CHAPTER 12

Same Sex, Different Armies

Sexual Minority Invisibility among Fijians in the Fiji Military Forces and British Army

Teresia K. Teaiwa

In the summer of 2008 and the autumn of 2009, I traveled around England trying to learn what I could about the experiences of Fiji women serving in the British Army (BA) for a research project I was conducting on Fiji women soldiers.[1] Through a network of personal contacts, I was invited to stay with service personnel and their families at a range of army bases in different parts of the country. At one of these bases, I had an uncanny experience while sitting down with my host at her dinner table. As we chatted, we heard the door open and she explained to me that it was her cousin, a corporal in the BA, with whom she shared the semidetached home. She called out to him to join us in the dining room and announced that they had a visitor named "Teresia." The response from the corridor came, "Is that Teresia Teaiwa?" I was caught completely off guard. In came a stunningly handsome, lithe young man with close-shaven hair, whom I did not recognize at all. "Do we know each other?" I asked hesitantly. "Yes!" the young man exclaimed, "You were my lecturer in Foundation at USP!"[2]

Although I pride myself on having a good memory for names and faces, I could not place him at all. It was only with further prompting that I realized that the athletic and indubitably masculine specimen in front of me was once the bleached-blonde, straightened-haired, and overtly camp student I had had in my Laucala campus classroom in Suva, Fiji, thirteen or fourteen years before.[3] In the course of our unexpected reunion and excited conversation, I learned that a family tradition of military service had led

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him down this path. It became apparent to me that, rather than forcing him to conceal his sexual orientation as one might assume a military culture might do, the BA's policies and the distance from Fiji made him feel comfortable and safe, not only in living his identity, but also—ironically—in not having to be "flaming" in order to express himself as one of a sexual minority.[4] His partner was an Englishman who had just retired (at a relatively young age) from service in the BA officer corps, and although I was told that they were not quite ready to move in together at that time, they were in the process of planning a joint holiday in Fiji.

To fully appreciate the significance of this encounter, it is useful to reflect on how Fiji's national culture is one of stark contrasts and contradictions—some coexisting easily while others are in marked tension. Much has been made by human rights activists of Fiji becoming, in 1997, one of only two countries in the world whose constitutions enshrined freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (George 2008).[5] Yet the murder of a prominent humanitarian and Fiji citizen of European descent, John Scott, and his New Zealander partner, Greg Scrivener, in 2001 produced a most astonishing circus of police attempts to prejudice the investigation and cast moral judgment on the deceased pair (Scott 2004; Goldson 2008).

Paradoxically, in 2008, I was able to witness firsthand civilian members of Suva's sexual minority community serving as referees of the Fiji Military Forces (FMF) versus Police netball matches at the two disciplined services' annual Ratu Sukuna Bowl games. What makes it possible for the horrific double murder with homophobic intent of a white couple to be treated without compassion by police, while camp Fijian men were adjudicating in sport over groups that to a large extent determined whether they would or would not be safe in society? What are the various contexts we need to account for in order to understand how intersections of race, class, sexuality, and other social matrices in Fiji produce different effects and meaning?

Is there another country in the world where the head of state (who holds a high chiefly title in the indigenous customary social hierarchy of Fiji and is also a former commander of the FMF) would be feted as the guest of honor and patron of a drag-queen pageant? Fiji's President Rātū Epeli Nailatikau was just so honored in 2010 at the annual Adi Senikau festival, the transgender mirror of the more heteronormative institution of the annual Miss and Mr. Hibiscus pageants. Just prior to the Adi Senikau festival on August 10, 2010, at the 10th International Congress on AIDS

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held in South Korea, the same president announced that travel bans preventing persons with HIV from entering Fiji would be lifted (http://www.unaids.org.fj/). This followed logically from the decriminalization of homosexuality by military decree announced in February 2010 (Chand 2010). However, *Kaila,* the newspaper insert for younger readers of *The Fiji Times,* a national daily newspaper over a hundred years old, in 2011 was able to print a feature piece that derided attempts to view transgender behavior as normal. The author of the article stated: "Morally . . . the only gender that is 'normal' . . . is our God given gender [*sic*], male or female" (Serelini 2011, 3). Less than a year later, in May 2012, the Fiji Police revoked a permit for civil society organizations planning to hold a march to mark International Day against Homophobia.[6] So although my former student experienced the BA as affirming of his sexual orientation, some of the ambivalences and antipathies that portions of society in Fiji have about homosexuality will no doubt have also traveled with Fiji's military diaspora to the UK.

The impetus for this reflective chapter arose out of interviews, anecdotal evidence, and my own fieldwork observations among service personnel in both Fiji and the UK between 2008 and 2009. Although my research focused on the experiences of Fiji women serving in the FMF and BA, I encountered several servicemen and women who candidly shared with me their thoughts about and experiences of being a sexual minority in the military.[7] During this period, for many of them, the memory of a fatal attack on a Fiji serviceman who had recently completed an overseas tour of duty was still raw. Everyone who spoke to me about the case described the deceased as gay and believed that the attack was homophobic in intent, but none of this surfaced in the media coverage surrounding his death or the conviction and sentencing of a fellow Fijian for the murder. Quite rightly, all the reporting emphasized the fallen soldier's exemplary service and the unprovoked nature of the attack. However, this studious official avoidance of any acknowledgment of the relevance of sexual politics effectively meant that the contributions of Fiji's sexual minorities to one of the most elevated categories of citizenship remained invisible.

I am deeply interested in Fiji's social and cultural complexities and the problems these present for analysis. I use the term "problem" here, not so much in the sociological sense, but in the sense that the invisibility of Fiji's sexual minorities in the FMF and BA presents a challenge to understanding the differential ways in which militarization affects diverse

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communities. While there are no official data on sexual minorities in the FMF or sexual minorities from Fiji in the BA, an analysis of the conditions shaping their invisibility is further hampered by the paucity of serious scholarship on same-sex practices and sexual minorities issues in Fiji.[8] Apart from an impressionistic article by sexual minority activists and educators Tora, Perera, and Koya-Vaka'uta (2006), the most significant work in this area prior to the chapters in this book was by George (2008). In that article, George describes and analyses a distinctly hypermasculine ethos pervading the dominant social context that is at once condoned in Christian ethno-nationalist discourse and at the same time serves to limit—if not eliminate—tolerance of most other forms of minority cultural and political expression. While George makes a valuable contribution to the literature, further work is needed to capture the complex layers of tolerance and intolerance that can coexist in Fiji and shape the everyday experience of those who identify as sexual minorities.

