FOLLOWING BOTH SIDES:
PROCESSES OF GROUP FORMATION IN VITU

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By

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ABSTRACT

A number of anthropological studies have been published on societies on the West New Britain mainland but little information is available about Vitu culture and society. The intention of this dissertation is to provide an account of Vitu social structure and particularly to describe and analyse the processes of group formation in the society. Specifically, the study attempts to elucidate the Vitus' claim that while they belong to matrilineal clans, they "follow both sides", inheriting rights from both parents.

Anthropologists working in various parts of Melanesia have studied accommodation between two apparently incompatible cultural principles and have published studies of societies where patrilineal and cognatic descent are both organizing principles. This dissertation provides comparative data for these studies but it differs from them because it seeks to explain the relationships between matrilineal and cognatic descent.

After an historical introduction, the study describes matrilineal and cognatic ideologies in Vitu. Matrilineal descent divides Vitus into discrete categories and provides a conceptual frame-work, in terms of which people orient themselves in time and space, calculate social relationships and assess rights to claim membership in particular groups. Cognatic descent allows individuals considerable freedom in joining groups and gaining access to land. Vitus assert rights in matrilineal corporations by stressing cognatic descent from matrilineage men.

Cognatic inheritance of land-rights means that lineage members and lineage descendants share land. Members of the two categories compete for resources, and tensions are exacerbated by a cultural preference that "the woman follows the man". This preference results in virilocal residence and a pattern of economic cooperation that allows women limited control over their land. These factors weaken the matrilineage and strengthen bonds among cognates. Lineage members cannot expel lineage descendants from their land. Instead they retain land for their lineages through strategic marriages. Each lineage becomes the centre of a limited marriage universe consisting of closely allied lineages exchanging women and land.

The traditional political organization of Vitu was related to the patterns of descent and alliance in the society. The islands were divided into hostile, largely endogamous territories, each containing two or more relatively endogamous groups composed of members of closely allied lineages. Local communities consisted of cognatically-related kinsmen who were members of intermarrying lineages.

The symbolism of ceremonial exchange in Vitu continues to reflect values of balanced exchange of property and personnel between allied lineages. In the contemporary society, marriage patterns still include clan exogamy and reciprocal exchange of women. But some young people arrange their own marriages, and lineage leaders and elders worry about the future of the matrilineage as a land-holding corporation.

The interaction of matrilineal and cognatic descent in the processes of group formation in Vitu contrasts with that in other areas of Melanesia. In the New Guinea Highlands, recruitment to local groups is bilateral, but Highlanders conceptualize local groups as patrilineal clans. In the Highlands, descent and residence patterns tend to be harmonic. So accommodation between patrilineal and cognatic ideologies occurs in ascendant generations where the distinction between residence and clan membership becomes blurred. In Vitu, the disharmonic descent and residence rules require the distinction between local group, and lineage membership to be preserved. Adjustment between matrilineal and cognatic descent in Vitu occurs only through marriage.

The dissertation concludes by stressing the considerable choice available to Vitus in joining social groups. Opportunities for joining a variety of groups may be

as great in societies where unilineal descent is a significant factor as in societies where cognatic descent is a major organizing principle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is based on twelve months of fieldwork conducted in the Vitu Islands between June 1975 and June 1976. The islands are part of the West New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea, and lie approximately forty miles from the coast of western New Britain, to the northwest of the Willaumez Peninsula. Five of the Vitu Islands are inhabited. This study concerns the four islands which are known collectively as Vitu. The fifth island, Unea, is culturally distinct.

Several anthropologists, including Chowning (1958, 1966, 1971), Counts (1968) and Goodenough (1962, 1976) have written accounts of social organization in societies on the northwest coast of New Britain and have shown that the area is characterized by considerable cultural diversity. But prior to my fieldwork there had been no anthropological research on social organization in the Vitu Islands and little published information existed about the inhabitants. Richard Parkinson (1907) provided some information about the society in the early post-contact period, and Tibor Bodrogi (1971) wrote a report about the artifacts that the Hungarian collector, Biro, acquired in Garove in 1900 and 1901. A.B. Lewis visited the Vitu Islands in 1909 and collected artifacts for the Field Museum in Chicago and P.J.C. Dark visited the islands briefly in 1967 (Dark 1974:41). All these men were interested primarily in art and material culture. They provided no information about social structure.

Objectives

I have two objectives in this study. First, I hope to contribute to the ethnological understanding of a part of New Britain that has received minimal attention from anthropologists; second I intend to describe and analyse some aspects of the social structure of Vitu society. Specifically, I shall investigate the relationships between the principles of matrilineal descent and cognatic descent in Vitu society, and consider the interaction of these two principles in the processes of group formation.

The specific focus of my study arose from an ethnographic problem that I encountered at an early stage in my fieldwork. During the first months of my research, I found that the people of Vitu claimed membership in ten matrilineal clans. Yet, when I questioned informants about local systems of descent and inheritance, they told me, "We belong to the clans of our mothers, but neither a man nor a woman can make a child alone. Therefore, we follow both sides together". By following both sides, my informants meant that they inherited property, particularly land, from both parents and that they, in turn, transmitted property to their children of both sexes.

I supposed, at first, that clans in Vitu served only as marriage categories, and that a cognatic descent principle regulated the transmission of property. This supposition seemed justified by my observations of behaviour. The residence pattern in Vitu was normatively virilocal and there was a tendency for matrilineal kin to be dispersed. Also I observed that people in Vitu who cooperated in such activities as copra-making, paying bride-price, and making prestations at funerals rarely formed groups that consisted only of matrilineally-related kinsmen. Occasionally, lineage-mates formed a minority in a group. The Vitu residence pattern in conjunction with the constitution of social groups, reinforced my impression that matrilineages were not significant social groups in Vitu.

I subsequently discovered that Vitus associated rights in land with membership in clans, and that clans were divided into lineages that had control over specific areas of land. Therefore, it seemed that matrilineal descent and cognatic descent did not merely coexist within the society, regulating different aspects of the social structure, but that the two descent themes were closely associated in the domains of land tenure and property relations.

There seemed to be two possible explanations for a situation in which matrilineal descent played a significant part in local ideology but featured less prominantly in local behaviour. Either a cognatic system was replacing a previously matrilineal system or, alternatively, matrilineal and cognatic principles were integrated within the structure of Vitu society, forming interdependent and interlocking processes within the social system.

My hypothesis that matrilineal descent was becoming less important in Vitu was influenced by the view, expressed by some anthropologists, that matrilineal systems tend to be unstable. Schneider (1961:6ff), for example, has described the strains that matriliny generates within the family and the community, and states that people in societies with matrilineal systems experience problems absent in societies with patrilineal systems.

Some authors have suggested that modernization leads to the weakening of matrilineal systems. Using data from the World Ethnographic Sample, Aberle (1961:771) notes that matrilineal descent occurs predominantly in horticultural societies. Murdock (1949:206-7), Goody (1962:348) and Stavenhagen (1975:127) suggest that matrilineal systems are incompatible with the development of social differentiation and increase of wealth.

Yet not all writers feel that matriliny is doomed. Hill (1970), Douglas (1969) and Nash (1974) all suggest that matrilineal systems can be adaptive in modernizing societies. A consideration of Vitu history produced evidence that supports this viewpoint. A survey of Vitu society during the ninety years since contact indicates that despite extensive social and economic changes; including the development of cash-cropping, basic beliefs about kinship and property have not undergone extensive alteration. A matrilineal system may be changing into a cognatic system in Vitu, but it is more probable that there exists an accommodation between matrilineal and cognatic principles in Vitu society. Since it appears unlikely that a satisfactory explanation of relations between the two descent principles can be found only in the domain of social change, I devote the major part of my study to the relationship between matrilineal and cognatic descent in Vitu society, and to the part played by the two descent principles in the formation of social groups.

Theoretical background

The coexistence of two descent themes within the cultural domain of land tenure is not a problem to members of Vitu society. It is specifically an analytical problem, whose genesis is related to the development of anthropological theories about social structure in Melanesia.

Many early theorists who were interested in social structure studied segmentary societies in Africa. At first, anthropologists believed that the model of descent developed in Africa had universal applications. Later, researchers working in Asia developed alliance theory as an alternative and partly competing model. In Melanesia, neither the descent nor the alliance model has proven adequate to describe local societies, although early workers in the New Guinea Highlands attempted to utilize the descent model.

In the New Guinea Highlands, anthropologists found societies that superficially resembled certain African societies. Therefore, they adopted the segmental model that the Africanists had utilized. One contemporary descent theorist writing about the Highlands stated:

> The principle of descent defined here is a means of allocating membership of segments of society; that is, an individual is placed within the society into which he is born, by reference to his membership of a segment of it. It underlines the allocation of status, including political privileges and liabilities, and often legitimizes rights in various forms of property (Lafontaine 1973:36).

At first, the African model seemed appropriate to the Highlands because early researchers reported that societies there were divided into patrilineal clans. Anthropologists claimed that local people perceived the clans as "groups of agnatically related men and women that functioned as corporate groups with respect to land tenure, war, economic change and exogamy" (Holy 1976:111). Later research suggested that the underlying assumptions of the descent model made it inappropriate for the analysis of these societies.

One limitation of the African model was that descent theorists accepted River's definition of descent as a principle of recruitment to descent groups. They tended to class societies as either matrilineal or patrilineal and to follow Radcliffe-Brown's (1952:39) dictum that

> Where the rights and duties derived through the father preponderate in social importance over those derived through the mother we have what it is usual to call a patrilineal system. Inversely a matrilineal system is one in which the rights and duties derived through the mother preponderate over those derived through the father.

Often, they stressed the dominant form of descent at the expense of forms that, while less prominent, still play vital roles in the social system. Descent theorists also tended to neglect the role that cognatic descent plays in social process; in their view, cognatic relations with ancestors cannot be considered as descent because the cognatic principle cannot serve as an exclusive means of recruitment to social groups (cf Leach 1962, Goody, 1961).

In the New Guinea Highlands, patrilineal descent was a significant component of local ideology, but principles other than unilineal descent were active in the processes of group formation. Barnes (1962:5) noted that data from New Guinea fitted badly into African molds, and mentioned, in particular, the presence of non-agnatic kin who lived without discrimination in local clan groups, and whose successors were absorbed into the local clan. He suggested that descent, at least in the Africanist sense, was rare in the Highlands and that recruitment to local groups could best be characterized as "cumulative filiation".

Following Barnes, many anthropologists who worked in Highlands New Guinea abandoned the African model. Strathern noted that

> The model began to break down on all three fronts. It was not clear in all cases whether groups were corporate; their mode of segmentation and political re-combination did not appear to follow the patterns established for Africa, and worse, it was unclear whether Highland groups could justifiably be called lineages (1973:24).

Concepts that eased the problems of analysis in Melanesia became available when researchers in Pacific societies with non-unilineal descent systems found it necessary to modify the meanings of "descent" and "filiation". Less restrictive ways of looking at social structure were formulated and applied to the analysis of New Guinea societies. Especially important, was Scheffler's contention (1966:543) that different societies may possess similar descent constructs but may not always apply them to the same social processes.

In the New Guinea Highlands, individuals usually acquired membership in local clans through filiation. However, although recruitment was potentially through either parent, cultural values ensured that patrifiliation was more common than matrifiliation. Early researchers had not understood the role of patrilineal ideology in the

Highlands and had sometimes regarded Highland societies in terms of a discrepancy between ideology and social process (cf. Langness 1964). The demise of the African model meant that anthropologists could concentrate on "comprehending what the ideology of the Highlanders in relation to their groups was, and how this might fit the context of social activity"(Strathern 1971:1). Anthropologists working in the Highlands reached a consensus

> that descent dogmas if not the rules of unilineal descent are found in a number of cases, but that they do not function exclusively as rules giving entitlement to membership in social groups; instead, they must be looked at as charters for, or assertions of male in-group solidarity and inter-group alliance (Strathern 1973:25).

In the Hagen area of the Highlands, for example, a principle of patrilineal descent, based on a concept of shared male substance, crosscut a principle of cognatic descent that gave an individual theoretical rights to affiliate with either his mother's or father's local group (Strathern 1971).

Most recent studies of social structure in Melanesia describe societies that combine patrilineal descent constructs and non-unilineal recruitment to local groups. Anthropologists have paid little attention to the relationship between different structural elements in Melanesian societies with matrilineal descent ideologies. Nevertheless, some writers have indicated that significant organizing principles in addition to matrilineal descent exist in these societies. Goodenough (1962) and Oliver (1955) have shown that the Nakanai and Siuai have matrilineal categories associated with land ownership, but that recruitment to local groups is not based only on matrilineal descent. Although Goodenough (1962) described recruitment to local groups among the Nakanai neither he nor Oliver analysed, in detail, the relationship between the lineage and the local group that utilizes lineage property.

Vitu is a society in which both matrilineal and cognatic principles coexist, but some of the problems of analysis that are apparent in Vitu society are similar to those encountered in the New Guinea Highlands. Anthropologists working in the Highlands attempt to understand why people propound patrilineal ideologies when local clans include varying proportions of non-unilineal kinsmen. In Vitu, it is necessary to understand the role of matrilineal ideology in a society where most groups are cognatic. In writing about Vitu social structure, I hope to provide material that can be fruitfully compared with Highlands material. I also attempt to analyse a society characterized by matrilineal descent from a perspective that differs from that of previous writers.

Methodology

Schneider (1965:78) suggested that anthropologists dispense with ready made models. Instead,

> We need a series of relevant elements, like descent classification, exchange, residence filiation, marriage and so on; these need to be rigorously defined as analytic categories and then combined and recombined into various combinations, in different sizes, shapes and constellations.

One of the "elements" that was not rigorously defined in the descent model was descent itself. Fortes described descent in general terms as "relationship with an ancestor" (1955:206), but some descent theorists restricted the term to unilineal descent and defined descent as a criterion for recruitment to descent groups (cf Leach 1961, Goody 1962). These restrictions left many kinds of "relationship with an ancestor" without a definitive term.

Most anthropologists working in Melanesia reject the exclusive association of descent with descent group and have adopted Fortes definition because it isolates descent as a principle that can be used to describe any social process where people utilize descent constructs. Use of the more general definition enables anthropologists to avoid classifying societies as "matrilineal" or "patrilineal". Also, if descent as a principle is disassociated from the idea of exclusive descent groups, then there is no need to deny the existence of cognatic descent.

In my study of Vitu social structure, I am concerned with the relationship between two descent principles. Since both principles are significant in group formation, I cannot use a descent model. It would be inappropriate to categorize

Vitu social structure as either matrilineal or cognatic, or to insist a priori that one descent principle had precedence over the other. In this study, I regard matrilineal descent as the relationship between an individual and his ancestress through female links and cognatic descent as the relationship with an ancestor or an ancestress through links that can be male or female or a combination of both.

Geertz's distinction between culture and social system will be basic to my analysis of Vitu social structure. Geertz viewed

> The former as an ordered system of meaning and of symbols in terms of which social interaction takes place...and the latter as the pattern of social interaction itself. On the one level, there is the framework of belief, expressive symbols and values, in terms of which individuals define their world express their feelings and make their judgements; on the other level, it is the ongoing process of social behaviour, whose ongoing form we call social structure. (1957:33)

The cultural/societal dichotomy is of considerable value in the analysis of Vitu society because of an apparent conflict between matrilineal ideology and cognatic social groups. In order to understand the interaction of the matrilineal and cognatic principles in the society, I must analyse their relationship at both the cultural and the behavioural levels.

Keesing (1971:126) accepts Geertz's distinction and notes that interaction between the cultural and social orders is characteristically dialectical rather than direct. Following Geertz (1957), he suggests that during periods of accelerated change, the two orders tend to diverge markedly. The distinction between culture and social action allows social change to be included as an element in my study. Change in Vitu during the past century has been extensive. Although I have stated that the existence of two descent principles within the domain of land tenure does not indicate a replacement of one principle by the other, I do suggest that the relationships between the two principles within society has undergone some alteration in an environment of social change.

Keesing (1971:125) also subdivides Geertz's cultural sphere. In this dissertation, I follow his suggestion that

> To analyse "social structure" we first need to describe as a system of concepts, categories and rules, the cognitive principles underlying social events. Within the cultural realm, we distinguish between culturally postulated things and principles and the normative rules (usually implicit) which are phrased in terms of them and enable native actors to behave appropriately, and to anticipate one another's actions.

The distinction between principles and norms is relevant to my study. Cognatic descent and matrilineal descent are cultural principles. They cannot be described statistically, and they must be differentiated from the normative rules of inheritance, residence and marriage. In my study, I shall show that in Vitu opposition and reconciliation between matrilineal and cognatic principles occur in the context of normative behaviour.

In making an analysis of Kwaio society, Keesing (1971) rejected the local descent group as a unit of analysis; the settlement and residential patterns of the Kwaio were very flexible and the membership and location of local groups frequently changed. Instead of adopting the "primary segment model", Keesing described Kwaio as

> falling into a complex pattern of partly overlapping categories, and it is from these categories that different social groups are crystallized in different social contexts (1971:126).

