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A Comparative Analysis of Mixed Race Marriage In Fiji and the United States

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**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MIXED RACE MARRIAGE
IN FIJI AND THE UNITED STATES**

By

Rachel Kung

**Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
Department of Anthropology**

UNION COLLEGE
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ABSTRACT

Rachel Kung A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MIXED RACE MARRIAGE IN FIJI AND THE UNITED STATES. Department of Anthropology, June 2016

In Fiji it is imperative to belong to group, particularly a racial/ethnic group because of a history of ethnic pluralism under British colonialism. Making connections and forming relationships is all determined by one's racial/ethnic group. Due to this, belonging to two groups, especially if those two distinct races do not get along, such as indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, it becomes increasingly difficult to create a system of social networks. Fijians also tend to define ethnicity in terms of behavior rather than simply looking at one's biology. If one cannot speak the native language of that particular race, he or she tends to be excluded or looked down upon by that particular group, even if they have the blood of that race running through their veins. In contrast, Americans do not find it necessary to belong to a single ethnic group. Especially for middle class Americans, being mixed race has become something that is desired and sought after. It creates a sense of being unique and different in a positive way. This group of mixed race individuals shares something that others are not able to achieve, simply by having parents that belong to different races. Americans think ethnic cultures can be picked and chosen at will. Due to this they embrace different races for the cultural aspects they bring to their lives.

CHAPTER ONE
AN INTRODUCTION TO INTER-MARRIAGE IN FIJI AND THE UNITED STATES

PREFACE

Mixed Race Interviewee in Fiji—Howard

Howard is a male in his mid-twenties who currently lives in Fiji. He is of half Fijian and half Rotuman descent. His mother is Rotuman, while his father is Fijian. He grew up with his mother and father and his two sisters living in Suva, the capital region. He and his sisters are part of a Rotuman dance group, known as Rako. He has had an interesting experience growing up in an inter-racial household:

I try to make it equal but I have noticed that I am closer to my mom's side but that doesn't stop me from knowing my dad's side and making more of an effort to know his side.

When growing up mixed race in Fiji, families tend to align themselves much more with one side of the family, rather than finding an equal balance between the two. In Howard's case, although he is able to speak both Rotuman and Fiji, which allows him to communicate effectively with everyone in his family, he finds himself draw more towards the Rotuman culture and traditions. Even though Rotumans are not the most welcoming group of people, Howards still tries to connect to that side of his heritage. He says,

For a Rotuman with mixed blood like myself, if I wasn't so strong willed it would be difficult because for a general Rotuman's reaction to a Rotuman with mixed blood is to push them aside say because they are "pure Rotuman" and if you don't know your culture you don't know your language they make fun of you. But it's not the fault of the person that doesn't know so in the

process so like for example if I want to go and learn and I'm still learning and make mistakes, they make fun and in the process they push you away.

Howard is fortunate enough to know the language relatively well and be able to interact with Rotumans. He has also learned a lot about their culture over time and has been able to learn even more through his dance group, Rako. Despite the fact that it is much more difficult to integrate one's self in to the Rotuman culture, rather than the Fijian culture, Howard still finds a strong bond with that side of the family.

Sarah

Sarah is current student at Union College whose mother is a European American and whose father is Kenyan. She grew up in an inter-racial, middle class family. Although there have been a few occasions where she has faced difficulties when it comes to her race, she has learned and grown to be proud of her heritage and embrace it fully. Her experience with being mixed race has been overwhelmingly positive. Sarah says, "My mom always told us that it was awesome to be biracial and mixed people have the most interesting backgrounds and stories to tell so I guess I have always thought it was cool. And I definitely connect better to people of mixed race as well."

Even though, when Sarah was younger there were times she felt out of place due to her different race, she has come to see it as something unique to her that not many other people can claim. Her mixed race heritage is something that a small minority of people in the United States share and in America it is something people find pride and joy in rather than discomfort and uncertainty.

OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENT

Howard, a Fijian male, finds himself much closer to one side of his family's heritage rather than sharing equally in both Fijian and Rotuman cultures. In contrast, Sarah, a mixed race American, was taught to fully embrace her entire heritage and never deny any part of it. In the following chapters I explore the differences in Fijian and American culture and society that contributes to these differences.

Fiji is a collection of over three hundred islands that has a history of difficult race relations between mainly indigenous Fijians and the Indians that were brought to Fiji as indentured servants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The visible divide between these two main groups creates difficulties when it comes to inter-racial marriages. Although attitudes have somewhat relaxed over time, tensions between these two races still exists today. America as well also has a long history of race relations between varying groups, particularly those of European descent and those of African descent. Inter-marriage in America though, especially for the middle class, is less controversial than in Fiji because for many middle class Americans, ethnicity is not a big part of their social identity. They may eat distinctive ethnic foods and observe ethnic holidays but do not rely on ethnic connections to get jobs in the way Fijians do.

Through my research I have found that American culture is much more pluralistic when it comes to race than Fiji. Fijians are much more tuned into behavior rather than biology. If one cannot speak the native language of a particular race, they tend to be excluded from that particular group, even if they have the blood of that race running through their veins. In Fiji it is imperative to belong to group, particularly a racial group. In Fiji making connections and forming relationships is all about what racial group you are

a part of. Due to this, belonging to two groups, especially if those two distinct races do not get along, becomes increasingly difficult. Through my interviews, I found that in Fiji, no matter what the combination of races may be, families always found themselves closer to one race rather than both. It is hard to fit in in Fiji if you do not belong to an ethnic group.

For middle class Americans, it is less necessary to belong to an ethnic group. Especially for middle class Americans, being mixed race has become something that is desired and sought after. It creates a sense of being unique and different in a positive way. This group of mixed race individuals shares something that others are not able to achieve, simply by having parents that belong to different races. Americans associate themselves much more with the cultural aspects of race. Due to this they embrace different races for the cultural aspects they bring to their lives. Americans believe that you belong to a racial group just by biology; you do not have to demonstrate membership through practicing the customs.

Because the United States is so vast though, some found themselves closer to one side of the family simply because of proximity. This however did not deter them from making efforts to still be in contact with the other race as well. Although many of these individuals that I interviewed found themselves closer to one side of the family, the reasons behind it vary greatly from those in Fiji.

In both Fiji and the United States, being mixed race can be seen as confusing. This confusion can either cause difficulties, like in Fiji, or can bring out more positive aspects of one's life, like in the United States. The confusion that comes with being mixed race though, is very different in Fiji than in the United States. Being mixed race in Fiji confuses the system when it comes to only belonging to a single group while in the United States it is

okay to belong to multiple different groups. The two very different cultures and way of life in Fiji and the United States has greatly contributed to the differences for inter-marriage and mixed race individuals.

METHODOLOGY

I conducted my research in the capital region of Fiji over a period of three months in the Fall of 2015. While I was in Suva I stayed with a host family in Samabula, a subsection of Suva. During my time there, I also volunteered at a local primary school, Yat Sen. Through both my host family and Yat Sen, I was able to make valuable connection in order to conduct my research. My research consisted primary of semi-structured interviews with various sources. I was able to conduct interviews with individuals involved in a mixed race marriage as well as individuals who were the product of a mixed race marriage. In addition to the interviews, I also conducted a limited amount of participant observation. Because of the nature of my topic, the most reliable source of information came from the interviews.

The interviews I conducted allowed me to collect in-depth information about different individual's ideas about marriage and the role that race plays. Some of the interviews I conducted were with individuals who I had formed a relationship with while other were with individuals I had met with the sole purpose of interviewing them. Although the number of interviews I was able to conduct was very limited, I was able to gather information from a wide variety of individuals of varying races. The semi-structured nature of the interviews also allowed me to delve further into people's idea and opinions about race and the role in plays in one's relationships.

In addition to my research in Fiji, I also conducted a small amount of research back in the United States. I interviewed a few individuals at Union College that were mixed race. I was able to use my existing social connection in order to gain access to these individuals. These interviews were semi-structured as well. In these interviews, I asked similar questions to those I asked in Fiji. By doing so, I was able to compare and contrast the two cultures and gain a better understand of mixed race marriages in both countries.

For both my Fijian and American informants, the questions I asked during my interview centered around a few topics. These topics consisted of the role of family, the role religion played, the impact on children, the differences in cultures, as well as the impact of language. I selected these topics to discuss because I felt they were the most affected by one's race, especially when one's enters into a relationship with someone of a different race. I was looking for what people thought was most important to ethnic identities: social ties, distinctive cultural and religious practice, appearance, language, and so on. Through these questions I was able to understand the lives of those in Fiji as well as those here in the United States.

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT

Chapter Two is a literature review on the history of Fiji focusing on race relations. I look at how the history of Fiji has contributed to the rigid divide between different races, particularly Indigenous Fijians and those of Indian descent. My overview of Fiji's history begins in the late nineteenth century and continues until the present day. The British laid in place a system of ethnic pluralism where, even till today, people feel they need to be a part of an ethnic group to have a social life, and to get access to jobs and other resources.

In this chapter I also analyze the role race has played in Fiji's political history as well as the role it plays in the educational system.

In Chapter Three I analyze the data I collected through the interviews with those involved in a mixed race marriage in Fiji. I found that people rank ethnic groups in Fiji and that marriages are less controversial between groups of similar rank. People tend to associate more with the higher ranking group involved and to try to assimilate with one group instead of thinking of themselves as mixed race.

In Chapter Four I analyze the interviews that I conducted with individuals who grew up mixed race in Fiji. I compare the results I got from these interviews to data I collected from the interviews in the previous chapter in regards to their idea of how growing up mixed race has played a role in their children's lives. In this chapter I discuss how those who grow up mixed race in Fiji tend to find themselves associating more with one race rather than both. They assimilate towards the race of one parent that they feel a stronger connection with and again generally choose the higher-ranking group. I also look at different theories relating to how mixed race individuals identify themselves.

In Chapter Five I compare the interviews I conducted in Fiji to those that I conducted at Union College. I look at the differences and similarities between the individuals that are the products of a mixed race marriage. I analyze the impact that growing up belong to two different racial groups has on one's life in the United States. I also look at the history of race relations in the United States in comparison to those in Fiji. In this chapter I discuss how, as opposed to Fiji, Americans who grew up mixed race tend to embrace the idea and find a uniqueness and significance to it.

In Chapter Six I conclude the paper by summing up the main arguments that I have discussed. In Fiji, racial relations have been greatly strained due to the long history of indentured servitude and different laws that have been enacted. Belonging to a single racial group becomes essential. In Fiji, much of one's race is based on one's behavior and knowledge of a particular race. In America however, being mixed race, at least for middle class individuals is much different and much more accepted since it is less essential for one's social and economic life to belong to an ethnic group.

CHAPTER TWO

RACIAL RELATIONS IN FIJI THROUGHOUT HISTORY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Looking at inter-ethnic marriages in Fiji is particularly interesting because there is a long history of ethnic pluralism in Fiji. Ethnic pluralism involves each ethnic group maintaining its language and culture and having a particular niche in the Fijian economy. Most people marry and socialize within their own group and have more superficial, single purpose relationships with people in other groups. In my thesis, I examined whether inter-ethnic marriages were common and whether these marriages were breaking down the lines between ethnic groups. Here, I explore the history of ethnic relations in Fiji laid in place by the British colonial government in order to show the long history of ethnic pluralism and the factors that historically maintained it.

The country of Fiji consists of over three hundred islands, yet there are less than one million people who inhabit its entirety. Despite this, racial tensions have run high throughout Fiji's history. Fijians, Indians, Chinese, Rotumans, and many others have lived amongst each other for years now. Racial tensions have begun to subside within Fiji, but the long history of the strict divide still greatly runs through everyone's minds in today's current society.

FIJI: COLONIAL HISTORY

On the tenth of October in 1874, Fiji became a British Crown colony under the governance of Sir Arthur Gordon. By this time "white people were no longer novelties and no longer perceived as ancestors returning in new color, but permanent fixtures, if at times irritating ones" (Lal 1992: 5). The British then began to inhabit the land and start

agricultural enterprises. One major crop that was grown on the lands of Fiji was sugar. Another major cash crop was cotton. By 1870, the number of Europeans greatly increased because they were drawn to the “island’s chiefly prospect of cashing in on the temporary global shortage of cotton caused by the American Civil War” (Lal 1992: 10). This however required much more labor that could not be supplied by the Fijian people. Between the years of 1864 and 1911, “27,000 Melanesian and Gilbertese laborers were imported to Fiji, but with the expansion of the sugar industry, that number was far less than the need” (Lal 1992: 13).

Many more laborers were needed so the British landowners began to bring in labor from India. Sir Arthur Gordon had previous experience using Indian laborers when he was governor of Trinidad so he decided to bring Indians over. There were two purposes behind the initiation of indentured workers. An indentured work force “would provide the backbone of the colony’s labor force, and it would allow Fiji’s native inhabitants, who practiced a subsistence-based lifestyle, to remain outside of market-based labor” (Trnka 2008: 32). In 1878, negotiations for Indian laborers were complete and “the first group of 479 indentured workers arrived from India in May 1879. By 1916, when the importation ceased, 60,639 Indian men, women, and children had arrived in the islands” (Lal 1992: 14).

In addition to bringing over indentured servants from India, Sir Arthur Gordon also implemented numerous law and regulation in order to protect the rights and preserve the way of life of the indigenous Fijians. One major piece of legislation that Gordon put into place was the land laws. This law put eighty three percent of the total land of Fiji, into Fijian hands. This land could only be possessed by indigenous Fijians, Fijian clans, which left only seventeen percent to the rest of the population. Indigenous lands can be leased to

other groups but not sold. Another notable policy by Gordon was the creation of the Great Council of Chiefs. This council was “specifically created to meet annually to advise the governor on native Fijian affairs and to assist him in formulating native regulations” (Lal 1992: 14). Gordon’s laws benefited the indigenous Fijians much more than any other group.

Land laws that were put in place were not fully positive for indigenous Fijians however. Laws under Ratu Sukuna put them at a disadvantage in the economy. Ratu Sukuna mandated that indigenous Fijians stay in the villages and take part in growing subsistence crops. Sukuna wanted to maintain the Fijian way of life in the villages. Having Fijians remain on their land and farm instead of being able to move into cities and create a different lifestyle for themselves would later contribute to the stereotypes about them. They were seen as lazy and having not motivation to do more with their lives in order to make money or support themselves and their families but in reality they were more or less legally barred from participating in the cash economy for many years.

