Indo-Fijians) or *racist others* (ethno-nationalist chiefs and churchmen). This political speech propagated a sense of crisis which enabled these leaders to reject election results and usurp governing authority in the name of cleansing Fiji of this other's distorting influence. The conceptual flexibility of populism to include both a racially exclusive and racially inclusive politics (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017) helps maintain focus on these two leaders' common illiberalism and their 'us versus them' polemics that heightened the political stakes (Moffitt, 2015) in order to excuse their coups and win subsequent elections.

In Rabuka's ethno-nationalist discourse during the 1987 coups, Indo-Fijians dominated the economy, and with a faster population growth, would dominate democratic politics too.[2] The notion of Indo-Fijian economic dominance is flawed (Kumar & Prasad, 2004), yet the high visibility of Indo-Fijian small businesses gives the impression of bustling Indo-Fijian affluence, particularly when juxtaposed against the quiet, comfortable, albeit cash-poor subsistence life in Indigenous villages. An Indigenous politics of grievance drew deeply on stereotypes of wealth-worshipping Indo-Fijians, who served as scapegoats for an increasing Indigenous social dislocation as the strict hierarchical structures of a chief-led village life disintegrated in the face of advancing capitalist modernity (Ernst, 1994). Rabuka's politics of crisis played to the perceived calamity of an Indian political takeover, in which Fiji would cease to be a Christian country, chiefly *mana* (power or effectiveness) would be diminished by *vulagi* (foreigner) rule, and Indigenous-held land would be converted to freehold, then plundered by Indo-Fijians and foreign capital. The Sunday Ban reveals how this politics interlocked ideals of racial paramountcy and a nostalgia for a past uncomplicated by a globalized modernity. The ban clearly discriminated against Indo-Fijians and recognized in law the authority of one ethnicity's religious doctrines over the nation as a whole. It also, however, pushed against iTaukei bourgeois lifestyles that increasingly used Sundays for leisure as well as worship (Rutz & Balkan, 1992, pp. 62–85) by recalling the strict Sabbatarianism of colonial village life introduced by early Wesleyan missionaries and imposing this onto Fiji's urban centres too (Heinz, 1993, p. 428). In addition to Rabuka's attack on Indo-Fijians, therefore, he also targeted the urban middle-classes, especially those connected to the newly-formed Labour Party. This included the violent harassment of leftist academics based at the University of the South Pacific in Suva (Howard, 1991, pp. 244–252; Robertson & Tamanisau, 1988, pp. 68–71).

By contrast, Bainimarama's anti-elitism attacked Fiji's Indigenous cultural elite, with Qarase's network of chiefs and Methodist *talatala* (ministers) vilified as the toxifying other. This Indigenous elite was portrayed as manipulating their customary high rank and religious authority to hijack the democratic process, playing the 'politics of race' to secure privileged access to iTaukei development funds. Crucial to Bainimarama's narrative is the crisis of a repeat of the 2000 coup, which recalls both the worst aspects of Indigenous ethno-nationalism and Bainimarama at his most heroic. Thus, corruption, ethnic division, and violence before his 2006 coup are contrasted by him with justice, unity, and good governance after it. Bainimarama's military enthusiastically pursued any rumour of malfeasance in Qarase's government, which in turn justified the replacement of key senior public

officials with coup loyalists (Larmour, 2005, pp. 11–12). This concentration on the vices of the old order facilitated nepotism in the new one. When encountering Indigenous resistance to his integrationist policies, such as his abolition of the GCC, Bainimarama's regime dismisses this as 'racism' and resituates these Indigenous claims of cultural vandalism as an ethno-nationalist dog-whistle for resurrecting the politics of race.

By identifying these two discourses as populist, we see not only their similar techniques of exclusion and misrepresentation but also the dynamic reciprocity of the two discourses: how they intensified one another. Despite being on opposite sides of Fiji's politics of race, both leaders' rhetoric hinged on a zero-sum relation between racial equality and the political integrity of Indigenous cultural institutions. Whenever political opponents defended the one, they were blasted for doing down the other. This entrenched and confirmed an irreconcilable opposition that justified the trashing of constitutional democracy and affirmed a preference for non-dialogue and rule by force. Indeed, it is notable that a feature of Rabuka's return to national politics in 2016, without military backing, is that his political speech placed much greater emphasis on dialogue and pluralism.

