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Associations in Fiji Indian Rural Society

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INDIANS who have settled in the rural areas of the Colony of Fiji have two principles behind the management of their associations. On the one hand, there is the idea of decisions unanimously arrived at by all parties concerned or by all the men acting as arbitrators and leaders. On the other hand, there is the principle of open voting, in which the decision of a majority is adopted. It is clear that these two methods of procedure will often conflict if applied to the same association. A compromise may be possible in communities whose members have a common background and interest and a tradition of strong leadership, for differences may then remain subordinate to an over-all sense of solidarity and a trust in accepted leaders. But the varied cultural and social segmentation of Fiji Indian society, and the lack of any pattern of accepted authority, make for wide differences in the rural settlements. Frequently, then, the unanimity which is formally shown by the open vote of all assembled, or of the chosen arbitrators, is no more than the result of pressure used by more powerful groups and individuals. The attempt to have such overt unanimity may, in these circumstances, result in deeper divisions than if there were an open recognition of differences. For if an insistence on formally unanimous action precludes the overt expression of minority opinion through a vote, the secession of these minorities may take place, the "unanimity" then becoming a factor of division. Further, an association which acts on the assumption that such an overt unity is real will sooner or later divide if it undertakes work (such as the arbitration of disputes) which needs a real interdependence and unity.

The analysis of these principles, though made for a single area, is of wider interest, particularly to students of India. For the principle of unanimity plays a large part in the operations of the panchayat, the traditional arbitrativ and administrative council in India, which also has an important place in Fiji Indian life. Conditions in Fiji may be found relevant to those in India, where the processes of panchayat unanimity and the new democratic majority rule increasingly confront one another. For there is, on the one hand, the development of rural panchayats based on universal suffrage and the voting of decisions and, on the other, the plea of people such as Acharya Vinoba Bhave for unanimous, rather than majority, decisions.

The paper embodies material gathered during a year's stay in Fiji in 1950-51. During this period three settlements were studied in detail, each of which appeared typical of Fiji Indian rural areas. All were of average size, containing some 500 people in an area about one and a half miles square, and each was within five to fifteen miles of a small market town. They contained representatives of all the major cultural groups to be noted below, and farming followed the broad variations of crops found elsewhere.

Three associations were found in these settlements: the cane-cutting gang, the school committee, and the Settlement Association. In no settlement did all three exist, but there were one or two in each area and they are general throughout the rural Fiji Indian settlements.

THE BACKGROUND

Indians first came to Fiji in 1879. They were brought under the auspices of the Governments of India and Fiji for terms of indentured work in the developing sugar-cane industry. This system continued until 1916, up to that time 62,837 Indians having come to Fiji, 24,655 of these being repatriated under terms of the contract (Derrick 1951:138). Since then, the Indian population has had a rapid natural increase, the average annual net immigration being no more than a few hundreds. By 1951 the community numbered 143,332, or 47.5 per cent of the Colony's total population; of the balance, Fijians numbered 132,889, and Europeans and others, 25,738 (Colonial Reports, 1953:10). With a few exceptions Indians and Fijians do not live in the same rural settlements or intermarry, and so, for the purposes of this paper, only Indians need be considered.

After their contract work in the plantations had ended, Indians were free to settle wherever they could lease land from its Fijian owners. An account has been given elsewhere (Mayer 1953:182-85) of the pattern of settlement which emerged. Two features are relevant here. The first is that the settlements consisted of homesteads settled piecemeal, with houses dispersed over the entire settlement area. This has meant an obvious physical difficulty in organizing associations, whose members may be reluctant to walk a mile or more for a meeting. It has also been a factor in the low social articulation of the settlement, which has made for difficulties in enforcing the decisions of some of the associations to be described.

