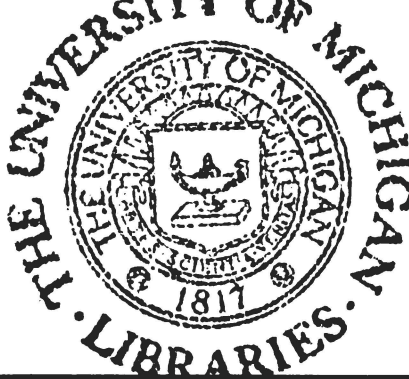


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**REGIME CHANGE AND REGIME MAINTENANCE
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

In recent years there have been some dramatic changes of political leadership in the Asia-Pacific region, and also some drama without leadership change. In a few countries the demise of well-entrenched political leaders appears imminent; in others regular processes of parliamentary government still prevail. These differing patterns of regime change and regime maintenance raise fundamental questions about the nature of political systems in the region. Specifically, how have some political leaders or leadership groups been able to stay in power for relatively long periods and why have they eventually been displaced? What are the factors associated with the stability or instability of political regimes? What happens when long-standing leaderships change?

The Regime Change and Regime Maintenance in Asia and the Pacific Project will address these and other questions from an Asia-Pacific regional perspective and at a broader theoretical level.

The project is under the joint direction of Dr R.J. May and Dr Harold Crouch.

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LEGITIMACY, SOVEREIGNTY AND REGIME CHANGE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC: COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE FIJI COUPS AND THE BOUGAINVILLE REBELLION

Peter Larmour

The coups in Fiji during 1987 were the first forcible changes of government among the independent states of the South Pacific. The Bougainville rebellion which began in late 1988 became the most violent internal conflict in the region. Both events brought the military to the foreground of domestic politics, and challenged previous assumptions about the legitimacy and sovereignty of governments. If 'regime' refers to a broad set of expectations and assumptions about government, then both sets of events amount to regime changes. This paper compares the two events, using ideas about sovereignty and legitimacy. It examines the ideas generally, and in relation to South Pacific politics, and then it summarizes the similarities and differences, and draws some conclusions about regime change.

Legitimacy and sovereignty

In normal times it may be hard to distinguish feelings about the legitimacy of a government from routine acquiescence. The ordinary activities of government can continue without anyone considering whether there is a single, absolute, source of authority behind them. Rebellions and *coups d'état*, however, bring legitimacy and sovereignty into sharp focus. Rebels accuse the government of ruling illegitimately, and invoke their own claims to legitimacy. Coup leaders strike at the sources of sovereignty, and seek to displace, replace or enlist them.

Both concepts—legitimacy and sovereignty—have normative and analytic dimensions. But in both cases we can describe and analyse claims to legitimacy or sovereignty without necessarily accepting or endorsing them ourselves. We also need to understand the normative dimensions, as these propelled actors such as Rabuka and Ona, who invoked notions of legitimacy and sovereignty to justify their actions to themselves, their supporters and their critics.

Sovereignty

Sovereignty refers to the idea that there is a 'final authority within a given territory' (Krasner 1988:86, cf Hinsley 1986:1). It has two dimensions: a sideways claim against other sources of power and a downwards claim on people or resources. 'The person over whom power is exercised is not usually as important as other power-holders' (Stinchcombe, quoted in Tilly 1985:171)

As a claim, it may be challenged, or unenforceable. Its scope may be limited in at least two ways: it may be limited to particular issues, such as the regulation of economic exploitation (but not shipping in exclusive economic zones); it may be limited by concepts of public and private that may put some activities, such as abortion, beyond the scope of state action (Krasner 1988:87). The public/private distinction, and the example of abortion, raise questions of gender and sovereignty which will be returned to below.

Though largely abandoned to lawyers, the idea of sovereignty seems relevant to understanding South Pacific politics in several ways.

First, it has become part of the language of claims by indigenous people, as in the debate about *rangatiratanga* in New Zealand (McHugh 1989). In several countries indigenous people are going back to original treaties and charters as bases for claims of political and economic sovereignty: Maoris to the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840; indigenous Fijians to the Deed of Cession in 1874; and, on a smaller scale, the traditional landowners of Port Moresby to Commodore Erskine's 1884 declaration of British Protectorate over southern New Guinea which promised 'no acquisition of land' would be recognized by the queen (Jinks *et al.* 1973:39).