The label of populism also usefully draws attention to the two leaders' common political style. Despite their ideological differences, Rabuka and Bainimarama set themselves up as *non*-politicians. Their claim to be no-nonsense soldiers not only sought to excuse an impatience with consensus-seeking and public deliberation and to assert a self-narrative of men of action, but may also be seen to position them as more authentically 'of the people', and not of the political elite. In this regard, their self-presentation as reluctant national leaders who would rather be back in the barracks matches the populist figure of the 'patriotic soldier', discussed most often with reference to the 'generals' of Latin America (Casullo, 2019, p. 58). Simultaneously, however, both leaders acquired a saviour status from their radical overhaul of the constitutional status quo. Rural Indigenous Fijians christened Rabuka their Moses, who saved them from becoming vassals in a 'little India', whereas the now pro-government newspaper, the *Fiji Sun*, happily reported local descriptions of Bainimarama as a 'messiah' who saved Fijians from the colonial politics of race (White, 2013, p. 97).

Due to this profound personal capital, Fijian citizens frequently petitioned these leaders directly, circumventing the normal state institutions of redress. This direct relation, unmediated by tribal loyalties or honorific protocols (qua chiefs), or institutionalized systems of representative government (qua politicians), added to their populist appeal and style. One absurd but real example of this is when Prime Minister Bainimarama's office telephoned my department at the Fiji National University to enquire about a student who had complained to the prime minister about their zero mark due to plagiarism. Framing this behaviour as populist emphasizes the matching personality politics of these two leaders: their similar aesthetics of martial masculinity, and their politics of crisis and exclusion, as well as their disregard for legal institutional norms and structures in their military takeovers. It also points to how this approach, as is the case with other populist regimes, degrades accountability, transparency, and the separation of powers, leading towards nepotism, patron-clientelism, and authoritarianism. The common marker of populism across the two regimes helps see past their rhetoric of opposition, or, as Robert Robertson laments on the frustrating familiarity of Bainimarama's new order, despite its revolutionary reforms: '*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*'[3] (Robertson, 2017, p. 211).

How a populist description in Fiji misses

The examples of Bainimarama and Rabuka are instructive because both leaders *appear* as attractive candidates for populist description. They both look the part of the contemporary populist strongmen we see elsewhere in the world. Both leaders used a discourse of 'us' and 'them', which they map out as 'the people' against an economic or customary 'elite'. Both are political outsiders who cultivated a saviour status. They both shared a low regard for the rule of law, operated an aesthetic of charismatic transgression, and propagated a public sense of crisis to justify their grab for power. Yet there are good reasons for caution regarding populist description too, not least because populism is typically viewed as a feature of democracies (or at least a politics that dresses in the language of popular sovereignty), and Fiji, thus far, has only been *contingently* democratic.

While Fiji's liberals strongly reject the old refrain of traditionalist chiefs that 'democracy is a foreign flower' (Larmour, 2005), political scientists might well affirm it. Despite holding thirteen competitive elections since independence from Britain in 1970, Fiji has never had a successful, democratic *transfer* of power, never mind the twice turnover criterion for 'democracy' required by Samuel Huntington (1991, p. 266). Incumbent governments get re-elected in 'free and fair' elections, but when opposition parties win, they never complete a full term before their ejection at the barrel of a gun. Historically, this has been limited to new governments with substantive representation by Indo-Fijians. However, with Bainimarama continuing his post-coup reign with electoral successes in 2014 and 2018, his new 'democracy' under the 2013 Constitution has yet to veer from this 'remorseless power of incumbency' (Fraenkel, 2015).

In his introduction to his collected volume *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, Panizza argues that 'the notion of the sovereign people as an actor in an antagonistic relation with the established order, as the core element of populism, has a long tradition in the writings of the topic' (Panizza, 2005, p. 4). Either as the exceptional, integral moments of political regeneration or as the illiberal self-portrait hiding in the attic, populism is strongly tied to a fundamental logic of democracy—power must flow from the agency and sovereignty of the people. This makes the translation of populism into Fiji's 'democratic' politics somewhat problematic, as coups and constitutions, not elections, have been the principal engines of political change, and when Fiji's two coup-makers overturned elections and overthrew governments, such acts were not conceived primarily as 'of the people'. Alternative sovereigns of Jehovah and the divine right of chiefs, and natural justice and anti-corruption figured more centrally in these coup-makers' claims to power. The authority to rule in Fiji, then, is gained not so much by harnessing the general will but by first invalidating it. Indeed, for both leaders, their charisma arguably lies less in the embodiment of the popular will, and more as the expression of their personal *mana* in defying it.