Traditional Vitu society was also very mobile. Although, in the contemporary society, residence is less flexible, the composition of land-using groups, exchange groups and groups participating in economic activities are both unpredictable and shifting. In my study, I contend that the kind of groups that form in Vitu vary with the social context, and that it is impossible to tell from genealogical criteria alone how an individual will align himself. In Vitu, as among the Kwaio, it is more productive to study the principles and processes that underlie the formation of social groups rather than to adopt a segmental approach. Therefore I adopt Keesing's perspective. I first describe Vitu concepts and categories and then discuss the processes involved in the formation of social groups.

Research Techniques

I collected most of the material used in this dissertation in Balangore I village on Garove Island where I lived for eight months during my fieldwork. I also gathered data for comparative purposes in Rangu village on Mundua Island where I stayed for two months. In addition, I spent several days in most villages in Mundua and Garove, and interviewed informants from all villages in the Vitu cultural group.[1]

My intention was to collect data both on the contemporary society and on changes that had taken place in Vitu during the past hundred years , so that I would be able to place my analysis of contemporary social structure in an historical setting. I acquired a small amount of historical data from published sources, but I gained most information about the traditional and early contact society during extensive interviews with knowledgeable informants. These informants, who came from various parts of Garove and Mundua, included lineage leaders and respected elderly men and women. Younger people regarded these persons as experts in the traditional culture, and they always directed me to question senior members of the community about matters that did not pertain to the happenings of everyday life.

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[1] I spent two months of my twelve months of fieldwork in the Vitu Islands doing research on the culturally distinct island of Unea.

In gathering information about the contemporary society, I employed a number of techniques. I again held interviews with lineage leaders and elders. In order to gain an understanding of contemporary ideology, I questioned informants about cognatic and matrilineal ideology as revealed in mythology and oral history and in ideas about conception and kinship. I asked them about social norms, including rules of residence, marriage and inheritance. In order to understand the operation of norms in contemporary society , I also questioned informants about current events such as disputes, ceremonial events and economic activities.

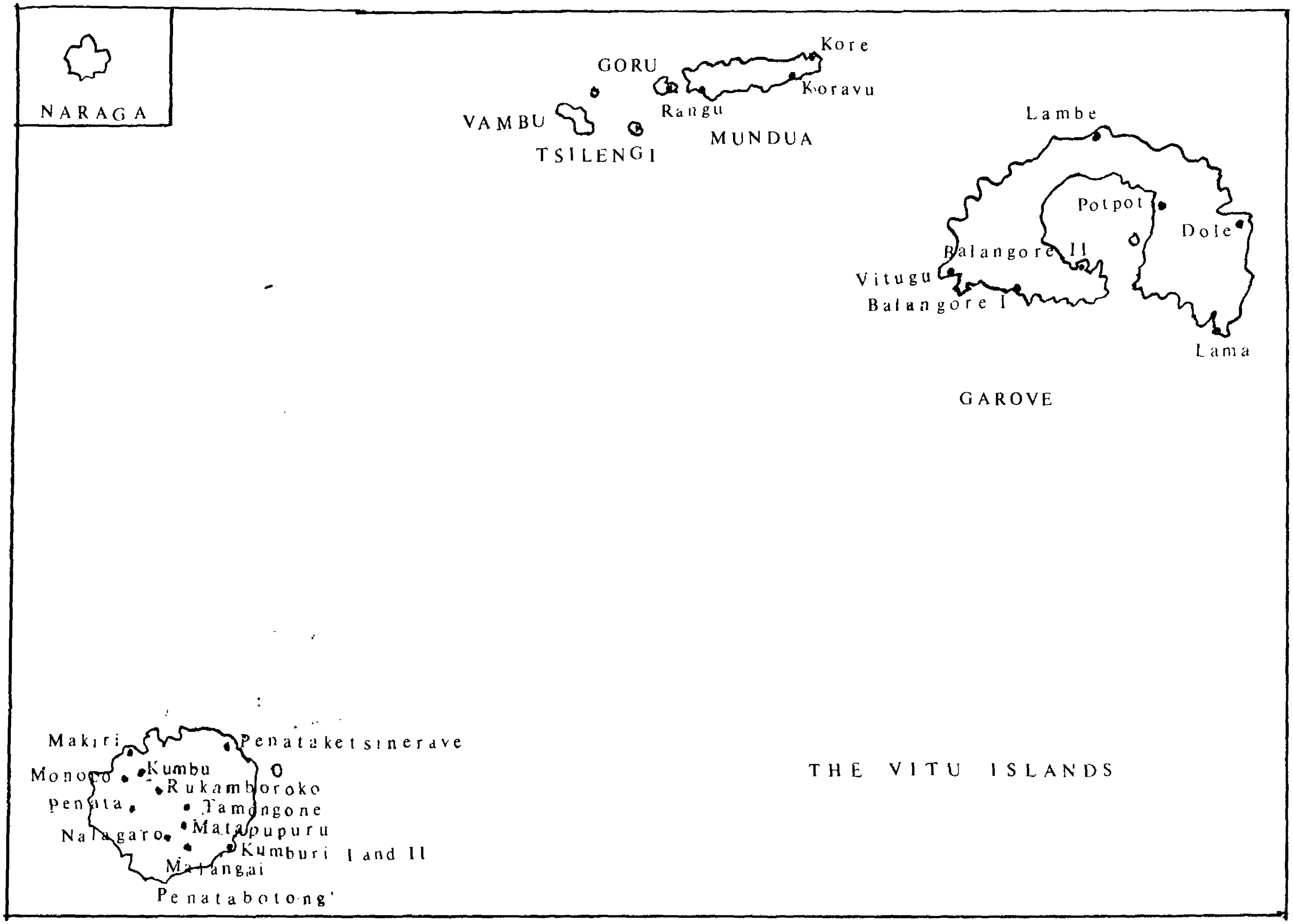
I discussed contemporary events more informally with unmarried and younger married people. In the traditional society, there was a structural cleavage between young and mature members of society and social change has increased the tendency of the young to view certain events from a different perspective than their elders. I collected most information from younger people in the course of casual conversation and during participation in the daily life of Balangore I and Rangu villages. All interviews were conducted in New Guinea Pidgin, a language in which all Vitus over seven are fluent.

In order to discover more detailed information about certain areas of social structure, I carried out censuses in Balangore I and Rangu, and gathered detailed genealogical information in Balangore I. The pattern of genealogical knowledge that informants displayed aided me in my understanding of the local ideology and provided a basis for discussions about membership of social groups. To discover how kin ideology related to the formation of social groups, I paid particular attention to the constitution of groups and particularly to that of groups that formed to participate in ceremonial exchange. I carefully observed who took part in these groups and subsequently discussed motivations for joining the groups with participants.

In order to discover how matrilineal and cognatic ideology related to land tenure and property relations, I administered a questionnaire about the inheritance of land. At a late stage in my fieldwork, after I had recognized the importance of marriage in the reconciliation of matrilineal and cognatic principles in property relations, I interviewed one or both members of all married couples in Balangore I about the circumstances of their marriages.

Outline of Dissertation

Since Vitu society has not previously been described, I begin my dissertation with an ethnographic and historical description of the society. Having established the social background to my study, I begin my analysis by discussing local concepts of matrilineal descent. Then I describe the way in which Vitus relate ideas of cognatic kinship and descent to matrilineal descent constructs. I examine the relationship of the rules of land tenure and inheritance with the processes of formation of land-using groups, and note the role of matrilineal and cognatic principles in these processes. I describe residence rules and practices in Vitu and suggest that virilocal residence increases the occurrence of anomalies arising from the presence of both matrilineal and cognatic principles in the domain of land tenure. These anomalies cause tensions between kinsmen and I suggest that Vitus use strategies of marriage in order to resolve animosities. I describe how the marriage pattern in Vitu influences the composition of political units, and I discuss the relationship between ceremonial exchange and the social system. Finally, I examine the activities of bigmen in the manipulation of social relationships through marriage and land transactions. In the last part of my dissertation, I compare and contrast the social structure of Vitu with the social structure of societies in the New Guinea Highlands and in other parts of Melanesia. I also discuss the relevance of my study to anthropological research concerning Melanesian social structure.


NARAGA
GORU
VAMBU
TSILENGI
Rangu
MUNDUA
Kore
Koravu
Lambe
Potpot
Dole
Balangore II
Vitugu
Balangore I
Lama
GAROVE
THE VITU ISLANDS
Makiri
Penataketsinerave
Monoco
Kumbu
Rukamboroko
Penata
Tamongone
Nalagaro
Matapupuru
Kumburi I and II
Matangai
Penatabotong'

MAP 1

CHAPTER II

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I provide an ethnographic and historical background to the analysis of Vitu social structure. Vitu society has been undergoing profound cultural change since the time when Europeans arrived in the islands nearly a century ago. The settlement pattern, and economic, political and religious arrangements all have undergone considerable alteration. My analysis of social structure focusses on the contemporary society, but modern Vitu institutions can best be understood within an historical context. I begin this chapter with a brief survey of the organization of the pre-contact society, then I discuss major changes that have occurred in the society during its colonial history.

The Topography of the Islands

Garove, the largest island of the Vitu group is situated some thirty-two kilometers northeast of Unea, and nine kilometers southeast of Mundua. Garove has an area of approximately forty square kilometers. The other islands of the group, excluding Unea, have a total area of about ten square kilometers.

All the islands are of recent volcanic origin and rise steeply from sea level. Mundua consists of a chain of small volcanic hills, but Garove is a single, large volcanic cone. A breach in the wall of the Garove caldera has resulted in the formation of a large land-locked harbour. Around the caldera the land rises steeply and there are cliffs on the northern side. Mount Tavutu, on the southeast side of the Garove caldera, is the highest point on the island and rises to approximately one thousand feet. Steep-sided subsidiary cones, ridges, and ravines characterize the slope on the outer side of the main cone.

The natural vegetation of Vitu is tropical forest, but except on Garove there is no climax vegetation. The soils of this island are mainly fertile black and brown loams, but stunted vegetation marks former lava flows. Steep ridges, ravines, and stony soil occur in the western peninsula, and people build walls in garden areas from stones and boulders removed during cultivation.

There is little permanent water on Garove, although a few brackish springs are located on the beach. There is no permanent water on Mundua or the smaller islands. Because of the lack of fresh water, people tend to use coconut milk for drinking and cooking. As I will discuss in Chapter VI, the Vitu Islanders' reliance on the coconut palm has had a major, if indirect effect on their social organization.

The Pre-Contact Era

It is probable that Vitu was first settled within the last millenium because, according to Blake and Johnson (1972:79), the central caldera of Garove is no more than a thousand years old. Lack of erosion on Mundua and Naraga suggests that these islands also are of recent formation. Geological evidence suggests that the Garove volcano has been active within the past few hundred years, and that there have been one or perhaps two periods of caldera collapse (Blake and Johnson 1972:79).

Oral tradition supports Blake and Johnson's contention that Garove has a recent history of vulcanism. Informants describe two major natural catastrophes. The first, probably volcanic in nature, destroyed an earlier Vitu society. Another disaster occurred when an "earthquake" caused the destruction of the caldera wall. The Vitus say that prior to this incident there was no water in Johannes Albrechtshafen.

In the wake of both disasters, new settlers arrived in Vitu. The people of Vitu believe that the migrants, who came both from Unea and the West New Britain mainland, settled first in the northeast of Garove. As the population expanded, people moved into the eastern and western peninsula of Garove and into the other islands. By the end of the pre-contact period, the islands were well-populated and little unclaimed land remained.

The accounts of informants suggest that change has been a constant feature in Vitu history, but while traditions pertaining to the earliest period suggest that structural change occurred as one society replaced another, later traditions indicate that population growth was subsequently the major form of change.[1] In order to present a standard against which to measure post-contact change, I will provide a brief description of Vitu society in the pre-contact era, using data from informants. The grandparents and sometimes the parents of the present elder generation were adult during the pre-contact phase, so contemporary informants had heard accounts of that period from those who had direct experience of the era. Vitus refer to the pre-contact period as "the time of the ancestors" (taim belong ol bigpela man). It is their idealized conception of this period against which they measure social change. Although some aspects of the accounts of this period probably are accurate, other aspects no doubt reflect a mythologized view of pre-contact society. Historical and mythological data both have relevance to an understanding of contemporary society. Mythology is relevant to an understanding of ideology, while history aids the understanding of the evolution of current social institutions.

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[1] I am distinguishing here between structural change and simple growth. I do not deny that the processes may occur together or that structural change did not take place in the pre-contact period. Local history merely suggests that there were no cataclysmic changes.

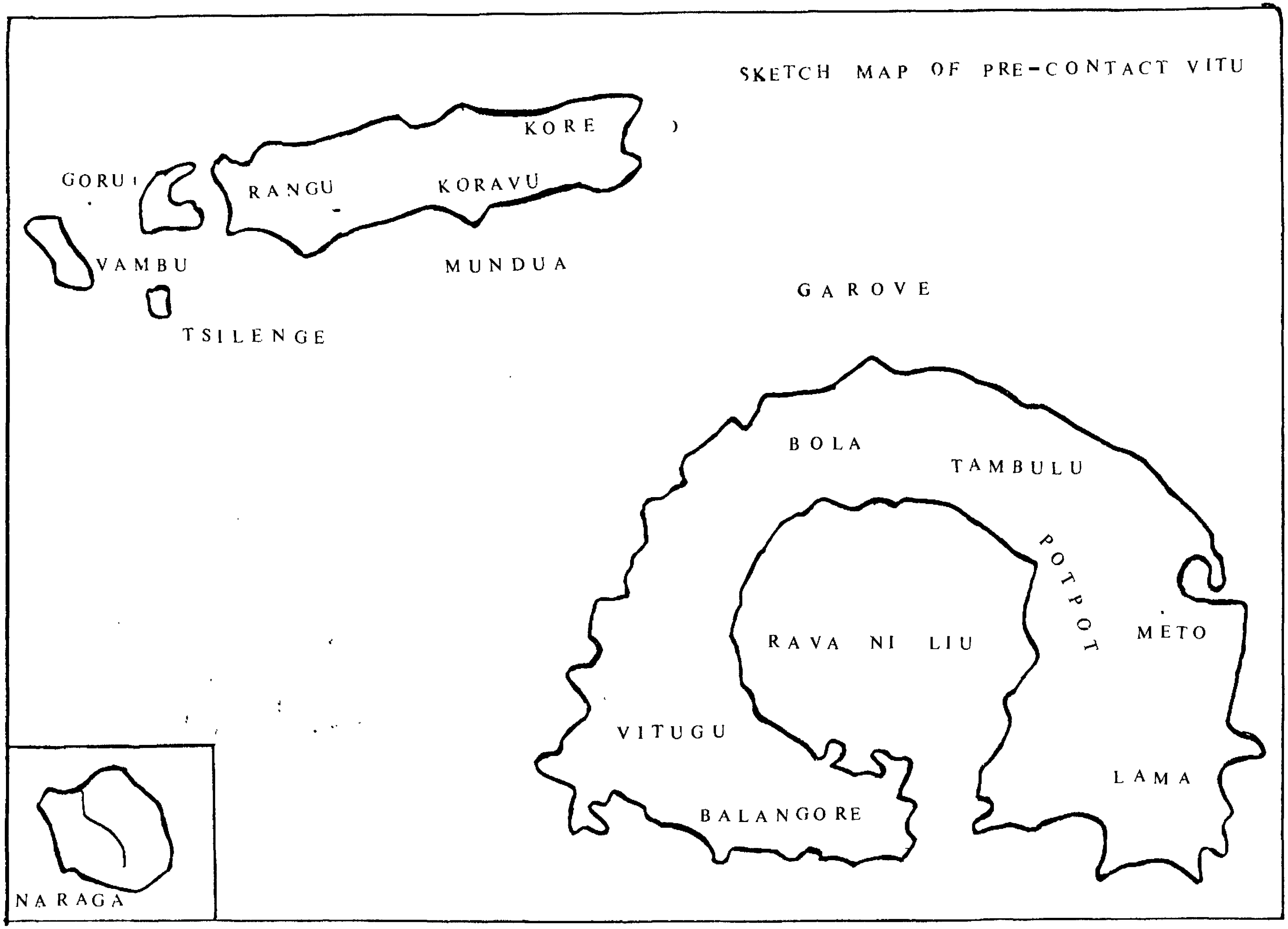
The Pre-Contact Settlement Pattern

In the pre-contact period Garove and the other islands were divided into several largely endogamous territories, each of which represented a distinct political community. Adjacent territories were usually hostile to one another and periods of war alternated with periods of uneasy truce. Vitus say that fighting was a major occupation of their ancestors and that even within a territory feuds took place between people of different settlements; so people rarely visited communities where they had no close kinsmen.