All the privileges allotted to the Fijians began to cause problems when the indentured servitude of the Indian population was over. Many thought that the Indians would return to India when their service was up but instead most remained in Fiji. There were thousands of Indian immigrants “whose service as indentured workers entitled them to permanent residence in Fiji” (Lal 1992: 16).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, many laws were put into place in order to protect the native Fijians. There were new regulations on trading. The Native Trading Ordinance of 1891 was replaced in 1904 and it was “ostensibly intended to safeguard Fijians from exploitation by others” (Lal 1992: 26). If a non-Fijian tried to contract with a

Fijian without following the new Native Trading Ordinance, they were fined and put in jail. In addition to trading laws, there were also new labor laws put in place in an attempt to benefit native Fijians. In 1912 there was a new Fijian Labour Ordinance that stated that “unmarried Fijians could enter into a contract of service under either the Masters and Servants Ordinance or the Fijian Labour Ordinance provided they had made arrangements to support their dependents in the village” (Lal 1992: 28). This law enabled Fijians to leave their villages and work elsewhere. This law however was not intended to benefit Fijians except by preserving their traditional village life. It put limits on their ability to engage in commerce. Governor im Thurn also made attempts to help the Fijians in terms of land laws. Im Thurn had a reputation of having his “whole interest wherever he has been has resting in and with the natives and he has been most successful with them” (Lal 1992: 29). In Fiji however, his efforts were controversial and unsuccessful. Im Thurn attempted to revise the land laws that Sir Arthur Gordon put into place. Many of the ordinances caused land to change hands. Between 1905 and 1909, the new land laws permitted “the outright sale of 20, 184 acres of native land, bringing the total area of fee simple (freehold) land in the colony to 434,799 acres” (Lal 1992: 30). In 1911, after im Thurn’s governance was over, the Colonial Office decided to issue new directions about land policies. They decided that “all non-Crown and non-fee simple land, whether occupied or not, was declared to be the property of the Fijians; no native land was to be sold or otherwise permanently alienated; and land could be leased only with the consent of the government” (Lal 1992: 33).

In addition to the large number of indentured Indian servants, the number of Europeans in Fiji was increasing as well. By 1901 there were 2,447 Europeans in Fiji and in

the next two decades the number increased to almost four thousand (Lal 1992: 33). This however was not the problem. Between 1901 and 1921, the number of Part-Europeans in Fiji nearly doubled from 1,516 to almost three thousand. The Europeans all lived in urban areas and began to control the sinews of the economy. Because of their dominance in the economy, there was an insistence amongst the Europeans “on social separation from Fijians and Indians” (Lal 1992: 34). Segregated schools came about and there were school in which only children of European descent were allowed to attend. Eventually a school opened for the sons of Fijian chiefs but “Europeans successfully opposed the extension of Western (English) educational facilities to Indians on grounds that that was contrary to colonial policy and inimical to the colony’s economic interest” (Lal 1992: 34). Despite the fact that sons of chiefs were now being educated, commoner indigenous Fijians were still not educated. This segregation caused Europeans to be held to the highest standard and Indians to the lowest. Segregated schools lasted about four decades.

Indians were seen as the lowest group because of their indentured servitude. Even though they held a lower status than other races, their presence in Fiji was very high. “By 1900, 21,056 indentured Indians had entered the islands, all of them obligated to five years of labor” (Lal 1992: 38). After their five years were over, girmitiya could return to their home in India but at their own expense. Many of these Indians came from impoverished districts though. Many ex-girmitiya, stayed in Fiji in the field of agriculture and “in 1911 of the total Indian population of 25,976, 10,357 were classified as agriculturalists” (Lal 1992: 39). Many of these Indians became sugar cane farmers and eventually surpassed the Europeans in the amount they produced and the value of the cane they were able to produce. Because of the land laws, it was very difficult for Indians to find fertile land to

lease. This led to “dispersed settlements rather than the clustered villages that were the pattern in India” (Lal 1992: 40). This in turn caused many problems within the social structure of settlements. The structure was very loose because there was a lack of common values and a lack of an established “means of group endeavor and conflict resolution” (Lal 1992: 40).

While many Indians returned to India after their time as an indentured servant was up, others remained in Fiji and began to make a life for themselves. Due to the land laws though, Indians were unable to purchase land to live on. They had to lease land from indigenous Fijians and “they continued to work mainly in the sugar industry as growers and mill workers, as did their descendants for several generations” (Lal 2006: 5). By the 1940s, the indigenous Fijian population was outnumbered by the Indo-Fijian population that had diversified and grown. In addition to their involvement in the sugar industry, the Indian population also had a desire to educate themselves in order to advance their lives. They established schools on the land without the help of the government for the most part. The Indians saw education as a way out of life on leased land from the Fijians. Over the years students in these schools filled the junior ranks of civil service. By the 1950s and onward, those who attended these schools entered the professional world as lawyers, doctors, nurses, and accountants. Even though they had may have had a rough past as an indentured servant, many Indians were able to build a more prosperous life.

Overtime there began to be more of a settled life. During indentured servitude, religion and cultural practiced were put on hold. Religious practices began to reemerge and help settle their lives. In addition, many prominent Indian leaders were beginning to arrive in Fiji, which drew more attention to the problems faced by Indians. During this

time, there were some indentured servants. It was not as difficult as it had once been though. The era of indentured servants in Fiji was coming to an end and “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 though indentured labor was over for the Indians, they still faced many problems while living in Fiji.

Much of the time spent between the discovery of Fiji and the end of indentured labor was spent causing a racial divide that has lasted decades. This divide between races then contributed to many other problems in the future such as numerous coups. The constant struggle between Fijians, Indians, and Europeans has lasted throughout Fijian history to some degree.

POLITICAL TURMOIL

Many coups have taken place throughout Fiji’s history causing many shifts in power and cementing ethnic divisions. In 1970 Fiji finally gained their independence from Britain. A new constitution was put in place. In this constitution, communal voting was designated as the form of voting for government positions. Communal voting, or racial voting, was designed so that someone could only vote amongst his or her own group. There were different candidates for each group. There were twenty-two seats designated for Indigenous Fijians and twenty-two seats designated for Indo-Fijians. The rest of the seats were common role seats that everyone votes for. Most of the time Indigenous Fijians ended up being the majority.

The first coup in Fiji took place in 1987. Indigenous Fijian, Timoci Bavadra was the Prime Minister and leader of the Indo-Fijian Labour Party leading to the coup led by Sitiveni Rabuka, an indigenous Fijian general. The army backed the coup. Rabuka was eventually elected to be Prime Minister in 1990 under a new constitution while he was part of the Fijian Political Party (SVT). Then in 1999, in hopes of winning the election, Rabuka decided to join forces with the National Federation Party, which was dominated by Indo-Fijians. Both indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians however deserted their major parties when these two parties tried to make an alliance across ethnic divisions. Rabuka however ended up losing to the Labour Party and Mahendra Chaudry. Chaudry became Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister. When Chaudry was first elected, many felt that he would be overthrown rather quickly, but "such expectations of trouble were, however, premature. The first month of Chaudry's leadership was marked with high levels of anxiety, but the widespread speculations of an impending governmental overthrow quickly subsided" (Trnka 2008: 64).

As Prime Minister, Chaudry was not favored by many people. Exactly one year after he was elected, George Speight led a coup against Chaudry. In 2000, the "political coup and the violence that accompanied it have their roots in over a century of political turmoil that has been locally portrayed as a struggle between Fiji's two primary 'races' over their rights to live in and take part of the governance of Fiji" (Trnka 2008: 32). Many people rallied behind Speight and wanted to remove Indians from political power as well as political and economic interests. Speight's explanation for the coup in 2000 was that it was "motivated by the desire of indigenous Fijian nationalists to remove Indians from political power" (Trnka 2008: 33). Even though Speight was the face of the coup, it is "unclear who was

involved in masterminding the ousting of the Chaudry government. Speight willingly led the assault, but he was not the one who put the operations together” (Trnka 2008: 40). Speight held forty-four people hostage and while this was all going on, violence was breaking out throughout Fiji as well. The brunt of all the violence though was focused on Indo-Fijians.

During the coup, politicians and the media manipulated the news and what was occurring which pitted indigenous Fijians against Indo-Fijians when in reality the division might have been by social class instead of race since both the 1987 and 2000 coups followed the election of the Labour Party, which wanted to reform large companies. By having the conflict based more in race, rather than class, groups were more likely to unite and take a side. A number of various factors including “class and regional differences and personal aspirations for political power, were represented to the populace as an ‘ethnic conflict’” when it comes to motivations for political upheavals (Trnka 2008: 22). News spread very quickly from one person to another and as the news was spread, the stories changed. What was heard on the news could have been exaggerated and in turn this escalated the racial division between both indigenous and Indo-Fijians. For example, one event that was greatly exaggerated and made to be something it was not was an occurrence with a stolen car. Four armed Fijian men hijacked a car on July 21, 2000. The media reported “four men had driven a car across the bridge, breaking curfew and refusing to stop at the military checkpoint. The soldiers on duty had responded by firing warning shots” (Trnka, 2008, 70). After hearing the news, the story was amplified. Rumors spread that it was a much larger mobilization of a few hundred of Speight’s supporters and that their target was a small Hindu school. News spread across the community and people were

urged to leave their homes. No one left his or her homes and thankfully, nothing ever happened. Much of the news that was spread during the coup was pitting one group against the other. It became difficult to tell the rumors from the truth. News and rumors gave people a foothold on how to interpret events and ascribe meaning to the chaos that was ensuing. The media interpreted events and attacks the way they wanted them to appear to everyone else as racially motivated violence.

Instead of either Speight or Chaudry taking over office, Bainimarama who was commander of the military made a deal with Speight. Speight and all of his accomplices were sent to jail and in turn, Chaudry was not able to regain his role as Prime Minister. Instead of Chaudry, Laisenia Qarase, an indigenous Fijian, led the interim government.

In 2006, Qarase was reelected as Prime Minister. Prior to his reelection, Qarase proposed the Reconciliation and Unity Bill to Parliament, a bill that heavily favored indigenous Fijians over Indo-Fijians. Many however did not favor the bill and Bainimarama threatened a coup to overthrow him. Bainimarama eventually went forward with the coup in December of 2006. His coup was successful in overthrowing Qarase. A few years later in 2008 Bainimarama introduced the People's Charter, which got rid of racial voting. Instead of voting for candidates by race, people now all voted on a common slate of candidates, known as voting by common roll. The hope of common roll voting was to get people to think and organize political parties along national lines and compel everyone to think in terms of his or her country rather than by any particular race, community, or religion.

Although the many of the coups that occurred in Fiji had other motives behind them, the most visible motive is that of race. The conflict between Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians reaches all aspects of life in Fiji from social, economic, and political spheres.

RACIAL STEREOTYPES

Due to Fiji's long history of racial turmoil, and the racial policies laid in place by the British which gave Indo and indigenous Fijians very different economic roles, many stereotypes have emerged. Based on people's past and the occupations they had and their role in society, the stereotypes assigned to each race or ethnicity, assumptions have been made about the entire group. Due to their past as indentured servants, Indians as acquired the stereotype of extremely hardworking. Living as indentured servants they need to work in order to survive and serve their term. This stereotype also comes from the life that Indians made for themselves after their indenture was over. They worked hard in order to escape a life in the fields. They have entered the professional world and the ideas people have about them align with this. Because of their work in the professional world and the success that has come along with it, it is also believed that they are more concerned with money than they are with people.

The indigenous Fijians however, are seen in a dimmer light. While Indians are hardworking, "Fijians, regardless of age, class, or gender, are 'lazy' and uninterested in disciplined labor. Fijians are depicted as living an 'easy life,' not willing to work hard but 'wanting everything' that Indians produce" (Trnka, 2008, 119). Some Indians have the idea that all Fijians do all day is lie on their mats instead of working. Along with this, they believe that they do not clean their homes or villages. When Fijians are not seen as being "lazy" but instead are gainfully employed, they are viewed as not knowing how to spend their money. The stereotype of the inability to save money exists for Fijians. By not saving money, they are seen as not being able to take care of their family. Some Indians believe

that Indigenous Fijians spend the money they make quickly and recklessly and then continue to ask for more cash when their own money has run out. Indigenous Fijians however, tend to give money to their extended families, despite not having much to begin with. Kin relationships are a huge part of Fijian culture and caring for one's extended relatives comes along with this. They give even if they do not have the means to.

Also, according to some Indians, when Fijians ask for extra cash and do not receive it, they resort to theft. Many use this as an explanation as to why there was so much looting during the coup. Indians saw Fijians as not wanting to work for money but instead wanting to benefit from the work of others. They did not work for their own material goods so they broke into stores and stole what they wanted and needed. This idea of not wanted to work for anything goes along with the idea that Fijians are "jungli." The word jungli comes from jungle. It connotes that Fijians are inhabitants of the jungle and contributes to the idea that Fijians are in "a wild and uncultivated state that has not been transformed through human endeavors" (Trnka, 2008, 120). According to this idea, Fijians have not been taught the proper way to act. The Jungli are seen as lazy, undisciplined, and prone to theft.

Even though there are many negative stereotypes of Fijians, there are also some positive. Fijians are seen as amicable and hospitable. Many Indians gave accounts of being in need or needing a place to stay and they were able to turn to a Fijian in the community that took them in and helped. The idea that Fijians are very friendly and welcoming sometimes overshadows the negative stereotypes and creates an atmosphere where Indians trust Fijians. During the coup however, many negative stereotypes overshadowed the positive ones.

RACE RELATIONS IN SCHOOLS

While race was the cause of many hardships in the past, it can be argued that conditions have greatly improved in the present. Racial divisions no longer seem to be as strict and there is much more comingling. In the past there had been a well-established network of small village schools. Because schools were located in the village, people would remain in their respective areas and away from others. During the first decades of colonial rule, the British approach to education for native Fijians was one of non-intervention. Churches established many schools for the commoner Fijians. By 1900, attendance to school became a norm for indigenous Fijians. Despite the improvements to the schools, none of the improvements applied to Indians. Between 1897 and 1916, there were about sixty thousand indentured laborers. No one in the government took responsibility for educating the next generation of Indians. This next generation was seen as being the next group of unskilled workers.