Secondly, while most Pacific Island constitutions declare the state to be sovereign, many limit the powers of parliament to legislate in relation to customary land, and others recognize or create alternatives to parliamentary sovereignty in the form of councils of chiefs. The most radical form of extra-constitutional sovereignty is probably in the role that Fiji's 1990 republican constitution gives to the Great Council of Chiefs. The constitution 'recognizes' (rather than establishes) the *Bose Levu Vakaturanga* (Section 3) and gives it the power to appoint and remove the president (Chapter 5). The Great Council of Chiefs also recommends on the appointment of Fijian senators (Section 55[1]a) and is exempt from review by the ombudsman (Section 135 [2]5) (National Federation Party and the Fiji Labour Party Coalition 1991:36-38). Even if constitutionally unrecognized, custom often provides a powerful restraint on state action.

Thirdly, a number of states, particularly in Melanesia and Micronesia, have adopted federal or quasi-federal constitutions that divide sovereignty between levels of government.

Fourthly, difficulties of implementation limit the effective sovereignty of most states in the region. These difficulties range from problems of transport and communication among islands, to shortages of skilled staff, and local structures of power that resist even the most determined central initiatives. A well documented example is the Plantation Acquisition Scheme in Papua New Guinea (Walter 1981).

Fifthly, a number of territories remain colonies, and the formal international legal sovereignty of five states is formally compromised by relationships of 'free association' with New Zealand (Niue, Cook Islands) and the USA (Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau).

Sixthly, it is a commonplace in the study of the international relations of the South Pacific that the formally sovereign states are not 'really independent'. Much of the literature refers to problems of scale, but many of what Held calls the 'gaps' between *de jure* and *de facto* sovereignty, or between sovereignty and autonomy, are different only in degree to those affecting much larger states in the modern international system. Following Held (1989:228-237) these gaps are caused by

- an increasingly transnational and interdependent world economy that limits the scope of any particular government's economic policy;
- the existence of hegemonic powers, and power blocs, particularly the USA (and in the South Pacific, perhaps Australia and New Zealand);
- the existence of international organizations, which restrain member governments (for example, the International Monetary Fund), or non-government organizations that irritate them (for example, Amnesty International, Community Aid Abroad);
- the growth of international law (for example, in relation to war crimes or human rights);
- the domestic spillover of concerns with national security (for example, in the internal activities of intelligence agencies);
- externalities, such as the environmental impact of one country's activities on another (rising sea levels from global warming might be the most extreme South Pacific example).

However limited in practice, the idea of sovereignty clearly suits the purposes of South Pacific governments, justifying and supporting each other in their claims to domestic rule, and excluding other claimants. It is the working doctrine of foreign affairs departments, whose task it is to manage the boundaries within which claims of final authority are made, and whose working relationships run sideways to the officials of other sovereign states as much as downwards to their own populations. The South Pacific provides a relatively benign external environment for domestic

claims of sovereignty: there are no outstanding territorial claims, though outlying islands are hard to patrol, and there is a persistent suspicion of the hegemonic claims, and military capacities, of Australia, New Zealand, France and the US. Papua New Guinea also has problems managing its border with Indonesia.

While the idea of sovereignty makes sense for relations between states, it has less purchase on indigenous political traditions, or the actual practices of power in these societies. Only a few eastern Pacific societies have traditions of stratified, centralized, geographically extensive monarchies (Tahiti, Mangareva, Tonga, Rarotonga, Hawaii; see Goldman 1970). Elsewhere, political systems were more diffuse, unspecialized and smaller in scale. Their boundaries were vague, and several claims to final authority might coexist within them.

Michel Foucault's famous phrase 'Right in the West is the King's right' (1986:230) suggests that 'sovereignty' may be a particularly Eurocentric notion. According to Foucault, it played four roles: to describe a mechanism of power in feudal society, where sovereignty was parcelled out among the nobility; 'as a justification for the construction of large-scale administrative monarchies' (*ibid.*:238); as an ideology used by one side or the other in the seventeenth century wars of religion; and finally in the construction of parliamentary alternatives to the absolutist monarchies (*ibid.*; see also Held 1989:216-225).