Pre-contact communities on Garove were named Balangore, Vitugu, Bola, Tambulu and Meto. However, before the arrival of the Germans, Balangore had begun to fission into the two contemporary territories of Balangore I and Balangore II, and Meto had already become two territories. In Mundua, there were three territories, each of which was a forerunner of a contemporary village. The approximate locations of the pre-contact territories are illustrated in Map 2.

Matrilineages associated with several clans owned land in each territory. Communities located on lineage lands were allied through marriage and common interests with other communities throughout the territory, but certain communities were more closely allied than others and formed coalitions within the larger political unit.

MAP 2


SKETCH MAP OF PRE-CONTACT VITU

KORE
GORU
RANGU
KORAVU
VAMBU
MUNDUA
GAROVE
TSILENGE
BOLA
TAMBULU
POTPOT
RAVA NI LIU
METO
VITUGU
LAMA
BALANGORE
NARAGA

Local communities consisted of both nucleated settlements, and hamlets in which members of the extended family lived and worked on their own land. In Balangore I, at least two settlements had populations of approximately fifty people, but other settlements were much smaller. The residence pattern seems to have varied greatly over time, in large part because people had interests in the lands of more than one lineage. Quarrels or the desire to utilize other areas of land seem to have been the major causes of change of residence. Although residence was flexible, local hostilities constrained people to live where they had kinsmen.

Parkinson, a plantation manager with ethnographic interests,[2] claims that Vitu villages were built with two rows of houses facing one another, and he provides a photograph of a village on Naraga (1907:209). Six houses are shown in this picture but Parkinson does not indicate whether these houses comprise a complete village. Nor does he mention whether the size of the village is typical.

According to informants, each settlement contained a number of family houses and a young men's house that married men also used on occasion. Houses were built on the ground. Under a roof of waterproof thatch, houses had an inner roof made of areca palm poles and pitpit (saccharum spontaneum).

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[2] Richard Parkinson, a German national of British extraction, was the brother-in-law of "Queen" Emma Forsayth, the owner of Forsayth and Co., and the manager of her plantation at Malapau on the Gazelle Peninsula.

Double walls protected the inhabitants of a house from the spears of enemies. As additional protection, people sometimes constructed palisades along the perimeter of villages.

The Subsistance Pattern

The climate of Vitu is tropical and the temperature varies between approximately 21° - 35°C. Vitus divide the year into two main seasons, one characterized by the southeast monsoon (*ragi*), the other by the northwest monsoon (*ravara*), and they also recognize transitional periods when variable winds blow. The southeast monsoon lasts from May to October. Little rain falls during this period and surface water evaporates. Drought only becomes a serious problem if gardens dry up and coconuts cease to produce milk. The northwest monsoon lasts from November to March. During this period heavy rain falls. The sea is rough, and high winds may destroy trees and coconut palms. In pre-contact times work in the gardens almost ceased and communications both within and among the islands were disrupted during the time of the monsoon.

Before contact Vitus cultivated many varieties of taro, their main crop. They also grew sugar cane, bananas and several varieties of green vegetables. The men of the extended family formed a regular cooperative unit in agricultural work. Each community made its gardens in one place, and surrounded their entire garden area with a fence to keep out pigs. Married and unmarried men in a community formed teams and competed against one another in building separate sections of the fence.

The main agricultural activity of women was harvesting food. Women rarely worked in the garden because of the danger of their abduction by men of other villages.[3] Wives remained close to the settlement where they occupied themselves with cooking and child-rearing. In addition, they regularly collected dry coconuts, and climbed palms to harvest coconuts for their families.

The Vitus do not seem to have been particularly productive gardeners. They did not grow food for display, and coconuts and areca nuts were more frequently used in exchange activity than was garden produce. The emphasis on tree crops in ceremonial contexts may have been partly the result of a blight that began to affect the taro crop in Vitu in the later nineteenth century. When the blight occurred the Vitus acquired new tubers from their trade partners on the Willaumez Peninsula, but taro productivity in Vitu continued to decline. So people became more reliant on wild yams, greens and coconuts. Inhabitants of Unea, whose staple crop was yams, characterized Vitus as having swollen stomachs from their poor diet.

Tree crops have always provided an important supplement to the Vitu diet. Vitus grew breadfruit, aila

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[3] Women in Mundua apparently played a greater part in agriculture than did women in the western peninsula of Garove.

(inocarpus fagiferus), Tahitian chestnut and mangoes as well as coconuts, areca nuts and betel pepper. Vitus regarded coconuts and, to a lesser extent, breadfruit as an insurance against the failure of their gardens. They stored dry coconuts in their houses to eat during the northwest monsoon.

Compared with horticulture and arboriculture, hunting was of minor importance in the Vitu economy. Fish, however, was a regular source of animal protein. The amount of time spent in fishing varied between islands since good catches depended on the quality of the reef belonging to local communities.[4]

Political Organization

In pre-contact times the local political community consisted of an aggregation of people living on the land of a particular lineage. The political community consisted of lineage members, people whose ancestors had been lineage members, and dependants of members of these two categories.

Each community recognized the authority of the leader of the local land-holding lineage to direct community activities and to act as mediator in disagreements between persons and groups with interests in lineage land. Lineage leaders played important advisory and organizational roles in the planning of ceremonial activities. Ideally, they possessed the genealogical knowledge necessary to assign persons to exchange groups and to advise individuals about the discharge of their debts.

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[4] In the contemporary society pig and opossum are still occasionally caught although the traditional pig net is no longer used. Traditionally fish were caught in men's bamboo traps and women's woven baskets. Today spearguns, spears and hooks and lines are used.

Within each territory, there was one man whose authority extended beyond his lineage land. This man, who was also a lineage leader, was instrumental in making settlements between factions within the territory. He was also responsible for negotiations between territories. The territorial leader was closely associated with ceremonial activities that culminated in ritual performances by members of the men's cult at mortuary ceremonies. Territorial leaders often resolved problems that existed between groups in the community at the beginning of a ceremonial period. For the duration of the ceremonies, fighting was prohibited and ritual sanctions supported the role of the bigman as a peacemaker. Ceremonies provide a context in which men from different parts of a territory could talk over problems. This forum was particularly necessary because Vitus were chary of visiting communities where they had no close kinsmen or rights, since accusations of trespass might result in assassination or sorcery.

In summary, geological evidence from Vitu indicates that the islands have been inhabited for less than one thousand years, and oral tradition suggests that an early society was replaced by one composed of migrants from various sources. The immediate pre-contact society serves as a standard in terms of which Vitus consider changes that have occurred since contact.

Informants suggest that pre-contact Vitu was violent and parochial. Territories were mutually hostile, and although people moved freely in areas where they had land, intra-territorial feuds limited mobility within the territory. The community, which was the local political and economic unit, was situated on the land of a specific lineage and recognized the authority of the local lineage leader. Both garden products and tree crops were essential to the Vitu economy. The division of labour between the sexes assigned most agricultural work to men and domestic tasks to women. One lineage leader in each territory had the authority to mediate internal quarrels and to act as the territory's representative in dealings with external groups. Mediation within the territory occurred most frequently prior to ceremonial activities associated with the men's cult. The ceremonies provided a context within which men from throughout a territory could meet to discuss problems.

Although the institutions of the pre-contact era underwent considerable change during the colonial period, certain aspects of the early society have persisted and have implications for a study of contemporary social structure. Today territories remain largely endogamous and, although inter-territory warfare had ceased by the Australian period, quarrels between individuals of different villages easily escalate into inter-territorial confrontations. Also, although the authority of traditional leaders and the importance of the men's cult both have declined in the contemporary society, the structure of political organization within the territory remains unchanged and ceremonial activities still continue.

The Post-Contact Society

Abel Tasman, in 1643, was the first European to sight the Vitu Islands. In 1793, Antoine D'Entrecasteaux surveyed the islands in greater detail (Bodrogi 1971:47). J.F. King visited Naraga in 1842 and named it Gipps Island. He described the island as well-populated and remarked that the inhabitants eagerly approached his ship. When Powell approached Garove in about 1880, the Vitus behaved more cautiously and refused to leave the shore (Powell 1883).

The Vitus have few traditions about early encounters with Europeans. However, they do claim that a sailing ship circumnavigated the islands and "marked" them. They also contend that a recruiting vessel departed with some men from Vitugu territory.[5] The visit of a labour ship probably occurred in 1843 or 1844. Finsch, who anchored off Mundua in 1884, reported (1888:119) that the people were nervous about approaching his ship because of their recent experiences with recruiters.

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[5] When their period of labour was complete the recruiters landed the Vitugu men on Naraga, from where they made their way back to Vitugu. Informants state that these men had learned Pidgin and so were immediately able to converse with German settlers who later arrived at Vitugu.

The recruitment of New Guineans did not begin until 1882, a year when the British Deputy Commissioner for the Pacific reported three vessels in New Guinea waters. In 1883, this number rose to thirty, but in the following year the Germans annexed Kaiser Wilhelmsland and the Bismarck Archipelago. At that time, the British labour trade came to an end in the area (Reed 1943:102).

1884-1904: The First German Settlers

The *Deutche New Guinea Kompanie* was the first administrator of the new German protectorate, holding the administrative charter until 1899. The Imperial government gave ample capital support to the company, and allowed it the sole right to acquire extensive holdings of land in coastal areas.

Otto Finsch, representing the New Guinea Company, took possession of the northern part of New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago in October 1884. He halted briefly at Mundua where he purchased a few ornaments (Finsch 1888:119). Accompanying Finsch on his expedition was Peter Hansen, a naturalized German of Danish origin. Hansen worked as a trader for the Deusche Handels und Plantagen Gesellschaft der

Sudsee Inseln and later for Forsayth and Company (Biskup in Mouton 1974:210). He returned to Vitu as a trader for the German New Guinea Company, probably in the later 1880s.

The Vitu islands had many advantages for a trader. In contrast to many areas of the New Britain mainland, Vitu had large plantations of mature coconuts (Parkinson 1907:210). The islands were on the shipping route between Kokopo, on the Gazelle Peninsula, the New Guinea coast, and, in addition, Garove had a fine all-weather harbour that Hansen named Peterhafen.

Hansen established his headquarters near Peterhafen and began to trade. At first he bought coconuts, but the quickly taught the Vitus how to sun dry copra. The Vitus claim that their ancestors welcomed Hansen. However, he aroused hostility by sending Chinese and New Ireland labourers into locally-owned plantations to collect coconuts. The Vitus attacked Hansen, but their slings and spears were no match for firearms. Hansen eventually drove the inhabitants of Meto away from their coastal settlements and began to mark out a plantation for himself on the land that they had vacated. In pre-contact times, Vitus had migrated from the Meto area into the western and eastern peninsulas of Garove. The defeated inhabitants of Meto followed these migration routes, and sought refuge with kinsmen in Potpot, Lama and Balangore.

In the 1890s, both the German New Guinea Company and a plantation owner named Mouton attempted to employ Hansen to "buy from the natives all the land he could" (Mouton 1974: 185). To Mouton's disappointment, Hansen decided to deal with his employer, the New Guinea Company.

The original land laws of the territory were set down in the Imperial Schutzbrief of May 17, 1885. The Schutzbrief granted the German New Guinea Company a monopoly on acquiring land in German New Guinea but stipulated that the company must investigate the title of any land that it wished to appropriate. After the rights of ownership and usufruct had been clearly defined, the company might purchase the land from owners and claimants (Reed 1943:132). The company took advantage of its monopoly to acquire large parcels of land at little expenses in such areas as the Gazelle Peninsula and the Vitu Islands.

Hansen succeeded in purchasing two thirds of the land in Garove and over half of Mundua and Naraga (Map 3;27). He also purchased twelve hundred acres of the best land in Unea. Hansen told a friend, MacKellar, that he intended to buy Unea for seventy five pounds (MacKellar 1912:93), and it is probable that he also acquired land in Vitu very cheaply.[6] Informants claim that Hansen gave the bigman of each territory a few trade goods such as knives, axes, tobacco and beads in payment for the land. There still are beads on Garove that informants say were Hansen's trade items.

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[6] MacKellar met Hansen on board ship in 1901 when the latter was returning to Vitu after buying a steamship in Australia.

When the New Guinea Company sent surveyers to map their new land there were only minor incidents involving violence between Vitus and Company employees. The Vitus' passivity was partly due to the presence of police on the island (Gammage n.d., 23), but it may also have been a result of a smallpox epidemic that moved through New Britain in 1897 and entered Garove from the Willaumez Peninsula.[7] According to Vitu Islanders the epidemic caused widespread panic. Bodies were left unburied and families left larger settlements to live in the bush. Some people fled from Garove where the epidemic had begun and spread the disease to the other islands. Parkinson (1907:36) notes that the islands were densely populated before the epidemic; when the sickness had passed, only a remnant of the population was left.

The decimation of the population disguised the effects of land alienation. The Vitus had enough land after alienation to fulfil the subsistence needs of the reduced population. Moreover, the land tenure system was flexible enough for the disinherited to obtain land elsewhere from lineage-mates, affines and cognatic kin. So, many people who had lost land in one part of a territory still had access to land elsewhere. Problems which had their origin in land alienation only materialized later as the population began to regain its former size.

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[7] It is difficult to estimate the pre-epidemic population of Vitu. Gammage (n.d. 27) says that half the population of the islands died of smallpox. The Malaria patrol of 1901 reported only that the population was decimated (Bodrogi 1971:47).

During the 1890s Hansen's enterprises prospered. He became known as King Peter and, in 1900, he bought a steamship called the "Meto" so that he could ship his own copra and add recruiting to his business interests (MacKellar 1912). Hansen's relations with the Vitus deteriorated during the last years of the nineteenth century. Informants say that their ancestors' major quarrel with Hansen was over his relations with Vitu women.[8] When Hansen returned from purchasing a steamship he found his family besieged in his house. In a letter to a friend Hansen states that he "took bloody revenge (on the Vitus) killing many with my own hands" (MacKellar 1912:87). The German administration sent a gunboat in the following year to further punish the Vitus for their attack on Hansen.

The Vitus attacked Hansen again in 1904. This time they succeeded in expelling him from the islands. Vitus describe how Hansen narrowly escaped with his life when men from Mundua, Meto, Potpot, Bola and Tambulu joined in the attack. The "War with Peter" probably represented the first time that men from so many territories had cooperated in war.

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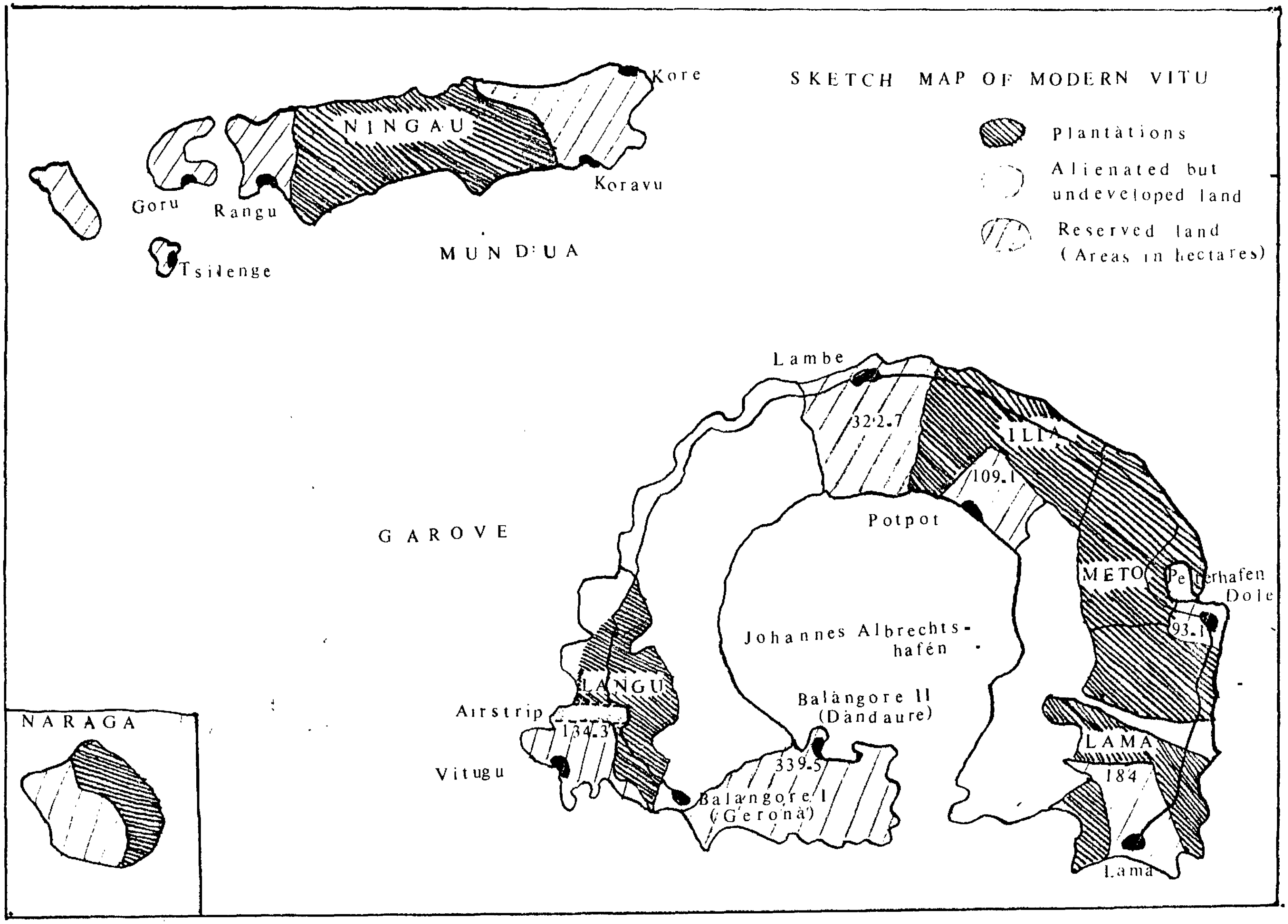
[8] Vitus strongly objected to Hansen's casual solicitation of local women, although they regarded him as married to at least three Vitu Islanders. Gammage (n.d. 27) claims that Hansen had nine wives, but not all were Vitus. A considerable number of Hansen's descendants still live on Vitu.