The second fact to note is the considerable cultural diversity represented. Recruitment under the indenture system occurred first in North India; after 1900, however, most immigrants came from the Tamil and Telegu areas of Madras State. There are no statistics available of the birthplaces of immigrants but Coulter estimated in 1935 that 64 per cent of the Fiji Indian population stemmed from the North, 29 per cent from the South, and 7 per cent from other areas (1942:81). Three main cultural groups can be seen in our settlements, based partly on area of origin and partly on socioreligious variations (see Table 1). They are Hindus from North India, Hindus from the South, and Muslims (almost all of whom are from the North). These groups are almost entirely endogamous in rural areas. Within the two former there are castes having varying degrees of endogamy, and the Northern Hindu group also contains men of the Arya Samaj reformed sect. The numbers of each group in the three settlements correspond roughly to those obtaining in the Fiji Indian population as a whole.

Differences between these groups (the small Sikh and Christian groups not being considered separately here) lie largely in the ritual and kinship spheres;

TABLE 1

Cultural Group	Percentage (Average of 3 Settlements)
Northern Hindu	56
Southern Hindu	26
Muslim	17
Sikh and Christian	1
	100

Hindi is a *lingua franca*, though some Southerners study and speak their own tongue among themselves, and Muslims may learn Urdu. Thus, Northerners perform an annual ritual of honor and propitiation to the agnatic ascendants (*sraddh*), Southerners have their own festivals of fire-walking and flagellation in honor of Mariamma, and Muslims their own religious occasions. Again, Northerners prohibit cross-cousin marriage, while Southerners allow it. Similarly, differences between castes lying within the two Hindu cultural groups may entail different behavior. Some Northerners, for example, sacrifice pigs to their tutelary deity and agnates, others use vegetable products. Caste differentiation, however, is seldom visible in activities (there are no commensal restrictions, for example) and mainly centers round the preferred pattern of endogamy and hypergamy. When the caste, and sometimes the cultural group, coincides with the extended kin-group in a settlement, the basis of differentiation is reinforced by ties of kinship.

In Fiji, there has been little time or opportunity for the development of traditional ritual and secular interdependences among these groups, as well as a common local background and history, of the kind which softened similar divisive features in the parent villages in India. True, socioreligious differences are usually taken for granted, and must not be made to seem over-important; most people feel some sort of bond as members of a single settlement. Nevertheless, differences between cultural groups can make for cleavages in the settlement and in the association. They may be used as explanations of motives which are economic or personal at bottom, and are ready handles of justification in disputes. And at such times there is no single source of authority in common settlement matters, no headman or other person or association with pre-eminence buttressed by constant and acknowledged powers, whose decisions are above these distinctions.

THE ASSOCIATIONS: THE CANE GANG

The major crop grown by Fiji Indians is sugar cane, it being estimated that two-thirds of the Indian population is directly or indirectly concerned with sugar production. In our settlements 135 farmers had cane as their major or only crop, and 65 cultivated other crops alone. In 1943 Indians occupied

94 per cent of the land under cane, Fijians 3 per cent, and the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR) farmed the remaining 3 per cent, leasing out most of its considerable holdings to Indian tenants (Shephard 1945:42); these proportions cannot have changed greatly in recent years.

The sowing and cultivation of cane is performed by each farmer on his own block of between 10 and 12 acres. But cutting the cane is highly organized by the CSR to insure a steady flow of suitable cane to its five mills, the only mills in the Colony. For this purpose two agreements are signed by the growers and the CSR officials—the first, called a Memorandum of Purchase, settles the terms of sale and specifies that the cane “is to be given when and where directed by the Company on its main line loaded on trucks . . . or in punts . . .” (clause 7 of the 1940 Memorandum). These agreements are usually made for ten years at a time. The growers then form themselves into a partnership, known as the “gang,” by signing a Grower’s Harvesting Agreement each year before the cutting season starts. Each gang mainly contains the men of one settlement, others only coming in when the neighboring settlements have too few growers to form a gang. On the average, a gang will harvest about 5,000 tons of cane a year, from roughly 450 acres of land under cane, not all of the land being harvested each year.

As to the gang’s operation, every farmer must have one representative in the gang for every estimated 100 tons of his cane (or, sometimes, for every 6 acres to be cut). Some men cut the cane, others lay portable line from the permanent railway and haul trucks to the cutters. One man acts as water-bearer, and one of the gang is elected to be *sirdar* in charge of operations. Above the gang there is a European field officer appointed by the CSR. Among his other duties, he acts as liaison between the gang *sirdar* and the officials at the mill. He arranges for the trucks to be sent to the gang and advises his superiors on the progress of the harvest. Besides this, he supervises the gang’s daily operations and discusses its problems with the *sirdar*, the latter having executive responsibility.