Bainimarama and Rabuka seized control of the state by military force—not through a strategic mobilization of the popular will—and only secured their popular mandates after first remaking Fiji's constitutional order from the top-down. Global norms of modern constitutionalism required these leaders to subsequently cast their interventions within a legal grammar of popular sovereignty, with Indigenous paramountcy (Rabuka) or racial equality (Bainimarama) given special emphasis. This is not to say that these later acclamations of a sovereign people were insincere or merely self-interested, but that they were not the primary means by which these political upheavals were initially achieved. Indeed, in what

we might call Fiji's *coupstitutions* of 1990 and 2013, a competing sovereignty of a 'right of might' is tacitly acknowledged. Unlike in Fiji's 1970 and 1997 constitutions, these two texts issued the military with the role to ensure both national security and the 'well-being of Fiji and all Fijians' (Constitution of Fiji, 1990, 94.3; Constitution of Fiji, 2013, 131.2). Given Fiji's history of military takeovers, such a vaguely-worded competency to ensure Fijians' 'well-being' remains a backdoor for military interference. With Rabuka's 2022 election bid increasingly perceived as a major threat to the Bainimarama military establishment, we should expect to see growing efforts by the government to paint Rabuka as not merely sorely lacking as a replacement prime minister, but as an existential threat to Fiji's basic political order.

We find further warning of the shortcomings of populist description in Fiji on the few occasions when Fijians do use 'populism' to remark on local politics. Here, the term denotes behaviours quite distinct from the standard juxtaposition of a sovereign people antagonistic to the established political order. In parliament, Fiji's opposition Members of Parliament (MPs) cry 'populism' at government promises of free laptops for schoolchildren, abrupt announcements of new public holidays, reckless infrastructure expenditure, and VAT reductions.[4] Bainimarama's Fiji First ministers counter-accuse opposition MPs of 'populism' for latching onto trivial trending issues, such as plastic bag levies or cheaper mobile phone data,[5] and not focusing on long term policy concerns. In a rare article that actually addresses this topic, albeit briefly, Scott Macwilliam critiques this usage as erroneous, and as merely denoting what is considered *popular*, not what is genuinely populist (Macwilliam, 2015, p. 6). Fijian use of 'populism', therefore, is not one that sees the spectre of illiberalism lurking in the majoritarian biases of democratic decision-making. Instead, it reveals the fear that a democracy too representative of the masses will jeopardize 'good governance'.

Through British colonialism to the neoliberal advocacy of development actors such as the World Bank, Fiji has long been subjected to *discourses of governance*. These may (or may not) aim to advance the people's best interests, but they rarely prioritize their voice. In Bainimarama's 'clean-up campaign', there is a similar focus on governing efficacy, based on a perception of a superior military technocratic know-how. Fiji's military is well-funded and cherishes its international reputation for professionalism. Fiji contributes more United Nations peacekeepers per capita than any other country in the world,[6] and its soldiers are prized recruits in the global security industry (May, 2014). Fiji's military class, both officers and privates, have developed skill sets and gained work experience well beyond that of village life. Officers sent to military academies in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, India, and, after Bainimarama's coup, China and Malaysia, return better educated and worldlier than most of Fiji's chiefs (Firth & Fraenkel, 2009, pp. 118–120). Such life experience can lead to a marked condescension towards both customary and democratic leadership. This is evident in Bainimarama's 'homebrew' remarks, and statements by him and his officers at the time of the 2006 coup. When Bainimarama's soldiers took to Suva's streets during the 2006 elections, Colonel Piti Driti promoted their superior military efficacy, saying: 'Politicians are politicians, but we are professionals', while Bainimarama later justified his overthrow of the government by stating 'only the military can bring about real social change' (Baledrokadroka, 2016, p. 179). After Bainimarama seized power, his contrast between his regime doing 'governance' and 'developing' Fiji versus his opponents 'playing politics' figured frequently in rebuttals to criticism of his rule (see, for example, Rasoqosoqo, 2011). While such speech acts might be read as populist for their monological style, adopting an ad

hominem hostility to dialogue, they also demonstrate a prioritization of governing efficacy over representational legitimacy.