Meanwhile, however, Foucault suggested that a new form of non-sovereign power has been emerging: more continuous, dispersed, finely grained, and based on surveillance. Foucault called this 'disciplinary' power, and located it in the practices of institutions like prisons, hospitals and schools, and in the 'normalizing' activities of professionals such as doctors, teachers and social workers. The two forms of power are incommensurate but coexist. The old theory of sovereignty has been democratized into a notion of collective sovereignty, exercised through parliamentary institutions, but it is sustained by the new mechanisms of disciplinary coercion.

Foucault's arguments about sovereign and non-sovereign power have several resonances in the non-Western context of the South Pacific.

The kingly idea of sovereignty appears in the constitutions and domestic politics of South Pacific states in two forms—the earlier feudal form in Tonga since the late nineteenth century, and Fiji since 1990—and the final parliamentary form in others. Democratized or not, power is conceptualized in the same way as a top-down relationship between sovereign and subject/citizen.

Quite separately, there have emerged numerous examples of the 'normalizing' institutions that developed in parallel with central governments. Colonial plantations, high schools, hospitals, prisons, seminaries and universities are in many ways

strikingly similar institutions, in architecture, location, methods of recruitment, and internal rules. They were involved in disciplining and transforming their inmates.

Sovereign and disciplinary power came together at independence when the products of these 'normalizing' institutions typically became the first generation of national leaders to hold state office. The products of such institutions continue to play a more salient role in South Pacific politics than elsewhere, whether it is the Papua New Guinea university students who violently protested against parliamentary members' pay rises in 1991, or the ethnic Fijian prisoners who escaped from Naboro prison just before the second coup and

jogged or were driven amiably up Victoria Parade under police and army escort to drink tea at Government House with the governor-general (Scarr 1988:127; see also Lal 1988:115).

Foucault's argument about the coexistence of old 'sovereign' and new 'disciplinary' power recognizes the salience of these institutions in the political landscape in ways that a focus on central institutions would not.

Foucault's more general orientation towards the micromechanisms of power also seems relevant to the politics of the region before the introduction of sovereign states, and on the dispersed bases of power that continue to coexist with juridical sovereignty, and to the relationship between state and family. He argues for attention to power

at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions (1986:232).

This dispersed, embodied notion of power—rather than the top-down picture of sovereign-subject/citizen—looks rather similar to Southall's characterization of 'stateless society', in which

the fundamental responsibility for the maintenance of society itself is much more widely dispersed throughout its varied institutions and its whole population, at least, usually, all adult males (1968:167).

Southall's reference to adult males, and our earlier reference to abortion as marking a (potential) limit to sovereignty, raise questions of gender. The relationship between state power and the power held by men over women has been explored, for example, by Pateman (1988). It is an issue in South Pacific politics in several contexts, including domestic violence (where masculine sovereignty within the family is under challenge from state agencies, particularly in Papua New Guinea), and in the recent ending of the monopoly of voting rights by heads of family (*matai*) in Western Samoa.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a more supple and inclusive idea than sovereignty, and refers to the 'conditions which justify government and require obedience' (Barker 1990:4). Barker distinguishes three distinct approaches to it:

- normative, concerned with why we should obey particular regimes;
- legal, concerned with the location of sovereignty; and
- social scientific, concerned with how and why claims to govern legitimately are accepted or rejected.

South Pacific examples of the normative approach might include debates about Indonesia's right to rule in Irian Jaya, Port Moresby's right to rule Bougainville, or the army's right to intervene in politics in Fiji. These debates quickly become concrete when we consider the conditions in which we think people should obey (and our attitudes towards people who decide, often bravely, not to obey).

Examples of the legal approach might include the deliberations of the Vanuatu courts over the president's attempt to dissolve parliament in 1988, or the legal arguments about the role of the governor general in the aftermath of the first coup in Fiji (Ghai and Cottrell 1990). These concerned, in part, the question of where 'final authority' in the political system should lie: with the prime minister; with parliament; with the governor general/president; and/or with the judges and the courts themselves.

Examples of the social scientific approach might include debates about the relative role of class and ethnicity in explaining recent politics in Fiji. Writers like Robertson and Tamanisau (1988) tend to class and economic explanations for obedience and dissent, while writers like Scarr (1988) tend to ethnic and historical explanations.