I draw on a combination of my personal experience growing up in Fiji, observations I made while conducting research on Fiji women soldiers, and my own survey of recent secondary sources related to same-sex orientation and sexual minorities in Fiji. I present a picture of same-sex issues in relation to military service for indigenous Fijians in the BA and FMF that highlights both the complexities of social and cultural values and concepts at play and the challenges for research in such contexts. In the next section, I lay out some of the cultural and linguistic contexts for identifying and discussing same-sex categories in Fiji. I discuss colloquial terms that have been used to describe individuals with a same-sex orientation and read this alongside major lexicographies. My purpose in this section is to highlight the epistemological challenges to researching and understanding which same-sex terms are relevant and intelligible, and in what ways, to people from Fiji. In short, this section reminds us that the terms we use can determine the levels of visibility and invisibility of same-sex issues vis-à-vis particular audiences.

In the second section, I explore the notion of "different armies." I underline the way in which same-sex orientation has often been cast in heteronormative societies as a difference worthy of naming and othering. Here I draw attention to a link between heteronormative forms of othering and military forms of othering, especially in terms of historical practices of excluding different categories of people from the particular privileges of citizenship bestowed upon military service personnel and veterans. I also compare the

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FMF and the BA in terms of their explicit or implicit policies on sexual minorities, pointing to the ways in which different demographic contexts shape the conditions of visibility and invisibility for Fiji's sexual minorities.

In the third section, I reflect more explicitly on the challenges that surround research on sexual minorities under conditions of invisibility. I outline issues of accessibility in relation to military archives and share some of my own experiences of having same-sex issues come up in interviews with servicewomen. Overall, I suggest, the field is wide open for research that will illuminate both the conditions that produce invisibility and the complex stakes of achieving visibility of Fiji's sexual minorities in military service. I offer my thoughts here as someone who has close kin and friends who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer, and as someone who is concerned about how military service becomes invested with the expectations and aspirations of marginalized communities.

Same Sex

Alexeyeff and Besnier (this volume) argue that focusing on difference, categories, and terms as objects of our analyses of non-heteronormativity is less productive than exploring social relations. This section, however, is focused on terms—but not for the purpose of reification. My discussion here attempts to explore both heteronormative and non-heteronormative conditions of social relations in Fiji through a tracing of colloquial terms used to describe non-heteronormative subjects. The section also positions me as a researcher who comes to the topic through particular social and cultural contexts.

Fiji in the 1970s and 1980s provided me with my introduction to sexuality. My own early understanding of social responses to same-sex orientation came from noticing how my peers at school reacted to boys whom they called "poofters" and girls whom they called *"panikeke."* The etymology of the term "poofter" is unclear, but it appears to have been brought to and embedded in Fiji by British, Australian, and New Zealand colonial influences.[9] An indigenous synonym is *qauri,* which is not found in either the standard Fijian–English dictionary (Capell 1991) or the Fijian monolingual dictionary (Tabana ni Vosa kei na Itovo Vakaviti 2005). This word is likely to have been borrowed into Fijian from the Fiji Hindi word *gauri,* meaning "homosexual" or "a male who behaves in a feminine manner" (Geraghty, Mugler, and Tent 2006, 238; see also Presterudstuen, this volume). The

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term may be used in the following way in colloquial Fijian: *"Raica mada na qauri"* (i.e., "Take a look at that gay guy") or *"Kua ni vāqauri tiko!"* (i.e., "Don't behave like an effeminate man!"). Brison (1999) has observed the latter injunctions, particularly in Fijian children's speech. While there were certainly negative connotations to the term *"qauri"* when I was growing up, in my experience it was often also used as a matter-of-fact descriptor.

Panikeke is a Fijian borrowing of the English word "pancake" and refers to the presumed absence of a penetrative sexual organ in the act of women having sex with women. The term "lesbian" may be mobilized when one is speaking Fiji English to confirm the meaning of *panikeke* (e.g., *"Era panikeke. Kilā? Lesbian,"* or "They are *panikeke*. You know? Lesbians"). While there must have been some pejorative dimensions to the term *"panikeke,"* I personally have not witnessed it being used as an insult. In any case, when I was growing up in the 1970s and 1980s in urban centers of Fiji from Savusavu to Levuka, Lautoka, and Suva, the ambiguous term *"tomboy"* had more currency and cachet among my peers. *Tomboy*-hood was something that we knew most girls grew out of and a few girls never did. However, to say that someone was a *tomboy* had no direct bearing on her sexual orientation, so the term did not necessarily refer to lesbianism (compare Tcherkézoff, this volume, on Samoa).

Even though it appeared to me as a child that there was nothing explicitly sexual in the general behavior of poofters or *panikeke*s, it seemed that it was assumed by many that their respective favoring of the opposite sex's accepted clothes or mannerisms signaled an interest in members of the same sex as potential partners.[10] There were cruder discussions about poofters and *panikeke*s that I occasionally overheard while growing up—although, to be fair, heterosexual activities are still probably the ones discussed in the most vulgar terms in the urban Fiji social circles with which I am most familiar.