To emphasize a populist description for these two leaders because they most closely match the charisma, authoritarianism, and divisiveness of other populist leaders in the world overlooks their founding anti-democratic strategies reliant on military force and their appeals to alternative sovereigns to merely that of 'the people'. Note, the argument here is not that Rabuka and Bainimarama are not 'populists per se', but that stamping these leaders with this label risks concealing as much as it reveals. It may successfully perceive typically populist characteristics in the behaviours of Rabuka and Bainimarama, but it arguably loses considerable explanatory power when making assumptions regarding the underlying ideological and strategic causes of such behaviours.

An alternative account for populist behaviour in Fiji

Given the populist character of these two leaders—deep partisanship, anti-elitism, clientelism, extra-institutional rule, authoritarianism, accountability deficits, and a heavy emphasis on charisma and personality—combined with only a limited appeal to a sovereign popular will or a politics premised on the mobilization of the masses, what non-populist accounts are there for Rabuka and Bainimarama's populist-like behaviour? Or in other words, what alternative descriptive or explanatory accounts would a populist lens potentially occlude?

First, we might consider the locally prominent models of Oceanic leadership, which Marshall Sahlins presents as two contrasting sociological types: the feudal Polynesian Chief and the entrepreneurial Melanesian Big Man (Sahlins, 1963). This binary model resonates with the contrast between charismatic and customary authority in Fiji's recent history, manifest in the waxing careers of commoner coup-makers versus the waning authority of Fiji's high chiefs. With the steady erosion in the governing authority of Fiji's eastern chiefs, marked first by the electoral defeat of Ratu Mara in 1987, then by Rabuka's ascendency as party leader of the chiefly SVT party, and finally Bainimarama's coup and his abolition of the GCC, one might say the ascribed status of Fiji's Polynesian chiefs has given way to the attained status of Fiji's Melanesian big men. Fiji's cultural and physical geography sits at the colonially-imagined divide between Oceania's Polynesian East (e.g., Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga, Samoa, Raratonga, and Aotearoa New Zealand) and its Melanesian West (e.g., Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea). The angry, brash style of politics by Rabuka and Bainimarama has drawn scholars of Fiji's politics towards this binary comparison (for example, Garrett, 1990). When reading Sahlins' caricature of Melanesian big men, we can see why.

> The Melanesian big-man seems bourgeois, so reminiscent of the free enterprising rugged individual of our own heritage . . . the indicative quality of big-man authority is everywhere the same: it is personal power. Big-men do not come to office, nor succeed to, nor are they installed in existing positions of political groups. The attainment of the big man status is rather a series of acts that elevate a person above the common herd.
>
> *Sahlins, 1963, p. 289*

Does populist-type behaviour in Fiji simply reflect the reassertion of a more Melanesian form of leadership? Conceptually, this position is tricky to maintain. Sahlins never intended

this binary to serve as a hard category distinction, admitting it as 'obviously imprecise' (Sahlins, 1963, p. 286). Moreover, critique of the big man/chief binary, which draws on Sahlins' own later work 'The Stranger-King or Dumézil Among the Fijians' (1981), points out that Fijian chieftainship itself operates a 'kingly/populist' duality (Marcus, 1989, p. 198).

> The opposed forces in play *celeritas* and *gravitas* . . . perfectly fit in the Fijian case [of chiefly authority]. *Celeritas* refers to the youthful, active, disorderly, magical and creative violence of conquering princes; *gravitas* to the venerable, staid, judicious, priestly, peaceful and productive dispositions of an established people.
>
> *Sahlins, 1981, p. 121*

In Sahlins' account, chiefs are outsiders from across the sea, 'sharks who travel on land' (1981, p. 112). These aliens take political power but consolidate their rule by becoming bound to 'the people of the land,' often through betrothal to the previous chief's daughter. The 'disorderly' politics of 'creative violence' of Fiji's two coup-makers, their status as political outsiders, and their usurping of the old constitutional order only to then ground their leadership in law anew resonates with this cultural logic. Rabuka and Bainimarama are not publicly discussed as chiefs in Fiji, but as Baledrokadroka has argued, the military is now in effect its own '[chiefly] super-confederacy' (Baledrokadroka, 2016, p. 179). Sahlins's observation that within Fiji's chiefly system, 'rather than a normal succession, usurpation itself is the principle of legitimacy' (Sahlins, 1981, p. 113), offers an apt prediction for Fiji's later cycle of coups and constitutions. Such an explanatory account based on cultural logic is important for centring actor perspectives and their frames of meaning (Enfield, 2000), but it also remains hazy how exactly such logic drives specific behaviour, particularly when multiple cultural logics appear to be in play. For example, Rabuka's and Bainimarama's populist common touch is a reflection on their non-chiefliness—their lack of strangeness. Are Rabuka and Bainimarama then 'big men' capitalizing on a politics of 'stranger chiefs' or something else entirely? It is not obviously clear how one might resolve this lack of clarity, or how such a theorizing of Fijian politics might actually inform policy.