Ethnic associations run the schools in Fiji. Racial pluralism still greatly exists though. Many schools contain a mix of many racial groups but the degree to which this occurs varies greatly. There are many schools that are a majority Indigenous Fijian while there are other schools that are a majority Indo-Fijian. There are also many that are more evenly divided by Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, as well as Chinese. School, however, been mixed ethnically, student wise, for some time now. These schools however, tend to have very different reputations. Schools that have a majority of Indo-Fijians as well as Indo-Fijian teachers are usually looked upon as being better and more rigorous than those taught by Indigenous Fijians and so many indigenous Fijians attend Indo-Fijian schools. In

the past, the opposite used to be true though. Schools that were taught by Indigenous Fijians used to be favored by a majority of the people. From what I have observed in Fiji, the schools people choose to send their children to vary greatly depending on their personal preferences though.

In 2008, the Fiji Ministry of Education issued the first set of kindergarten guidelines called the Na Noda Mataniciva. It was developed through the support from the Australian Agency for International Development, the New Zealand Agency for National Development, as well as the European Union. One of its goals was to “outline the importance of teaching in children’s ethnic languages” (Brison 2014: 28). In addition to teaching children in their native tongue, the Na Noda Mataniciva also, “looks to kindergarten to build a multicultural society through promoting children’s awareness both of their own culture and of other cultures” (Brison 2014: 41). This task is very difficult to achieve in Fiji. Many teachers have a very limited knowledge of languages and cultures that are now their own.

Depending on the school, much of the education and curriculum tends to lean either more towards Indigenous Fijian culture or Indo-Fijian culture. Despite trying to bridge the gap between different races and cultures, it is a very difficult to actually achieve this goal. In addition to this challenge, there are also other flaws in the Na Noda Mataniciva as well. The Na Noda Mataniciva’s vision statement is stated in English and translated into Fijian but completely neglects to translate the statement into Hindi. Even though its goal was to encourage children to learn more about their own culture, because of this it seems flawed.

Different schools all had their own way of dealing with the question of race. Since it is very rare to have a classroom filled with a single race, a single religion, or a single culture, teachers in Fiji have to figure out ways to deal with the diversity in a way that will

help students learn. An Indigenous Fijian teacher Miss Sera taught the kindergarten in one school, Matanisiga. Miss Sera “followed the guidelines of Na Noda Mataniciva well, implementing its vision of promoting (i) holistic developments through play (ii) pride in one’s own culture and (iii) respect for other cultures” (Brison 2014: 61). Although she herself was Indigenous Fijian, she explained the custom of Diwali, which is celebrated by mainly by Hindus. Although not all of her information to the students was correct, she made an attempt to teach the children of other cultures besides just the one they practiced. In another school called Bright Beginnings, the kindergarten teacher was also Indigenous Fijian. In Bright Beginnings, their vision “combined a contemporary emphasis on multiculturalism with a colonial vision of Fiji left in place by the British, which emphasized that each cultural group had its own niche and would prosper in different ways in the contemporary world” (Brison 2014: 67). Bright Beginnings however put less emphasis than Mataniciva on teaching about different ethnic cultures. Instead, they put more emphasis on Christian morality. At Bright Beginnings, the teachers switched between speaking in English and speaking in Fijian. Not all the kids knew Fijian though. Similarly to the Na Noda, Hindi was left out. Elenoa, one of the kindergarten teachers at Bright Beginnings, when teaching children about Fijian tradition and its importance said:

That this was not important because Fiji was a multiethnic society. But she went on to say that she thought that each group should be educated in its own religion. She hoped that Hindus would eventually accept Christ; and that it was important for children of each group to learn their own religion in school...Through focusing on religion as a central part of the ethnic divide in Fiji, Bright Beginnings in many ways endorsed the pluralistic model of

society where children from each group were empowered through a strong foundation in their culture (Brison 2014: 77).

Children in kindergartens in Fiji have their own perception of race however. In many schools in Suva, race tends to be ignored by the children. Because there are so many different races in one classroom, it is much easier for students to associate themselves with children of the same gender rather than children of the same race. Conversing and playing with someone of the opposite gender is avoided in a lot in Suva kindergartens and the children “generally choose playmates and companions at the lunch table according to gender, even if it involved interacting with a child from a different ethnic group who spoke a different language” (Brison 2014: 151). Many children in Fiji attend kindergarten for more than one year and therefore get accustomed to an environment with children from multiple different backgrounds. Children were often criticized for crossing a gender line and doing something that was not the norm of his or her own gender rather than being criticized for being a different race than the rest of the playgroup.

Rural Fijians though tend to still tend to see differences in other children aside from gender. Although they still play in groups of all the same race, children from villages often make a distinction between those from their village and those who are from different regions or from urban areas. They also focus more on age than on gender, the division favored by urban children. Their playgroups consisted of different age children so they “took on behavior appropriate to the relative age of the children present with other children assuming authority roles towards younger children and submissive roles in the presence of older children” (Brison 2014: 154). Those who are not from the village are seen as outsiders and although they are the same race, they are treated differently than

those who are from the village. Rural children are not as exposed as urban children are to the great deal of racial diversity that is present in Fiji.

Many schools and programs that have been put in place attempt to bridge the gap between the multiple ethnicities that coexist throughout the islands of Fiji. The Fiji Ministry of Education, along with many of the teachers make an effort to teach children about different races and cultural views besides the one that they are a part of. With continued education and support from the school, the divide between the multiple races in Fiji can be lessened.

THE CHINESE IN FIJI

The Chinese constitute a much smaller part of the population of Fiji and the indigenous Fijians and the Indo-Fijians but they still play an important role in Fiji's history. The first Chinese settlers arrived in Fiji in the 1870s. They were cooks, small traders, and market gardeners. When the Chinese arrived they came as free settlers but were met with a lot of haste. As the numbers of Chinese increased, neither the colonial government nor Fiji's European settlers welcomed the Chinese immigration into Fiji. The Chinese were arriving in a steady stream but in very small amounts. Many articles were published in *The Fiji Times* against the Chinese immigrants. They were seen as "cheap living, slow changing, unassimilating, but very useful laborers" (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 28). While not all of these are negative ideas, the positives were overlooked. Some even believed that the Chinese were coming to Fiji with the intention of trading and that it would affect the Europeans. Many worried that they would establish themselves so well that the European and Indian traders would be forced out. Many of these concerns though were not warranted. The

number of the Chinese at this point was very minuscule compared to the number of all the other groups including the Europeans and the Indians.

By 1921 a majority of the Chinese in Fiji were in professional and commercial occupations. Some were engaged in agriculture and the rest were in manufacturing or industry businesses (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 57). The number of Chinese was still very small during the 1920s. In 1923, “an Ordinance to Place Restrictions on the Immigration of Aliens into the Colony was passed” (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 63). Its main intent was to restrict the immigration of the Chinese. Although many wanted to restrict their entry into Fiji, not everyone was against them. Within the Council of Chiefs, there were two differing views of the Chinese. Some saw the Chinese as deceitful while others saw them as honest traders. Those that saw them as honest traders thought that they served a useful purpose. Even though there were two opposing ideas, there was unanimity in the “need to preserve the purity of the Fijian race and prevent an influx of Chinese into Fiji” (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 64). In 1926, the Buli Batiki proposed Resolution XIV, which was then adapted by the Council of Chiefs. The resolution stated that if the flow of Chinese was not restricted “Fiji would be blessed or cursed with a large half-caste Chinese population as Fijian women had not had the same repugnance to Chinese as they had to Indians” (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 64). Many of the Chinese in Fiji at the time were single men. Very few Chinese women immigrated to Fiji.

Because the number of the Chinese in Fiji was so limited, they were forced to learn Fijian and interact with the indigenous Fijians. Fijians were their landowners and the proprietors of the stores they worked in. Connections between the Chinese and Fijians began to form for some. Many of the Chinese men who were in Fiji were single so they

sought the company of Fijian women. Some Chinese men even married Fijian women. For the Chinese, if they married “Fijian women, they gained some acceptance among them” (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 75). Despite the small amounts of interracial marriages occurring, there was still much haste towards the Chinese. The Immigration Ordinance No. 33 of 1947 was put in place. It was intended to put a stop to all Chinese immigration where the “only exceptions were wives, children below the age of ten, and those already holding valid entry and re-entry permits” (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 90). Men that have never been to Fiji and did not already have a permit were not allowed to enter. This ordinance strictly limited the number of Chinese entering Fiji. During this time, much of the world feared the spread of communism. China, however, was under communist rule. Fijians feared that the Chinese would bring those ideas over to Fiji and spread them. Only young children were permitted to enter Fiji because of the idea that older children had already been educated in China and therefore they have been taught communists ways. Fijians wanted Chinese children to be educated in Fiji in order to avoid this. The red scare eventually died down and the minds of many Fijians were put at ease. The population of the Chinese in Fiji has increased but not to anywhere near the numbers of indigenous Fijians or Indo-Fijians. In 1996, the Chinese in Fiji numbered 4,939 (Ng Kumlin Ali 2002: 208).

The negative ideas of the Chinese in Fiji for the most part no longer exist. They are now seen as hard working, smart individuals. The negative connotations that came along with them do not hinder their entrance into the country.

CONCLUSION

Fiji's history in terms of race relations is very complex. Colonial policies established separate policies and niches for the major ethnic groups and tried to keep them separate. This led to numerous conflicts throughout history. Because of Fiji's history as well as the history of each group, there have been crude stereotypes associated with each group. Each group's past and what it involved greatly contributed to how they are viewed in today's society.

All throughout their history in Fiji, Indians have been forced to work for almost everything. From the time they arrived in Fiji as indentured servants they have been hard working because they had no other choice. Once indentured labor was over, Indians became very prominent in the business world. Because of these events, Indo-Fijians are viewed as being smart and hardworking. While these two are positive aspects, there are also numerous negative stereotypes that come along with them. Many people view Indians as being sneaky and the type of people who are only looking out for him or herself.

Indigenous Fijians on the other hand are mainly stereotyped as warm hearted and loving. They are also seen as being spiritual but at the same time not good at business. And because they are not good at business, they are viewed as being less wealthy as well. In addition to lacking business skills, another crude stereotype is that Indigenous Fijians are lazy.

Many of these stereotypes of both groups have their basis rooted in British colonialism. Both Indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians were forced to be this way at the time. They did not have very many options to live a different life. Indians were forced to be indentured laborers while Indigenous Fijians were living in rural areas on farms unable to get

jobs in the city. Even today people still have these stereotypes in the back of their minds even though race relations have greatly improved. Fiji's history laid the groundwork for the complexity between these two groups that still exists today.

The history of racial segregation in Fiji makes inter-ethnic marriages an interesting topic. Although these racial segregations seems to have broken down some over time, I argue that ethnic divisions are still robust except for within a very small middle class that identifies more by class than by race. For those outside of this middle class, marrying outside of one's own ethnic lines may causes much more controversy. Even for this small middle class, however, mixed race marriages still face many problems within the relationship due to the differences in race. In the next chapter I discuss the varying degrees to which Fiji's history has contributed to the difficulties for those involved in a mixed race marriage.

CHAPTER THREE INTER-ETHNIC MARRIAGE IN FIJI

Throughout my time in Fiji I interviewed five couples who had married across ethnic lines. Few of the people I interviewed had much to say about different cultural practices that made cross-ethnic marriages difficult. They did, however, have more to say about how it was difficult for their families to fit in to larger extended family and other groups. Sometimes family and friends were disapproving. Often the couple associated mostly with one side of the family over the other. They all wanted their children to fit in to one of the parents' ethnic groups even though this often involved the children feeling uncomfortable with the other side of the family. Overall, It appeared that it was not cultural beliefs that kept ethnic groups apart or major differences in lifestyle. Instead, people seemed to operate from the assumption that it was important to be in an ethnic group in order to have a place in Fijian society so cross-ethnic marriages mainly created problems about what one should be part of.

HIERARCHY OF ETHNIC MARRIAGES

Scholars have focused on the divide between Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians, arguing that colonial and postcolonial history have pitted these two communities against each other and reinforced continued divisions. However, there are in fact many ethnic groups in Fiji and many divisions within each ethnic group. I interviewed couples who had married across ethnic lines and found that there was a hierarchy of ethnic marriages, reflecting a ranking of ethnic groups in prestige in Fiji. Europeans, part Europeans, East Asians, and Pacific Islanders occupy the top of the hierarchy, followed by indigenous Fijians

from the south and east of the country, then other indigenous Fijians and finally Indo-Fijians. Marrying “up” the ethnic hierarchy was relatively uncontroversial and the least problems were associated with marrying people at a similar level of prestige. For the couples I interviewed, the families tended to lean more on the side that was considered to be of higher status. When someone was seen as marrying down, the family tended to disapprove of the relationship. If the two involved in the relationship were of the relatively same status, both sides of the family seemed to have similar reactions as one another.

For many who choose to enter an inter-ethnic marriage, there are many repercussions that come along with this decision. Although entering into a mixed race marriage has its problems, there are many different types, some much more controversial than others. Those that are less controversial tend to be between Indigenous Fijians and other Pacific Islanders such as Rotumans, members of a small island province of Fiji with a distinct language and culture. Indigenous Fijians who are married to Europeans also tend to not face much controversy. A relationship between and Indigenous Fijians and someone of Asian descent tend to be slightly more controversial though. The most controversial type of relationship though is that of an Indigenous Fijian and an Indo Fijian. However, within each of these categories, there are many problems that can be unique to each situation depending on the people.

The first couple I interviewed had a fairly uncontroversial marriage. The wife is of Rotuman descent and the husband is of Fijian descent. Although this couple has had a few issues arise over the years, their relationship has been the smoothest. They met through mutual friends while they were working at the same place. They now have three children, two in primary school and one who is yet to start schooling. Even though the children have

become much closer to one side of the family over the other, it has not caused many problems for the family.