After Hansen's escape, a German gunboat arrived in Vitu. People say that German sailors pursued Vitu fugitives through the bush. The sailors shot men women and children and used fire to smoke people out of hiding places. The hunt stopped only when the Vitus promised to deliver the leaders of the attack on Hansen to the Germans. Two men were taken to Madang where one of them was executed. Police were stationed at Meto to deal with any threats to plantation managers who followed Hansen (Gammage n.d., 23).

During Hansen's time, Meto Plantation on Garove and Ningau Plantation on Mundua had been planted with coconuts. The plantations at Lama, Ilia and Langu, all on Garove, were completed in the first decade of the twentieth century (see map 3). The Vitus never again committed acts of violence against the Germans. They continued to work as labourers and to sell copra to local plantations.

By 1904, the indigenous society had undergone considerable change. The Vitus had been severely reduced in number and had lost two thirds of their land. Cash-cropping had been introduced and wage labour had begun. Politically, Vitu territories were no longer autonomous; Vitu had become part of the German Empire.


SKETCH MAP OF MODERN VITU
Plantations
Alienated but undeveloped land
Reserved land
(Areas in hectares)
Kore
NINGAU
Koravu
Goru
Rangu
Tsilenge
MUNDUA
GAROVE
Lambe
322.7
ILIA
109.1
Potpot
METO
Peterhafen
Dole
93.1
Johannes Albrechtshafen
LANGU
Airstrip
134.3
Vitugu
Balangore II
(Dandaure)
339.5
Balangore I
(Gerona)
LAMA
184
Lama
NARAGA

The German Administration 1904-1914

A fight occurred between Balangore I and Vitugu between 1901 and 1904, and Vitus claim that in the western peninsula feuding continued until the establishment of Australian rule.[9] Nevertheless, the frequency of inter-territorial warfare decreased after contact. Inhabitants of the eastern part of Garove refer to their encounter with Hansen as their last fight.

In 1896 Dr. Hahl became the Imperial Judge in German New Guinea and in 1897 he appointed the first *luluai*[10] in the Tolai area. In 1899 he appointed *luluai* throughout the Gazelle Peninsula (Reed 1943:140). It is probable that he appointed them in Vitu soon after this date.

The policy of the German administration was to appoint traditional leaders as *luluai*. The latter's duties were to ensure that the government's regulations were carried out locally, to look after roads, and to supply men to government recruiters. They also settled minor criminal cases and disputes involving property valued at less than twenty-five marks. A _luluai_ received no pay but he kept ten percent of any taxes levied. The Germans appointed _tultul_ who acted as aides to, and translators for, _luluai_. They also trained medical orderlies (_heiltultul_), whom they employed locally at twenty marks a year.

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[9] This fight can be dated because immediately before it took place, some of the participants had returned to Garove from Unea in Hansen's ship, the "Meto". Hansen bought "Meto" in 1901 and the Vitus destroyed the ship in 1904

[10] *Luluai*, the Tolai term for war chief, was used by the Germans to mean native magistrate (Salisbury 1970:35).

A _luluai_ was appointed for each territory in Vitu. The first _luluai_ in Vitu sometimes were individuals who spoke Pidgin but had no traditional authority. Vitus regarded these men as middlemen between the traditional leader and the Administration. Later the Administration usually appointed territorial leaders. In general the _luluai_ system conformed well to the traditional authority system in Vitu. In Vitu, only traditional leaders had the specialist knowledge required to settle problems arising from quarrels over land or marriage arrangements. The Germans expected _luluai_ to have authority in their territories and settle disputes.

One result of the 1897 epidemic was that local settlements became very small. To facilitate administration the Germans compelled the Vitus to centralize their hamlets. In Balangore I, people left communities throughout the territory and built five hamlets spread out along an inland ridge. Even so, many people maintained "pig-houses" on their own land, and retired there on occasion to look after their animals.

Although Hansen seems to have paid for copra with trade goods (MacKellar 1912), money was introduced into Vitu during the German period. In 1905, a head tax of five marks was imposed on people living in the more developed parts of the protectorate and in 1910 this tax was raised to ten marks (Annual Report 1910)[11]. It became necessary for Vitu men to acquire at least enough money to cover tax requirements. In addition, money became necessary to purchase steel tools, tobacco, and domestic items. Money had early become an important item in the payment of bride-price. Store-bought cloth first supplemented, and then replaced, the use of tapa and pandanus mats in ceremonial contexts.

During the German period, Vitus planted large numbers of coconuts as cash-crops. Elderly informants claim that their fathers planted many more coconuts than their grandparents. In addition to acquiring money through copra sales in their own islands, Vitus also began to work in other areas of the protectorate. German Annual Reports indicate that government officers recruited twelve men as labourers in 1907, and that in subsequent years numbers of recruits rose sharply. There were 53 recruits in 1910 and

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[11] The controlled areas in New Britain included only the coastal and low lying areas of the Gazelle Peninsula. Taxation was limited to these areas.

143 in 1912 (German Annual Reports 1907, 1910, 1912). Contemporary sources indicate that Vitus did not always become migrant labourers willingly[12], but today people look back to the German period as a time of relative affluence, when trade goods were cheap and labourers returned to their villages with chests full of cloth and other items.

The Australian Administration until World War II

The German administration of New Guinea ended in 1914, but some German plantation managers remained in the country until the end of the war. After the Australian Administration dismissed the German plantation managers, The German Expropriation Board assumed responsibility for the administration of plantations in New Guinea. Australian ex-soldiers staffed the plantations until the Expropriation Board could find buyers for the properties. But the price of copra fell in the immediate post-war period and few buyers could be found. It was not until 1926, when the market had recovered somewhat, that the plantations in Vitu were sold. A private owner purchased Langu, the only plantation in the west of Garove, while Burns Philp Ltd.

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[12] A district officer who visited Vitu in 1913 reported reported: "The young people are not against signing on but they are held back by the old people who claim to be unable to do without the working strength of the boys in exploiting the resources of copra... On the island of Mundua one old native put up a fierce resistance to his son's signing on and wanted to use force against me. His immediate arrest and sentencing, which soon became known on all the islands will not fail to make an impression upon the natives" (Gammage n.d. 28).

bought the other plantations on the island together with all the land that the Germans had alienated but never developed.

In the 1930s the price of copra fell again. Today the Vitus consciously reduce their production of copra when the market price falls, and it is probable that they also curtailed their production of copra in the 1930s. The Vitus were a long way from the market in Rabaul and so were forced to sell their copra cheaply to local plantations. A major reason for a consistently high rate of migration from the Vitu Islands in the 1920s and 1930s was that Vitus did not regard working their own copra as very profitable. Eventually the Australian administration forbade labour recruitment in Vitu in an attempt to impede migration of the male work force from the islands.

Most Vitus worked for private employers in Rabaul or as labourers on plantations in New Britain. A few went further afield to the mainland of New Guinea or to New Ireland. In spite of the remoteness of their islands, Vitu experience of the outside world was comparatively wide and varied. Older men state that they spent many years away from Vitu before they eventually returned to marry. After marriage, they either remained on Vitu and worked copra or else returned to New Britain for further periods of contract labour.

By the time of the Australian Administration, the division of labour had altered. Women participated in cash-cropping activities and worked as hard as their husbands in the gardens. This change in women's roles resulted partly from the greater security that women had from abduction after pacification and partly from a world economic situation that encouraged a large proportion of the male labour force to leave the islands.

In spite of the absence of many men from the islands, Vitus made larger gardens and relied more heavily on cultivated crops than they had in the immediate pre-contact period. After the First World War, the Vitus acquired food crops to replace the *colocosia* taro, which still suffered blight. During the 1920s, the Vitus adopted a white taro species, known locally as *singapo*. The latter quickly replaced *Xanthosoma*, a less pleasant-tasting variety which had been introduced during German times. *Tapiok* (cassava) became an important supplementary food. Vitus began to make larger gardens and ceased to store coconuts for the rainy season.

Vitus continued to plant coconuts during the inter war years and gradually the effects of land alienation became noticeable. According to the Expropriation Board's survey of 1926, the total land area of Garove is 5095.29 hectares. The four plantations on Garove covered 1125.79

hectares and the undeveloped land accounted for an additional 2969.5 hectares. Only the 1000.00 hectares of land that Dr. Hahl had declared as native reserve land could be used by the Vitus for cultivation.

The land reserved for the villages was adequate for subsistence requirements but was insufficient for extensive cash-cropping. While a considerable amount of land continued to be available in the less populous northern regions of Garove, people in the more densely populated western peninsula found, by the time of the Second World War, that they had no more land suitable for planting coconut palms.

Missions were a less important influence in catalyzing social change in Vitu than in some other areas of Melanesia, because, when the first Catholic priest arrived in Unea in 1935, Vitu had already been subject to European influence for over forty years. Syncretic elements seem to have been present in Vitu religion even before the arrival of the Church.

The priest stationed on Unea visited Vitu periodically, and eventually sent a Vitu man, Pius Keluku, to Vunapope, near Rabaul, for training as a catechist. When the latter returned to Vitu in 1940, he began to hold meetings and arrange for the building of churches. According to Keluku, there was little opposition to his teachings. In conversations about his early work in Vitu, he stressed the arduousness of constantly travelling round the islands to arrange meetings.

The most significant changes made during the early days of the church were the abolition of the more extreme hardships imposed on mourners following the death of close relatives and the prohibition of the more violent masked men's cult figures. By the time of the establishment of the mission it is likely that ceremonial activity had already become a less important feature of Vitu life, partly because of the reduced male population and partly because cash-cropping and other kinds of economic activity represented an alternative means of gaining prestige in the society. Modern Vitus say that ceremonial activities have been curtailed so that they will not have to take time from wage-earning occupations unnecessarily.

Cargo cults have played little part in Vitu history. However, one outbreak occurred immediately before the Japanese invasion. The cult[13] was introduced into Garove by trade partners from the New Britain mainland and affected the eastern villages of Garove. Village leaders in the west of the island travelled to Talasea, the administrative headquarters for West New Britain, to ask for aid. An administrative officer and a Vitu sergeant succeeded in restoring order just before the Japanese arrived in Vitu.

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[13] The Vitu cult was inspired by the Nakanai Batari Cult. A description of the Nakanai cult occurs in J.K. McCarthy (1963).

The Japanese Invasion

The Japanese established their headquarters at Meto and placed guns on high ground. The Vitus moved their settlements to hilltops where they could watch for aeroplanes that might bomb the islands. Several bombs fell on Vitu and perhaps a dozen people were killed. The Japanese recruited men from each village to work for them for a two week period. Otherwise, they tended not to interfere in Vitu life. The Japanese paid for food and shortages only developed towards the end of the occupation. Without informing the Vitus of their intention, the Japanese left Vitu in a single night.

In summary, changes that occurred in Vitu by the end of the Second World War included the introduction of new crops and an alteration in the division of labour. Involvement with the outside world increased as many men spent years away from the islands. Cash-cropping continued, and increased planting of coconut palms began to create pressures on land in some parts of the island. The Vitus were converted to Roman Catholicism and the influence of the mission, cash-cropping, and the effects of colonialism caused the decline of traditional religion and a de-emphasis of men's cult activities.

The Post-War Period

During the period of German administration, the Vitus had abandoned their scattered settlements and moved their hamlets closer together so that some people no longer lived on ground where they had rights. After the Second World War inhabitants of several territories constructed large new villages along the coast in order to gain access to road and water transport for their copra. These villages were built round large grassy rectangles. Houses were raised on wooden supports to conform with administrative health regulations. Some people still built houses or shelters in garden areas but few spent more than an occasional night away from the village.

In 1951, a Roman Catholic priest was assigned to Vitu on a permanent basis. He established a mission near Balangore II and built a school and a church. Later he established two more schools in Garove, as well as one in Goru.

Today, most Vitus under thirty are literate in Pidgin and all Vitus are at least nominal Roman Catholics. With the exception of a few polygynous men, almost everyone has been baptized. Major achievements of the mission were the provision of the first schools on the island, the establishment of a fairly well-stocked trade-store, and direct employment for a few Vitus. The mission also provided some practical assistance in the developing of village trade-stores and other business ventures.

After the war, Balangore I and several other Garove villages expanded onto land that had been alienated by the Germans but never developed. Part of the reason for the expansion lies in Vitu population growth. Population densities now are over one hundred persons per square kilometer in the western peninsula. While this figure is not high in comparison with Highland New Guinea, a considerable part of the land in the western peninsula is of marginal agricultural value. Another reason for Vitus' expansion onto the alienated territory was their recognition that their own reserves included some of the least productive land in the islands and that the alienated land was not being used.

The Administration encouraged the inhabitants of Balangore I in their use of the new lands. Local people say that an administrative officer and the owner of Langu Plantation marked out an area of land for native use. The people of Balangore I built a new village on the alienated land.

At first the Balangore I people only made gardens on the new land. Later, in the belief that development would strengthen their claims to the land, they planted a considerable area of coconuts on the land they occupied. The administration negotiated with Burns Philp Ltd. for the return of a large amount of undeveloped land to the Vitus but it was many years before an agreement was reached.

When three thousand acres of land were returned to the people of Vitu in 1972, the Balangore I people had been planting coconuts on the land for twenty years. Problems of access to land still exist for some villages. For example, no alienated land has been returned to the people of Mundua.

In the contemporary society, Vitus no longer serve as contract labourers. Those who leave the Vitu Islands are teachers, catechists or skilled workers. Many Vitus remain in their villages and work copra. The number of younger people who have remained in the Vitu Islands and have built copra-dryers had increased since the Copra Marketing Board was instituted in Kimbe in 1974.[14] The existence of a market within easier reach than Rabaul has made copra production a more profitable enterprise than it was during the period when the plantations set the prices. Today, most Vitus sell their copra to the Copra Marketing Board. They sell to the mission or to local plantations only if they need money quickly or if they wish to sell small amounts of copra.

The Australian administration founded the Bali-Vitu Local Government Council in 1967. The Vitus accepted the Council without opposition but insisted that alternate Council meetings be held in Garove. Unea, an island with a patrol post and a fine mission hospital, had become the administrative centre of the Vitu islands. The Vitus began to feel that their islands were being unduly neglected.

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[14] Kimbe is the only town in West New Britain and the centre of the oil palm industry in the region.

The replacement of luluai by Local Government Councillors has not involved an easy transition of power. The authority of the luluai has declined since early contact days. Ceremonial activity is no longer a means of acquiring prestige and, although Vitu bigmen frequently are leaders in business enterprises, the economic disadvantages resulting from Vitu's isolated location has prevented them from becoming successful entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, lineage leaders and luluai who are territorial leaders still remain the only people on Vitu who can successfully mediate between parties to quarrels, particularly when these quarrels concern disputes over land.

Local Government councillors are usually young men of above-average education. Such men tend to be chosen for their skill in dealing with the Administration. They lack traditional authority and possess little traditional knowledge. A workable division of responsibilities and authority between traditional leaders and government councillors still does not exist.

Conclusion

Some aspects of Vitu society have remained unchanged through the colonial period. Nevertheless, there have also been considerable economic, political, and religious changes in post-contact Vitu. Some of the changes have had significant direct and indirect affects on the social structure. Massive alienation of land has disinherited many lineages and has precipitated conditions of land shortage in some areas of the islands. The settlement pattern has changed from small communities, living on land to which the inhabitants had rights, to large nucleated villages. In the political and economic domain, changes due to the colonial presence have led to the decline of the traditional leaders' authority. Traditional means of gaining prestige have become less important and have only partly been replaced by methods based on entrepreneurial skills. Elders have lost control over young people as the latter have gained financial independence and have adopted new ideas. It is against this background of change that I make my analysis of Vitu social structure.