When the gang harvests the cane in a farmer’s field, the cutting and haulage charges are debited to his account with the CSR and are subtracted from the sum he later receives for his cane. These costs are noted by the *sirdar*, and the farmer or his alternate then has to earn an equal amount from his work in the gang. Everyone therefore puts into the gang, through his work, an amount equal to that which he receives when the gang cuts his cane. For those whose harvest expenses are high, their land being far from the permanent railway, more work is needed to level out these two heads. Often the balance is not struck, and they are liable to a penalty at rates decided by the gang. Some gangs prefer to define a unit of work and then have everyone complete a certain number of units; but the principle of equality of contribution and benefit is everywhere the same.

The operations of the gang may provide grounds for disputes or may be seized upon as pretexts for quarrels by men who are already at loggerheads over some other affair. On the whole, however, they appear to give rise only

to minor differences, usually between individuals. It is the election of the *sirdar* that provides the major occasion for divisions of the gang, in which these smaller disputes may play a part.

Open elections of the *sirdar*, though a formal part of the machinery of appointment, are disliked. As one man put it, “elections are bad, for they only create opposing parties.” Another man had these views:

People in a gang will always form parties. A *sirdar* will usually favor his friends by giving them portable line to cut their cane at the most favorable time and so forth [this is not quite true, since the field officer makes up the rota of cutting, but many people believe that the *sirdar* controls this list—especially if they are against the *sirdar*]. A party will rise against him at the next election. Both sides will talk to all farmers before the election, and if the result appears close, within a vote or two, there may be voting. But if a group realizes that it is in a minority, its members will give in before the election, and the candidate of the largest party will be elected unanimously without a vote, because others will be discriminated against in the next season if they openly vote against the *sirdar*.

It therefore often happens that there is no election for the post of *sirdar*, whatever disagreements are latent in the gang and however strong the jealousies may be among the disappointed aspirants—the only vote recorded in some 20 elections was 14 votes to 11, close enough for each party to hope for victory.

The fact that elections are unanimous, we see, does not prevent strenuous canvassing before the event or high feelings after it. This is the case especially if the election is made part of a more general contest between factions in the settlement. In one gang, for example, there appears to have been general agreement over the *sirdar* for many years. More recently, however, factions have arisen, taking the form of a division into a majority of orthodox Northerners, Southerners, and some Muslims, and a minority of Arya Samaj Northerners and other Muslims. The subjects of difference have not been primarily the capabilities of the *sirdar* but have concerned local subjects of dispute, and also policies pursued by two Fiji-wide cane growers’ unions, each supported by a different faction. These unions, in turn, are part of the Fiji political scene, since rival members and candidates for the Legislative Council of the Colony actively support them. Their organization is on a District-wide, not a settlement, level, and most of their leaders are townsmen. They cannot, therefore, be classed as rural associations of the kind we are considering here, nor do they have explicit control over the gang. But their policies may indirectly affect the gang’s operation by providing bases for divisions and pre-election tests of strength, and they have on occasion directly affected the gang’s work with a successful appeal to strike.

In another settlement the *sirdar*’s election has been tied to factionalism within a large kin-group, expressed partly in a struggle to control the gang by having a *sirdar* friendly to the winning faction. But only a few men of other kin- and cultural groups have been firm members of either faction. The rest of the gang has supported one or other of the candidates offered, according to

each man's interests. These include social and economic relations with the factions at the time, and also with the candidates themselves. A man might support a candidate to whom he was indebted, or from whom he had hopes of some favor. Again, the leader of a small cultural group, too small to vote him in without outside help, would hold off his and his kinsmen's support until it was clear that there would be no compromise candidate, and would then throw his support behind the man with whom he was on the better terms. This changing support accounts in part for the number of *sirdars* in this settlement—10 in 12 years—and their varied cultural group membership: 2 have been Muslims, 5 Southerners, and 3 Northerners.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