The next relationship is between a man of mixed descent including Fijian, Samoan, Scottish, German, categorized in Fiji as “Part-European, and a woman who is of Chinese descent. While they were both going to school in Auckland, New Zealand, they met through mutual friends. They met in 1994 but got married nine years later in 2003. They now have two sons who attend Yat Sen Primary School. Throughout this relationship there has been a few problems but overall, in comparison to many other mixed race marriages, the problems are minimal.

Although the next couple I interviewed has faced numerous problems, not all have been related to the issue of race. The age gap between the two is quite significant. The subject of age in addition to the subject of race has made for a rough journey for this couple. The wife, who is the younger one in the couple, is of Fijian, Rotuman, Chinese, and Tongan descent while the husband is of Korean descent. For the husband, this marriage is his second. His previous marriage was to a Korean. These two met through the wife’s work as she was working at a restaurant in a hotel. He was a customer when they first met. Their relationship started as one that was not romantic but eventually evolved in one. They meet in 2000 and seven years later they got married in 2007. They now have one daughter who is almost one year old.

The next two relationships are the most controversial. They are both between and Indigenous Fijian female and an Indo Fijian male. These two vary slightly though because of religious beliefs. The individuals in first couple are both Christian while the second are not. The first couple met in church about thirteen years ago. They were in the same youth

group and began their relationship as just friends. Their relationship evolved and they have been married for the past twelve years. They have a daughter who is in year one in primary school. In the second relationship I was only able to speak to the wife. The couple is now divorced because of many hardships due to their differences in culture and religion. They first met though, through work. Their two companies had a business deal together and this is what brought them together in the first place. They got married when she became pregnant with their first daughter. They then went on to have a son before getting divorced. The ex-wife later got remarried to an Indigenous Fijian man and had another daughter.

For all of these relationships there have been many problems that arise through the years. Some problems have been much easier to solve than others. Some of these problems within the relationship even cause years of hardship and tough times for everyone involved. Many of the issues that arise have to do with how family and friends deal with the news, how one's religion plays a role, how cultural differences play a role, and even how language plays a role.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

While not everyone I interviewed touched upon the cultural differences between the two, those who did seemed to find that it created a major barrier between some couples. For many, such as Indians, Fijian, and Asians, culture plays a large role in one's life. Even if someone is not strict about taking part in their cultural traditions or living in the traditional way of life, cultural differences can still create distance between people that has to be overcome or dealt with.

For some families culture did not play as large a role as others. For the first couple that I interviewed, the marriage between a Rotuman and a Fijian, there were not many cultural barriers that existed. While the wife grew up Rotuman, her family was in no sense traditional. They did not practice many Rotuman traditions and did not pass down much culture that would cause conflicts. The husband grew up in a much more traditional Fijian family. Despite this, there were not many cultural differences that arose throughout the marriage because his family was more distant to the marriage than the wife's family.

For those who grew up within a more robust ethnic culture, it began to play more of a role in one's relationship. For Suiva and Alfred, the Chinese and mixed European couple, the issue of culture became a problem on the wife's side of the family. Although she lived in Fiji basically her entire life, the family still practiced many Chinese traditions. Since the husband grew up being such a diverse mix of cultures, he was very accepting of her traditions. He had to learn what the traditions were but once he did he saw no problem to them. Suiva and Alfred try to live a very Europeanized life so much of the Chinese tradition is left out of their household. They try to celebrate some holidays but because the Chinese follow the lunar calendar, they are never quite sure when they are. Suiva's extended family still tries to maintain their traditional, Chinese roots but Suiva herself, along with her family, had a difficult time keeping up.

As for the next couple, culture became much more a dividing factor. Although Connie is a mix of a few different races, her husband Richard is fully Korean, and grew up in Korea. His family still follows a lot of Korean traditions that are generally very strict and rigid while Connie's family is much more laid back culturally. The two had to learn to cope with the others way of life and learn how to accept their differences in culture. According

to Connie, “the really big difference from my culture is they show a lot of respect, the Koreans. Like for us islanders, we used to have it but now it’s just not like the Koreans. There is a lot of respect.” In many traditional Asian cultures everyone must show a great deal of respect to their elders. While this is also true in many other cultures, especially Fiji, Connie grew up in a mixed race household that did not practice much tradition. Connie went on to give an example of their differences in culture saying of her husband:

He has a nephew and for him to come in here, for him to have a cigarette or a drink, he cannot do it in front of his uncle even though he is married. He cannot still. It’s a respect they show to their uncle. He has to go outside and take a cigarette or if they drink they have to turn away and if they pour his drink they have to use two hands. Just so much respect. It’s a big difference compared to my culture because you can come in and drink with your auntie even though you’re way older. It’s a big difference.

Even though a lot of the cultural aspects that Connie pointed out during the interview are minor things, for the Korean culture they are much more important. Pouring tea with two hands may seem like something that is insignificant and bothersome but to not do it would be a sign of disrespect. Although Connie does not have to follow these rules, she still must take them into consideration and not excuse them as something unimportant to his culture.

When it came to marriages between Indigenous Fijians and Indo Fijians, the number of cultural differences greatly increased and became much more significant. Although Racheal did not expand on what the cultural differences were between her and her ex-husband, an Indo-Fijian, she recognized that there were major differences that existed and

it contributed to their eventual split. As for Una and Amitesh, another indigenous Fijian woman married to an Indo-Fijian man, there were many cultural differences on both sides of the family that caused problems and had to be resolved. For them it was difficult at first to fully learn and accept the others cultural practices but once they learned to accept them their relationship was strengthened. Una listed many cultural differences such as “different foods, beliefs, manners, we just do different things but he tries my style and I know his.” Since Amitesh grew up in Fiji, he grew up learning a lot about Fijian culture and traditions so for him to accept everything about Una seemed to be much simpler. Una had a lot more to learn than Amitesh.

Cultural differences between couples can cause barriers in the beginning of a relationship. Once these cultures are learned and accepted though, it seems that everyone for the most part embraced their spouse’s traditions. Many couples attempted to incorporate each other’s traditions into their lives instead of dismissing them and allowing it to cause problems.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Family and familial ties play a large role in Fijian society and culture. For many Indigenous Fijian families, family plays an invaluable role. Many Fijian families live not only with their immediate family but their extended family as well. Extended families rely on each other and help each other out but when obstacles arise, this relationship gets tested.

For many couples, one's family became the biggest obstacle that they had to face. Even if the family was fine with the relationship, there were often problems. Some of the problems that would arise were not intentional. Some families were distanced from their families inadvertently because they just naturally fit into one side over the other. Other family ties were purposefully broken because of the disapproval of a relationship.

For the couples that had the least controversial relationship, their problems tended to be minor. Generally, the couple gravitated towards the more prestigious of the groups involved and it was this side of the family that had more trouble with the marriage. For the marriage between the Indigenous Fijian and the Rotuman, their family has drifted more towards the wife's Rotuman family rather than the husband's Fijian family. The husband was raised in a very traditional Indigenous Fijian home while the wife was raised in a Rotuman home that was not very traditional. Despite this, his family was not against the relationship at all. Before he met his wife, the husband has a wild side to him and would go out a lot and party. When he met his wife he began to calm down and this made his family encourage the relationship. According to his family the wife was "a stabilizing influence on him. He was just going wild, partying, getting into all sorts of mischief." Her side of the family also had no qualms about the relationship seeing as how they had never been one for tradition.

Even though there were no initial problems, the immediate family has not remained as close as they wish to both sides of the extended family. The husband still attends all of his own family functions but the rest of the family (his wife and children) usually stays home while he goes out. The entire family only attends major functions such as wedding and funerals of close relatives. When the wife's side of the family has any functions though,

the whole family will attend. No matter what the importance of the function, the family comes together and attends as a unit.

For the next marriage, the part-European-Chinese marriage, the family problems remained more on the wife's side of the family rather than on the husband's side. The husband's family already contained a mixture of multiple races and cultures that it was some what of old news to them that someone would be marrying someone outside of their race. Although he was a mixture of about half a dozen races, the wife is fully Chinese. The wife, Suiva, came from a traditional Chinese family who always dreamed of having their daughter meet a nice, successful Chinese man. According to her, "my parents didn't quite agree because my parents are very into the cultural thing. So they weren't too happy with us, with me. And me being the only girl, only daughter, and I was the eldest. So in Chinese you are supposed to set good examples for the younger siblings and all that." Her family saw her as setting a bad example for all her other siblings and they feared that the rest of their children would follow in her footsteps and not marry someone Chinese. Although she claims that they no longer have any problems with their marriage, the husband, Alfred, would disagree. He agrees that there is not nearly as big of a problem as their was before but he believes that it is still brought up from time to time especially in regards to her younger brother who is still unmarried.

In their relationship, the moment that Suiva's her family changed their mind about Alfred was when they were finally able to meet him and see that he had his life together and planned out. He had bought a house for them and was serious about the relationship. The couple however did not tell her family about their engagement until the last minute. They were hiding the seriousness of their relationship for nine years. As the wife put it,

“eventually you have to bit the bullet and tell them. They had to ask me again to really make sure that’s what I wanted. In the end they just knew I was the rebellious one and I would do whatever I wanted to.” Now the two sides of the family get along very well and her family is quite fond of her husband. According to her “now when we go and visit it seems like I'm the daughter-in-law and he is the son.”

When it came to family for the next relationship, many issues came to the surface on both sides. Because the wife is a mix of Fijian, Rotuman, Chinese, and Tongan, race was not much of a problem as much as age was. Connie’s mother and father had different ideas about the marriage. While Connie’s mother encouraged it and pushed her towards it, her father was not as supportive. In the beginning, according to Connie, “he couldn’t believe that I had met someone way older than I am and of a different race. Later he told me if you love this guy then I’ll accept it just because I don’t want to spoil any relationship between you and I.” Connie’s father was concerned about the age different but as the relationship progressed he realized that there was not much he could do about it.

Since the husband, Richard, is much older than his wife, he already had two children who are now grown up. In the beginning they were not in favor of the relationship between their father and Connie. The problem was not strictly about race though. Age became more of a factor because Connie is not much older than Richard’s children. Over the years the family has learned to get along and their relationship is much stronger now than it used to be. Because these two different groups that Connie and Richard come from are fairly equal in prestige, race did not create many problems for them. Much of the issues they faced were overshadowed by the drastic age difference that is clearly visible between the two.

The last two relationships had the most strained family relations of them all. Una and Amitesh endured years of strained relationships between their families. When Una first told her family about her relationship with Amitesh they blatantly told her not to marry him. They told her straight to her face that they did not like him and she “should just marry one of us.” After some time though, her family was able to accept him for who he was. His family however took much longer to get things back to how they should be. For his family to fully accept their relationship took about eight years in total. According to Amitesh, they had to break many barriers from both sides, “my family didn’t accept her and her family did not accept me because I’m Indian.” After years had passed though,

We have been finally accepted by both families but it took some time for families to really know who we are. For my family to really know who she is and for her family to who I am. So finally they have accepted us for who we are and marriage for example, a mom and dad will always want the best for their kids so finally they come to know who I am they have accepted me that way I am. The way she is, she has been accepted by my whole family, but in the beginning when we got married it was really hard.

His family had a much harder time accepting their relationship and even excluded them from family events. They did not let it deter their relationship though and now they are fully accepted by both sides.

Racheal kept her relationship with an Indo-Fijian man secret from her family for a year. Her family did not seem as against the relationship as the previous family had been. According to her, “they gave her some advice, they were against it but they can’t go against it, it’s my will. So it’s up to me. So Mom gave me her piece.” Even if her family did not

agree she seemed determined to defy them and do what she pleased anyway. For her relationship, from the time she was dating to when she got married was about four year. Her family by that time was used to the relationship and just accepted that she would not change her mind.

Racheal was unable to say how her husband's family reacted to the marriage, indicating her total distain for them or their opinions. They were not that close to his side of the family and no one ever said anything directly to her about their relationship. She was however aware that they were not very supportive of the relationship. He was the first one in his family to marry outside of their culture so it was a shock to his family. After they got married, things improved for his side of the family as well.

Throughout my interviews, it also became apparent that those families that had faced few problems with their marriages came from families where there had already been a lot of mixed ethnic marriages. While some couples I interviewed had other brothers and sisters that were married to someone of a different race, others were the only one in their family to veer from what was expected of them. For Emily, who faced very few problems within her relationship, she has "about two or three siblings that are married to Fijians as well." Although she grew up Rotuman, they were not very traditional so marrying outside of their own group did not raise any complications.

As for the next couple, Suiva and Alfred, they were split down the middle. Seeing as how Suiva's family was very traditional in their Chinese culture and upbringing, she was the only one of her siblings to marry outside of their race. All of Suiva's brothers have Chinese wives. Alfred on the other hand has a lot of different races between himself and his siblings. Alfred's "sister is married to someone who is part European as well as part

Chinese and part Fijian...and his brother is married to a lady whose mother is part European and her father is Muslim.” Because he comes from such a mixed background already, his siblings continue to be a mixture as well.

Connie and Richard are more complicated. Although Connie comes from a mixed background herself, she is the only one currently in her family who is married to someone outside of her own race. Her sister is married to a Fijian man and her brother has yet to be married. As for Richard, since he and his siblings were born and raised in Korea, his siblings are married to other Koreans. His children however, have chosen to marry outside of their own groups. Richard’s son is married to a Fijian woman and his daughter is married to a Muslim man. Even though Richard denies it, according to Connie, he was not always accepting of their choices. Because of his relationship with Connie though, and his grandchildren, he is now fully accepting of who his children chose to spend their lives with.

For the indigenous-Indo Fijian marriages, there were no other such combinations in their extended family. For Una and Amitesh, their relationship is the one that stands out in the family for the most part. Una has one brother and three sisters, all of whom have married someone else that is Fijian. Amitesh as well is the only one in his family to marry outside his ethnic group, despite having a few other siblings. My last interview with Rachael was very similar to Una and Amitesh in this regard. Even though she is one of five children, out of her three brothers and her sister, she is the only one to have married someone who is not Fijian. The more controversial relationships, and the families that saw a lot more problems in the relationship tend to have much less mixing of races within their family. The mixed race marriages in the latter interviews tend to be isolated events rather than someone that happens quite often for those in the beginning. This probably reflects

the fact that it is fairly rare still for indigenous and Indo-Fijians to inter-marry so these kinds of relationships are more controversial.