CHAPTER III

MATRILINEAL KINSHIP

Matrilineal descent provides an ideology in terms of which Vitus see their society organized in time and space. The history of Vitu is an account of the movement of matriclan segments, and Vitu conceptions of the division of the physical landscape reflect the land claims that members of these segments make. Within the contemporary society, every school-age child knows his clan, and each teenager knows the clan membership of everyone in his village. In the following pages, I discuss the mythological origins of Vitu society and the oral traditions which tell the history of matrilineal clans. I examine the clan as a marriage category, and describe its role in relation to religion, property and social organization.

Oral Traditions

Two types of oral tradition, which Vitus call mana and nangi, are relevant to an understanding of matrilineal institutions in Vitu. Mana are myths and folk stories set in a timeless age. Informants describe them as patterns for the ways that men act now. Mana include accounts of the origins of Vitu society and, to some extent, these myths reflect values associated with contemporary Vitu social structure. Nangi are "stories of families and land" and recount the migration of clans and clan segments through the Vitu Islands. Claimants to particular areas of land use nangi to validate their rights.

The Origin of Vitu

Vitus attribute the creation of the universe to a being called Mana, who still continues to be responsible for the appearance of all new life on earth. One informant stated:

> Mana is that bigman who creates everything. He created all stories, everything in the world, men, pigs and dogs, breadfruit, trees of all kinds, fish, sea, stones... We used to ask the old people: "Have you seen him?" "No", they said, "We have never seen him so we do not know if he looks like a Vitu person; but he is the origin of everything here".

Mana never reveals himself to man and Vitus never try to communicate with him. Mana's concern is that man should respect the things that he has made, and that they should respect food in particular. Vitus say that Mana might withdraw his creative power and leave them to starve, if they were guilty of waste. They must give all food that humans do not eat to dogs and pigs. Today, Vitus associate their rather shadowy creator with the Christian God.

The myth of how Mana created Vitu society is particularly relevant to an understanding of the native model of society. Vitus believe that the earth was originally a single mass that floated on the ocean. Mana stamped his feet and caused the earth to break into many pieces. Water welled up through the cracks in the earth and the pieces drifted away as islands. At this time, the Vitu Islands floated away from the New Britain coast. When Garove reached its present location it was inhabited by one woman. An informant, Koni, told the story (mana) of the coming of the first man to Garove.

> God created this island. He created the mountain, Doviri, the stone Vatu Mangu. He created a woman at the same time that he created the stone, and she lived alone in its shelter. God realized that the woman was alone, so he sent something to her. He had made an object like a man, and had allowed it to lie near the sea for a long time...
>
> Mana created the crocodile at the same time that he created everything else on earth. The crocodile did not appear of his own volition; Mana himself sent it. It went up to the thing made of earth, lying by the water's edge, that Mana had shaped like a man. The crocodile swallowed the man and wandered around until it came to Doviri. The crocodile regurgitated the man then went away. Later, it returned and found the man still there. It swallowed him again and wandered about. Then the crocodile returned to Doviri and regurgitated the man again.
>
> The woman was living at the top of the mountain and she came down and walked on the beach. She looked at the man and saw that he had no mouth but he had all other body parts. The woman stood there, thinking. She said, "He looks just like me". She took hold of him and turned him over. Then God himself spoke to the woman. He said,

> "Speak to him and he will talk". So she said to the man, "Get up and talk". The man stood up and spoke to her. The woman took the man with her up the mountain.

The Vitus believe that the population of their islands descends from this couple and from the issue of the incestuous marriages of their children.

There are versions of the original myth which differ in detail from that which I have quoted. But in each version that I collected, the autochthonous inhabitant of Garove is a woman and the migrant is a man. The designation of the original inhabitant of Garove as a woman appears appropriate to a society in which controlling rights in land are transmitted through women.

In some versions of the myth, the migrant finds several women on the island, each of whom represents a different clan. In these versions, the migrant marries all the women. The Vitus appear to have no origin myth involving more than one male ancestor. In Vitu, matrilineal descent divides people into exclusive categories while cognatic descent traces kinship across divisions of clanship. The myth supports an ideology that values men as links between clans.

Moieties

Many Vitus believe that only the clans of the two original inhabitants of Garove existed in early Vitu society.

Membership of these clans divided the society into moieties, the totems of which were a "large" and a "small" bird.[1] This social division occurs in several contemporary New Britain societies, including the Tolai (Epstein 1968:87), Duke of York Islands, (Errington 1974:32), Mengen, Sulka and Kol (Pannoff 1969:24).

Although moieties serve no function in Vitu society today, Vitus associate two contemporary clans, Kara and Kainata, with the big bird. They consider that all other clans belong to the small bird division. Informants say that the moieties ceased to have any social function after "something that we call 'the tide' came down from the bush and destroyed all the trees and killed all the people".[2]

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[1] In Vitu, the moieties are associated with two different species of eagle. In other societies which recognize this division, the large bird moiety is always represented by an eagle. The small bird moiety is sometimes represented by another kind of bird, e.g. hornbill.

[2] There seems to be some confusion in the minds of informants about the exact nature of the 'tide'. There are elements in the story of this disaster which demonstrate its association with Melanesian flood myths, and in some versions the influence of the Biblical Noah's ark story is evident. However, some informants state that the 'tide' came out of round holes in the bush, and that the survivors sought refuge from it in a cave. In addition, Vitus refer to molten lava as hot water. In Vitu cosmology, the "hot water" under the earth is only kept in place by a firmer layer of earth above. If the earth becomes over-heated, or if Mana wishes to punish men, the upper layer of firm ground may lose its strength and allow the hot water to escape.

Given the volcanic nature of Garove, it is possible that this mythologised incident has historical validity.

The Origin of Modern Clans

Vitus say that Mana divided their society into moieties when he created the earth, but that men organized the modern division of their society into clans. There are two quite different traditions about the origin of clans in Vitu. One tradition appears to justify and explain the clan as a marriage category, the other includes accounts of the appearance of new clans as a result either of fission or of the migration of new settlers from Unea and West New Britain to Vitu. The two traditions are not incompatible because they validate different institutions. One tradition concerns the *ruka*, the plant or animal emblem that individuals inherit from their mothers and for which clans are named. Association with a *ruka* divides Vitus into ten marriage categories. The other tradition concerns the *ǥaǥaǥa*[3], the clan as a corporate category.

The Origin of Clan Emblems

According to the people of Vitu, the disaster which overwhelmed the early society on Garove resulted from the immoral behaviour of the descendants of the autochthonous woman and the man brought by a crocodile. "They copulated in public like dogs and God was angry." As a punishment, God sent the "tide" that poured down the mountain and "killed all the wicked, while the good survived". Some syncretic versions of this myth closely resemble the Genesis story of Noah's Ark. These syncretic elements possibly increase the story's authority in the contemporary society.

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[3] The literal meaning of *ǥaǥaǥa* is "wild yam vine". In this study, ǥ represents the velar fricative.

After Garove became habitable and plants began to grow again, the survivors chose new clan emblems, adopting the names of foods that they liked. Then they instituted sister exchange. Clans became exogamous and the rule of balanced exchange of women between clans was instituted.

Every contemporary Vitu belongs to one of ten matrilineal clans, each named for a plant or animal species. Three clans, Kara (Creeper species), Xandora (Opossum) and Boro (Pig) have a large membership and occur throughout Vitu. Seven smaller clans are less widely distributed. Information about Vitu clans is summarized in Table 1. Vitus inherit their clan membership only from their biological mother. They cannot change their clan affiliation through adoption, through residence on the land of another clan or through any other circumstance.

Although Vitus insist that an individual's clan membership is immutable, they do not claim any exclusive spiritual or biological kinship with their clan mates. One informant told me the story of how men chose their clan

TABLE 1

VITU CLANS

VITU	ENGLISH	FOOD PROHIBITIONS	DISTRIBUTION
Kara	Creeper Species	Eagle, crocodile and the fish species Malisa, Pata, Tibula, Marakau	All areas
Øandora (Kambu ke Poi)	Opossum	Some shellfish species	Occurs in all areas except Tsilengi and Naraga
Boro	Pig	None	All areas except Goru, Tsilengi, Naraga
Kulu	Breadfruit	None	This clan occurs in all areas but holds lands only in the eastern peninsula of Garove, Naraga and Mundua. It bought land in Goru 90-120 years ago.
Ngepi	Aila (inocarpus fagiferus)	None	This clan owns land in the western peninsula of Garove. It also acquired a little land in Mundua after its migration there from Garove.
Kainata	Hybiscus	As Kara	This clan occurs in Garove where it shares the ground of Kara.

TABLE 1, continued

VITU	ENGLISH	FOOD PROHIBITIONS	DISTRIBUTION
Tangari	Cannarium Almond	None	This clan exists only in east Mundua, but previously existed in north Garove.
Malakau or G̸andora	Fish species Opossum	?	Naraga, West Mundua, Goru, Tsilengi.
Barita (Marai)	Dry Coconut	None	Naraga, Goru, West Mundua.
Barita (Kambu ke Nali)	Dry Coconut	Flying Fish	Vambu, Tsilengi, West Mundua.

emblems specifically to illustrate the artificial nature of the clan divisions. He added that the purpose of the emblems was to regulate marriage.

For most clans there is no sense of kinship or mystical bond with the clan emblem. For this reason, I translate ruka[4] as "emblem" rather than as "totem". The Vitus say that the only clans which have true ruka are Kara and one of the two Barita clans. Vitus claim that Barita, which has the flying fish as a totem, is a recent migrant from Unea. In contrast, they identify Kara, one of whose totems is the sea eagle, with the original large bird moiety.

Since it is the only clan that can claim to be autochthonous, Vitus regard Kara as superior to other clans. Unlike other clans, it possesses many totems, and members are prohibited from eating many animal, bird, fish and plant species. Mythological heroes always belong to Kara clan and sometimes receive aid from their totem animals.

Clans as Marriage Categories

Vitus believe that their original moiety divisions extend beyond their own society. Consequently, people of Kara clan regard non-Vitus who have sea eagle or crocodile totems as kinsmen whom, in theory, they should not marry.

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[4] The word ruka actually implies that there is a mystical relationship between clan-members and the species that represents them. Totem would therefore be an accurate translation of the word, but, as the Vitus say, most Vitu emblems are not true ruka.

Ideally, the emblem defines a marriage category rather than a descent group.

In practice, Vitus do not prohibit marriage between people who share emblems but belong to different ǥaǥaǥa or descent categories. Within Vitu, Ǥandora (Kambu ke Poi), which members believe to have migrated from West New Britain, intermarries with Ǥandora (Malakau), which is indigenous to Naraga. The two Barita clans also intermarry. In real terms the ǥaǥaǥa is the exogamous unit in Vitu.

Although most Vitus agree that people who share the same emblem but belong to different social categories may marry, people disapprove of marriages within a clan. Vitus do not regard intraclan marriages as incestuous. In the Vitus' view, an individual derives equally from his or her mother or father. Instead Vitus regard such marriages as contrary to public order. The clan and its emblem provide an orderly framework in terms of which marriages should take place. Marrying within the clan obscures the ideal of the clan as a marriage category and contravenes the ideal of sister-exchange. If carried out consistently, intraclan marriages would lead to anarchy and eventually to incest. According to their myth, Vitus first created their clans in order to avoid such a situation.

Clans and segments

Narrators from different parts of Vitu relate fairly consistent versions of the history of Vitu clans. This consistency does not imply that the histories are factually correct. Vansina (1971:76) writes that "history is a mirage of reality" while Levi-Strauss (1966:257) points out that "history is therefore never history, but history-for". Although Vitu history may have a relationship to actual events, it is also ideology. When Vitus think of their island as divided into areas belonging to different clans, they orient themselves in space. When they consider the circumstances under which clans have become associated with particular areas of land, they orient themselves in time. Vitus are interested in those aspects of the past that are relevant to understanding the ways in which social groups relate to one another, and the reasons why persons have rights in particular places. So Vitu historical narratives frequently are accounts of population movements, and of the fights or natural disasters which caused them.

In Chapter II, I mentioned briefly that Vitus believe that migrant groups from Unea and West New Britain first settled in the northeast of Garove and then, as their numbers increased, moved into the eastern and western peninsulas of Garove and into the other Vitu Islands. As representatives of particular clans settled in new areas, they claimed unoccupied land which they regarded, thereafter, as the inalienable property of their clans. The matrilineal descendants of the first settlers inherited controlling rights in the land.

Vitus call all segments of clans dananga (branches) Lineages may be distinguished from more inclusive segments on the basis of the functions that they serve. In Vitu, lineages may be defined as groups of kinsmen who are able to trace actual matrilineal links among themselves and who constitute administrative groups with controlling rights to specific areas of ground. Lineage members recognize the authority of a senior member who acts as the manager of their joint resources.

Several segmentary levels may exist between clan and lineage in Vitu, but there is no regular segmentary pattern. It would be difficult for an analyst to designate a particular unit as a subclan or a major segment. Although lineages within the same segment regard themselves as related more closely to one another than to other lineages, specific segmentary levels above lineage level have no particular social functions. Vitus themselves speak of the relationships between the segments of a clan in a historical context. Their description of the relations between the segments of Boro clan in Mundua (Diagram 1) is typical.

Vitus regard the representatives of Boro clan who live in Mundua as divided into two distantly related

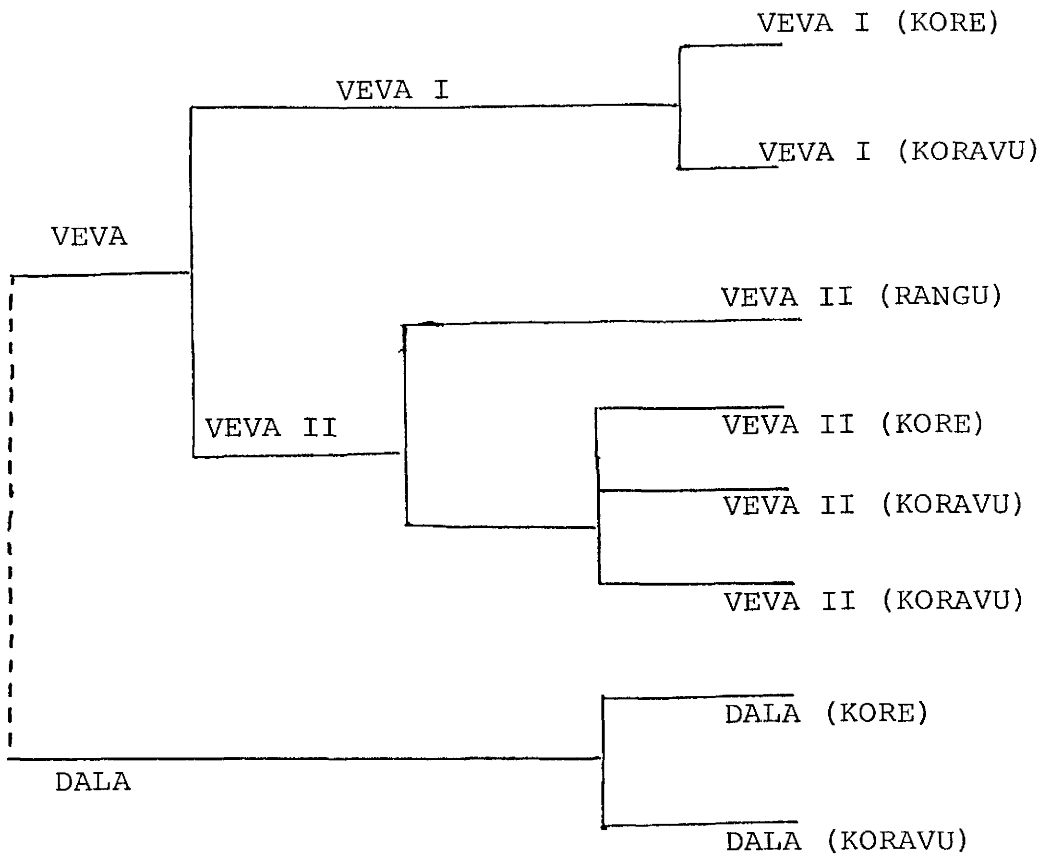
VEVA I (KORE)
VEVA I
VEVA I (KORAVU)
VEVA
VEVA II (RANGU)
VEVA II
VEVA II (KORE)
VEVA II (KORAVU)
VEVA II (KORAVU)
DALA (KORE)
DALA
DALA (KORAVU)

FIGURE I - SEGMENTATION OF BORO CLAN IN MUNDUA

branches: Veva, which owns land locally, and Dala which migrated from Garove to Mundua in the distant past. Dala consists of a single lineage which is divided into two sub-lineages. One of the Dala sub-lineages formed after a woman married into an adjacent territory and had children there. The segmentation of Veva is more complex. Informants say that Veva became large and fissioned into two lineages owning adjacent parcels of land. One of these lineages engaged in a war, and when it was defeated some of its members fled to Unea. When they returned, they settled on unclaimed land in the eastern part of the island. This group eventually became a separate lineage. Today each of the three Veva lineages is located within the confines of a specific territory.