There are three main types of school for Indians in Fiji. Some are operated directly by the Education Department, and others are under private Fiji-wide organizations, like the Methodist Mission. But about two-thirds of the total are schools organized and operated by local committees. Each committee is responsible for the upkeep of buildings and pays 25 per cent of the teachers' salaries from fees collected from the parents. The Education Department pays the remaining 75 per cent and may make grants for construction work. The teachers are civil servants, directly under the control of the Department. There is an Education Officer and an Organizing Teacher who periodically inspect the school. Committee schools are of primary standard, catering for children from 6 to 14 years of age. English is taught orally from the beginning, and from class 5 is the medium of instruction. Hindi is the other main language though any regional language, such as Tamil or Gujarati, can be taught if enough parents desire it and the committee approves.

Because official policy is to have no country schools within three miles of each other, establishments usually cater to an area larger than the settlement, men from several settlements being on the committee. Usually the settlement in which the school stands, and from which most pupils come, has more representation on, and interest in, the committee. The size of that body varies—one school of about 200 pupils was operated by a committee of 27, of whom 7 to 10 composed a working group of regular attenders. Executive positions are held by a Manager, Secretary, Treasurer, and their deputies. Upon these men rests the major responsibility for the school's administration.

The election of the school committee officers tends to follow the same pattern as in the gang elections, there being unanimous choice of those who have succeeded in the pre-election canvass. Similarly, issues in this canvassing can be related to internal differences in the committee over policy, or to factional activity in the settlement, and feeling between cultural or kin-groups. The protagonists in a discussion over the best way to collect fees, for example, were at the same time opposed over other matters in the settlement. Further, where men from several settlements take part in the committee, differences may have a territorial basis. Thus, one committee was divided between people of two settlements, each group wishing the school to be in its locality and supporting candidates from its settlement.

The schoolmasters may be important in the committee's work. These men usually come from other parts of Fiji, and on their relations with the local residents depends the successful operation of the committee. The Headmaster is often the executive arm of the committee, being in the school all the time, and he may collect fees as they are brought in, and see to the maintenance work. With his help a committee may continue which might otherwise founder through lack of interest, or internal dissension. But masters are themselves members of cultural groups. They may therefore tend to identify themselves, or be identified, with men of the same cultural groups in the settlement. If the latter form a faction, it is easy to see how a schoolmaster can be drawn into disputes—even if he wishes to keep out of them—and how this may react on the work of the committee. But disputes between masters and committee cannot go too far, for too wide a breach will result in the transfer of the former. Schoolmasters can therefore be a stabilizing or a disruptive influence on the committee.

The school committee in the two settlements where it was studied did not appear to have the same importance as the cane gang. The latter's smooth running was of far greater economic interest to cane farmers; also, the gang members worked together every day for months on end during the harvest, whereas the daily operation of the school did not concern the committee, which met only from time to time. Hence people talked less about the committee than the gang and the data gathered were not as full, though enough to show that the committee's working is similar to the gang's.

THE SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION AND THE PANCHAYAT

The third and last association covered is the Settlement Association. Though it claims to speak for the entire settlement, the Association may draw active support from only a part of the area. The India-born, for one, do not play a large part in it. Numbering about 5 per cent of the rural population, they maintain that it is a Fiji-wise way of doing things (as opposed to the panchayat to be described) and that the Fiji-born are therefore best equipped to direct such a body. Further, there may be Fiji-born men who disagree with the Association and take no part in it.

Officers are elected annually—a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. Elections are of the same kind as noted for the gang and school committee, i.e., the only candidates to be publicly nominated are unanimously supported. On one occasion, for instance, elections to an Association were postponed because, it was said, contending nominees might arise and parties thereby be formed. In fact, divisions of opinion in the Association's membership had made for an uncertain outcome of any election, with the possibility of a vocal minority. The elections were thus held over for a month or two, and finally ended in a unanimous vote when the minority group realized it had no chance of obtaining power.