Another account for the apparently populist character of Fiji's military strongmen, and one that suffers less from the imprecise causality of explanatory accounts based on cultural logics, concerns the specifics of Fiji's human geography. Namely, the more intimate political ecologies of very small nation-states (such as those of Pacific Island countries) can establish norms of populist-type behaviour—a strong connection between individual leaders and constituents, a limited private sphere, a limited role for ideology and programmatic policy debate, strong political polarization, the ubiquity of patronage, the capacity of individual leaders to dominate all aspects of public life—by dint of their smallness alone (Corbett & Veenendaal, 2018, pp. 8–11). Such an observation is crucial for a comparative populism, for while very small nation-states—which Corbett and Veenendaal (2018) enumerate as countries with populations of less than a million—make up nearly 20% of the world's nation-states, the framing assumptions of populism studies, and political science more generally, rest pretty much exclusively on the experiences of much larger countries.

These populist characteristics, which emerge because of the micro-scale of a nation-state, repeatedly show similar outcomes deriving from different causes. For example, the inevitably proximate social relations between political actors and the public in very small

states mean that there is already less institutional distance between politicians and the people for populist leaders to disdain and symbolically collapse. Populist leaders override the separation of powers and may concentrate power by combining a multitude of cabinet portfolios. In very small states, however, a similar circumvention of institutional checks may be less an egregious power-grab and more a quotidian habit of responsive and cost-effective government. Though this is not to say ministry-hoarding is never criticized. Public dissent directed against Fiji First's 'minister for everything', Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, shows such portfolio-hoarding has its limits. Populist authoritarianism occurs when actors claim to embody the homogenized, sovereign will of the people, establishing a charismatic authority to roll over institutional norms. In very small states, such authoritarianism also appears to be a feature of the out-sized role of the state compared to other civil society institutions, where, for example, state-compliant newspapers, like the *Fiji Sun*, tailor their reports to guarantee continued government advertising for income. Moreover, where personalization of politics is a core feature of populism, it is also a pattern of behaviour in small Oceanic states in general, in 'face-to-face societies' where 'everybody knows everybody' (Corbett, 2015, p. 5). Instead of this necessarily making politics less partisan, familiarity may breed contempt, particularly where political divisions cut through family ties (Corbett, 2015, p. 8).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the relevance of populist description for Fiji's two military strongmen has been evaluated in terms of both what such a description reveals and what it obscures. Given the wide polysemy with which populism circulates in contemporary global politics, and yet its relative absence or divergent use in Fiji, the focus has fallen on what populism studies offer for understanding Fijian politics, more than what Fijian politics has to offer populism studies. As such, descriptive accuracy has been prioritized over conceptual precision. The benefit of this approach, on the one hand, has been to skirt the contested semantics that besets a comparative populism. On the other hand, it has enabled analyses to dig into Fiji's politics and navigate around the ideological differences of its two pre-eminent military strongmen—Rabuka and Bainimarama—to reveal their commonalities in discourse and style. And in contrast, by showing what populism misses, this approach has also drawn attention to Fiji's *ongoing* democratic deficit despite its much-touted 'return' to democracy in 2014 (Ratuva & Lawson, 2016)—where popular sovereignty merely confirms political authority rather than establishes it. It is an anti-democratic trend that is revealed in Fijians' own idiosyncratic use of the term 'populism', which is bound up in Fiji's colonial and neo-colonial discourses of governance pursuant of a capitalist productive efficiency. Where Fiji's particular cultural logics, such as Sahlins's 'stranger chief', may partially help explain the more confirmatory role that populist appeals to 'the people' fulfil in Fiji, the recent scholarship of Corbett and Veenendaal offers a more comprehensive account of Rabuka's and Bainimarama's apparently populist behaviour—namely, that it may be productively explored as a function of scale. The small size of Fiji's polity encourages behaviours that resemble populist practices—including personality politics, authoritarianism, extra-institutional governance, and nepotism, but also broad political participation at elections—that need not be rooted in ideologies of popular sovereignty or strategies of mass mobilization.