The causes of segmentation that Mundua informants mention are characteristic of Vitu narratives. Fission results from population growth, from the marriage of women to men who belong to other territories, and from migration to other parts of Vitu. As in the case of Veva, war sometimes caused migration. In Garove, informants also cited vulcanism and drought as reasons for seeking new land.

If a lineage is established in a new territory, members do not quickly forget their ties to their original community. Members retain rights in their ancestral lands and they occasionally may send women to their home community in marriage so that matrilineal descendants will be able to use the land.

Clans as Corporations

When they speak Pidgin, Vitus refer to their clans, which they regard as corporate bodies, as *bisnis*. One bigman informant, Tamuto, compared the various Vitu clans to organizations such as Burns Philp , the Administration, and the Roman Catholic Church, each of which owns land in Vitu. He stated that Burns Philp is similar to a Vitu clan because it is a corporation whose branches are run independently by managers. European managers of individual plantations, like managers of Vitu lineages, aided each other but did not interfere in one another's affairs.

In making his comparison, Tamuto ignored the Burns Philp hierarchy of management that includes all of its branches. Vitu clans have no central authority and are not organized hierarchically. Smith (1975:177) states that corporate categories should be conceptually differentiated from corporate groups. He says of corporate categories:

> Having presumptive perpetuity, determinate boundaries, identity and membership, such institutions are constituted as categories by their lack of organization procedures and capacities necessary to regulate the collective affairs of their common membership.

While Burns Philp is a corporate group, Vitu clans are corporate categories. Within a clan no lineage leader has priority over another, although individual leaders may consult with others about items of traditional knowledge and lineage leaders may cooperate to defend joint interests. Clans never formulate common policies nor do they convene as a body. Clan-mates perceive themselves as having common interests but their obligations regarding one another are minimal. Clan-mates, in the Vitus' view, should "help one another" and provide refuge for one another in times of conflict. The lack of internal organization of Vitu clans is evidenced by the fact that they have no institutionalized means of redistributing the land of defunct lineages.

Clans and the Supernatural

Vitu clans have little secular authority or control over their corporate possessions but Vitu religion postulates an intimate and mystical relationship between a clan and its land. The rituals of clan religion, now obsolete focussed upon the protection of land and the fertility of crops.

Vitus draw a clear distinction between clan land and unclaimed bush. They regard the latter as the domain of spirits (*ǥanitu*), cannibalistic ogres (*garinoi* and *tamani valala*), and autochthonous creatures called *vuvu* (*marsalai* or *strong belong graun*). In contrast, they consider clan land to be domain of men. *Vuvu* are said to dwell on clan land as well as on unclaimed land. Vitus contend that the *vuvu* that live on clan land are closely related to the owning clan and share its emblem (ruka).

Like their creator, Mana, vuvu control the fertility of the land. Unlike Mana, their activities are restricted to specific areas of land. Although most vuvu move about their territories, each has a specific dwelling place. Traditionally, Vitus left these dwelling places uncultivated. Vuvu take many forms. Some are vegetal, e.g. clumps of bamboo; a few are mineral, e.g. reefs and large stones; most are animal such as eels, snakes and lizards. Some vuvu combine the characteristics of humans and animals, while a few of the most powerful have entirely human forms.

Vitus believe that vuvu protect the property of their human clan-mates. They may do this spontaneously by attacking or frightening trespassers on their land. However, Vitus also made use of vuvu in their sorcery practices. They would leave some item connected with the intended victim near the vuvu's dwelling place; the vuvu would eat this item and the victim would become sick and die.

Vitus say that while "Mana is far away, Vuvu are close by" and that clan members can communicate with them. Traditionally, members of land-owning clans gave propitiatory offerings of food to the most powerful vuvu who, in return, ensured that crops were plentiful.

In Mundua and the adjacent islands, informants state that each clan has a powerful vuvu which directed its original settlement in the Vitu Islands and which is responsible for the whole clan. So clan members regard themselves as being subordinate to supernatural authorities rather than human leaders. This belief is less prominent on Garove. Nevertheless, throughout all the islands, it is evident that supernatural sanctions support rights to clan land.

Lineages

Vitu lineages are five to nine generations in depth and vary in size from one to approximately one hundred living persons. Lineages, like clans, are corporate bodies with interests in land and other possessions, but, unlike clans, their organization allows them to control their possessions. Smith (1975:177) argues that corporations are corporate groups when they have the internal organization to act as such. Therefore, it is possible to describe Vitu lineages as corporate groups. Specifically, they are "secondary" rather than "primary groups" because members are "bound into a group through relationship to the management" but do not necessarily engage in face to face interaction (cf. Keesing 1974:10).

Vitu lineages are administrative units, managed by lineage leaders and associated with particular areas of land. They are not coresidential units: the virilocal residence rule ensures the dispersal of members. Today, most members of a lineage reside in a single village, so they are able to interact with each other more frequently than they could when they were dispersed throughout the pre-contact territory. Nevertheless, some lineage members may still reside in other territories. Lineages rarely act as exclusive groups. Instead, most social groups in Vitu consist of some lineage members together with some of their affines and cognatic kinsmen.

Lineage property includes land, war magic, dances, designs and masks. The lineage leader administers this property and acts primarily as a manager of land. He also arranges exchanges between groups and advises his followers on the naming of children and the selection of marriage partners.

Vitus call a lineage leader *paraǥa*, a term of respect that means "senior" or "ancestor". The fact that paraǥa can be used to denote any mature person suggests that the manager in no more than the first among equals. One informant said of the lineage leader:

> The meaning of *paraǥa* is this; we call a man *paraǥa* because he is the eldest of his lineage. He was born first. When he dies the next eldest will take his place.

Vitus often pay lip service to the ideal of seniority. For example, when I asked one accepted leader for the name of the manager of his lineage, he named his elder brother. In practice, mature, politically active men tend to be selected in preference to persons who are older but who lack the qualities of leadership. Vitus expect that a lineage leader will be a man but, if a lineage has few adult members, a knowledgeable and politically active woman may be chosen as a leader.

Although clans are exogamous units, Vitus try to balance the exchange of women at lineage level. The group which gives and receives bride-price does so on behalf of the lineage that it represents.

The number of lineages within a territory varies considerably in accordance with migration patterns. For example, in Rangu there are several local lineages and no established migrant lineages. In Balangore I, there are eight local lineages and fourteen migrant lineages. Land is the major possession of a lineage. So migrant lineages appear less corporate than local land-controlling lineages. Nevertheless, migrants retain some rights in land in their original community. In addition, they possess commmon interest in the marriages and the welfare of lineage personnel. Migrant lineages act as foci for exchange groups and interest groups. As a migrant lineage establishes itself in a host community, it also acquires a lineage leader. By skilful political manipulation, it may eventually acquire some land.

Conclusions

The matrilineal principles that underlie Vitu mythology and cosmology provide a means whereby Vitus orient themselves in time and space. Matrilineality, to the Vitus, implies social continuity and organization. Matrilineal descent also plays an important part in organizing social relations. Clans are marriage categories; members of a clan have collective rights in land and, as a group, are affiliated with a supernatural being. Lineages, even more than clans, are responsible for the formation of most Vitu social groups. Lineages are administrative units. However, lineage members do not consider themselves to be, nor do they act as, an exclusive social group. In the next chapter, I shall consider the relationship between matrilineal and cognatic kinship in Vitu society, and the way in which the matrilineal and cognatic principles interact in the formation of social groups.

CHAPTER IV

COGNATIC KINSHIP

I have suggested that matrilineal descent provides Vitus with a model of an orderly society. In this chapter, I describe cognatic kinship in Vitu and discuss the relationship between cognatic descent and matrilineal descent in the society. I will present evidence that indicates that cognatic principles temper the Vitu model of society in such a way as to allow people considerable freedom of choice in social affairs.

Ideas about Ties of Substance

Vitus believe that matrilineal kinship exists within a larger framework of cognatic kinship. One informant suggested an analogy between clans and parts of a tree branch. A branch bears fruit and flowers. These items all appear quite different but in reality they are all part of the tree. Similarly, clans appear to be quite different, but members of the various clans share common ancestory. In order to support his analogy, my informant referred to the origin myth (see p. 60), noting that since men rather than God, had divided Vitus into marriage categories there could be nothing intrinsically different between members of the various clans. The metaphor of the branch as a unity corresponds to the Vitu notion of a single male ancestor. The total branch represents the Vitus as cognatic kinsmen who descend from that ancestor. The division of the branch into items which appear superficially different represents the artificial division of the members of Vitu society into clans.

When Vitus discuss the conception of children, they stress the different but equal roles of both parents. They say that a father "puts" or "places" (tarugia) the child and that a mother nourishes (ruru) it. They insist that "neither a man nor a woman can create a child alone", and so they attribute the formation of the child's body to both sexes equally. Informants say that Mana or God is responsible for giving life to the fetus.

Vitus believe that the substances of both parents contribute to the formation of the embryo and so the child inherits blood (topo) from both his mother and father. This belief contrasts with that of certain New Guinea groups that believe that male and female substances are responsible for the formation of different parts of a child. For example, the Enga believe that flesh and blood derive from the mother and spirit from the father (Meggitt 1970:140), while the Iatmul suppose that bones derive from semen, and flesh and blood from menstrual blood (Bateson 1958:42).

Inheritance of blood from both parents suggests a paradox to the observer of Vitu society. This paradox points to a conflict between cognatic and matrilineal aspects of Vitu society which, I suggest, underlies Vitu social structure. Matrilineal descent crosscuts the ties of blood and differentiates a child from his paternal kin. A child belongs only to the clan of his mother but he is equally related by blood to both parents. Vitu men do not pass their clan membership to their children but they do transfer the blood of their lineages both to children and to their cognatic descendants. So Vitu fathers and their lineage-mates have interests in, and obligations towards children. Children, in turn, have rights in the lineages of their fathers and other patri-linked kinsmen who "gave blood to their lineages". The ideology that Vitus inherit blood by cognatic descent and clan membership by matrilineal descent is relevant to the interpretation of Vitu kin terminology, and to the understanding of conventional behaviour between members of particular kin categories and relationships between matrilineal segments in Vitu society.

Classes of kin

Vitus classify their relatives into three categories, *vinika* (cognates), *viǥara* (clanmates) and *ravana* (affines).

The term vinikengu[1] means merely "my relation" and people use the term for those kin whom they cannot place in more precise kinship categories. They use vinikengu to refer to ancestors above the generation of great-grandfather and to their descendants who are not lineal ancestors of ego. In practice, Vitus never address distant relatives living in the same village as vinikengu. Instead they use either teknonymy or personal names. Vitus address all clan-mates and close cognates and affines by exact kinship terms.

Personal Kinship

The application of kin terms in Vitu depends on a system of terminology known as Dravidian-Iroquois. In this system:

> The principle of same-sex equivalence lumps a series of collaterals together with lineals: FB and FFBS (and many others) with father; MZ, MMZD (and many others) with mother [...]. These collateral relatives who are structurally equivalent with lineals can be called parallel relatives. There remains a class of relations not equated with lineals by the same-sex sibling equivalence principle, which we call cross relations [....]. Dravidian-Iroquois systems distinguish cross and parallel relations in the three middle generations (Keesing 1975:105).

The two subtypes, Dravidian and Iroquois, differ in the manner in which they extend the classification of cross-relative ties. In Iroquois terminology, whether a relative is classified as cross or parallel depends on the connecting links at either end of the chain of relationship. In Dravidian terminology, all the links that connect ego with alter have to be taken into account (Keesing 1975:107).

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[1] -ngu and -na are the first and third person possessives in the Vitu language.

The equivalence of affines with those relations who would be identical if cross cousins married is characteristic of the Dravidian subtype. This equivalence has resulted in the conventional association of the terminology with the existence of moieties or cross-cousin marriage (cf. Dumont 1953, 1957, Needham 1962). But Scheffler (1969:247) criticizes attempts to explain Dravidian terminologies in terms of either of these institutions and concludes that only formal generalizations about Dravidian systems are possible. No single social structural explanation is sufficient to fit all cases.

In general, Vitu kinship terminology (diagrams 2 and 3) conforms to the Dravidian sub-type. The evidence from Vitu society tends to support Scheffler's contention that it is not possible to associate the terminology cross-culturally with specific institutions. Cross-cousin marriages and exogamous moieties do not exist in Vitu although, if Vitus are correct in their assertion that their society once had moieties, it would be possible to attribute the terminology to cultural lag. Rather than speculating about the reason for the presence of the terminology in Vitu, I shall confine my remarks to observations about the fit between the terminology and the perceptions that Vitus have of relationships between kinsmen.

A immediately observable fact about Vitu terminology is its symmetry (Figure 2, p. 86). This symmetry coincides with Vitu conceptions of the equal importance of maternal and paternal kin, and their policy of "following both sides together". Nevertheless, a matrilineal bias in Vitu kin terminology becomes clear when kin terms applied to members of ego's own lineage and his father's lineage are isolated.

Vitu kin terminology conforms to the Dravidian subtype in lacking discrete affinal and consanguineal terms. Vitus use ravana, the reference term for father's sister, for all affines of adjacent generations, and use tai and kua, the terms for same - and opposite - sex cross cousin to address all affines of ego's generation. Every Vitu is born into a situation in which he classifies all his own lineage-mates as tsitsi, vava, tai (same sex), vuku and tungu (Woman speaking), and all his father's lineage - mates as tata, toto (ravangu), kua, tai and tungu (man speaking). So it appears that Vitus classify members of their father's lineage as affines.

The affines of a consistent kin term for father's sister's husband supports the idea that a Vitu regards his father lineage-mates as affines. Ego addresses both father's sister and mother's brother's wife as toto, but he does not equate mother's brother and father's sister's husband in the same way. Some informants claim that people should call father's sister's husband vava because "we exchange our sisters". In practice, most Vitus address this man by a term that does not relate to his marriage. The reason why there is no term for FSH appears to be that father's sister is already an affine[2].

Some anthropologists, notably Levi-Strauss (1949 (1963)) and Dumont (1953) have assumed that in Dravidian-type systems ego addresses his cross-cousins by affinal terms because they are potential marriage partners. However, Vitus regard marriage between first cousins as incestuous. If Vitus are asked why they call their cross-cousins affines, they state that cross-cousins are affines through their parents. Ego inherits his mother's affinal relations. Mother's brother's wife and father's sister are affines of ego's mother, and become affines of ego. Cross-cousins derive their affinal relationship through their parents.

If the relationship between father's sister and brother's child is an affinal relationship, then is the relationship between tata (father) and tungu (child) also affinal? I argue that it is, because father is an affine of mother and ego inherits his mother's affines. Affinity and consanguinity in Vitu are not exclusive statuses. Vitus trace blood relations equally through men and women and to suggest that a father is an affine of his child is not to deny that he is also, with the mother, the child's closest consanguine.

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[2] Vitus do, in fact, have terms for marriage partners of some affines. They classify F.B.W. as tsitsi, and, in ego's generation, tai always marries tai but one vuku always marries kua.

When ego marries, some of his lineage-mates may become his affines. Ego's personal set of affinal kin may include members of his own lineage if his wife's (or husband's) father belongs to ego's own lineage. Ego would call his own father-in-law ravangu in such circumstance, but would be unlikely to extend the term even to his father-in-law's brothers. Since intra-lineage marriage does not occur, ego never addresses lineage-mates of his own generation by affinal terms.

TABLE 2

VITU KIN TERMS

Reference	Address	
pupuluna		Any relation of the seventh ascending or descending generation.
avuna		Any relation of the sixth ascending or descending generation.
mauna		Any relation of the fifth ascending or descending generation.
kalana	kalanangu	Any relation of the fourth ascending or descending generation.
tumbuna	tumbungu pwao	Any relation of the third ascending or descending generation.
tsina	tsitsi tsiau	Mother; any woman of mother's clan and generation; wife of tata; anyone whom mother calls tai (same sex) and father calls tai (opposite sex).
tamana	tata mau	Father; any man of father's clan and generation; husband of tsitsi; anyone whom mother calls tai (opp. sex) and father tai (same sex).
vavapana	vava	Mother's brother, any man of mother's clan and generation; anyone who mother calls vuku or father calls kua; child of vuku (man speaking).
ravana	ravangu	Any affine of the adjacent generation, parents of own child's spouse.
ravana	toto ravangu	Father's sister, mother's brother's wife; anyone whom mother calls kua and father vuku; child of vuku (woman speaking).
tathina tarina	tai	i. same sex sibling; child of tata and tsitsi. ii. opposite sex affine; child of tata and vava.
livuka	vuku	opposite sex sibling; child of tata and tsitsi.