The Settlement Association has two main purposes: to aid in the organization of major ritual and social events, and to arbitrate in disputes. In pursuit of its first aim, the Association may help with money and the labor of its mem-

bers at the weddings of people too poor to hold a feast of minimum proportions, and will organize activities at the major festivals (e.g., Mayer 1952). These activities are aided, or tacitly approved of, by all members of the Association and even by those who do not belong. The aspect which most interests us here is that of arbitration made, it is said, to save money otherwise spent on litigation. Here the Association has taken over functions performed by the panchayat in areas where no Associations exist. Since the two bodies have the same aim, though different procedures, we can examine them at the same time.

First, the panchayat (group of five) is theoretically said to be formed by the selection of two men by each disputant, these then choosing the "head" of the five men. They hear the evidence presented by both sides, confer, and hand down their unanimous decision. In practice, however, there need not be five men; for matters of importance there may be more, and in small disputes one or two men, known to be experienced and impartial, are said to be enough. All the panchayats recorded were *ad hoc* bodies, called to hear a specific dispute, rather than permanent entities organized on a territorial or cultural basis.

Fourteen instances of panchayats were noted, eleven of them between men of different kin-groups, three within a kin-group. Of these, four can be classified as attempts to collect damages; in one case there was a quarrel over wages, in another a man was accused of neglect in allowing a bullock to be injured. Three panchayats concerned cultural group friction—some Muslims, for example, killed a cow near a Hindu house. Two meetings were held over cases of assault, and the remainder (save for two cases to be noted below) were about land boundaries, a quarrel over a woman, and a quarrel in a joint household. The panchayats therefore deal with a wide variety of cases. In all these instances the panchayat punished by levying a fine or demanding an apology, and its unanimous decision was accepted by the loser. Though the panchayat is said to be unable to invoke sanctions to enforce its decisions, there is no doubt a fear of general disapproval if it is not obeyed. Moreover, agreement on the verdict is reached by the representatives of both sides to the dispute, and the latter can scarcely disavow the decision of their own nominees.

Two cases were noted, however, where the panchayat had ostracized an offender and where its decision was not accepted by everybody. In the first case, the man, who had committed incest, was little by little visited by those to whom social or economic contact brought benefits worth disregard of the panchayat decision. In the other case, the boycott was applied to a storekeeper, who did not accept the decision and compelled his debtors to continue their trade with him under pain of summons. It seems, in fact, that in Fiji the extreme penalty of ostracism is inoperable by panchayats unless accepted by its object, though lesser penalties are enforceable. It is important that in both cases the accused was on one side, and the panchayat was said to be "acting for" the entire settlement on the other. The failure of this type of panchayat must be recalled when we note later that the Settlement Association is accused of causing splits by trying to speak for the whole settlement.

It must be stressed, of course, that the acceptance of any panchayat ruling does not mean that the dispute is thereby finally settled. The contestant who thinks he is the loser may try to revenge himself later, and factions may then arise. If the loser is dissatisfied with the decision, moreover, he can take his case to court. The panchayat may only stop the quarrels of the moment, though it may be more successful than this. A major aspect of importance is the unanimous nature of the panchayat decision. It was said that to be a good member of a panchayat a man should have a "hot" temperament, as well as qualifications of literacy and an experience of authority in other matters (e.g., a *sirdar's* post). The hot temperament alone is not enough, but it is needed in cases where the opinion of the panchayat is divided and where someone is required to speak up fearlessly and persuade a unanimous decision.

Take now the Settlement Association and its attempts to arbitrate. As noted, the Association aims to serve the entire locality; but Fiji Indian settlements have hitherto had no such single controlling body. The areas were settled with persons of great heterogeneity of background, as indicated, and people have co-operated only when it was in their interests to do so. The Settlement Association wishes, however, to have unified action even when it may not be immediately beneficial to some, so long as it is regarded by its executives to be of service to the community as a whole.

In several cases the decisions made by the Association have not been accepted by everyone, and cleavages in the settlement have resulted. These are of two types. First, there is what can be called the opposition; here members of the two sides have no economic or social intercourse. Second, divisions may occur; in this case the people on both sides talk to each other and may attend each others' social functions if the division is not too serious—but they co-operate only partially or not at all in Association matters.