When all is said and done and the marriage is official, many of these families tend to become closer to one side of the extended family over the other. Many found it easier to affiliate themselves mainly with one side of the family rather than trying to fit both families in equally. For Emily, the children as well as Emily are much more connected to her side of the family rather than her husband's side. As for Suiva and Alfred's family they seem to get along well with both sides of the family but lean towards Suiva's family. One reason for this is that they want their children to be more connected to their Chinese heritage because it is so strong on her side of the family.

For Una and Amitesh, in the beginning it was hard to be close to both sides of the family. Once relationships improved though, they found themselves relating mostly to Una's family much more than to Amitesh's. They belong to the same church as her family and her family was much quicker to accept them as a couple than Amitesh's family was. Rachael and her children are much closer to her side of the family as well. They do not seem to see their father's side of the family very often at all. Rachael and her children appear to embrace the Fijian side much more than the Indian side. Being in a mixed race marriage, even though there may not always be problems, tends to create a divide between families. Throughout the interviews, families often leaned towards one side of the extended family over the other for various reasons. Bringing two very different races and cultures together, naturally creates a divide that may be difficult to overcome. The solution often times to this, is to choose a side and stick with it.

RELIGION

Many Fijians are very religious. Advertisements for churches are on billboards throughout Suva; primary schools have morning devotion, and there are numerous churches all over Suva. Some people, however, are more actively religious than others.

For some couples I interviewed, both partners in the relationship practiced the same religion. Even though Una and Amitesh had many problems arise throughout their relationship, religion luckily was not one of them. They both belong to the same Christian church. Amitesh grew up in a Hindu family but converted to Christianity, which caused problems with his family but these were unrelated to his marriage.

Connie and Richard are similar to Una and Amitesh in the sense that they too are both Christian. They shared the same religious beliefs despite their other differences so this was not one of the difficult factors that played a role in their relationship.

For some religion wasn't a factor at all because they barely practice any religion. Suiva grew up Buddhist and Alfred grew up Catholic. Both of them though rarely practice their own religion. According to Alfred religion was a "nonissue." When it came to where they got married, Alfred said, "I was open and asked 'I know you're not a Catholic but how comfortable are you getting married in a church.' We can have it elsewhere, but we got married in a church." He then went on to say, "actually we had two weddings. We had a Chinese wedding and we had a traditional one. I told her you have to divorce me twice if you want to leave." In order to please both sides of the family, Suiva and Alfred decided to have two weddings. This way they did not have to choose one side of the family to entertain over the other.

Although they do not attend church often or take part in many religious traditions Alfred claimed, “we are religious in a way. But Catholics are the worst to practice their own faith...I suppose you practice your faith in your own way. We know the rights and wrongs and what we need to do. I think that if you can live up to that, that’s religious, whether you practice or not.”

Similarly, the first couple that I interviewed, Emily, the Rotuman, and her husband, Banuve, have not put a priority on religion in their lives. Emily is Methodist and up until recently so was her husband. He is currently trying to convert to Seventh Day Adventist though. Emily did not seem to feel that this was very plausible though. The family all has very busy lives and converting would involve changing their schedules and their way of life. Emily and her husband have three children that they have brought up to be Methodist. Although they are Methodist, they do not practice very often. The entire family used to attend Sunday school because it was in English and appealed to the children. Recently though, they had to stop going because their youngest daughter was no longer behaving, “she couldn’t sit still.” Instead of going to church now they “try to have our prayer sessions at home but we are very inconsistent because this time is very busy.” Everyone in their family, besides the youngest daughter takes part in a lot of activities, such as school, work, and sports, which take up a lot of their time.

In contrast, Racheal claims that religious differences undermined her marriage. Racheal, similar to many others in Fiji, does not make religion part of her every day life. She takes part in religion and her church but not regularly. Racheal claimed, “I am religious. I do believe in God but at the moment I am just taking it slowly. I do take part in church things like when you give your contributions, if anything comes around for me to

help I do.” She helps out when she can. As for her husband though, being as he is Indo Fijian, he grew up Hindu. This was a major breaking point for the couple. Although they were married for about eleven years, the problems never subsided. Racheal’s husband was much more religious than she was and “actually followed every Hindu belief, no meat at certain times and he worshipped and all that.”

The children also took on Racheal’s religion and ignored the Hindu side despite the fact that their father practiced much more regularly than their mother. Their views and their religious expectations were always a topic of conflict. According to Racheal her husband’s religion was “just against all my beliefs and what I do.” She also stated “there was always a problem. That is why I had to leave him.”

Religion, in short, was not an issue for most couples mostly because those who chose to marry either belonged to the same church or were not very religious.

LANGUAGE

Language was an issue for most mixed families. There are many languages that are used throughout Fiji such as Fijian, English, Rotuman, Chinese, and Korean. Language became more of a problem when it came to children and what language they should speak rather than an issue that brings about conflict.

The number of languages and the fluency in which these languages were spoken by the parents determined the main language the children learned and how many languages they would learn. For some marriages, it was kept simple and the children simply learned English and nothing else. In the first couple I interviewed, Emily, her two older children

were brought up only speaking English. Even though Emily is Rotuman, she is unable to speak the language so was unable to pass it down to her children. The daughter however is learning Fijian from her nanny. The two older boys stayed with Emily's parents a lot so they spoke solely English to them, but the younger daughter is "brought up by my husband's auntie who stays with us so they speak to her in Fijian so she is starting to pick up some of the words." The daughter will be the only one out of the children who is able to speak Fijian. In addition to English however, the two older sons are learning Chinese because of the school they attend, Yat Sen Primary.

For Emily and her family, there was no question about what language the children would learn when her sons were younger. Now though she wishes that her sons were able to speak either Fijian or Rotuman in addition to English and Chinese.

Suiva and Alfred were both able to speak English and Fijian. Suiva is also able to speak Chinese because of her upbringing. Suiva's entire family speaks Chinese and Alfred's extended family knows a plethora of languages. Alfred's grandparents are able to speak fluent German. The two children though only speak English. When their two sons were young Suiva tried to teach them Chinese so that they would be bilingual. Even though both the parents are able to speak Fijian, they did not pass it down to their children.

Growing up in a household where only one of the parents speaks a language, it is difficult to pass that language down to the children. Suiva speaks Cantonese and she claims that her two sons are able to understand some of it but not speak it. She went on though to say that "now when you speak to them in Chinese they'll go 'mom, what's that?' They understand but they ask. They know the basics." Their children, like Emily's two sons attend Yat Sen Primary where Chinese is part of the curriculum. Suiva and Alfred's sons

however are not the most studious children and do not seem to be picking up any Chinese from school. Like Emily, Suiva wishes that her children were able to speak her native language and not just rely on English.

The next family, has a much more complicated relationship with language. Connie, who is a mix of a few races, only speaks English and a bit of broken Fijian. For her learning a language besides English was very difficult because “if you didn’t have any elderly person in your home its hard because we used to pick it up.” Richard on the other hand grew up in Korea so he is able to speak Korean fluently. He is also able to speak English fluently as well as understand a little bit of Fijian since he has lived here for much of his life. For him though learning Fijian was not a necessity because “everyone speaks English so no sense to know Fijian.”

Connie and Richard have one daughter together who is not yet able to speak but Richard, since he is much older, has children who are grown with children of their own. His children were born in Korea so they are able to speak Korean fluently. They also speak English, and a little bit of Chinese and Fijian. His daughter can also speak Hindu. Richard’s children attended Yat Sen when they moved to Fiji from Korea so they are able to speak some Chinese because of their schooling. Although Connie and Richard’s new daughter is unable to speak yet, Connie wants her to grow up speaking Korean as well as English. Richard speaks to her in Korean now so that she will be able to easily pick up the language as she grows up. Learning multiple languages for Richard and his children came somewhat easily because they were forced into it when they moved from Korea to Fiji. This shows the importance many people place on speaking an ethnic language.

Racheal is able to speak both Fijian and English and her husband was able to speak Hindi as well. Although her husband spoke Hindi, Racheal's two children with him never learned the language. They are only able to speak English and can understand but not speak Fijian. When Racheal got remarried she had another daughter. Her youngest daughter, also only speaks English. She attends Yat Sen so she will eventually learn Chinese but the extent to which she will be able to speak it is yet to be determined.

The next couple that I interviewed that is also between an Indigenous Fijian and Indo Fijian, like Racheal are very different when it comes to language. The wife, Una, is able to speak both English and Fijian fluently. When she met Amitesh though, she made an effort to learn a bit of Hindi even though it was not necessary for communication. Amitesh, having grown up with a Fijian nanny is fluent in Fijian, English and Hindi. For their daughter they raised her wanting to know all of the languages. She is able to speak English and Fijian fluently as well as understanding Hindi when it is spoken to her. Where as Una and Amitesh embraced all three languages, Racheal and her family chose to stick to one side rather than both, largely because of Racheal's contempt for her husband and his culture.

In most mixed ethnic families then, the children either speak only English or speak only one of the ethnic languages of their parents.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the interview that I conducted, there were many topics that stuck out as either causing problems or simply bringing up an issue that the family had to take into

consideration. Being a mixed race couple made topics such as culture and religion something much more complicated than it would have been had the marriage been between two people of the same race. Religion however can still be a subject of conflict between two individuals of the same race but when two completely different races are brought together it seems that the likelihood of the two being of a different religion greatly increases. Whether the families choose to embrace these numerous differences and ignore them seems to determine the fate of the family, not only for the couple involved but for the children as well.

CHAPTER FOUR GROWING UP MIXED RACE IN FIJI

Children of interethnic marriages in Fiji often do not feel that they fully belong to either group. Most choose to affiliate with one side of the other showing the importance of belonging to an ethnic group in Fiji. Although this is the case for many mixed race children, there are exceptions to this rule.

THEORIES ABOUT IDENTITY

Many studies of multicultural identities deal with people of mixed African American and European heritage in the United States although American Race are of a very particular kind and so the experience of being mixed race could well be different in other places. In 1928, Park introduced the concept of the 'marginal man.' The idea of the marginal man "described the predicament of those 'predestined to live in two antagonistic cultures'" (Tizard and Phoenix 2002: 43). While many saw having to live in two antagonistic cultures as a dilemma, Park believed that it had great benefits. Park believed that the 'marginal man' was a citizen of the world because he was able to look at both cultures he belonged to with a degree of critical detachment. The marginal man has wider horizons, has a keener intelligence, and has a more rational viewpoint than those who live within the confines of only one culture. He believes that it is not just the hereditary traits that contribute to these attributes but it is one's position in society as well. It is one's position in society that "makes the mulatto more intelligent, restless, aggressive and ambitious than the negro" (Tizard and Phoenix 2002: 44). Park's ideas came from observing that progressive thinks

like Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. du Bois had mixed backgrounds. Although race relations are different in Fiji, Park's general idea of the marginal man may still apply.

In contrast, Stonequist saw little that was positive about being a 'marginal man.' Stonequist believed that there was a life cycle of marginality that involved three phases. In the first phase of the cycle, the marginal man is not conscious or only slightly conscious of the differences that exist between them and the dominant caste. In the second phase, a crisis occurred when the marginal man was rejected by society. According to Stonequist, in this phase the individual saw themselves as marginal and belonging to the inferior group. He believes that this phase was accompanied by psychological maladjustment, which led to a feeling of isolation and despair. Finally, in the third phase of the life cycle, the individual tried to escape from the state of marginality by adjustment. They chose one race to fully identify with. Others remained marginal living in a state where they are isolated and rejected by both groups.

In subsequent decades, scholars have argued that mixed race people are 'outsiders.' This 'outsider' lives on the margins to two different cultures. The marginal man may feel the pull of both cultures and experience a divided self. Based on the individual, the idea of being a marginal man can be seen as either a positive or negative, or even both.

In addition to the theory of marginality, there are also many different types of biracial identities according to Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David Brunnsma. Rockquemore and Brunnsma categorize four types of biracial identity: border identity, singular identity, protean identity, and transcendent identity. A border identity is an identity that lies between the predefined social categories. A border identity, the most common way of conceptualizing biracialism, "involves the creation of a new category of

identification, one that encompasses both of the socially accepted racial categorizations...yet includes an additional element from its combination” (Rockquemore 2002: 61). The next way someone who is biracial may identify himself or herself is by using a singular identity. An individual chooses between the two social categories that exist and he or she identifies with exclusively one race. To these individuals, being biracial merely means acknowledging the racial categorization of his or her birth parents.

People with a protean identity change their racial identification across context. When an individual of mixed race is with one particular race, they will understand themselves as belonging to that race but when they are with the other side, they understand themselves as being part of that group. Those who identified as having a protean identity, “describe themselves as moving in and out of different social contexts, acting as chameleons who change their identities as quickly and as often as others change their clothes” (Rockquemore 2002: 71). The last identity is known as the transcendent identity. Individuals belonging to this group, opt out of the categorizing game altogether. These people deny having any racial identity at all. These different types of identities all vary greatly. Those who are mixed race tend to fall into one of these categories.

PARENTIAL OPINIONS OF MIXED RACE CHILDREN

Although there are very varying degrees of conflict between the two individuals involved in the marriage, the presence of the first-born child creates a common interest. According to one interviewee, the first grandchild brought everyone together and

“everything changed from there.” Although children tend to strengthen the bond between families, there are still conflicts that arise with their presence.

In the first interview that I conducted with Emily, her family was very divided between the two sides of the family. Emily and her children are much closer to her side of her husband’s side of the family. Even though her children do not speak any Rotuman, this does not seem to be a problem for them. Emily’s husband tends to attend family gatherings on his own without the rest of the family. Emily now regrets the fact that her children have not become close with her husbands family and “the fact that when they have big gatherings with his family, [their] children go and hide in their room. They are very unsociable.” When their kids are with Emily’s side of the family they have no problem spending time with everyone but the opposite is true of their father’s family. Since they have not grown up around them, they are uncomfortable with them.