Corbett and Veenendaal's comparative work on small states has emphasized their democratic resilience, yet their scholarship bears relevance for exploring the quality of populist politics in larger states too. Indeed, this potential crossover is an opportunity Corbett and Veenendaal consider themselves (2018). Their comparative analysis draws on the personalized politics of small democratic states to anticipate the future democratic integrity of large states experiencing a wave of populist politics. The comparison may also, however, identify something that appears integral to the core logic of populism more generally: its nostalgia for a more proximate politics. Populisms tend to be anti-globalization and anti-bureaucratic, grounding their appeal in the promise of a more demanding and more intimate form of political representation. These political preferences for norms of authority are more consistent with smaller polities than with larger ones. Populist leaders are often 'family' figures, such as Don Pepe Jose Figueres[7] or Uncle Bernie.[8] Emotional closeness is prioritized over distant rational argument. Populist behaviour takes high politics and pulls to the low familiarities of common life, whether this is Big Macs on Air Force One[9] or swearing in press statements. Comparative populism has so far largely ignored the experiences of small states, especially in Oceania. These case studies, however, may not only present as instructive outliers or illuminating contrasts; they may embody the very proximate politics that big-state populists idealize in their speech and behaviour.

Epilogue

Fiji's subsequent national politics have fulfilled and overtaken the anticipations of this chapter. In a repeat electoral face-off between Fiji's two strongmen in December 2022, the final count tied Sitiveni Rabuka's People's Alliance Party (twenty-one seats)—allied with his old 1999 elections partner, the National Federation Party (five seats)—with Bainimarama's Fiji First Party (twenty-six seats). With the three remaining seats won by SODELPA, this fixed the successor party to the Indigenous government usurped in Bainimarama's 2006 military takeover to now deliver the *coup de grace* to his sixteen-year rule. Remarkably, however, the ill-will Rabuka generated by abandoning SODELPA to start his own party had split the SODELPA hierarchy over whether to support their old leader or rally behind Bainimarama. An initial vote of SODELPA's thirty-member board narrowly chose Rabuka sixteen to fourteen, yet this vote was declared null and void by Mohammed Saneem, the Supervisor of Elections and nephew to Fiji First's General Secretary Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. That SODELPA's party leader Viliame Gavoka was also Sayed-Khaiyum's father-in-law layered the party's internal politics with further intrigue. At the same time, Police Commissioner, Sitiveni Qiliho—a former military officer and close ally to Bainimarama—circulated reports of inter-ethnic violence triggered by the prospective return of Rabuka as prime minister. Decrying these reports as false flags, the deputy police commissioner Abdul Khan resigned in protest, offering a crucial counter narrative at this pivotal moment for Fijian democracy. The military commander, Major-General Jone Kalouniwai, also refused requests by Fiji First loyalists to militarily intervene. On December 23rd, the now-reduced SODELPA board voted a second time, and narrowly chose Rabuka again, with votes split thirteen to twelve. On Christmas Eve, parliament elected Rabuka's new cabinet, with Bainimarama resigning from parliament in the new year, having little enthusiasm for life on Fiji's opposition benches. Though with charges of corruption and sedition being assembled by Rabuka's ruling coalition—a rare source of common ground in a government including Indigenous nationalists and Indo-Fijian liberals—Bainimarama is unlikely to get a quiet retirement from public life.

Notes

1 A search for the terms *populism* and *populist* over the last five years in Fiji's oldest and most respected national newspaper, *The Fiji Times*, returned ninety-seven hits. Of these, 79 were in Reuters or other international news agency reports. The remaining mentions turned on local debates, but here, the meaning varied significantly from how the term is understood in comparative contexts. This is further discussed later in this chapter.
2 Population ratios between the Indigenous iTaukei and the Indo-Fijian have influenced, and been influenced by, Fiji's political upheavals. At the time of the 1987 coup, Indo-Fijians outnumbered the iTaukei, with their population share at 49% compared to 46% for the iTaukei (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 1986). Primarily due to Indo-Fijian emigration following the 1987 and 2000 coups, though also due to shifting birth rates, this population ratio changed to 37% Indo-Fijian and 57% iTaukei by the time of Bainimarama's 2006 coup (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2008).
3 The more things change, the more they stay the same.
4 See National Parliament of Fiji, *Parliamentary Debates*, July 11, 2017 (Prem Singh, Opposition MP); April 12, 2018 (Biman Prasad, Opposition MP); June 18, 2019 (Jese Saukuru, Opposition MP).
5 For example, National Parliament of Fiji, *Parliamentary Debates*, August 8, 2019 (Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Government MP)
6 Figures taken from United Nations (2018) 'Summary of Troop Contributing Countries by Ranking', 31 December 2018, https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2_country_ranking_8.pdf. At the end of 2018, Fiji's deployment stood at 458, though this is a drop from 655 in 2016. In 2005, deployment numbers were at 767. On the 2018 figures, Fiji is very closely tied with Rwanda for the top spot, and one's choice of population statistics could call it either way.
7 José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrer, thrice president of Costa Rica.
8 Bernard Sanders: U.S. Senator who sought the Democratic Party nomination in the 2016 presidential election.
9 Donald Trump's projected preference for eating McDonald's fast foods.