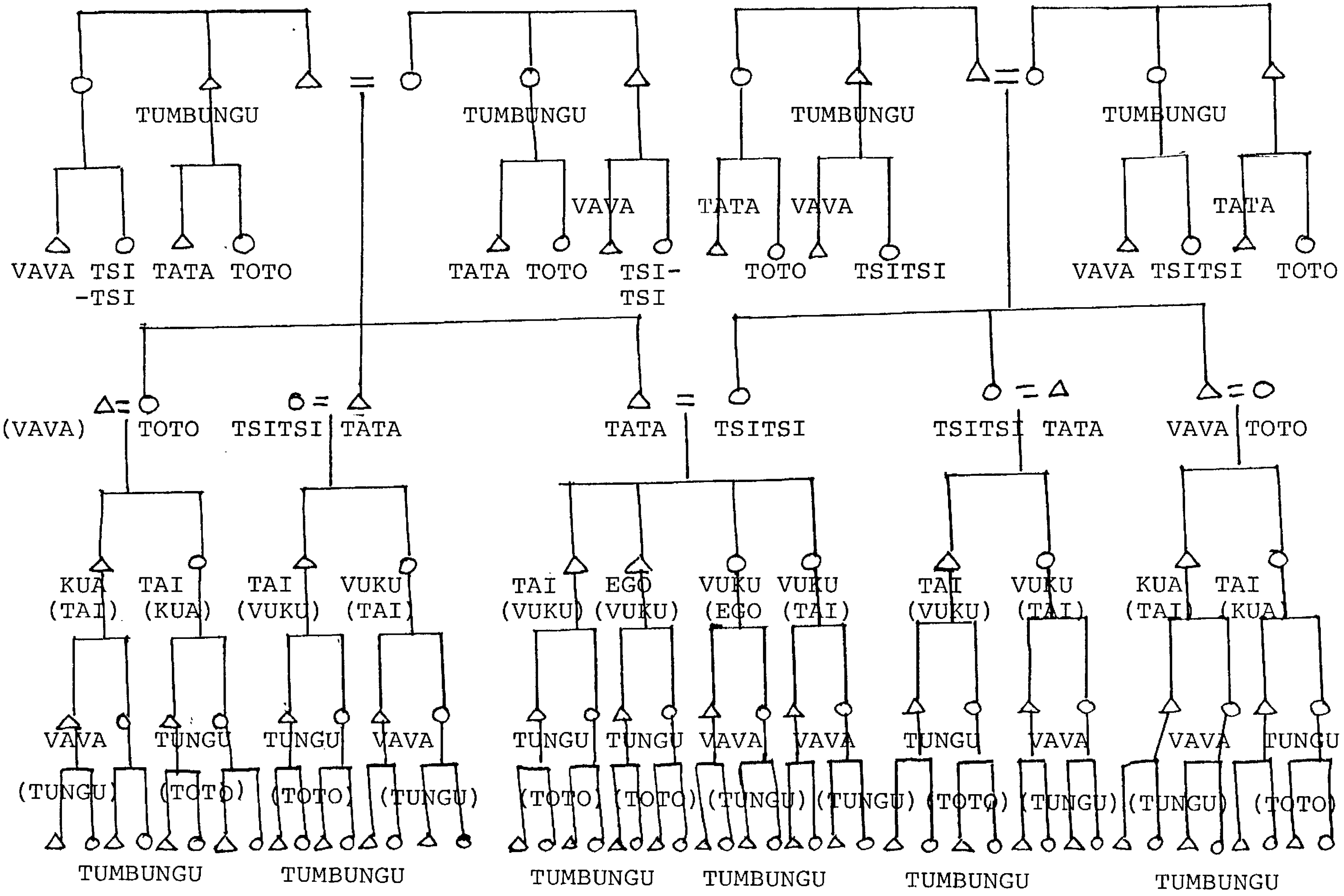
Table 2, continued

Reference	Address	
kurana	kua	opposite sex affine of ego's generation child of toto and vava.
tuna	tungu	child; child of anyone ego calls tai.

The term Kapou may be added to tsina, tamana and tuna to indicate a classificatory relationship.

FIGURE 2 - CONSANGUINEAL KIN TERMINOLOGY

Terms used by female ego are in brackets



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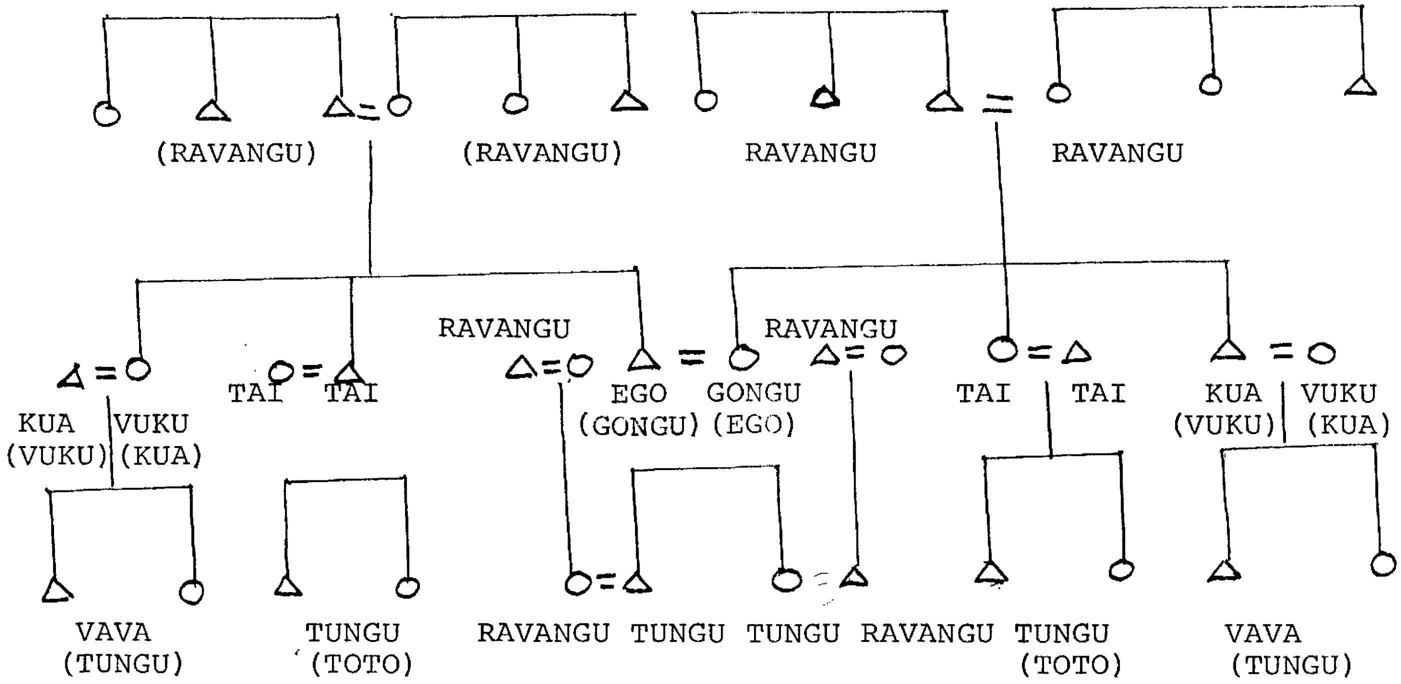
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(TUNGU)

FIGURE 3 - AFFINAL KIN TERMINOLOGY

Conventional Behaviour to Affines

Vitus distinguish affinal from non-affinal kin by adopting particular kinds of conventional behaviour towards them as well as by referring to them by specific kinship terms. Restraint is characteristic of dealings with affines. Forms of restraint that Vitus employ include an avoidance of general conversations, a prohibition on mentioning the names of affines either in address or reference, and a ban on commensality. In view of these restrictions on eating and speaking it is significant that the literal meaning of ravangu is "my mouth". Breaking avoidance rules leads to feelings of shame and sometimes results in the payment of compensation[4] by the offender.

I will discuss the social and ritual aspects of affinal avoidance in Chapter VI. Here I discuss restraint only as a device that characterizes behaviour between different classes of kinsmen. Three variables appear to influence the degree of restraint with which affines treat one another. These are generation, sex, and degree of consanguinity. I provide a summary of the conventional behaviour between the various classes of affines in Table 3.

Affines of adjacent generations treat one another

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[4] Compensation is usually paid only when opposite sex parents-in-law and children-in-law inadvertently discover one another eating.

TABLE 3

Avoidance behaviour between affines

KIN TERMS	Addressing affine by name	Joking with affine	Making requests of affine	Referring to affine by name	Eating with affine	Making general conversation with affine
	PROHIBITIONS					
Ravangu; spouse's opposite sex parent	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ravangu; spouse's same sex parent	x	x	x	x	x	
Ravangu; spouse's Mother's Brother	x	x	x	x		
Tai; affine	x	x	x	x	(x)	
Kua; affine	x	x	x			
toto; Father's Sister	x	x	x			
Tai; cross cousin	x	x	x			
kua; cross cousin	x	x				
Gongu; spouse	(x)					

x	avoidance observed
(x)	individual practice varies.

with greater respect than affines of the same generation. Individuals treat parents-in-law with much greater respect than siblings-in-law, and Vitus characterize the relation between ego and his parents-in-law as the "true" affinal relation. There appear to be elements of sexual shame associated with this relationship, but there are also social tensions inherent in the relationship between parents and their respective sons and daughters-in-law.

Vitus always treat opposite sex affines with more respect than same sex affines of the same generation. Parents and their opposite sex children-in-law rarely speak directly to one another but people of the same sex converse respectfully but freely. Commensality is avoided between all close affines of adjacent generations.

Ego eats with same-sex affines of his own generation, avoiding only names and licentious conversation. In contrast, most opposite sex affines do not eat together and tend to avoid general conversations. Exceptions occur when one affine is much older than the other. When questioned about her lack of restraint towards her elder sister's husband, one informant explained that she had been a child when her sister married and since her father died her brother-in-law had been "like a father" to her. Nevertheless, individuals who become friendly with opposite sex affines are frequently the target for gossip about adultery.

The third variable affecting behaviour towards affines is consanguinity. The more closely individuals are related through blood to their affines the less they treat them with restraint. Ego may behave much more freely with affines inherited from his mother than with his own affines. In the father/child relationship, the consanguineal relationship over-rides the affinal relationship and no restraint behaviour is necessary. The influence of consanguinity is also evident in the relationship between ego and his father's sister. She is an affine through his mother and is referred to as ravangu. Ego treats her with respect and does not address her by name. However, she is also a consanguine through his father and so he addresses her by the familiar term toto. Relations between cross cousins are much more relaxed than those between siblings-in-law.
Restraint behaviour includes only the avoidance of the name in address and the avoidance of joking behaviour between opposite sex cousins.

Relations between affines become more relaxed as a blood tie develops between them through the birth of a child. When a firstborn child is conceived, affinal groups symbolize their new relationship by exchanging cooked food[5] for the first time. Traditionally, the birth of the first child also resulted in changed behaviour between the mother and the father. Although the custom has lapsed, husbands and wives previously practiced a minor degree of avoidance. Before marriage, a betrothed couple hid from each other and even after marriage they did not eat or live together. They established co-residence and commensality only after the birth of their first child. Subsequently, the restraint behaviour of a married couple consisted primarily of avoiding one another's names. They addressed each other by the name of their common child, i.e. Tani X and Tsini X.

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[5] Food given in marriage exchanges is uncooked. Cooked food indicates a closer kinship than uncooked food and is appropriate after the conception of a child. The symbolism of food is discussed in Chapter VII.

Vitus prefer not to practice restraint behaviour and so they address people by affinal terms only if they have no alternative. If ego is only distantly related to his wife's (or her husband's) lineage, then he classifies all members of the lineage as affines. If his father-in-law is a member of his own, or his father's lineage, then he calls only his father-in-law ravangu, and addresses all other men of that generation as vava or tata.

In practice, Vitus do not distinguish clearly between distant affinal and non-affinal kin. Informants in Balangore found it difficult to assign kin terms to many people in the village, and they usually addressed these people either by name or by a teknonymous term. If it is necessary to discover an exact term for a distant kinsman, individuals most frequently modify the kin terms that their parents use. Alternatively, they trace the genealogies of ego and alter to a common ancestor or a common lineage membership, since the application of Dravidian terminology requires that all links in a chain of relationship between two people be known.[6]

In summary, Vitu kin terms appear symmetrical, but patterns of terminological usage reveals a matrilineal bias. Variables of generation, sex and consanguinity influence the degree of restraint that affines exercise toward each other. Consanguinity modifies an affinal relationship when a consanguineal relationship inherited from a man coincides with an affinal relationship inherited from a woman.

Cognatic Categories

In Vitu, the most general term for cognatic category is *kambu*. Vitus sometimes use *kambu* as a synonym for clan or *ǥaǥaǥa* (e.g. *Kambu ke Poi*, *Kambu ke Nali*). They also use the term to describe all those who share common ancestry. For example, an informant told me that all the inhabitants of Balangore I, were of the same *kambu*. Vitus refer to the distant kinsmen whom they call *vinikengu* as *kambu ka ǥita* (cognatic kinsmen). Describing a typical instance of the use of this term an informant said:

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[6] Vitus have no rule that stipulates marriage to a particular kin category and they do not avoid distant affines. Accordingly, they do not classify all members of the community as cross or parallel kin.

> If we go to Unea and hear a *Navio* (men's cult ritual) and we recognize it as one that we own, we ask, "Where did you get that *Navio*?" They tell us its history, and we say: "*Kambu ka ǥita*. You are our kinsmen."

Navio[7] are inherited cognatically in both Vitu and Unea, so that individuals with rights in the same *Navio* presume that they are kinsmen even if they cannot trace their mutual genealogical links in a precise manner.

Vitus use the cognatic category *ǥambu* with more precision. *Ǥambu* are cognatic categories that focus on a particular apical ancestor and include all his or her descendants. There is no word for nuclear family in Vitu. Instead *ǥambu tuni X* refers to a man or woman and his or her children. Similarly, *ǥambu tumbuni* refers to a grandparent and his descendants, and *ǥambu taranga* to an ancestor above grandparental level and his descendants (Figure 4).

Besides using *ǥambu* to describe the cognatic descendants of either men or women, Vitus regard *ǥambu* as related to matrilineages. In this sense, the apical figure of a *ǥambu* is always a man who, as a representative of his matrilineage, passes its blood to his descendants (Figure 5). Vitus consider that men transmit their blood to descendants for four generations before it becomes exhausted.

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[7] *Navio* is a men's cult ritual in which ancestral spirits are brought into a village. Songs which are also called *Navio* are sung at performances of the ritual. The original owners of songs and their descendants have the right to sing the songs.

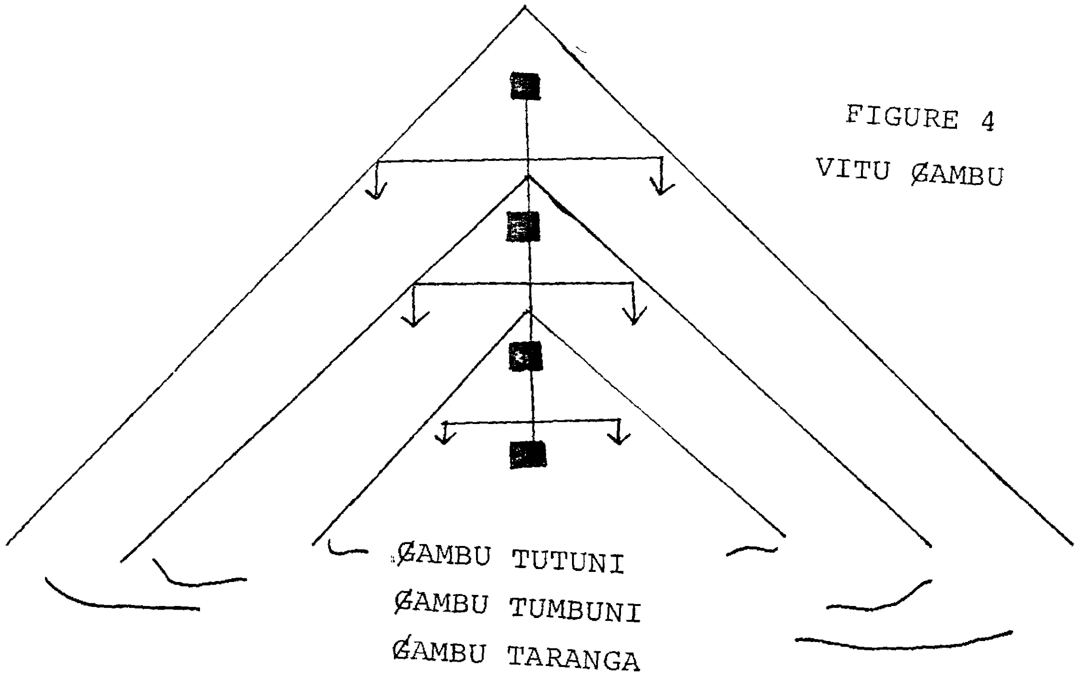
ØAMBU TUTUNI
ØAMBU TUMBUNI
ØAMBU TARANGA