It wasn't until I was in my teens in the 1980s that I heard the term *"wādua"* (Fijian for "one string") to describe men who engaged in sexual relations with other men. The impression I got from its usage was that *wādua* were not necessarily poofters. It was just over a decade later, in the 1990s, that "men who have sex with men" or "MSM" began to be used as an analytical unit, especially in association with HIV/AIDS and STD research in the Pacific (e.g., Peteru 2002, 1997). The term *wādua,* however, appears not to circulate as widely as *qauri* today and does not appear in any of Fiji's dictionaries.[11]

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Of course, the most dignified of Fijian speakers will use more polite terms to describe transgender and same-sex sexuality: McIntosh (1999, n.d.) makes passing reference to the Fijian term *"vakasalewalewa"* as the equivalent to the more prominent Polynesian categories *fakaleitī, fa'afafine,* and *māhū. Na Ivolavosa Vakaviti* (2005, 759) does not indicate what the origins of *vakasalewalewa* might be, but its gloss is remarkably respectful: *"tiko ruarua vua na gacagaca vakatagane kei na vakayalewa; tagane itovo vakayalewa,"* outlining the identity as one of having two spirits—both masculine and feminine, or being a male who has been assigned feminine duties.[12] *Vakayalewa, dauyalewa,* and *vakamocetagane* are additional terms that might be used to refer to males with feminine behavior or a sexual orientation toward other men; and *vakatagane, dautagane,* and *vakamoceyalewa* to refer to females with masculine mannerisms or a sexual orientation toward other women.[13] Today, these terms may be considered archaic or more reflective of a particular generation's linguistic turns and sensibilities.[14]

It was also when I was in my late teens and twenties in the late 1980s and 1990s that I noticed that the term "gay" had entered popular usage in Fiji to describe same-sex orientation, although in a way similar to other international contexts, it was applied more frequently to men than to women (Smorag 2008). As has been documented elsewhere, the term "gay" signals a kind of politics that may have a high profile in the public imaginary but is not necessarily universally embraced by people with same-sex orientations (Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel 1999). Wallace (2003) argues that modern Western notions of sexual personhood, such as those that cohere around the categories "homosexual," "transgender," or "transvestite," owe their historical constitution to early encounters of European explorers in Pacific Island societies where same-sex relationships were treated as normal rather than deviant. She resists positing rigid cultural and historical boundaries between indigenous and "modern" terms and categories of sexual personhood, preferring to see them as co-constitutive of one another (2003, 139; see also Alexeyeff and Besnier, this volume).

It is interesting to note that in the 1990s an NGO taking up the challenge for the first time of directly countering heteronormative biases in Fiji society downplayed gay terminology and put itself forward under the conceptual framework of "sexual minorities" (George 2008, this volume). The focus on "minority" status for individuals, couples, and groups with same-sex orientations allowed the NGO to keep questions of human rights at the center of their activism and gave them the assurance of

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having recourse to those international human rights conventions that the state of Fiji was party to, deflecting some of the moralistic intolerance based on particular interpretations of the Scriptures in this predominantly Christian nation.

There are a myriad of other terms related to same-sex orientation that, to my knowledge, have had little traction in Fiji English. Many of these are derogatory, although some have been rehabilitated and reclaimed in international gay pride movements (see Smorag 2008). "Queer" terminology, while popular in places like the United States, has recently gained some currency among sexual minority activists in Fiji, especially because of the relative advantages the discourse offers, allowing for a lot more complexity and disruption of dominant order gender and sexuality.[15]

An example of how sexual minority activists in Fiji have been able to use indigenous terms to strategically articulate with or disarticulate from global movements and hegemonic concepts emerged in the late 1990s, while I was teaching at USP. A small number of student activists formed a group called "Drodrolagi," which is Fijian for "rainbow," the international symbol for gay pride. As George (this volume) documents, the group's visibility petered out when the founding cohort of students moved on, but recently it has been revived at USP under the name "Drodrolagi Movement" or "Dromo," and it is currently garnering significant local and international support both on the ground and in cyber-based communities through the use of social networking and Internet media such as Facebook.

I have laid out some of the relevant terms in Fiji here in order to highlight some of the complexities that need to be accounted for when researching and writing about same-sex orientation in Fiji. What terms are being used in existing literature? What terms are intelligible to potential research participants? Might there be a gap between the existing literature and common vernacular usage? As Smorag notes in her survey of gayspeak (2008), questions of language and terminology are fundamental to social and discursive processes of exclusion and inclusion that can render groups marginal, invisible, or visible. As a code or secret language, gayspeak can serve to cloak or make same-sex subculture invisible to the mainstream and visible only to insiders. Do Fiji's sexual minority communities have their own gayspeak, or codes, and insiders' language? This would certainly be a rich area of research that could challenge the heteronormativity evident in the current lexicography of Fiji—as demonstrated by the silences around same-sex sexuality in dictionaries.

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Different Armies

In popular Anglophone discourse, sexual orientation is often cast in metaphors of team sports. Someone who comes out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer might be described as "switching sides" or "playing for the other team, now" (Smorag 2008, 4). A "team" is thus formed by shared sexual orientation. A team considered to be "other" does not conform to what is considered normal in society—it will be different, perhaps even oppositional. Discourses that take male–female sexual partnerships as the norm are described as heteronormative (see Alexeyeff and Besnier, this volume). Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender same-sex relationships are considered to be beyond the bounds of heteronormativity. This is ironic, because the prefix "hetero-" refers to multiplicity and diversity but a heteronormative discourse privileges only one form of sexual orientation. Although at one point in the late nineteenth-century United States the term "heterosexual" was used to also refer to what today we would call "bisexual" (Katz 1995), contemporary understandings of the term frame it as an exclusively male–female sexual partnership. So the prefix "hetero-" in heteronormativity is misleading, because while it could seem to normalize diversity, in fact it is shorthand for "heterosexual normativity." How heteronormative discourses deal with alternatives can vary: at one end of the spectrum, "other teams" may be considered unremarkable and rendered invisible; at the other end of the spectrum, they could be considered a serious threat and thrown into the spotlight of surveillance. To be oriented toward or involved in same-sex intimate partnerships is thus understood as playing for a different team in a heteronormative society.

An army is a large-scale team. Its primary business, war, is a lot like an extreme sport, except with national policy and pride at stake and death as its inevitable consequence. Military studies assume that membership in an armed force is governed by a transparent logic. To play for this "team," namely to serve in this army, one has to be qualified to do so. The primary qualifications for national military service are often framed around full membership in a society (i.e., citizenship) and full capacity to serve (i.e., able-bodiedness). Although there were variations from age to age and society to society, certainly by the twentieth century, once selected for this team, one became a member of one of the most honored "squads" of a society.[16] This is evident both from the extent to which societies that have militaries tend to invest their trust in them and from the degrees of financial

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and emotional investment those societies make in military fortification and celebration.