References

Baledrokadroka, J. (2016). The Fiji military and the 2014 elections. In S. Ratuva & S, Lawson (Eds.), *The people have spoken* (pp. 177–189). National University Press.

Constitution of Fiji (1990). *Constitution of the sovereign democratic Republic of Fiji (promulgation) decree 1990*. http://www.paclii.org/fj/promu/promu_dec/cotsdrofd1990712/

Constitution of Fiji (2013). *Constitution of the Republic of Fiji*. https://www.laws.gov.fj/ResourceFile/Get/?fileName=2013%20Constitution%20of%20Fiji%20(English).pdf

Casullo, M. E. (2019). How to become a leader: Identifying global repertoires of populist leadership. In F. Stengal, D. MacDonald & D. Nabers (Eds.), *Populism and world politics* (pp. 55–72). Palgrave Macmillan.

Corbett, J. (2015). 'Everybody knows everybody': Practicising politics in the Pacific Islands. *Democratization*, *22*(1), 51–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.811233

Corbett, J., & Veenendaal, W. (2018). *Democracy in small states: Persisting against all odds*. Oxford University Press.

Enfield, N. (2000). The theory of cultural logic: How individuals combine social intelligence with semiotics to create and maintain cultural meaning. *Cultural Dynamics*, *12*(1), 35–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/092137400001200102

Ernst, M. (1994). *Winds of change: Rapidly growing religious groups in the Pacific Islands*. Pacific Conferences of Churches.

Field, M., Baba, T., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2005). *Speight of violence*. Reed Books.

Fiji Bureau of Statistics (1986). *1986 census*. Government of Fiji.

Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2008). *2007 census*. Government of Fiji.

Firth, S., & Fraenkel, J. (2009). The Fiji military and ethno-nationalism: Analyzing the paradox. In J. Fraenkel, S. Firth & B. Lal (Eds.), *The 2006 military takeover in Fiji* (pp. 117–138). ANU Press.

Fraenkel, J. (2015). The remorseless power of incumbency in Fiji's September 2014 election. *The Round Table*, *104*(2), 151–164. https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2015.1017255