As the examples show, the normative, legal and social scientific approaches may be hard to disentangle in practice. Each approach may also present the same situation in quite different lights: we may (normatively) reject obedience to a regime which is (legally) sovereign while (social scientifically) recognizing that others meanwhile give it support. Barker remarks:

We all like to think that effective popular fury and ethical dissatisfaction coincide both with each other and our own preferences and values (1990:42).

The classic social-scientific distinction between types of legitimacy was that Max Weber drew between traditional, legal, and charismatic. Barker suggests that a fourth, 'value rational', might be derived from other parts of Weber's writing (1990:49). It refers to the substantive policies and values of the regime, and their consistency with those of the people obeying it. Democracy as such does not appear in Weber's typology, perhaps because it works through each type (and a democratic

regime would, almost by definition, conform to the additional 'value rational' form; *ibid.*:53-54). The absence of reference to democracy is particularly important in relation to analysis of the Fijian case, where the Bavadra government's claim to legitimacy rested on the results of a general election. On Bougainville, by contrast, the rebellion took place in spite of one of its parliamentary representatives, Fr John Momis, being a minister in the national government.

South Pacific politics presents numerous examples of Weberian types of claims to obedience, and acceptance or rejection of them. Sahlins's famous (1962-63) distinction between 'big man' and 'chief' is partly a matter of charisma versus tradition. Meleisea's *Making of Modern Samoa* very explicitly adopts a Weberian framework. Weber was concerned to explain the process of transformation of the legitimacy of traditional authority to the new notions of legitimacy underlying the rational legal authority of modern Western European institutions. These insights have been useful in analysing the historical processes of change in Western Samoa since the 1860s and the conflicts and contradictions when the two types of authority and their respective sources of legitimacy attempt to coexist (Meleisea 1987:229).

In practice, politicians usually mix their appeals, as in the famous distribution of 4,000 cartons of beer by Iambakey Okuk on the Kundiawa airstrip during Papua New Guinea's 1982 general election campaign (Dorney 1990: 21-23). For nine hours Okuk played on his own charisma, legality (as minister of Transport) and tradition (his headdress of cassowary feathers; the detailed group-by-group distribution of wealth). The most explicit rejection of claims (rather than simple indifference to them) is perhaps in the Labour/NFP's critique of traditionalism in Fiji.

Several aspects of Barker's 1990 analysis of political legitimacy seem relevant to South Pacific politics.

First, legitimacy is not a single undifferentiated attribute, but may vary according to type, to the parties to the relationship with the state, and to aspects of their relationship. In particular, the legitimacy of the relationship between state and citizen may be much less important than relationships within the elite, and with those whose support they depend on (particularly the army or police). In relation to ordinary powerless citizens, the state may simply get by with acquiescence rather than legitimacy (Barker 1990:107-125). Thus a South Pacific state will have a quite different, and more significant, legitimacy relationship with its army and police commanders than with its law-abiding citizens or its street criminals.

Secondly, in maintaining its legitimacy, the state may be its own worst enemy. Barker argues that popular dissent is typically reactive to an expansion of state power into new areas, or to a changing of the rules. He cites De Toqueville as saying 'governments are most insecure when they promote change' (*ibid.*:188). 'Getting

tough', Barker suggests, 'only works if people see themselves as out of line' (*ibid.*:169). In South Pacific terms, a state committed to development, or extending or withdrawing the scope of its activities, becomes therefore more likely to subvert its own legitimacy. However, conservative regimes have their own distinctive weaknesses. Barker suggests they may be particularly clumsy in dealing with dissent. By assuming a 'shared moral parish' they treat dissent as wilful or wicked, and recognized as such by its the perpetrators (*ibid.*:133). They cannot see that people may genuinely disagree with them.

Thirdly, Barker argues that in cultivating their own legitimacy, states typically appeal to sources of authority outside the state but which the state uniquely expresses. Examples are race, class, the revolution, and so on. The point is not that the state simply borrows authority from autonomous competing sources: it makes the additional claim of its unique ability to express them (*ibid.*:138-40). Thus South Pacific states do not simply draw on the autonomous authority of 'tradition' or 'indigenouness'. They are making a more complex and ambitious claim to a unique ability to express these values (for example, 'only through the state can tradition be maintained', or 'only through the state can indigenouness be promoted').