Part of the reason for this may be the language barrier. Although Emily’s family is Rotuman, not many of them speak Rotuman fluently. Her husband’s family however, all speak Fijian fluently. When her two older boys were young “they stayed with [Emily’s] parents so they only spoke English, but my daughter, she is not yet two, she is being brought up by my husband’s auntie who stays with us so they speak to her in Fijians so she’s starting to pick up some of the words so I think she will be the only one who knows it.” Emily has considered putting her sons in a class so that they have the opportunity to learn Fijian as well.

From what I observed from the next family, Suiva and Alfred’s, their children seem to get along fine with both sides of the family. I have experienced multiple occasions in which the grandparents on either side have been with the family and the children have had

no problem interacting, although the children do seem slightly more comfortable around their grandfather on their father's side. Part of the reason for this may be that their grandparents on their mother's side speak Chinese as a first language. Suiva's parents are fluent in English but their Chinese is much better. Christian and Nathan, the two sons only know a few words in Chinese, which makes it difficult to communicate sometimes.

For Connie and Richard, their daughter is only a few months old so not many situations have yet to arise where one side of the family is chosen over the other. Connie and Richard did not think they even had a chance of having a baby but when Connie found out she was pregnant it was a miracle. Both Connie and Richard want for their daughter to be fluent in Korean. While Connie speaks to her in English, Richard speaks to her in Korean in the hopes that she will be able to pick up both languages equally.

According to Una, her daughter that she has with Amitesh splits her time between both sides of the family fairly equally. On "weekends she goes to the dad's side and weekdays sometimes after school she goes to her mom's side. She has a lot of grandparents around, but [Una's] side of the family there are children so they go there to be petted and here to play." While their daughter is with her father's side of the family it seems like she is spoiled by grandparents but when she is with her mother's side of the family there are other children she is able to play with. In addition to their being more children for her to play with, there daughter is able to communicate with Una's side of the family more effectively than with Amitesh's side of the family. Even though she understands Hindi, she is unable to speak it fluently but she is able to speak both English and Fijian fluently.

In the last family, the situation was complicated by divorce. Prior to the divorce though, it seemed as though the children were already closer to the mother's side of the

family. Even though Rachael claimed that her children were closer to their father's side of the family, she also noted that they were unable to speak any Hindi. In addition to not being connected to her Indian side of the family, Rachael also believes that her daughter does not have any friends that are Indian. Rachael believes that she only "goes around with other Fijians and Europeans at school." From Rachael's daughter social medias accounts though, it appears that this is not entirely true and that she in fact has an Indo-Fijian boyfriend. Despite all this, similar to the last family, the birth of the first child brought the conflicting families together. Not only was Rachael's daughter her first child, but she was also the first grandchild in both families. The dynamic improved from then on.

Intentionally or not, these mixed race families tended to lean more towards one side of the family over the other. Although some of the reason's varied, the main proponent of this was the influence of language. Not being able to properly communicate with an entire side of the family greatly hinders the ability to form a strong bond.

Many of the individuals that I interviewed, did not have a preference as to whom their children should marry. According to everyone, they just wanted their children to be end up with someone that made them happy. For Emily, it is the choice of her children when it comes to who they will end up with but she believes the "most important thing is that they maintain their values." Like Emily, Suiva believes that the decision is left to their children. As parents, Suiva and Alfred will teach them what is right and wrong "and hopefully they choose correctly." Alfred referred to himself and Suiva as their children's "guidance counselors" in the sense that they will teach them as much as they can but when the time comes, the decision is out of their hands. For Connie and Richard, although this is a long way down the road Connie is "praying about her spouse already." For Connie, "it

does not matter the race as long as she finds happiness and he is the right guy for her.” All that Connie wishes for her daughter is to find someone who makes her happy and treats her with respect.

Una and Amitesh’s daughter is only six years old so Amitesh says he has “not thought of that yet but [he] wants her to marry someone who is going to look after her and who will love her.” He does not care about race but instead wants “somebody who is intelligent, somebody smart, and who comes from a good background.” Una agrees with Amitesh but “it will be her decision at the end of the day.” Out of all the families that I interviewed, the only one who seemed to have any sort of preference for their children in the future was Rachael. In the beginning, Rachael claimed that she did not care who her children married but she was quick to go back on her word. Right after her initial “yes” to not having a reference she then followed up with, “yes but not Indian!” She does not want her children to follow the same thing that happened to her and end up divorced because of the many differences they could not overcome. She then clarified that her children could marry someone who is Indian as long as they are the same religion. Although it seemed like she was still against the idea of her children marry someone who was Indian regardless of religion based on her tone and distained expression. The parents I interviewed all wanted their children to find happiness and end up with someone that loved their child as much as they did.

GROWING UP MIXED RACE IN FIJI

Children who grew up mixed race in Fiji have some varied ideas of what life is like that differs from the parents interviewed in the previous chapter. Although some of their perceptions on life are different, many of their mentalities still align. I was able to interview two different individuals who grew up mixed race in Fiji. Unfortunately, neither of the individuals I interviewed belonged to the most controversial of mixes: Fijian and Indo-Fijian.

The first individual I interviewed, Howard, is a mix of Rotuman and Fijian descent. His mother is Rotuman while his father is Fijian. The second individual that I interviewed, Monica, is of Rotuman, Fijian, and Filipino descent. Her father is fully Rotuman while her mother is “half-cast” as she phrased it. Howard grew up with two sisters and Monica grew up with two sisters and a brother. Both Howard and Monica claim to not have faced any problems growing up mixed race but there did appear to be some issues caused by race that arose in their lives that had to be dealt with such as language and the idea of leaning towards one race over the other. While religion has played a major role in the lives of those interviewed previously, for the children, religion was never a problem. For the most part, the parents had already either decided on what religion to raise their children or were already practicing the same religion. This burden did not have to fall on the children.

When looking at the different types of identities that Rockquemore and Brunnsma have categorized, many Fijians who grew up mixed race tend to fall under the singular identity category. In this category, an individual acknowledges that both races exist but they identify solely with one. While those I interviewed did not associate exclusively with

one race, they strongly leaned more towards one side over the other. Because of Fiji's social structure, being aligned with one race is much more beneficial.

EMBRACING A 'SINGULAR IDENTITY'

In Fiji, being part of one race is essential. Many social connections are made through race. It is much easier to succeed in Fiji if one have a set network of people around you in every aspect of one's life and these networks, for the most part, are based on race. For Howard and Monica, both of them found themselves draw more towards the Rotuman side of the family, despite the fact that Rotumans are not known for their welcoming demeanor. Both Howard and Monica though, claim that this bias towards the Rotuman side is unintentional and just happened that way.

For Howard, his mother's side is the Rotuman side. According to Howard, he is close to everyone on this side of the family including grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Growing up they would attend many family functions, no matter the importance of the occasion. As for his father's Fijian side of the family, their attendance at family gatherings depends on his father's discretion. Whether they attend family functions or not depends on whether his father "actually lets [them] know on which events that are important to attend." They mostly attend celebrations for relatives such as weddings or other gatherings such as funeral. Even when they do attend these events though, they do not stay for a long time. According to Howard, his father believes that attending family functions is too much of a hindrance if they were to stay for too long. For this reason, similar to Emily and her family in the previous chapter, the father attends many of his family functions alone. One possible explanation that Howard offered up as to why he is closer to his

mother's side of the family rather than his father's, is that his father was traveling a lot when Howard was a child but his mother was always around. While his mother was at work, since his father was not home, Howard's mother's parents would sometimes watch over Howard and his two sisters.

Howard did admit though, that as he was growing up, there were times that he felt as though he didn't fit in with either side of his family. His reasoning for this distance is that he "didn't know the significance of it all. [He] wasn't educated in certain traditions or cultural things so [he] felt left behind." Now that he is much older, he has learned a lot about the culture and traditions on both sides of his family and no longer feels that he doesn't fit in.

Howard's connection to his Rotuman heritage can also be seen in his involvement in Rako, a Rotuman dance group, for the past seven years. He was introduced to traditional Rotuman dancing when he was younger and go really into it. According to Howard, being part of Rako, is "basically sharing in the culture." The Rotuman culture is endangered and for Howard and the rest of Rako it gives them "more incentive to put it out there so people can actually acknowledge [its] existence."

Monica, like Howard, also felt closer to her Rotuman side of the family. Unlike Howard though, her Rotuman side, was her father's side of the family. Her explanation for this closeness was simply because "dad's family was always there while growing up." Although both sides of her family do not live far away, she only gets together with her mother's side of the family every once in a while. Although Monica is closer to her father's Rotuman side of the family, she claims to associate more with Fijians, despite that fact that

she is only one quarter Fijian. Her reasoning for this though, is that most of her friends are Fijian.

While many Fijians tend to have a singular identity, this aspect of Monica's life is more similar to that of a protean identity. The identity she associates more with depends on the social situation she is placed in. Monica identifies closely with her Rotuman culture when she is with her father's family but sees herself as more Fijian when she is with her friends. Unlike Howard, who used to feel out of place sometimes, Monica claims that she never felt this way. She never felt isolated from any racial groups that she belonged to. She attributes this to her friendly demeanor that was able to carry her through. Her friendliness has allowed her to get along with many different people, without taking race into consideration.

Similar to the interview with those involved in an inter-racial marriage, those who grew up mixed race found themselves closer to one side of the family. The presence of one race was much stronger than the presence of others.

CHOOSING A PREDOMINANT LANGAUGE

The children discussed previously in the chapter all either speak only English fluently or they are only able to speak one of the native languages of his or her parent. Even though they children may be able to understand a different language, many are unable to speak more than two languages at most. Howard and Monica seem to be exceptions to this rule.

Howard and Monica are both able to speak multiple languages due to their upbringing. Both seem to use English as their language of choice though when communicating on a daily basis. Howard is able to speak English, Fijian, and Rotuman. His Rotuman is currently better than his Fijian but he wants to improve his Fijian and get it to the same level as his Rotuman. He is able to fully understand both though. For Howard, his extended families on both sides speak their native language of either Fijian or Rotuman. This made it difficult at times to communicate with his father's Fijian side as he was growing up. Howard's extended family on his father's side, "Know a bit of English so growing up with [his] grandparents they were mostly speaking in the native tongue to [Howard and his sisters] expecting [them] to know but [they] just made do and said like the basics like yes and no, and they switched to English as much as they could."

Howard's grandparents knew very broken English to communicate just enough. Now that Howard is older though, his Fijian has improved greatly, but not yet to the level he desires.

Many Rotumans are known for the idea that if someone is unable to speak Rotuman properly, they are not as welcoming. Howard claims this is true but believes it is quite "stupid." If someone is unable to speak Rotuman fluently, especially those who are of mixed heritage, they tend to be isolated from the rest of the group. According to Howard,

They say it is a bad thing but then they don't make any effort to make it better, like teaching it. There are a lot of mixed Rotumans that actually try but the Rotumans that know it make fun of them so it's just a method of pushing them away from learning the language. That's why it's stupid.

Not knowing Rotuman can greatly hinder one's relationship with his or her own race. Howard's youngest sister does not speak Rotuman or Fijian much. She is able to understand both but mainly using English when communicating with others. Howard's youngest sister gets along best with the younger cousins who are likely in the same situation that she is in. She does however still get along with the rest of the family but communicating with them does not come as easy.

Similar to Howard, Monica is able to speak multiple languages. Monica claims to be fluent in English, Fijian, Rotuman, as well as Hindi. She was able to learn all of these languages, including Hindi simply by "just growing up around friends." Although she has two sisters and one brother, they unfortunately are not as fluent as Monica in multiple different languages. Monica's two sisters and her brother are able to speak mainly English and Fijian fluently. Unlike Howard though, Monica did not seem to convey the sense that communicating with family was difficult for her sisters and her brother.

The differences in language barriers between Howard and Monica and those discussed earlier in this chapter may be due to age. The children discussed earlier are all still in primary school while Howard and Monica are well past that. They have had much more time to develop their language abilities as well as the relationships with their families. They have also learned to cope with the challenges that differences in language might bring when it comes to one's family.

THE PRESENT AND THE NEAR FUTURE

The question of marriage and children may not be too far in the future for Howard. Howard's ideas for his future are very reflective on how he tries to live his life currently. Seeing as how he is currently trying to make the divide between his two different heritages closer, he wants the same for his future as well. When it comes to race, he does not have a preference when it comes to marriage. Race would not determine whom Howard was to marry or not marry. If he were to have children though, he would want them to learn both Fijian and Rotuman. Howard would also "want them to grow up around both cultures as well." Since Howard was able to learn about both sides of his family as he was growing up, he wants to be able to provide the same for his children in the future. Unlike his current situation now though, he wants both sides of the family to be equally apart of his child or children's life.

As for Monica, she is already married with a daughter. Her husband is of Rotuman heritage but before she married him she did not have a predetermined idea of what race she wanted to marry. Her daughter is currently in year six in primary school. Her daughter's main language is English but she is also able to speak Fijian. Although a majority of her daughter's heritage is Rotuman, she is unable to speak it. She does however understand Rotuman if someone is speaking to her. Both Howard and Monica seem to have the desire to embrace at least part of their mixed race heritage when it comes to their spouses and children.

CONCLUSION

In Fiji, those who grow up mixed race then to acquire either a singular identity or a protean identity. For some, due to family circumstances they are able to associate much more to one side of the family. In many of these cases, the other side of the family does not have much of a presence in the child's life. Even in cases where both sides are present, one race still prevails as dominant.

For others, they find themselves associating more with the race that they surround themselves with more. For Monica, although she is close to her father's side, due to her association with more Fijian people, she identifies as more Fijian. This is also seen in the fact that her daughter is able to speak Fijian and only able to understand Rotuman. Racial identity in Fiji is crucial to one's social networks and how one gets by on a daily basis.

CHAPTER FIVE

MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY: FIJI VERSUS THE UNITED STATES

Growing up mixed race in America has had its ups and downs. Although I used to see it as a burden in life, it has now become part of my life that I am most proud of. Even though it is not something I have necessarily achieved, but instead been born into, I have learned to embrace it and see it as something unique to myself. When I was growing up I saw it as a negative aspect of my life that made me stand out in a bad way. I even went as far as denying half of my heritage in order to try to fit in. When I was around ten years old I made my mom mark that I was only white on the census in order to fit in. Although that is not something that is seen by everyone else, it made me feel better about myself at the time. Despite the occasional issues that may arise with being mixed race in America, it has become very beneficial to me instead of a problem.