Garrett, J. (1990). Uncertain sequel: The social and religious scene in Fiji since the coups. *The Contemporary Pacific*, *2*(1), 87–111. http://ezproxy.une.edu.au/login?url=www.jstor.org/stable/23701519
Hawkins, K. (2009). Is Chávez populist? Measuring populist discourse in comparative perspective. *Comparative Political Studies*, *42*(8), 1040–1067. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414009331721
Heinz, D. (1993). The Sabbath in Fiji as guerrilla theatre. *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *61*(3), 415–442. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/LXI.3.415
Howard, M. (1991). *Fiji: Race and politics in an island state*. University of British Columbia Press.
Huntington, S. (1991). *The third wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century*. University of Oklahoma Press.
Keeling, D. (1991). Rabuka's turn. *Australian Left Review*, *131*, 26–27.
Kumar, S., & Prasad, B. (2004). Politics of race and poverty in Fiji: A case of Indo-Fijian community. *International Journal of Social Economics*, *31*(5), 469–486. https://doi.org/10.1108/03068290410529335
Lal, B. (1988). *Power and prejudice*. Institute of International Affairs.
Lal, B. V. (2000). Review: Rabuka of Fiji Coups, constitutions and confusion. *The Journal of Pacific History*, *35*(3), 319–326. www.jstor.org/stable/25169505
Lal, B. V. (2009). 'Anxiety, uncertainty and fear in our land': Fijis road to military coup, 2006. In J. Fraenkel, S. Firth & B. V. Lal (Eds.), *The 2006 military takeover in Fiji* (pp. 21–41). ANU Press.
Larmour, P. (2005). *Foreign flowers: Institutional transfer and good governance in pacific islands*. Hawaii University Press.
Macwilliam, S. (2015). *Bonapartism in the South Pacific: The Bainimarama government in Fiji, state, society and governance in Melanesia discussion paper 2015/10*. Australian National University.
Marcus, G. (1989). Chieftainship. In A. Howard & R. Borofsky (Eds.), *Developments in Polynesian ethnology* (pp. 187–223). University of Hawaii Press.
May, S. (2014). *A fighting people? Fijian service in the British army and the production of race and nation* (PhD thesis, University of Chicago).
Moffitt, B. (2015). How to perform crisis: A model for understanding the key role of crisis in contemporary populism. *Government and Opposition*, *50*(2), 189–217. https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2014.13.
Moffitt, B. (2016). *The global rise of populism*. Stanford University Press.
Mudde, C., & Rovira Kaltwasser, C. (2017). *Populism: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.
National Parliament of Fiji, *Parliamentary debates*, July 11, 2017 (Prem Singh, Opposition MP); April 12, 2018 (Biman Prasad, Opposition MP); June 18, 2019 (Jese Saukuru, Opposition MP); and August 8, 2019 (Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Government MP).
Norton, R. (1990). *Race and politics in Fiji* (2nd ed.). University of Queensland Press.
Panizza, F. (2005). Introduction: Populism and the mirror of democracy. In F. Panizza (Ed.), *Populism and the mirror of democracy* (pp. 1–31). Verso.
Rasoqosoqo, L. (2011, June 14). Bainimarama: No room for dirty politics. *Fiji Sun*. http://fijisun.com.fj/2011/06/14/bainimarama-no-room-for-dirty-politics/
Ratuva, S. (2013). *The politics of preferential development*. ANU Press.
Ratuva, S., & Lawson, S. (Eds.) (2016). *The people have spoken*. ANU Press.
Robertson, R. (1998). *Multiculturalism & reconciliation in an indulgent republic*. Fiji Institute of Applied Studies.
Robertson, R. (2017). *The generals goose: Fijis tale of contemporary misadventure*. ANU Press.
Robertson, R., & Sutherland, W. (2001). *Government by the gun: The unfinished business of Fiji's 2000 coup*. Pluto Press.
Robertson, R. T., & Tamanisau, A. (1988). *Fiji: Shattered coups*. Pluto Press.
Robie, D. (2009, September 17). Bainimarama won't be bullied. *Pacific Islands Report*. Center for Pacific Island Studies.
Rutz, H. J., & Balkan, E. M. (1992). Never on Sunday: Time-discipline and Fijian nationalism. In H. J. Rutz (Ed.), *The politics of time* (pp. 62–85, American Ethnological Society Monograph Series 4). American Anthropological Association.
Sahlins, M. (1963). Poor man, rich man, big-man, chief: Political types in Melanesia and Polynesia. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *5*(3), 285–303. www.jstor.org/stable/177650

Sahlins, M. (1981). The Stranger-king or Dumézil among the Fijian. *Journal of Pacific History*, *16*(3), 107–132. www.jstor.org/stable/25168469

Sartori, G. (1970). Concept misformation in comparative politics. *American Political Science Review*, *64*, 1033–1053. www.jstor.org/stable/1958356

Scarr, D. (1988). *Politics of Illusion: The military coups of Fiji*. New South Wales University Press.

Teaiwa, T. (2005). Articulated cultures: Militarism and masculinity in Fiji during the mid 1990s. *Fijian Studies*, *3*(2), 201–222.

Trnka, S. (2008). *State of suffering: Political violence and community survival in Fiji*. Cornell University Press.

United Nations (2018, December 31). *Summary of troop contributing countries by ranking*. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/2_country_ranking_8.pdf

White, T. A. J. (2017). How novel is the secularism of Fiji's 2013 constitution. *Journal of South Pacific Law* (Special Edition), *2017*, 73–100. https://doi.org/10.3316/agispt.20180927002522

Wiles, P. (1969). A syndrome, not a doctrine. Some elementary theses on populism. In G. Ionescu & E. Gellner (Eds.), *Populism: Its meanings and national characteristics* (pp. 166–179). Weidenfeld and Nicolson.