Finally, Randall Collins's (1986) account of Weberian sociological theory responds to the problem that Weber's types are, after all, just types: they do not explain how and why claims to legitimacy are made and rejected or accepted, just the forms they take. Collins locates the explanation in Weber's discussion of interstate competition. He concludes:

...nationalism for Weber is the essence of political legitimacy. Legitimacy, as usually defined, is the willingness of followers to accept orders given to them as properly to be obeyed. Too often this is conceived of as a kind of psychological quantity impressed on individuals by socialisation, and acting as an internal gyroscope bringing about political obedience. Yet Weber's discussion shows that legitimacy is nothing if not dynamic. It is not an internalized constant but an emotional feeling that arises from assessing the prestige of the state at any given moment (Collins 1986:155).

Two aspects of Collins's argument seem relevant to the South Pacific. One, that states are likely to have difficulty in claiming legitimacy where decolonization takes place without a nationalist struggle (most cases), and where interstate conflict is absent (throughout the region). The other, that legitimacy is intermittent, and dependent on the performance of states; it cannot be assumed as a steady background to ordinary political life.

Fiji

Sovereignty

Between the first and second coups there was an intense debate about, in part, where domestic sovereignty lay. It turned on the role of the governor general (Ghai and Cottrell 1990). Having arrested the cabinet, Rabuka turned immediately to the governor general, who received the unsought advice of the chief justice and other judges that the purported suspension of the constitution by Rabuka was 'illegal and invalid'. He declared a state of emergency, claiming to have assumed executive power in the absence of the cabinet, and swore in Rabuka as head of government. But the governor general backed away from swearing in a new council of ministers Rabuka had chosen (and including the former prime minister, Ratu Mara). Instead, he dissolved parliament and appointed his own council of advisers to review the 1970 constitution. He also called a meeting of the Great Council of Chiefs, which endorsed the coup. The deposed Coalition applied to the Supreme Court to declare that the governor general's dissolution of parliament and dismissal of the government had been illegal. The review committee reported, but under mounting Fijian nationalist pressure the Alliance and Coalition party leaders came together in a power-sharing agreement that was aborted by the second coup on 25 September (Lal 1988; Scarr 1988; Robertson and Tamanisau 1988).

The constitutional case had been due to be heard on 29 September, and the question of whether sovereignty in the sense of 'final power' lay with the prime minister, the governor general, parliament or the courts themselves was unresolved. Instead Rabuka proposed an alternative, extra-constitutional form of sovereignty that reached back behind independence to cession:

Fiji was ceded to Great Britain by the Tui Viti, the Vunivalu of Bau, and other chiefs of Fiji, and at independence the sovereignty of the country was never returned to the Fijian chiefs. Now, they want it back (quoted in Scarr 1988:132–133).

This extra-constitutional view of domestic sovereignty is partly reflected in the powers given to the Great Council of Chiefs in the 1990 constitution. At the same time the constitution seems also to recognize the *de facto* sovereignty of the army as a final arbiter of Fiji politics, giving it 'overall responsibility... to ensure at all times the security, defence and well being of Fiji and its peoples' (Section 94[3]).

Issues of international, rather than domestic, sovereignty arose, first in the deposed prime minister's appeal to Australia for assistance, and secondly in the role

played by the meeting of the South Pacific Forum, which refused to hear ministers sent by the deposed government, rejected proposals for a delegation to Fiji, and urged other countries to respect Fijian sovereignty (Lal 1988:108-111).

Legitimacy

As well as the legal issues discussed above, the Fiji coups raised distinct questions of normative and social scientific legitimacy. The normative questions were of the kind: should we obey the Coalition government or the military regime; what support should we give to people who decide bravely, even illegally, to resist either. The social scientific questions were of the kind: what sort of appeals were being made by the Coalition, the coup leaders, or the governor general, and why and to what extent were they successful.