As an example of the first type of split, an individual in a settlement disagreed with the officers of the Settlement Association over their condemnation of some of his activities; he left the Association, not attending meetings or paying dues. The leaders of the Association decided that its members should boycott the man because he had repudiated their judgment, over which they felt themselves justified. People who lived far from the man obeyed this ruling, since contacts with him mattered little to them. But his nearer neighbors feared that a boycott would bring out many petty quarrels with him over straying cattle and boundary lines. They considered it was more important to be on good terms with a neighbor than to censure him for actions which did not directly concern them. They therefore continued to associate with the man and were in turn boycotted by the Association, and an opposition ensued.

The Association was criticized by some of its members, for they maintained that it had overreached its authority and proper function. The appropriate objects of the Association, they said, were those of a ritual and social nature already mentioned. As regards arbitration it should, at most, hold itself ready to give its good offices to those who wished its help, and only then lay down a judgment. In fact, they wished it to behave in the same way as the panchayat,

only acting when both parties involved agreed to attend it and heed its decision. Though this view may have been colored by the personal outlook of the speakers, the principle expressed differs markedly from that held by the Association's officers. These regarded the body as having a responsibility, given it by its members, in all quarrels of the settlement, whatever the wishes of the disputants.

It is significant to note that the people in the boycott mentioned above accepted their position of opposition. It would have been hard for them, had they not done so, to have re-established social contact with Association members, without to some extent agreeing with the pronouncements of that body on their case. In this the panchayat and the Association differ. An unwilling victim of a panchayat boycott can gradually improve his position after the decision of the panchayat has, in time, faded. The panchayat, as an *ad hoc* body, no longer exists to enforce its sentence, the latter now depending on the support of those who believe in panchayat decisions but who may make exceptions, for personal reasons, in specific instances. But any attempt by a boycotted person to revoke the Association's decision meets with action by a permanently established body, which will eject any of its members if they do not conform. Splits within the settlement were thus made wider by the Association than they might have been with a panchayat's decision.

Because of this degree of irrevocability, however, oppositions appear to occur seldom. It is only when a dissenter can, in fact, carry on alone that he can afford openly to oppose the Association. This may be when, as in one case, the boycotted group lived on the edge of the settlement and was able to co-operate with people of a neighboring locality; or the boycotted man may live in an isolated homestead and be self-sufficient for his labor. Though the general level of interdependence in Fiji Indian settlements may be low, and confined largely to economic activities, it is nevertheless a factor in preventing too many oppositions. It is also noteworthy that the recorded cases of boycott did not concern men who were members of a cane gang, nor did their children stop going to school. It is improbable that anyone could be denied Government-sponsored education; nor would it be economically feasible for any cane farmer to risk a boycott of his crops by the gang, even if the CSR were to leave them unharvested. Oppositions must therefore exist only in activities uninfluenced by such outside organizations. The recorded oppositions involved only a small minority of people, and the probability that boycotted people might eventually form the majority of the settlement, and thus reverse the roles, appears theoretical.

Divisions are formed when people disagree with the Association's policies and activities. Some pay no further attention to them, some join in only at major ritual occasions, and yet others remain active Association members but form a recognized though covert faction of dissidents within it. Members of one or more factions may be executives of the Association, though one faction alone will hold power. Each faction will try to keep its members and to enlist new followers before election time.

The Settlement Association professes to speak and act for the entire membership. And, on the face of it, it would seem that its leaders are justified, for they have been unanimously elected. But the unanimity, in fact, often masks this minority opinion. Two circumstances can bring it into the open. First, if divergence of opinion over the Association's policies can no longer remain covert, the weaker faction may withdraw from the Association so that this body can again be "united," and this will mean a division of the settlement. If dissidents do not leave the Association, elections may be postponed, as mentioned above, and if there is deadlock the entire Association may fail—"go bad," it is said. The second circumstance is when the Association arbitrates between its members and presents them with an "either-or" decision. If they do not accept the arbitration, however unwillingly, they must withdraw (again, to preserve unity) and, because they have challenged the authority of the leaders, may be boycotted and an opposition formed.