Throughout modern history, however, citizenship has in fact rarely been a transparent category. Armies have not always welcomed, and still do not welcome, all citizens of the nation. Observing military recruitment and admission policies is one way of understanding how nations implement a graduated concept of citizenship. When a military restricts service to one sex, one race, one religion, or one sexual orientation, we learn which identities are privileged in that nation. Debates in the United States over the now defunct "Don't ask, don't tell" (DADT) policy were but the latest example of the recurrent battles for equality of citizenship that take place in modern democracies (Belkin 2008).

The case of Fiji is particularly interesting. It is an ostensibly heteronormative society that is in the unusual position of having its citizens eligible to serve in two different armies: Fiji citizens are currently serving in both the FMF and the BA. Fiji Bureau of Statistics figures from 2007 place the total regular force capacity of the FMF at 4,359.[17] As of July 2008, UK Ministry of Defence statistics record the number of Fijians in the BA at 2,170. In Fiji, military service has historically been considered an elevated category of national citizenship, and for indigenous Fijian males it was often viewed as a reliable vehicle for social mobility. In British colonial Fiji, soldiering was the preserve of European and indigenous Fijian men until early in the twentieth century, when recruitment expanded (somewhat reluctantly) to include Indo-Fijians, and in the late 1980s (slightly more enthusiastically) to include women (Teaiwa 2008). The recently observed phenomenon of sexual minorities from Fiji serving in either the BA or FMF thus raises questions about the ways globalization and militarization are engendering sociopolitical, cultural, and economic transformations around the world. But the questions my current research explores are more specifically comparative.

I have been following and analyzing various dimensions of militarization in the Pacific for over two decades. In 2008, I undertook an investigation into the history of Fiji citizens' respective entanglements in the two armed forces. My curiosity was piqued, for example, by the question of what difference it makes if a Fiji citizen decides to enlist in the FMF rather than the BA or vice versa. What does it mean to enact some of the most idealized forms of citizenship and national service for a country of which one is not even a citizen? How does a national armed force deal with the fact that its citizens have the option to serve another country?

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Both the FMF and the BA fulfill functions that are valued highly in their respective societies in terms of providing employment and training opportunities for their own citizens. The BA even extends these privileges to those in its personnel who are not UK citizens but who are part of the British Commonwealth of Nations (see Ware 2012). BA recruitment of Fiji citizens for military service since the late 1990s does not appear to have had a direct impact on FMF—that is, FMF personnel have not been leaving in droves to join the BA. Rather, the BA is drawing recruits from the burgeoning pool of high school leavers and young adults who have not been easily absorbed into Fiji's limited job market. Both militaries are engaged in overseas missions, and both have troops serving in what since 2003 has been one of the most important global theaters of conflict in the twenty-first century—Iraq.

The size, technology, and history of professionalism in the BA of course dwarf that of the FMF. The BA traces its origins to the merger of the Scottish and English armies in 1707, whereas the FMF came into being as a result of British colonial rule in Fiji in 1874. The BA had a force capacity of 177,840 on April 1, 2010, while the FMF in 2012 would have had between 4,000 and 5,000 at least in their full-time trained strength, with around 6,000 territorials. The FMF's nine naval patrol boats cannot compare with the thousands of armored vehicles, over two hundred aircraft, and several landing craft and assault boats of the BA.[18]

The rate of pay for BA new entrants is £13, 895, while the basic pay for privates in the FMF is reportedly F$10,194.[19] Thus, BA soldiers earn almost four times more than their FMF counterparts by 2013 exchange rates, but the cost of living in the UK is also significantly higher than in Fiji, so FMF soldiers may in effect have a higher standard of living, or at least more disposable income, than their BA counterparts. A further consideration is that Fiji citizens are for the most part excluded from serving as officers in the BA, whereas Fiji citizenship is explicitly advertised as a criterion for officer recruitment in the FMF.

A notable point of comparison between the two armed forces is their policies toward same-sex partnerships. In the case of the FMF, an informal DADT policy appears to be at work.[20] When I enquired of my military liaison officers about policy documents governing personnel issues in the FMF, I was directed to the Fiji Public Service Commission Guidelines for Public Servants and told that these also applied to servicemen and women. While I could locate no explicit injunctions against same-sex or

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non-normative gender behavior in them, the Guidelines for Public Servants clearly rely on the Laws of Fiji to define the parameters of legal behavior.[21] In spite of the fact that the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1997 included a preamble that enshrined the principle of freedom from discrimination on the basis of sexuality, the Penal Code of the Laws of Fiji at the time considered "unnatural offences" to be felonies, including "carnal knowledge of any person against the order of nature" and "indecent practices between males" in public or private. The maximum sentences for these offenses were fourteen years and five years respectively, with options for corporal punishment. While Fiji inherited much of its legislation from its former colonial authority, it took over four decades for its penal code to catch up with Britain's 1967 Sexual Offenses Act, which decriminalized consensual sex in private between males over the age of twenty-one. The circumstances under which homosexuality was decriminalized in Fiji in 2010, however, are very particular: rather than resulting from a process of democratic legislative reform, it took place in the context of an unelected and *military* regime (Chand 2010).

To be fair, it also took the BA several decades to align its policies with British legislation, and the institution did not lift its ban on homosexuality until 2000, and then only to comply with a European Community Human Rights ruling (Belkin and Evans 2000). Nonetheless, within the year, it opened the door for same-sex partnerships to be formally recognized by the military and administered by the institution to the same extent as heterosexual ones (Burke 2001). By 2004, British armed services were actively recruiting at gay-pride festivals (Keller 2004), and several branches of the defense forces had joined a "diversity champions" program run by Britain's leading charity for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals—Stonewall—participating in regular workplace equity benchmarking.[22] In the same year, the passage of a Civil Partnership Law in the UK translated into legal recognition of same-sex unions, and for the military this meant that all housing, allowances, and pensions accorded to married service personnel were to be extended to personnel in same-sex partnerships.[23] Today, an association for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender military personnel runs an online networking, support, and information service called "Proud 2 Serve."[24]