With its plays on tradition, charisma and legality, Fiji politics since the coups lends itself easily to Weberian categories. It also confirms Barker's emphasis on the differential character of legitimacy, and the importance of the legitimacy relationship between the state and powerful supporters, as much as the population at large. With the exception of some demonstrations, strikes and boycotts, politics since the first coup has been largely an elite affair. Fiji also confirms Barker's argument that the legitimacy of states is most vulnerable when they promote change: it was a conservative backlash against the Coalition victory that provided the occasion and opportunity for military intervention.

Barker's argument about state claims to be the 'unique expression' of sources of authority outside well explains the ambivalent relationship between 'Fijianness' and the state. In one sense Fijian communal traditions predate the introduction of the state, and still stand outside it. Yet in another sense, they are tightly interwoven—through the structures of Fijian administration—and hard to imagine without it. In that sense criticism of the 'invented' character of Fijian tradition, or the mixed and 'non-traditional' composition of the Great Council of Chiefs misses the point. Fijians have become a kind of *staatsvolk*: as an ethnic group, rather than a collection of individuals, their future has become bound up with the state in ways that the future of other ethnic groups has not.

Bougainville

Sovereignty

The questions of sovereignty raised by the Bougainville rebellion are quite different from those in Fiji after the coups. In part they turn on the point or points at which 'crime' turned into 'rebellion' (the subject of a Melbourne court case between BCL

and its insurers, whose exclusion clause ensured they did not have to pay up if and when the situation became a rebellion). A criminal, in this sense, recognizes sovereignty ('it's a fair cop'), whereas the rebel challenges it.

Hobsbawm's notion of 'social banditry' captures the ambiguity of the distinction between crime and politics. According to Francis Kabui, the premier of the North Solomons provincial government: 'the people see Ona as some kind of a folk hero' (quoted in *The Times of PNG* 2–8 February 1989, p.7). The Bougainville rebels played to variations of Hobsbawm's (1969) three types of social bandit. First there was the 'noble robber', like Robin Hood (who, however, had not planned that Sherwood Forest should secede). Second was the 'terror-bringing avenger', admired, as Filer (1992) suggests of Ona, for his rage, and whose modern exemplar might be Rambo (whose name was frequently invoked on Bougainville). The third type—though without suggesting any stages of development—was the 'primitive resistance fighter or guerilla unit', of the kind that fought off the Papua New Guinea army.

Limited collective challenges to state sovereignty seem to be a regular feature of Papua New Guinea politics. Saffu argues:

Popular participation from the grass roots tends to be episodic, direct, and dramatic rather than continuous, routine and mediated through parties or other voluntary groups which have enough confidence in their influence and ability to obtain results without resorting to demonstrations, roadblocks, disruption of services, and threats to property. Demands are usually for compensation and for redress of perceived injustices and other specific grievances. There is a great deal of such limited "popular uprisings" in PNG politics ... But the appearance of radicalism is usually belied by the narrowness and specificity of demands. ... There is no wish to move beyond the specific to question the general, the framework that may be responsible—or at any rate that may be providing the opportunity—for the specific grievance. The appearance of radicalism is also belied by the evident reluctance of the leaders to engage in any sustained mobilisational efforts, once the specific demand has been met (1982:265).

The Bougainville rebellion, of course, went beyond this typical pattern. First, the 'threats to property' were systematically and repeatedly carried out. Secondly, Ona at least moved from the particular to the general, questioning the framework responsible for the grievance (Bougainville's inclusion within Papua New Guinea; Bougainville Copper Limited's influence on the government; the South African attitudes of management; the 'white mafia' advising the national government). Ona's emerging general analysis was 'ethnonational': the root cause of the problem on Bougainville was the alien domination of the national government, and Papua

New Guinea domination of Bougainville. Thirdly, the army was called in, no longer simply to assist the police, but acting aggressively in a distinctively military manner, against rebels in the bush. Fourthly, while some of the landowners were ready to bargain about compensation payments and development projects, Ona continued to hold out for wider political goals. In an interview with a Bougainville journalist in early September 1989, Ona's 'right hand man', Sam Kauona, was reported as saying that, '[the] wish is to push for a referendum [on secession], independence and secession for Bougainville' (Age 15 September 1989).