Growing up mixed race in Fiji versus growing up mixed race in the United States have differences both historically and in current times. The United States has a history of not acknowledging those who are mixed race and defining them by the One-Drop Rule. Historically in the United States if you are born mixed race you are automatically assigned to the group with the lower socioeconomic status. In some ways this is the opposite of Fiji. In Fiji those who are mixed race seem to assimilate up and emphasize language as much as biology. In Fiji, much of one's identity has turned more towards behavior rather than biology.

In the United States this pattern is breaking down though, particularly for the middle class. For those of a higher socioeconomic status, being mixed race has become an aspect of one's life that is now being embraced instead of ignored. Individuals in the United

States now take pride in being biracial. While people can choose how they want to identify themselves, their appearance still plays a role. Other can try to fit these biracial individuals into a certain category based on their appearance and ignore the reality of what they actually are. In Fiji socioeconomic status plays a large role as well. In Fiji, as well as in the United States, it seems that the closer the groups are in terms of socioeconomic status, the less controversial the combination of ethnic groups seems to be. In both countries, the higher status you have, the more acceptable it is to be mixed race.

Both the United States and Fiji share the idea that there seems to be one combination that causes the most controversy. In the United States, those that are a mix of black and white descent cause the most discussion, and in Fiji, that that are indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian are the ones talked about most. These two different combinations are the ones that can be traced back to history as having the most conflict between the two groups. Currently in Fiji, it is still looked down upon for some people to be mixed race but in the United States it is becoming more popular and is seen as exotic, in a good way.

RACIAL HISTORY IN AMERICA

America has become known as a melting pot. Over its long history, numerous different races have become numerically prominent in America. Coming from all different areas of the world, every group has come with their own intentions and purpose for settling in America. Similar to Fiji, some major race relations in America can be traced back to the days of being a British colony. Despite the label of “the melting pot” America’s

history with race has not been the smoothest. The most controversial race relations are between those of European decent and those of African descent.

Most research on biracial identities in the United States focuses on people with mixed African American and white European backgrounds. Even though there was a clear hierarchy that existed between races, “miscegenation has occurred in the United States as long as individuals from African and European populations have had contact” (Rockquemore 2002: 4). Even during the times of slavery, there has been a comingling and mixing of blacks and whites. Slavery existed in America for a long period of time until Abraham Lincoln became president. In 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, freeing all slaves. It was not until the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution in 1865 though that slavery was officially abolished.

Relationships between blacks and whites began long before emancipation. Many white slave owners felt they had the right to take advantage of their female, black slaves all throughout the time of slavery. The result of this was that a majority of interracial sex consisted of exploitative unions between white males and female slaves. Sex between a white woman and a black, male slave was, however, strictly forbidden and greatly frowned upon. A mulatto child in a white household was considered scandalous. Through this relationship between white landowners and their African, female slaves, the “black population gradually whitened” (Rockquemore 2002: 5).

The response to a growing number of mixed race children was the one drop rule, which relegated people with even “one drop” of African blood to be “Black” category. Even if a landowner fathered a child with a slave, this child was not seen as related to the father in many cases. Although the father would sometimes be more lenient with the mulatto

child, the child was still considered a child of a slave and put to work when they were of the right age to work.

Even after the civil war and the end of slavery, southerners accepted the one-drop rule without question. They often viewed all blacks as their enemies. Due to this segregation and disrespect, mulattos in turn sided with the blacks. The outcome of this was full acceptance of the one-drop rule by everyone: whites, blacks, and mulattos themselves. Even though mulattos formed a distinct group, between blacks and whites, those with lighter skin who were mixed race were much more socially mobile than those of darker skin.

Over time, many European groups immigrated to the United States and although the immigrants might have been discriminated against, they were on the path to assimilation, unlike the African American population that had lived in America for much longer. For a long period of time, African Americans were not on the path of assimilation. They stayed their own group and were discriminated against for a long time. Even today in America, racism is still a major problem.

As of more recently, the “mere desire of white parents for their children to be identified as mixed race (as opposed to black) signifies an implied acknowledgement that racial groups exist, that they exist in a hierarchy, and that separation from the subordinate group bring individuals closer to the dominant group” (Rockquemore 2002: 14). In comparison to the long history that African Americans have in America, the time in which everyone accepted them is still just a small aspect of their history. Prior to 1960, being mixed race between black and white, was equivalent to black identity. Today there is much more acknowledgment of the idea of being biracial.

Similar to the idea of Fiji and Indian indentured servant, African faced a very difficult time in America. Laws were enacted to keep the two groups separate for a long time and the white were the superior race.

Although the relationship between blacks and whites is the most common connection that is studied and known, many other immigrant populations have had a rough time when it came to establishing themselves in America. The Chinese also have a long history in America. The earliest Chinese immigrants in America expressed no desire to become permanent residents or build stable communities. Many people have divided Chinese immigration into three different time periods. The first period was between 1852 and 1882. The temporary migrants, known as the sojourner, who was looking to get rich and go back home, dominated this period. In the beginning, almost all the Chinese in America were men (Buenker and Ratner 2005: 80). The women and children stayed behind in China and waited for the men to return with the money they made in America. Panning and digging turned out to be a lot harder than intended without the outcomes they had expected. The Chinese either returned home or tried a different profession. Back in China little awaited them besides chronic poverty, the destructive forces of war, and the conscription into either the imperial or the rebel army. During this time, the Taiping Rebellion was occurring. The Chinese decided to go into mine working because not much was available to them. They faced much discrimination in the mines though. Although it was a diverse group of workers, “Chinese miners—as perhaps the most ‘different’ of their kind—suffered as frequent victims of both harassment and violence” (Buenker and Ratner 2005: 81). When people realized that the Chinese were staying in America, many were not thrilled with the news. In 1852, Governor John Bigler issued a declaration of hostility

towards Chinese immigration and called for their future exclusion from California (Buenker and Ratner 2005: 82). By this time, many Chinese had already established their lives in America. By this time the Civil War had come to a close and the laws put in place to protect the newly freed African American inadvertently benefited the Chinese as well. Both the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1870 helped the Chinese by accident. The Chinese though were still unable to become citizens of the United States.

The next period between 1882 and 1943 is known as the exclusion era. The European American population made many attempts to prevent the working class Chinese from entering the country. There were many restrictions on the number of Chinese allowed in America. The Chinese were not allowed to exceed the quotas that were put in place. The last period from 1943 onward, signaled an emotional transition towards settlement in America when there was political upheaval in China and there was a growing acceptance in the United States that led Chinese Americans to see the United States as their home. In the midst of World War II, many United States soldiers were stationed in the Asian theater and had established romantic relationships with the local women there. As a result of this, the War Brides Act of 1945 was enacted. This act enabled spouses to American military personnel to enter the country as non-quota immigrants. For the first time in America, there were more Chinese women than men. Post World War II, the Chinese Americans were increasingly found in the economies most lucrative and prestigious professions.

RACIAL STEREOTYPES AND HIERARCHY IN AMERICA

Growing up in America, it is incredibly difficult to ignore the stereotypes that come accompany each race due to their history. Like Fiji, each race comes along with its own stereotypes. From what I have observed growing up in America, racial stereotypes can be seen constantly. These stereotypes are a result of years of racial hierarchy that has existed in America. With whites being the highest in the hierarchy, they encompass a large group. Over America's history, whites from many different countries in Europe have settled in America. Even though some of these may have a rougher history than others, all whites tend to be lumped into one large group.

Blacks on the other hand, have always been seen as part of the bottom of the hierarchy. Unlike Fiji where Indians developed the stereotype of hard working due to their days in indentured servitude, those who were slaves for much of American history, were unable to form much of a positive stereotype at all. The discrimination against the black population has lasted for so long that it has greatly limited the achievements of some. Segregation in America contributed to the lack of opportunities afforded to the blacks. Today, even those who are in the middle to upper class, dressing the wrong way can cause a lot of negative attitude and ideas towards those of the black population. Despite one's achievements or one's actual life, many people of African decent are seen in an undesirable light.

Not all stereotypes allotted to the different races are negative though. Many Chinese and other Asian groups are seen as excelling at academics. Though this can be seen as a positive stereotype, it can still be a negative aspect because it groups everyone of a large

group together as one. It also creates unreal expectations that may not be able to be met by many individuals. Although these stereotypes do exist, they do not apply to every individual that belongs to these groups. The social and economic class that one belongs to can greatly influence the stereotypes as well.

GROWING UP IN A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE AMERICA

I have interviewed a few mixed race individuals that have grown up in America. The first individual is of Columbian and European decent and the other is of Chinese and European descent. Both of these individuals have been born and raised in America. Chelsea was born in Florida but now lives in New Hampshire. She lived in Florida until she was in her first year in high school. Since then she has lived in New Hampshire and still lives there when she is not at school. Hannah was born in New York City but moved when she was a few months old to live in New Jersey. She spent a majority of her life in New Jersey until she moved away for school. The last individual I interviewed, Sarah, is of Kenyan and American descent. Unlike Chelsea and Hannah, she is a combination of the two races that seem to be the most controversial when mixed. She was born in Kenya but grew up in New Mexico.

In both the towns where Chelsea and Hannah grew up, the population has been predominantly white. When Chelsea was living in Florida, although she was exposed the cultures of both sides of her family she felt more American than Columbian. When she was young she felt a stronger pull to her father's culture rather than her mother's Columbian culture. During Chelsea's childhood, she aligned with Rockquemore and Brunnsma's idea of

a protean identity. She saw herself as being more European than Columbian because of the area she grew up in and the people she was surrounded by daily.

As Chelsea was about to enter high school, she spent about a year in Columbia. When she returned from Columbia though, instead of returning to Florida, her family moved to New Hampshire. Hannah had to make the switch from Columbia, to a basically all white school:

I went from Columbia to New Hampshire and that was an all white school. I think in my school I was one of only two Latino kids and there were maybe three or four blacks. Asian kids, there might have been like a dozen. It was about eighty percent white, kind of like it is here (Union College) and that was the biggest difference and that was when I felt like I stood out the most. Also because I was just in Columbia for a year so I was a lot more tan and I stood out a lot more.

Although Chelsea felt uncomfortable at first, the transition back to the United States was not difficult. Since she had grown up in Florida around a mostly white population, it was not that difficult for her to adjust back to life here opposed to in Columbia. According to Chelsea, "being in a place like New England that is predominantly white, I definitely experience more of the white culture but at times that just highlights more of the Columbian side of me because it just stands out against a white backdrop." Being surrounded by mostly American's of light skin has greatly shaped Chelsea's life, even how she sees her future. Chelsea's identity has changed from a protean identity to more of a border identity as she grew up. Once she returned from Columbia, she was more able to see both sides of her heritage and embrace them both. There are still some aspects of a

protean identity present in Chelsea's life though. Chelsea finds herself attracted to mainly white men and a few Latino men. She feels the reason for this might be because that is just what she is used to. Being surrounded by white people for most of her life, there have not really been many other options. Even though she is mainly attracted to people of lighter skin, she fears that in the future, she will not have as much Columbian culture in her life as she wants. Because her mom is fully Columbian, she knows a lot about the culture and customs. Her mother was able to teach her a lot about it but there is still a lot that she does not know. If she were to marry someone who is not of Columbian descent, Chelsea fears that it will be difficult for her children, if she ever does have children, to be part of the culture and know about their Columbian heritage. Growing up in a mainly white area, and attending a university that is mainly white, limits the options that Chelsea has for meeting someone in the future. While she does not necessarily see this as a negative aspect of her life, she sometimes wishes that there were other options available to her.

Hannah's life has been somewhat similar to Chelsea's in that she grew up surrounded by white people. Her high school as well as her college had a predominantly white population with a small minority of Asians, as well as other races. The high school that Hannah attended, although it had a sizeable Asian population, they were still by far the minority in comparison to the white population. Also similar to Chelsea, Hannah finds herself attracted to those who have light skin opposed to those that are Asian. A major part of the reason behind this is that she was mostly exposed to them as opposed to being exposed to Asians. Some of the only times when she is submersed in Chinese culture is when she is with her family. Basically every other minute of her life white people have surrounded her instead. Hannah's identity tends to shift between both protean and border. Although she

tries to embrace both sides of her heritage equally, she sometimes finds herself associating more with one side based on the people who are around her in that current situation.

Sarah's ideas about being mixed race in America seem to vary from that of Chelsea and Hannah. As Sarah was growing up, her mom always told her that "it was awesome to be biracial and mixed people have the most interesting backgrounds and stories to tell." Even though she occasionally felt out of place as she was growing up, now when it comes to feeling out of place, she believes that it has either become less of an issue for her of that she has simply learned to deal with it better now. Since her mother mainly raised her, she grew up taking her religion and attending Hebrew school starting at the age of eight. Even though she was raised Jewish, her father is Muslim but they do not really follow Islam very much. Despite this, she has learned a lot about Kenyan culture and traditions from her father. Because she now lives with her mother, she and her family "don't really practice it except when it comes to food occasionally." The culture is very different than her mother's so it is difficult to incorporate it in her life very often.

Even though Sarah attends the same predominantly white university as both Chelsea and Hannah, she does not have the same ideas about her future. Sarah finds herself "attracted more to mixed race people or at least people that look mixed race." While Chelsea and Hannah both found themselves drawn more to people who were Caucasian, Sarah was more intrigued by those who looked racially ambiguous. No matter who Sarah ends up with though, if she were to have children in the future, she would absolutely want them to learn about their Kenyan heritage and culture. Unlike Chelsea and Hannah, Sarah lies much more along the lines of solely a border identity. She fully embraces both sides of her heritage and also finds an additional element of uniqueness in its combination that she

learned from a young age. Although all three individuals had slightly different ideas about race and their futures, they all share the same desire to pass on the culture and traditions of the side of the family that is not Caucasian.