The contrast between the radical extralegal reforms of same-sex sexuality legislation undertaken by Fiji's military regime and the resounding official silence about sexual minorities in its military service on the one hand and, on the other, the apparent progressiveness and consistency of Britain's

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laws and military policy is striking. It is tempting to assume that Britain and the BA would provide safer environments for Fiji soldiers with same-sex orientations. But nationalism can also claim a progressive, liberal identity for itself, exemplified in the form of securing rights for sexual minorities, while still casting "others" as regressive and backward; Puar (2011) and others have called this "homonationalism," reminding us of the dangers of simplistic comparative readings. The simultaneity of increasing protection of sexual minority rights in Israel and the persistent framing of Arab, including Palestinian, cultures as intolerant of gender equality and same-sex orientation that Puar writes about begs further exploration in regard to the ongoing deployments of FMF forces and BA forces with personnel from Fiji to the Sinai and Iraq. Anecdotal evidence indicates that FMF participation in UN peacekeeping operations in the Sinai since 1982 has strengthened the admiration that indigenous Fijians have for Israeli armed forces. But how might FMF personnel think of the state of Israel's reforms around sexual minority rights? Would they see their own country's policy reforms in the area as necessarily or unnecessarily emulating this trend? Would Fiji soldiers in the BA feel comforted by the alignment of British and Israeli policies on sexual minorities? Or would social and cultural pressures toward preserving heteronormativity incline Fiji's service personnel in the BA and in the FMF to identify more with Palestinian and Arab cultures (simultaneously buying into Israeli homonationalist representations of them)? These complex questions clearly demand further research. There is an easy temptation to judge the FMF negatively in comparison to the BA on the issue of formally institutionalizing the protection of sexual minority rights. But it bears recalling here that, although my former student felt comfortable expressing himself as a member of a sexual minority in the BA, another Fiji soldier could be killed by a fellow countryman in circumstances that were at least rumored to have homophobic dimensions.

Hegemonic Christianity's role in reinforcing heteronormativity (Chaney and Patrick 2011; Linneman 2004) makes it a crucial context for understanding homophobia and its production of sexual minority invisibility among Fijians in the military at home and abroad. Halapua (2003) has documented extensively the way in which the Methodist Church has historically exercised a monopoly over clerical and cultural ministry in the Fiji military as well as over its political ideology, especially in the buildup to and the aftermath of the 1987 coups. George (2008) also refers to the collapse of sexual minorities' euphoria about the 1997 constitutional changes when

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the Methodist Church mobilized homophobic sentiment around the John Scott and Greg Scrivener murders in 2001.[25] In her analysis, the Methodist Church at the time enforced a return to gay invisibility, and she quotes the Women's Action for Change (WAC) nongovernmental organization's Sexual Minorities Project (SMP) describing the Methodist Church in Fiji as "the most serious promoter of homophobia in Fiji" (George 2008, 175–179, this volume). Of course, this characterization is unfair to those members of the Methodist Church in Fiji who resist both ethno-nationalist and homophobic beliefs and practices, although in broad terms the Methodist church officially toes an antihomosexual line.

In the end, 2001 became something of a swansong for a particular group of ethno-nationalist Methodist leaders. The church had faced a severe threat from Pentecostal churches in the previous decade as a result of the growing perception among indigenous Fijians that the Methodist Church's articulation with chiefly and village-based hierarchies was stifling the social mobility and financial well-being of individuals and nuclear family groups (Brison 2007; Barr 1998; Ernst 1994). The popularity of Pentecostal churches and "new religious movements" grew exponentially in the 1990s, and then again after the most severe attack on the Methodist Church's claim to represent indigenous Fijian interests, when FMF's commander, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, effectively designated it an enemy of the state with his coup in 2006 (Tomlinson 2013, 82).

As George aptly recognizes, the military's dismantling of the Methodist Church's authority in the period after 2006 has specific ramifications for sexual minority invisibility in Fiji: "While the military-led government [of Bainimarama] could certainly be accused of encouraging self-censorship within civil society in Fiji at the current moment, and of once again reinforcing the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and militarization, some of the new regime's actions might also be viewed, somewhat ironically, as strengthening the hand of gay activists in Fiji" (George 2008, 180). It is indeed tempting to interpret the actions of Fiji's military regime as socially progressive in this instance, but it would be simplistic. As I laid out in the introduction to this chapter, circumstances in Fiji are prone to change, inconsistency, and contradiction. The focus on the Methodist Church in WAC SMP's analysis neglects the position of its rival Pentecostal churches; for it would seem unrealistic to expect that new religious groups would be more tolerant of sexual minorities than mainstream churches in Fiji. As Ernst (1994, 12, 272) observes, new religious groups in the Pacific Islands

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tend to import fundamentalist and right-wing agendas almost wholesale from the United States, including opposition to abortion, feminism, labor unionism, and sexual minority rights on one hand and, on the other, advocacy for a strong military. More detailed research on homophobia in Fiji and its diasporic communities, I suspect, would reveal that, while the official conditions afforded soldiers in same-sex partnerships may ostensibly be better in the BA, notions of cultural authenticity and appropriate social behavior are likely to be policed more directly and even brutally in migrant communities abroad than they are among Fijians at home.[26] This is even more likely when, in the absence of other counterbalancing cultural institutions, religious worship and identification become the focus of indigenous social organization for Fiji's military migrant communities.[27]

Research and (In)visibility

So far, I have outlined some of the linguistic, institutional, and cultural conditions that in many ways embed sexual minorities in the FMF and BA. There are certainly contrasting conditions of same-sex invisibility in the FMF and BA. The FMF's version of DADT encourages the invisibility of same-sex orientation, as does the ethnic and cultural dominance of indigenous Fijians within the force—sexual minority identity becomes subsumed under the ethnic identity of indigenous Fijians. Yet in spite of the BA's official recognition of same-sex partnerships, the BA's size and demographics also seem to render sexual minorities from Fiji invisible. (The numerical minority status of Fijians in the BA, however, does not prevent their rugby players from gaining regular visibility in forums such as the BA's monthly *Soldier* magazine.)