Given this need for at least overtly, if not truly, unanimous decisions, then, the Settlement Association is a body which needs certain prerequisites of unity before it can operate without splits. An over-all authority is necessary, whether supported by supernatural powers, or by lineage and caste superiority, or by common agreement, or a combination of all these, and functions are needed which all people recognize as appropriate to the Association. Fiji Indian rural society, as investigated, does not possess these bases of unity. There is no generally accepted channel of authority, there are jealousies between leaders and their potential successors, and the Settlement Association is too recently formed to have generally accepted and institutionalized functions. Socioreligious differences between cultural groups invest disputes with an added dimension of disagreement. The unity everyone desires in these permanent associations is therefore only an ideal, in spite of the unanimous vote at election time, just as the disputes nominally solved by unanimous agreement in an *ad hoc* panchayat judgment may continue later, in different guise. But at the same time there seems to be a felt need for an authoritative body and leader, perhaps partly coming from memories of traditional authority, partly from the sight of other power structures in Fiji—the Government hierarchy, the Fijian system of chiefly rule. Settlement Associations are thus started, and try to allocate this position to themselves.

CONCLUSION

Two developments from the present situation appear possible. First, changed conditions may favor associations working under the principle of unanimity. Authority may become firmly vested in certain families or in the hands of wealthy or educated individuals; differences between cultural groups may become less marked; and better internal communication would be a further factor aiding this development. The continuing existence of the associations themselves may make for an increasingly solidified division of super- and subordination. With such bases, associations might operate with unanimous decisions. Though this unanimity might not always be a true one, in the sense

of a genuine agreement, there would be sufficient co-operation to avoid divisions or oppositions.

Possibly, however, the future will see a lessened distrust in the existence of vocal minorities and a realization that the airing of differences can take place openly within an association without foundering or splitting it. Elections will then reflect trends of opinion which at present usually remain covert.

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Double Descent and Its Correlates among the Herero of Ngamiland¹

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INTRODUCTION

TRUE double or dual descent, i.e., the utilization in one society of patrilineal and matrilineal principles of affiliation resulting in two systems cross-cutting each other, has been found in scattered examples in several parts of the world (Murdock 1940). Our knowledge of the variation of operation of some African double descent systems has been greatly enlarged by recent studies by British anthropologists of the "structural-functional" school, namely, those of Forde (1950) on the Yakö, of Fortes (1950) on the Ashanti, and of Nadel (1950) on the tribes of the Nuba Hills. The Herero and Herero, Bantu peoples of Angola and South West Africa, also possess a double descent system on a system of double descent. That the Herero possess a double descent system has been clear for about fifty years from the reports of missionaries and travelers in South West Africa (cf. Dannert 1906; Irle 1906). The Mbundu system has had recent treatment (Childs 1949), though an earlier report (Hastings 1933) indicates that a fuller study of Mbundu social organization might be made. The Mbundu and Herero systems show both morphological and functional similarity and are doubtless related historically (Childs 1952). This paper will be concerned with a description and analysis of the double descent system of the Herero of Ngamiland, which the author investigated in recent field study.² The data of the older sources were collected against current custom in Ngamiland, and further investigations were undertaken to fill out the picture of Herero social organization and to discover changes which may have occurred. It is hoped that the structural-functional type of analysis here employed will make this study useful for comparative purposes. The studies should lead eventually to a general theoretical explanation of double descent, if indeed one is possible.

In any subdivided society, it is self-evident, requires mechanisms to maintain and regularize at least a certain minimum of social interaction among the divisions. If the amount of interaction were to fall and remain below the minimum level, the society would fracture into independent systems which would thereafter tend to differentiate culturally. In societies segmented along kinship lines, there will always be found to be some institutions, such as rules of marriage, economic co-operation and exchange, government, juridical and religious participation, which operate across segments and so prevent the society from splintering into numerous culturally independent groups. We must therefore, contrast the forces of "disjunction" which divide a society into groups, be they based on residence, economic or hereditary class, ethnic descent, or whatever, from the forces of "conjunction" which bind