Once the army had withdrawn, this secessionist project was expressed in the declaration of the 'Republic of Mekamui' on 17 May 1990. Yet the 'sovereignty' of the republic is far from clear: it remains unrecognized by other states, and its territorial extent is vague and under pressure from Papua New Guinea government forces in Buka. It may still be, as Connor suggests, that

Ethnonational concerns by their very nature are more obsessed with a vision of freedom from domination by nonmembers than with a vision of freedom to conduct foreign relations with states (1987:215).

While the Papua New Guinea government has little domestic sovereignty within Bougainville, its international sovereignty has been largely unchallenged.

Legitimacy

Notions of 'sovereignty', and distinctions between 'crime' and 'rebellion' seem too crude to make much sense of what has been happening in Bougainville. Several aspects of Barker's analysis of legitimacy seem more appropriate.

First, as cultivator of legitimacy, the state has proved to be its own worst enemy, through army harassment and atrocities.

Secondly, the relationship between the particular and the general (from mining grievances to rejection of Papua New Guinea rule) is partly a matter of differential legitimacies. Before the rebellion, people might have felt that only particular central government legislation was illegitimate, without feeling that all legislation was (an issue complicated on Bougainville by the division of sovereignty between Port Moresby and the constitutionally protected provincial government). Similarly, the state needed to maintain its legitimacy relationships with groups able to sabotage a mine more carefully than it maintained its relationships with groups who did not have that leverage.

Thirdly, the Papua New Guinea state may have had less to fear from popular uprisings on Bougainville, or demonstration effects on other mines or in other provinces, than from disaffection among its own supporters in Port Moresby, notably the police who demonstrated outside Fr Momis's house in March 1989, 'fed

up with political interference and indecisiveness' (quoted in Dorney 1990:139) and the failed BarbeCoup, after the withdrawal of the army.

Conclusions

Comparing the events in terms of sovereignty yields several differences. The idea of a single location of sovereignty was strong and persistent through the coups in Fiji. The only issue was where that sovereignty was located: in parliament; with the governor general; or with the Great Council of Chiefs or the army itself (or in some uneasy parallelogram of forces joining all of them). By contrast (domestic) sovereignty never seems to have been such an issue in Papua New Guinea, with its indigenous traditions of 'statelessness', a constitution which divided it up between provincial governments, and a political system characterized by what Saffu (1982) has called 'limited "popular uprisings"'. Internationally, however, the Fiji government has had a harder job defending its sovereignty since the coups than the Papua New Guinea government has had since the rebellion. And in both cases the territorial scope of national government sovereignty has been questioned. In Fiji, Rotuman leaders talked of independence from Fiji after the coups. In Papua New Guinea Bougainvillean leaders questioned the colonial boundary with Solomon Islands, while their own territorial claims were questioned by the government's reoccupation of Buka, and by the uncertain allegiance of the Bougainvillean equivalent of Rotuma, its own outlying islands.

There were also differences in terms of legitimacy. in Fiji, the breakdown in legitimacy was first and foremost among the elite and between the central institutions entrenched at independence, including the army. In Papua New Guinea, by contrast, the elite—Bougainvillean and national—largely stuck together; the breakdown took place between them and ordinary Bougainvilleans. It was expressed at first in sympathy for landowner militancy and later in what amounted to an island-wide rebellion, which included attacks on plantations and government buildings throughout the province. The level of popular participation in events in Fiji has been much lower. There is also a difference in the efforts of the states themselves to restore legitimacy: in Fiji there has been continuous manoeuvring to reconstruct some basis of legitimacy in legality, charisma, tradition and the promise of elections; the Papua New Guinea government's attention to the legitimacy of its rule over Bougainville seems to have been less consistent, and was perhaps fatally undermined by the actions of the military.

Ideas of legitimacy and sovereignty form a basis for systematic comparison of events, but also (through these events) illuminate questions about regime change.

Both cases demonstrate the fragility of regimes, conceived of as understandings and expectations about government, rather than particular personnel. In these cases, regime change has involved less and more than a forcible replacement of personnel from the government of the whole territory (Fiji) or part of it (Bougainville). Less, in that in both cases there has been a significant continuity in personnel (Fiji's governor general continued as president of the new republic and Bougainville's provincial secretary reappeared as leader of the secessionist cabinet of the Republic of Mekamui). More, in that the assumptions and expectations under which these same individuals governed had changed irreversibly, towards terms set by military leaders in the background, Rabuka and Ona.

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