The twin problematics of visibility and invisibility both raise particular challenges for research on sexual minorities from Fiji in the FMF and BA. Where a phenomenon is easily visible, the researcher should be willing to probe below the surface of appearances. Many authors in this volume are doing precisely the kind of probing that is needed in their considerations of Polynesian same-sex visibility and the too easy conflation of visibility with acceptability. By its very definition, investigating any form of social invisibility or marginalization requires adopting an epistemological standpoint that will either have to resist or heavily negotiate with empiricist demands for evidence. Given that the precise topic of sexual minority invisibility among Fijians in the BA and FMF has not been previously explored; that

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there is little to no official data available on the numbers of military service personnel from Fiji with same-sex orientation or in same-sex partnerships in either the FMF or the BA; that ethnographic or analytical literature on same-sex relationships in Fiji is very limited; and that homophobic violence represents a real threat, the researcher's task is a delicate and difficult one.

If one seeks a historical understanding of the topic, access to military archives in Fiji can be problematic, as these are not held in the National Archives repository but at the Queen Elizabeth barracks in Nabua, Suva. The last major scholarly work to be published utilizing sources in the FMF archives was on New Zealand's participation in the British anticommunist campaign in Malaya (Pugsley 2003). The fact that the Malaya campaign is central to the FMF's heroic narrative and that the researcher was based at the prestigious Sandhurst Military Academy in Britain literally opened the archive doors. Although I was given virtually unimpeded access to FMF personnel for interviews during my six months of fieldwork in Fiji in 2008–2009, all my requests for access to the archives and official policy documents were politely ignored.

While historical BA records are held in the public British National Archives at Kew, other factors can affect their accessibility. When visiting Kew in 2008, I was fortunate that files pertaining to the recruitment of Fiji soldiers into the British Army in 1961 had by then been declassified. This allowed me to excavate some of the history and politics surrounding the recruitment of Fiji women in that cohort. The one file available on the 1961 cohort focused on their recruitment and did not capture any of their experiences of training and service. Perhaps other files will be declassified in due course; perhaps no other files were kept on the cohort as a discrete group. Personnel files for each BA soldier exist, but posthumous access to these is restricted, understandably, to immediate family members. Any records on Fiji soldiers recruited into the BA since 1998 would still be classified. British military court-martial records and decisions are also only selectively made available online, so access to information about disciplinary or criminal charges against soldiers is limited. While I would be surprised to find evidence of same-sex orientation in any of the official files of the 1961 Fiji cohort in the BA (and I would probably be more inclined to look for records of homophobic harassment or violence), it is of course advisable not to assume anything.

When I embarked on my research on Fiji women soldiers, the central focus of my inquiry and analysis was on gender—sexuality was not an area

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of priority for me. It was only after meeting and talking with members of sexual minorities from Fiji in military service that I realized I should have sought ethical approval from my university to investigate a broader base of questions. But every request for an interview on the topic of sexual orientation is potentially a form of "outing"—that is, of exposing individuals' private lives to public scrutiny (Smorag 2008)—and that would be a reprehensible outcome of research. I subsequently sought and received ethical approval from my university to interview service personnel about same-sex partnerships, on the condition that the topic arose organically out of our interviews, and that research participants' anonymity and confidentiality be preserved. I certainly did not want to shine surveillance spotlights on anyone, and neither did I want to have military doors slammed in my face as a result of explicitly asking people to be interviewed about sexual minority issues. Although my initial motivation for broadening my research from women soldiers to same-sex sexual orientation in the military emerged out of a concern for potential and actual victims of homophobic discrimination and violence, I came to realize that such a focus lent itself to sensationalized and superficial readings and reactions. With careful consideration of ethical questions—especially concerning the safety of research participants—bona fide research on sexual minorities in the military can more generally help to increase our understanding of the limits of and possibilities for cultural change within one of the most powerful and influential institutions in modern society.

In my own field visits to BA and FMF sites between 2008 and 2009, there were very few occasions when I might have thought, "Hmm . . . that soldier looks gay or that servicewoman looks like a lesbian." I do remember being quite impressed by the appearance of one Fiji servicewoman, though, who had shaved her hair very close to the scalp, with the result that her attractive facial features and lean physique projected a steely and formidable "GI Jane" aura. I was informed by other servicewomen I interviewed that she identified herself as a lesbian, but I did not have a chance to speak to her, and encountered few others like her in my travels. Certainly there is always the problem of the culturally informed limits of our perception—someone who might easily be assumed to be a "dyke'" in Western society because of her solid build, short hair, and authoritative speaking voice could very easily be a vigorously heterosexual mother of four in a Pacific Island society.[28]

While it is often a matter of pride among members of sexual minority communities to develop and sharpen one's "gay radar" or "gaydar" (Nicholas

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2004; Shelp 2002), presuming or predicting a potential research participant's sexuality is fraught with difficulties for researchers. But the flip side of erroneously trusting one's gaydar is to erroneously assume universal heteronormativity, thereby excluding or marginalizing sexual minorities, as if social blindness were a viable defense. Whenever I did find myself among soldiers I was meeting for the first time who openly asserted a same-sex orientation, I was often surprised, though I was able to exercise enough restraint not to show it.

In my formal research on women soldiers, only two of the nineteen oral histories recorded mentioned same-sex orientation. One of the members of Fiji's pioneer 1961 BA cohort told me that she had encountered lesbians for the first time in her life during basic training. She made the statement casually, commenting that it seemed only natural to her in a context where women had little daily contact with men. Although I was curious to hear more, I did not pursue the matter, as she had been a little anxious during our interview and occasionally asked me to turn off the recorder when she thought our conversation might have been straying into controversial territory. Even though it seemed as if she had no reservations about bringing up the topic of lesbians, I did not want to press her.

The other interview dealt with same-sex questions in the military at more length, and was with a member of one of the post-1998 cohorts. While the servicewoman I was interviewing did not like to label herself explicitly as either a lesbian or bisexual, she was not inclined to try to mask her sexual orientation. She spoke candidly about her own experiences, recounting how one of her commanding officers had once quietly taken her aside to ask if she was no longer "that way." She took this to mean that he was inquiring about whether she was still pursuing women as sexual partners. She noted with chagrin, however, that the harshest penalty she had ever received in the military came in the form of a demotion in rank when her superiors learned that she had been having an affair with a married male colleague. In spite of this career setback, she continued to serve with enthusiasm.