FAMILY RELATIONS

Being surrounded by mainly white people has not affected the family that both Chelsea and Hannah are close to. Unlike in Fiji where people tend to associate themselves with the race that is of higher status, Chelsea and Hannah both realize that they are closer to the non-white side of their family. In Fiji, many of the people I interviewed were closer to one side of the family over the other but in a very different way than in America. In Fiji there is a very clear racial hierarchy that exists but in America, for Chelsea and Hannah's family there is no clear difference in status between the groups that they belong to. For many Americans, European ethnic identities have been lost and just appear to be "vanilla" so other ethnic heritages make one more exotic and unique. Chelsea is closer to her Columbian side while Hannah is closer to her Chinese side. For Fijians, culture makes you part of a group, while for middle class Americans, ethnic cultures define a unique individual identity

Part of the reason for this relationship can also be attributed to proximity as well though. When Chelsea was living in Florida, her mother's sister lived near by. They were able to spend a lot of time with her and form a closer bond. Her father's side of the family lived in a different state though. Because of financial reasons, they were unable to visit her father's side of the family very often. Despite this, they have kept up a relationship though

through social media. They are able to stay in contact and keep up on each other's life but not to the same extent as her mother's side of the family.

For Hannah, proximity to her family also played an important role. Living only one state away from her father's side of the family, she was able to spend a lot more time with them because the drive from one house to the other was only about forty-five minutes. Hannah's mother's side of the family however was spread out across the country. Her grandmother lived in Seattle, Washington while her grandfather moved from Florida to Vermont. Her two aunts were in different states as well. Hannah still maintained a relationship with her mother's side of the family though. They were fortunate enough to see each other a few times a year. Even though they saw each other fairly often, Hannah felt more comfortable spending time alone with her father's side of the family over her mother's side.

For Hannah, the Chinese culture of her father's side of the family meant that the family was a lot closer to each other than her mother's side of the family. Hannah's father frequently visited his side of the family much more often than her mother visited her side of the family. Proximity, as well as the cultural differences that come along with each race, contributed to which side of the family that Chelsea and Hannah feel more connected.

Sarah's experiences are very different from Chelsea's and Hannah's. Proximity, however, did still play a large role in family relations. Since Sarah's father was born and raised in Kenya, his entire family still lives there. Her parents are currently divorced and her father has moved back to Kenya. She is still able to maintain a relationship with him but maintaining a relationship with his side of the family is very difficult because of the distance. Unlike Chelsea and Hannah who are closer to the non-Caucasian side of their

families, Sarah definitely finds herself closer to her mother's Caucasian side of the family "because they are here in the United States." Even if they do not necessarily live in the same state as Sarah and her sister and mother, traveling within the continental United States is much more feasible than traveling to Kenya to see family.

Sarah is much closer to her mother's side of the family but occasionally feels out of place. This is not because they do not accept her and her sister as part of their family but instead because they look so different than everyone else. The rest of Sarah's family is of fully Caucasian descent. Being around everyone in her family causes her to stand out even more and she believes that people think they are adopted sometimes. Proximity to one's family plays a large role in all three of these family relations.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN AMERICA

As in Fiji, not being able to speak the same language as half of your family can create a divide. For all three of the individuals that I interviewed, half of their family did not speak English as their first language. The non-white sides of their families were immigrants that spoke their native language much more fluently than English. This created space between them and made them feel a slight disconnect from their family.

For Chelsea, being of Columbian decent, her mother's side of the family spoke predominantly Spanish. Although she had taken basic Spanish throughout her years in middle school, it was not sufficient enough to keep up with those who were fluent in the language. Before she was fortunate enough to spend a year in Columbia, the Spanish she knew was very minimal. She was able to sometimes understand what her family was

saying to her but she was unable to have a full conversation with them. Even though she heard Spanish around the house occasionally from her mother, she was unable to become fluent in the language. According to Chelsea, she was “definitely more shy speaking to [her] family unless they could speak English because I couldn’t really speak anything so I would kind of just smile. So there was definitely a little bit of a barrier but my family was just always very open and if there was a barrier on my side, there wasn’t on their side. They would still come up and try to talk to [her] and just be like whatever and hug.” Even though Chelsea felt disconnected on her side, her family tried to ignore it and still include her and her siblings.

Chelsea was fortunate enough though, to spend a year in Columbia with her family when she was a freshman in high school. Through her father’s friends who happened to be an American Airlines pilot, they were given free tickets to Columbia and decided to move there for a year. Chelsea and her siblings were enrolled in a school there and completed a year of schooling. The school was one that was fully Columbian so right from the start they were fully immersed in the language. This forced Chelsea to quickly learn the language so that she could do well in school, as well as communicate with those around her in Columbia. After a year in Columbia, Chelsea and her family returned to America. For Chelsea, during that year she was able to become fluent in Spanish and is now able to communicate fully with her family and keep up whenever they speak to her. Unlike before, this has brought her closer to her family and lessened that barrier that was felt by Chelsea before.

Unlike Chelsea, Hannah has had a much different experience with language and her family. Hannah was not fortunate enough to become fluent in the native language of half of

her family. Similarly to Chelsea though, growing up, Hannah had trouble communicating with her father's side of the family. During family gatherings, Chelsea felt disconnected from her family because many of her older relatives did not know any English. They spoke solely Chinese. When Hannah was young her parents put her in Chinese school with the hope that she would learn Chinese and be able to communicate with her family.

Unfortunately she was unable to pick up the language. In Chinese school Hannah did not feel like she fit in. Although she does not remember much from her short time there, the memory that sticks out the most to her is sitting in the back of the class and crying because she had no idea what was going on. She was "basically the only white person who didn't know Chinese" in the class. She quit after a short time there.

For Hannah though, much of her family on her father's side, besides the older relatives is able to speak both Chinese and English. If she ever needed to communicate with those who only speak Chinese, her other family members would assist her and translate. Other times Hannah just avoided having to communicate with them. Similar to Chelsea, Hannah was able to spend some time in China learning the language. She was not as submersed in the language and culture though and unfortunately did not pick up the language like Chelsea did. She was only there for a semester at school and was surrounded by those who also spoke English. She did however learn more of the basics of Chinese and is able to now hold short, simple conversations with those that can only speak Chinese. Even though she has learned more Chinese than she ever did growing up, it has not necessarily brought her closer to her family. Because she is so accustomed to not interacting with her Chinese-speaking relatives, it has remained this way even after she got back from abroad.

Hannah's parents had different views about whether she should learn Chinese. Although her father is the Chinese one, her mother was always more in favor of her learning the language than her father. She spent the first few years of her life living with her father's side of the family until they moved away to live on their own with just their nuclear family. Hannah's first words and sentences were in Chinese because of the people she was surrounded by. Unfortunately, once they moved away, Hannah lost her ability to speak Chinese because she was no longer immersed in it the language. Although her father is fluent in both Chinese and English, he communicated with Hannah solely in English. Hannah's mother only knew a few words in Chinese because she had lived with her husband's side of the family for a few years. Despite trying to learn Chinese later in life, Hannah has been unable to become as fluent as Chelsea and she now regrets not being able to communicate with everyone in her family.

While Chelsea and Hannah have both been fortunate enough to have family around to help them learn either Columbian or Chinese, Sarah has not been as fortunate. Her father's first language is Swahili so she has been able to learn a little but not very much. According to Sarah, "my dad always said we would learn when we needed" so her Swahili is very limited. She finds her lack of knowledge about the language disappointing in a way and wishes she knew much more than she currently does. She believes that "the best way to learn a language is to grow up speaking it" which she was unable to do. Only having her father around, instead of the entire family, greatly limited the amount of Swahili she heard. Sarah and her family are currently planning a trip to Kenya in the coming year and hopefully she will be able to improve her language skills and come back to America more fluent than before.

APPEARANCE AND ASSUMPTIONS

Hannah, Chelsea and Sarah are all frequently asked, "What are you?" By looking at them, the question is well warranted. It is difficult to decipher what race they each belong to just through appearance. They all look racially ambiguous. For Chelsea and Hannah, their last names do not help the situation either. Since Chelsea's father is white, before people meet her they assume she is a white, Jewish girl and for Hannah, because her father is Chinese, they assume they are about to meet someone who is solely Asian.

When Chelsea first moved into college her freshman year, she and her roommate did not connect on any social media sites prior to meeting one another. According to Chelsea, when her roommate first saw her she was taken aback. Chelsea was not what she was expecting. Because of her darker skin, it is clear that Chelsea is not fully white. Most of the time people cannot pinpoint Chelsea's race. Some of the few that she has gotten from those trying to guess are: Greek, Egyptian, Italian, Mediterranean, and Mexican. The most popular though are Greek and Italian.

Once people find out that Chelsea is part Columbian though, there are assumptions that come along with that race. Often times Chelsea hears jokes about being part of drug cartels and even jokes about prostitution. One of the more popular jokes for Chelsea is that she often uses cocaine. For a while, Chelsea just brushed off the jokes. As she embraced her Columbian culture more though, she felt more offended by the jokes. Instead of just laughing them off now and pretending that they do not bother her, she now calls people out for them. Chelsea does not take part in any of the stereotypical activities that Columbians are labeled as and takes it as an offense to her culture when people assume she does.

Hannah has faced similar situations throughout her life. She, like Chelsea, looks racially ambiguous. Many people are unable to identify the different races that she is. Some of the more popular assumptions that Hannah has gotten about her appearance are that she is Hispanic, fully Asian, Native American or Hawaiian. Hannah even had someone ask her once if she was an Eskimo. Although some people think that she is Asian, it is not a very popular assumption. When people find out she is half Asian they sometimes question her appearance. Because of the absence of 'squinty eyes' or a typical Asian nose, many people question if she is telling the truth about her race. People's guesses also vary according to season. When Hannah is tan during the summer there are much different assumptions about her race than when she is pale during the colder months of the year.

Like Chelsea, Hannah confronts many racial stereotypes. Because of the assumption that all Asians are good at math she often gets asked to solve math equations and figure out the bill at the end of group meals. Although her friends know she is not particularly good at math, they continue to make the jokes. Some jokes bother her much more than others. When it is her friends, she knows they are joking and know the real Hannah, but when the jokes come from someone who does not know her as well, they tend to bother her. Both Chelsea and Hannah, embrace the fact that people are unable to tell what race they are. They both see it as a benefit to themselves because there are no assumptions made about them until people know the truth.

Sarah has also faced a lot of people questioning what race she is. Some people do not even attempt to guess what race she belongs to but instead claim "I cant figure you out, what are you?" For those that do guess though, Sarah has received multiple different assumptions about her race. Some of the more popular guesses are Arabic, Indian, and

Native American. Once people find out that Sarah is part Kenyan, the assumptions and stereotyping begin. Unlike Chelsea and Hannah though, she does not see the stereotyping as a negative. The one stereotype that is the most popular for Sarah is that she should be able to “run fast or jump high.” Although she can do neither, this does not bother Sarah. Instead, she thinks “its almost nice that people think Kenyans are good at stuff but it’s definitely a stereotype.” Even though people are joking when they bring it up to her, she sees it as a positive rather than a negative to be associated with something like that. Sarah is proud of her Kenyan heritage and likes when people see the positive aspect of her African descent rather than seeing any negatives.

CONCLUSION

Race is constructed very differently in American than in Fiji. Although both countries have a long history that has contributed to their racial divides, when it comes to being mixed race, individuals seem to feel very differently from one country to the next. In Fiji there seems to be more of a strict divide and people tend to stay with the decided hierarchy. In America though, it seems that people tend to choose the side of the family that has a richer culture and back-story. There are exceptions in Fiji and America however to this idea. In both of these countries, similar problems still arise though. There are stereotypes and assumptions about race that are very difficult to escape. While it is important in Fiji to associate with a particular race in order to be part of a social group, in America, being mixed race is much different. In America, ethnicity contributes to one’s unique identity.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF ARGUEMENTS

In conclusion, being both involved in a mixed-race marriage or growing up mixed race has huge implications on one's life. For some, it plays a role in who one associates themselves with and how their social networks play out. In Fiji, the implications that come along with being in and inter-racial marriage or growing up inter-racial seem to be far greater than for those in the United States that have to deal with similar situations. The different cultures of both of these two very different places are the major contribution to these apparent differences.

Fijian culture places a huge emphasis on the ability to belong to a social group and making almost all of one's social connections through that group. For individuals who enter into a mixed-race marriage, they are going beyond that social group that they were previously a part of. When one marries outside of their social group it affects almost every aspect of their life. Many relationships with family and friends become strained due to disapproval. For some this relationship is strained much more than others depending on the two different racial groups. For those involved in an indigenous-Indo-Fijian marriage, the strain is the greatest.

These inter-racial marriages also cause problems in other aspects on one's life including language and religious differences. In Fiji, many different languages and religions coexist but they all have their own sphere in which that existence takes place. Inter-racial marriages break down these preexisting spheres and create tension. In many cases, one race, which includes its language and religion, must be chosen. Many families that contain more than one race tend to associate themselves with one side of the family much more

than the other side of their family. A balance between the two is rarely found. Both those involved in the marriage and the children that are a result of the marriage feel the divide of the two races.

For individuals who grew up mixed race, they find themselves much closer to one side of the family because of the necessity to be part of a group. My Fijian informants both found themselves much closer to their Rotuman side of the family despite the preconceived idea that Rotumans are not as welcoming. A majority of children that grow up mixed race are unable to speak the native language of both sides of their family. They tend to either speak only English or choose the language of the parent whose family they feel a closer bond with. Mixed race individuals in Fiji are inclined to take on a singular identity when it comes to their inter-racial heritage.

In America, the repercussions of growing up inter-racial are very different from those of Fiji. It is much easier for American to embrace both sides of their family rather than feeling forced to lean towards on singular race. Although there is no pressure to choose a side, many mixed race Americans still feel that they are closer to one side of the family, simply due to proximity. Despite the fact that they may be closer to one side of the family, they are still able to fully embrace both of the different races that make up their biological self. They embrace the idea of being mixed race but in many of these cases, the culture of one race is much stronger and richer than the culture of the other race. This richer culture is the one they wish to pass on to future generations. Being mixed race in America is something that is embraced rather than denied.

Inter-racial marriage in both Fiji and the United States has many different implications that come along with it but how those issues are dealt with vary greatly from one culture to the next.

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