Although aspects of her circumstances are unique, this research participant also indicated that there were several officers (all male) and other ranks of personnel (some women) who shared a same-sex orientation. However, any sense of recognition or community among these service personnel did not appear to translate into visible or formal types of organization, community building, or leveraging of institutional support for sexual minorities. If

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sexual minorities are invisible in the FMF, it may be because they remain atomized individuals in their institutional setting. If Fiji's sexual minorities are visible in the BA as individuals but invisible as a political group, it may be because they are negotiating between the civil rights guaranteed them by the state and the army and the pressures to conform culturally in their diasporic communities. Sexual minority invisibility in either the FMF or the BA is best understood as a product of a combination of individual choices and survival strategies, and structural, institutional, or cultural conditions.

The field is wide open for researchers, but it is crucial that sensationalist urges be tempered. As McIntosh (n.d.) argues, the most important things to understand about same-sex sexuality or sexual minorities—when heterosexuality is still considered the norm—are not so much sexual, but social. In that vein, my reflections here have identified some areas for further research: gayspeak in Fiji, and the Israeli–Palestine interface for Fijian peacekeeping personnel and its impact on sexual politics, among other topics. In spite of over thirty years of contracted service with the United Nations, not enough is known about either the formal or informal sexual provisioning of Fijian troops while on peacekeeping and other security deployments for the UN. Neither do we know much about the relationship between FMF and BA soldiers and sex workers in Fiji. No significant research appears to have been done on the formal policies, informal attitudes, or social and cultural changes taking place that are related to either heterosexual or same-sex relationships among Fiji's military service personnel. Occasionally, matters of sexual health or reproduction in the military such as HIV and other STDs emerge in the media, or there is coverage in the news of the FMF cooperatively working with women's NGOs to address issues of domestic violence, but same-sex issues remain invisible.

Same Sex, Different Armies: More Work

To understand the conditions of invisibility of sexual minorities from Fiji in the FMF and BA, we have to examine contexts. The first context I explored in this chapter was terminology. Attentiveness to colloquial, formal, and political registers and naming helps us understand how sexual minorities are made visible or invisible in the culture. The second context for understanding invisibility was in relation to the institutions and cultures of the military. In the case of the BA, it would seem that official recognition of same-sex partnership would guarantee visibility. However, because

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of numeric and minority cultural reasons, Fiji's same-sex-oriented service personnel are nevertheless rendered invisible in the BA. While invisibility presents particular challenges to research, which I discussed in the third section, there may be valid reasons to maintain invisibility, such as preserving the safety and privacy of individuals.

What might be more problematic than invisibility, however, is the silence of activists, intellectuals, and researchers in regard to the processes of militarization among Fiji's minorities. As I have described in an earlier work, there has been a remarkable lack of public debate in Fiji around women serving in the military (Teaiwa 2008). This is surprising given that Fiji has had a robust feminist and women's rights movement since the 1970s and indigenous notions of gender propriety would exclude women from martial service. Fiji's feminist movement has avoided the trajectory of liberal feminism that is perhaps best exemplified by the United States' National Organization of Women's submission of an amicus curiae to the Supreme Court in the 1980s "calling for equality in policies shaping military conscription in the name of equality" (Shigematsu 2009, 418). But if the absence of any debate about women in the military in Fiji is notable, there is also no public discourse at all about sexual minorities in relation to the military. Several possible explanations for such silence and the resulting invisibility of sexual minority soldiers in the contemporary era remain to be investigated. Some of these explanations will be particular to the individual and his or her circumstances, but many are shaped by broader social, political, and cultural structures and institutions. The series of events that first drew my attention to the complexities surrounding sexual minorities in the FMF and the BA involved two young men. One is my former student living his life to the fullest in the BA, the other is a young man whose life was ended too early—not in the warfare or peacekeeping he was trained for—but in an act of interpersonal violence. The issues faced by Fiji's sexual minority soldiers demand careful inquiry and critical reflection. There is so much more work to be done.

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Notes

1 The title of my chapter resonates with the title of Herdt's book, *Same Sex, Different Cultures* (1997).

2 USP stands for the University of the South Pacific, a regional university owned by twelve Pacific Island nations. Its main campus is in Suva, Fiji; the law school, in Vila, Vanuatu; the agricultural school, in Alafua, Samoa; and distance education centers are in each of the member island countries.

3 In a survey of what she calls "gayspeak," Smorag notes that the term "camp" emerged out of *Polari,* a lexicon of five hundred words used in gay communities in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States. It originally meant "effeminate" or "outrageous" (2008, 3) and was "recaptured in 1964 by the American writer Susan Sontag who coined two new phrases, high camp (sophisticated, tongue-in-cheek wit, and self-aware) and low camp (showing a lack of sophistication and self-awareness)" (Smorag 2008, 6).

4 Smorag notes that "flamer" is another term used to signify an "effeminate gay man" (2008, 4).

5 In July 2009, India's High Court decriminalized homosexuality with explicit reference to legal precedents in Nepal and Fiji (Khosla 2011). But, in my opinion, the initiative taken in drafting the preamble and much of Fiji's 1997 constitutional amendment was much more about the drafters' aspirations than it was a response to or a reflection of a widespread social movement or universally held beliefs in Fiji. Indeed, the 1997 constitutional amendment preceded the reform of laws criminalizing sodomy. In the late 1990s, when the Fiji Women's Rights Movement spearheaded legal reform around rape and sexual violence, I recall participating in consultations where participants were informed that the laws on sodomy were strategically dropped from the feminist agenda, ironically reproducing the sorts of political prioritizing that often sees women's issues deferred until "after the revolution" (see George, this volume).

6 Tora, Perera, and Koya-Vaka'uta recall that Fiji police granted a permit for church groups to organize a march against sexual minority rights in 1997 (2006, 58).

7 Although the military regime has decreed that all citizens of Fiji may be described as "Fijian," that term has historically been used to signify indigenous or ethnic Fijians rather than any of the other ethnic populations in the country. Whenever I use the term "Fijian," I am referring only to indigenous citizens of Fiji. Whenever I use the term "Fiji" as an adjective rather than a noun, I am signifying a national identity rather than an ethnic one. For example, my research on Fiji women soldiers is not just about Fijian women soldiers.

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8 By contrast, the neighboring Pacific Island countries, particularly Tonga and Samoa, have prominent indigenous gender-liminal categories that for some time have attracted scholarly attention on questions of gender and sexuality (e.g., Wallace 2003; Besnier 1997, 2002).

9 "Poofter" is defined in Geraghty, Mugler, and Tent as "'male homosexual,' the use of this word may give offence" (2006, 421). See also http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=poof and http://www.peevish.co.uk/slang/p.htm. Confirming the connotations of homosexuality and effeminacy, Adinkrah (2000, 158) also notes that "[w]ithin male peer groups [in Fiji], those who display hesitancy or an unwillingness to participate in peer-approved displays of machismo are ridiculed as weak or are labeled 'poofter.'"

10 *Editors' note:* While poofters in Fiji may be defined as males with a same-sex orientation, within their own communities there may be proscriptions against partnering with those who were similarly defined.

11 My father is from the ethnic minority community of Banabans in Fiji whose first language is Kiribati, but he speaks Fijian fluently as a result of spending eight years in an all-male predominantly indigenous Fijian boarding school and working for over thirty years in agricultural extension and rural development. As I was working on this chapter, I asked him what words he knew that referred to same-sex orientation in Fiji, and he volunteered the term *wādua* and did not recognize the term *qauri.* Further research into the changing currency of same-sex terms in Fiji could be revealing of generational and other sociocultural shifts in attitude and thinking.

12 Interestingly, *pufta* (which is a more phonetically intelligible spelling of "poofter" for speakers of Fiji English) and *qauri* are listed as synonyms in the entry for *vakasalewalewa,* but neither term has its own entry in the dictionary.

13 *Na Ivolavosa Vakaviti* (2005) does not include *vakayalewa* or *vakatagane* in its listings. However, *dauyalewa* and *vakamoceyalewa* are designated in the dictionary as male activities, and *dautagane* and *vakamocetagane* are designated as female activities, that is, there appears to be a heteronormative injunction in the dictionary's glossing of these terms.

14 I thank Maciu Raivoka and Dr. Apolonia Tamata for their illumination of these terms for me. *Vinaka vaka levu sara.*

15 Queer sexuality is not just about feminine men having sex with masculine men, or masculine women having sex with feminine women, but covers more nuances of sexual orientation than I am able to account for in this chapter. Smorag (2008) notes, for example, that heterosexual children of gay parents might also identify as queer.

16 In colloquial parlance, regular BA soldiers are called "squaddies."

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17 See Fiji Bureau of Statistics website: http://www.statsfiji.gov.fj/Key%20Stats/Employment%20&%20Wages/9.4%20Paid%20employment%20by%20occup.pdf (accessed February 15, 2013).

18 See Ministry of Defence: http://www.dasa.mod.uk/applications/newWeb/www/index.php?page=48&pubType=1&thiscontent=10&PublishTime=09:30:00&date=2010–09–29&disText=2010&from=listing&topDate=2010–09–29 (accessed September 15, 2011). In addition, the UK Ministry of Defence also has the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy as part of its force capacity.

19 See The Defence Suppliers Directory: http://www.armedforces.co.uk/armypayscales.htm and the Fiji Coup 2006 blogsite at http://www.fijicoup2006.com/2011/08/army-privates-paid-more-than-usp_19.html#.UR36FaW9ZSU (both accessed February 15, 2013).

20 While the FMF is not interested in pursuing its service personnel on questions of sexual orientation, there is a concomitant lack of interest among Fiji NGOs about the impact of domestic militarization on the sexual health of the wider community. The most extensive survey of MSM in relation to HIV and AIDS in Fiji, for example, makes no reference at all to the influence of the military on sexual practices in the country or on the incidence of HIV and AIDS (Bavinton et al. 2011). The significance of the invisibility of the military altogether in sexual health and policy research literature on Fiji and the Pacific (e.g., PIAF 2010, 2011; UNDP Pacific Centre and UNAIDS 2009) deserves to be explored in greater detail.

21 See Fiji Public Service Commission, Legislation and Policies at http://www.psc.gov.fj/index.php/legislations-policies/policies (accessed February 15, 2013).

22 See Proud to Serve.Net, the British Armed Forces LGBT e-network website: http://www.proud2serve.net/lgbt-organisations/227-workplace-equality-index-stonewall-benchmarking (accessed February 15, 2013).

23 See Proud to Serve.Net, the British Armed Forces LGBT e-network website: http://www.proud2serve.net/civil-partnerships (accessed February 15, 2013).

24 See Proud to Serve.Net, the British Armed Forces LGBT e-network homepage: http://www.proud2serve.net/ (accessed February 15, 2013).

25 The extent to which human rights pertaining to sexuality have been considered expendable enough in Fiji to garner broad public support is perhaps best demonstrated by the populist move made by Mahendra Chaudry, as the first Indo-Fijian prime minister of the country in 1999, proposing to delete the antidiscrimination clause as one of his first legislative acts. Unfortunately for Chaudry, rather than winning him support from right-wing Christian Fijian nationalists, his willingness to tamper with the constitution raised alarms and helped to feed fears among indigenous Fijians about his intentions in regard to

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their constitutionally protected land rights. Chaudry's term as prime minister was short-lived, for in May 2000 the ethno-nationalists mobilized not only to remove him from office but to hold him and his cabinet hostage for over fifty days.

26 For a discussion of the heteronormative pressures in migrant communities, see, for example, Gairola 2009.

27 For a comparative example from the Nigerian diaspora, see Kuku-Siemons 2011.

28 French primitivist painter Paul Gauguin, whose works have become iconographic of Pacific Islands sexuality, wrote in his memoir *Noa Noa* (1919) of his frustration in not being able to tell Tahitian men from women when viewing them from behind. He recounts an incident where he was admiring the feminine form of a native walking in front of him, only to find when the native turned around that it was a man. By the same token, those natives he took to be men turned out sometimes to be women.

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