FIGURE 4

VITU ØAMBU

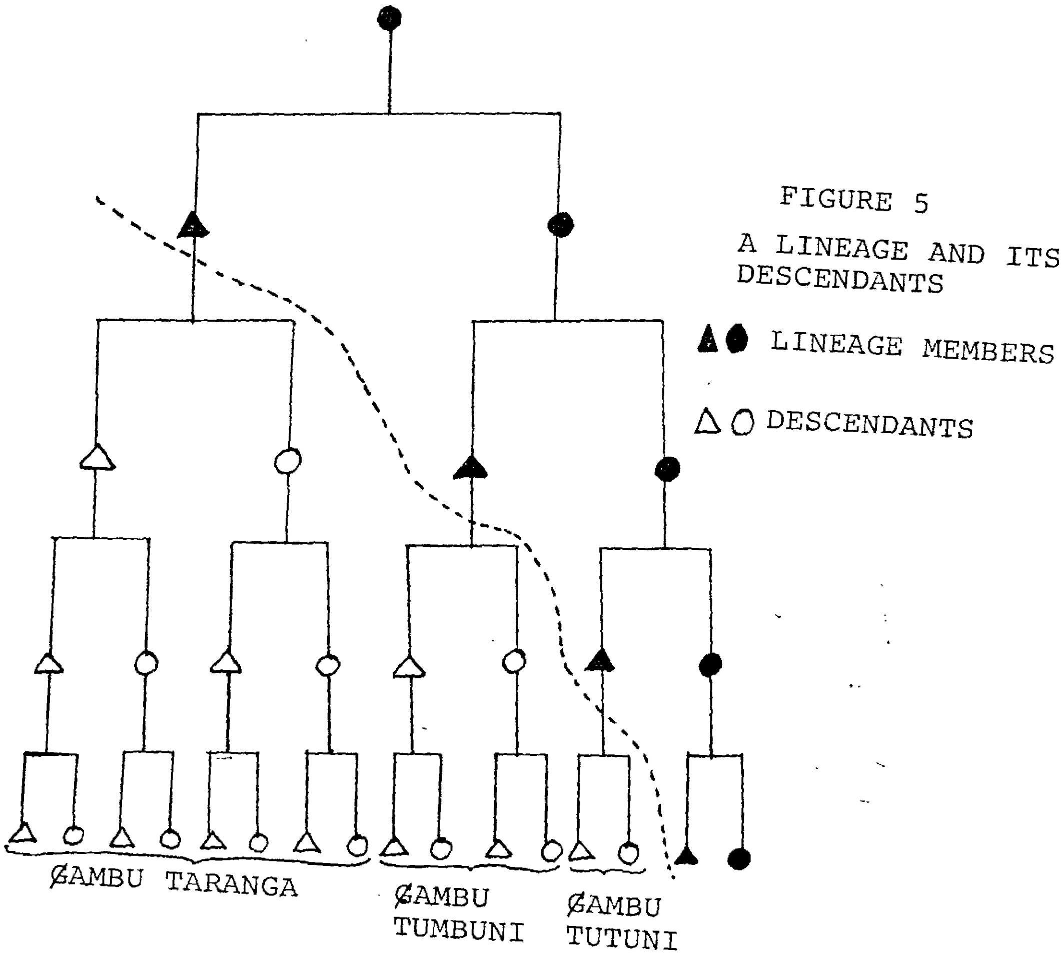
▲● LINEAGE MEMBERS
△○ DESCENDANTS
ØAMBU TARANGA
ØAMBU TUMBUNI
ØAMBU TUTUNI

FIGURE 5

A LINEAGE AND ITS DESCENDANTS

In Vitu, an individual is a member of only one matrilineage, but he traces relationships through blood to male ancestors representing as many as seven other lineages (Figure 5). He has rights[8] in and duties towards each of these lineages, but he may not utilize some of his rights and may neglect some of his duties. Conversely, members of related lineages have rights in and duties towards their kinsmen. Individuals may act as members of groups on the basis of the ties to any of the lineages to which they are related. The cognatic appearance of social groups in Vitu derives from the participation of individuals who share lineage blood but not lineage membership.

The apical member of a *ǥambu* mediates relations between his cognatic descendants and between lineage descendants and lineage members. Each individual considers himself to be a close cognatic kinsman of persons in his own *ǥambu* as well as of the surviving lineage-mates of the apical member of the *ǥambu*.

The total number of persons with whom ego shares *ǥambu* membership constitute his personal kindred, the group of close kinsmen to whom he gives, and from whom he receives aid. Ego shares *ǥambu* membership with his full siblings, but he shares fewer common memberships with more distant kin.

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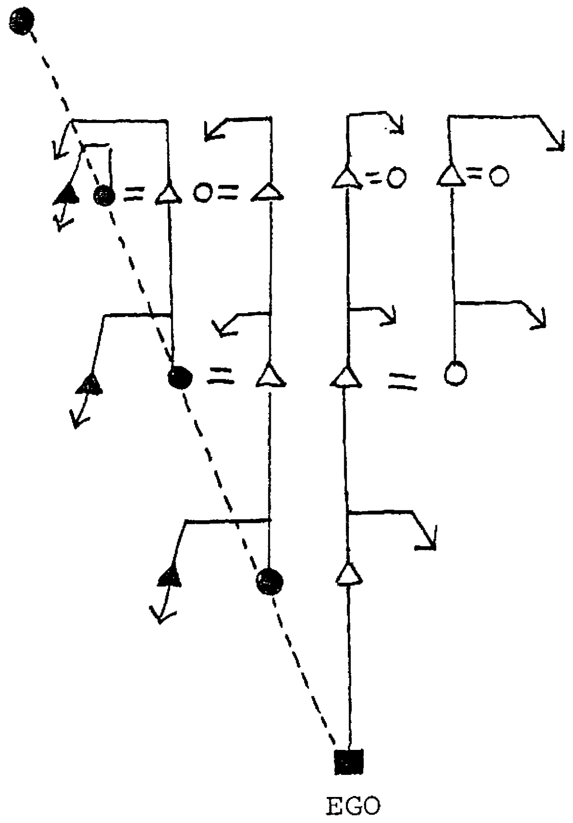
[8] In theory, an individual has rights in the matrilineages of F., F.F., F.F.F., M.F., M.F.F., F.M.F. and M.M.F.

FIGURE 6 - Lineages in which ego has rights



▲ ● Men and women of Ego's lineage

△ ○ Men and women whose lineages begot ego's lineage.

In Vitu many social groups crystalize round specific lineages. Since individuals are obliged to aid members of lineages with which they are affiliated by consanguineal ties, a person may cooperate with different configurations of relations on different occasions. So, although the formation of social groups occurs through the application of well-defined social principles, the groups themselves may appear to an observer to be formed in a haphazard manner.

One informant described the inclusion of lineage descendants in an exchange group as follows:

> If a Ngepi man who has a Kara child undertakes some ceremonial work, the child is involved in the work because *ǥambu taranga ndia ta tarugia*, all the ancestors (of *Ngepi* clan) begot him. My father was *Ǥandora* so I am included in his clan. The process of inclusion continues for four generations but ceases on the fifth. When we have a common great-grandparent we are ready to marry again.

The implication here is that cognatic relationships fade over time and are replaced by new affinal relationships. If ego marries a member of the lineage of one of his male ancestors he ceases to regard himself as a descendant of the lineage and becomes an affine. In the next generation his child will look to him as an apical member of a new *ǥambu*, so cognatic relations will be re-established between the two lineages. Ideally, movement between affinal and cognatic kinship is cyclical.

Different people within a lineage may simultaneously trace both cognatic and affinal relations to other lineages in the local marriage universe. Over time, individuals also trace both affinal and cognatic relations to other lineages. For example, a man is both an affine and a cognatic descendant of his father's lineage. Vitus recognize both alliance and descent in the idioms that they use to describe relationships between lineages. When they emphasize the alliance relation between lineages, Vitus speak of the exchange of women. When they emphasize the descent relationship, they speak of one lineage begetting (tarugia) another lineage.

Categories and Groups

In Chapter II, I suggested that Vitus saw their society as ordered in terms of matrilineal descent. In this chapter,I have argued that concepts of cognatic descent add flexibility to the matrilineal structure. Cognatic descent cross-cuts lineage classification and gives an individual rights in many lineages.

When an individual aids a member of another lineage, he does so because he is a descendant of that lineage. If he is asked why he is helping he may reply, "Because Ruka X fathered me", meaning that his father or lineal ancestor was a member of that clan. When aiding a related lineage, an individual does not stress his membership of his own clan, but his inclusion, through cognatic descent, in the clan that he is helping.

Vitus discuss social groups as if they were aggregations of matrilineal kin, e.g., Ruka Kulu is making an exchange; Ruka Kara is cutting copra. In speaking this way, they are not referring to the groups as such, but to the matrilineal categories that these groups represent. Vitus perceive their society as ordered in terms of ideal matrilineal categories, but they do not expect that groups that represent matrilineages will consist exclusively, or even predominantly, of matrilineal kin. Vitus make a clear distinction between category and group. And it is necessary that such a distinction be made in an analysis of Vitu social arrangements.

In Vitu matrilineal categories represent bases for the formation of social groups. Groups consist of lineage members, lineage descendants, and persons who are dependents of, or supporters of, these people. The relative proportion of persons from these categories to the actual people who make up groups will vary with the kind of group in question. For example, in traditional times, a local community did not coincide with the group of people who had access to the land on which the community resided. Different cultural rules affect the constitution of different kinds of groups. In addition, the composition of real groups is always unpredictable and unstable because random, non-cultural variables also influence their formation. Such variables range from fluctations in the birthrate to questions of personal preference in deciding which kinsmen to aid.

CHAPTER V

RULES OF LAND TENURE AND THE ACQUISITION OF LAND

In this chapter, I analyse the composition of groups that utilize lineage land. I describe the land belonging to a lineage as an administrative area, and enumerate the categories of persons that have rights in the land. Then I show the relationship between these categories and the kinship categories that I discussed in Chapter IV. In the second part of the chapter, I describe the ways in which individuals activate the rights to which membership of categories entitles them. The chapter ends with a discussion of variables which influence the formation of land-using groups.

Divisions of Land

In Vitu, land is divided into small, named areas that vary in size from a few square metres to a few hundred square yards. Names frequently refer to topological features, e.g., Potuna Dokodoko, Hill of Flowers; Vuna Kulu, the Base of the Breadfruit. The named segments tend to be larger in areas of unclaimed or little-used land, but along the sea-shore every boulder and large tree has a name. Several individuals may own trees, or have access to land in a named area, so names do not correspond with individual plots. Nevertheless, the proliferation of names does allow Vitus to locate small areas of land with considerable accuracy. Names do not relate to boundaries of land belonging to individuals or social groups, but they enable people to discuss these boundaries.

Lineage Land as an Administrative Area

Before contact, Vitu consisted of a number of politically autonomous territories with areas of between approximately two and six square kilometres. Territories contained several fairly compact areas of land, each associated with a specific lineage. After contact, alienation of land by the Germans reduced the areas of the territories to between 91 and 372 hectares, and deprived many lineages wholly, or partially of their land. Despite these disruptions, Vitus still regard land as divided into administrative units based on lineage properties. If a lineage is large, its land may be divided into areas associated with sublineages. The sublineage leaders, who administer such land,are subordinate to the lineage leader, and members regard all the land as the corporate possession of the lineage.

Although land is the most important possession of the Vitu lineage, not all members use the land of their lineage. Instead, the land-using group consists of some lineage-members and some members of other categories who have rights in the land. The lineage has controlling rights in the land but the local land-using group is not a local descent group.

Among members of a lineage who do use their land is the lineage leader. The essential qualifications of a lineage leader are first, that he should utilize the land of his lineage, and, second, that he should be knowledgeable about the history of the land that he administers. In the traditional society, a lineage leader lived on his own lineage land and acted as the political leader of a local community as well as the manager of the properties of the dispersed lineage with which he was affiliated. In the modern society communities no longer exist on lineage land, but the authority of the lineage leader still encompasses all those who utilize the land.

The lineage leader has several duties with regard to land. First, he is responsible for the day-to-day management of lineage resources. He makes decisions about communal work and leads his followers to consensus about the siting of gardens. Second, he is responsible for mediating disputes between users of lineage resources. He attempts to bring about a settlement through his diplomatic skills and his superior knowledge of boundaries and areas of land that ancestors used. Third, the lineage leader has rights of disposal over unused lineage land. He uses land to increase the strength of his lineage by allotting it to lineage members who have inherited little or no lineage land from their parents. Most lineage leaders can recite genealogies that mention the names of all right-holders and include those people who currently do not use the land. Finally, the lineage-leader acts as the representative of his lineage and (in traditional times) of his community. Specifically, he attempts to protect the land against other lineages' attempts at encroachment.

If all lineage-members are young or ignorant of tradition, they may ask for advice about boundaries and histories of areas of land from a lineage-leader who has rights in their lineage land and who knows their land well. Lineage-leaders assured me that that members of other lineages should only advise. Only the manager of a lineage and his lineage-mates have the right to make policy decisions about their land.

Rights in Land

Crocombe (1974:8) points out, "There is no land tenure system in existence, wherein all rights to any parcel of land are held by a single party". A Vitu gains rights in an area of land through being a member of an owning clan, through membership of a controlling lineage, through descent from a member of a controlling lineage, or through being a dependant of a right-holder. The kind of rights that people hold in land include residual rights, controlling rights, leasehold rights and usufruct.

Rights of Control

Rights of control are vested in the local landholding lineage; i.e., the lineage descending from the first claimants to the land. Any man or woman belonging to a controlling lineage has the right to make gardens or plant trees on the land of their lineage and to dispose of the improved property to their heirs and dependents. Even if members of the controlling lineage do not utilize their land, they maintain an interest in it. They expect the lineage leader to administer the land on their behalf and to consider the interests of their descendants should they wish to return to their land. In particular, they believe that they have rights to arrange marriages for their daughters with occupants of lineage land so that their lineage will re-establish itself on its land.

Residual Rights

A clan has residual rights in the properties of its constituent lineages. It forfeits these rights only when lineages lose their land in war or when they sell their property to another lineage. Members of lineages who have lost their land to enemies may dispute the legality of their loss of rights. However, everyone agrees that a sale of land involves a transference of all rights to the purchasing lineage and its clan. Lineages sell property very infrequently, but it is possible for an individual to convert usufruct into controlling rights in this way, if a lineage wealthy in land has few members. A landless lineage may also purchase land under similar circumstances. In the pre-contact society, pigs were used as payment for land. But lineage leaders indicate that, if they were to sell land today, they would expect to receive a considerable amount of money.

Residual rights become important only when a lineage is becoming extinct. Another lineage of the same clan should take its place as controller. Usually members of the dying lineage arrange for one of the descendants of their lineage to marry a member of the lineage that they wish to become controller. By this means, the new controllers inherit blood from the lineage of the original controllers and there is continuity of substance between ancestors and heirs.

Leasehold Rights

Among the Tolai, men have the right to "eat" of their father's land but, unless they receive the land as a gift, this right lapses when their fathers die (Epstein 1969:133). The rights which Vitus inherit from their fathers and from other patri-linked kin are of much greater scope. Vitus may claim rights as descendants of lineage men for four generations until the blood of their ancestors in the lineage have become exhausted.

Lineage descendants have as much freedom as lineage-members to use inherited land. They may plant trees and dispose of the land as they wish. However, they have less ready access than lineage members to general resources. When land is plentiful, descendants may be able to plant trees on unused parcels of land; if land is limited, Vitus believe that a lineage leader should favour the claims of his lineage-mates.

Vitus draw clear distinctions between the rights of lineage members and the rights of lineage descendants. One informant said of the latter, "We do not give them land to keep for ever. They just lease it". The lineage descendant as lessee validates his rights by paying an adult pig to the controlling lineage. Heirs to the land repeat this payment in every generation that the land is alienated from its controlling lineage. Heirs pay their debts for land at their father's mortuary ceremony, or at a public ceremony that takes place after their father has become too old to utilize the land to which he is entitled.

During my residence in Balangore I, a woman named Kumui made a presentation for land in a ceremony that is typical of payments for land. Kumui's father, Bito, had retired from gardening and copra production and had given his land to his children. The land belonged to his own (Boro) lineage and to his grandfather's (Ngepi) lineage.

On the morning of the presentation, the bull-roarer sounder as a public proclamation of the transaction. At this signal, Kumui and her kinsman began to mourn over Bito as he sat in his daughter's house. Subsequently, Kumui gave a pig to her father and his brother, the last surviving members of their lineage. She also gave a pig to the leader of her great-grandfather's (Ngepi) lineage. The recipients killed the pigs and distributed the meat to all those who shared rights in their lineage land. Donors, such as Kumui, expect recipients to remember that debts have been paid.

Although payment of pigs ensures that lineage descendants maintain their rights in lineage land, the controlling lineage grants the "lease" in anticipation that, eventually, an heir to the land will marry a woman of the controlling lineage. Vitus call this pattern of marriage pule mule tavine, "taking back the woman", or kandia garigari, "buying back the land". As individual rights in the lands of an ancestor become more attenuated with the passing of the generations , eventually, lineage members begin to suggest that he should either leave their land or arrange a marriage between his heir and one of their women.

Usufruct

Usufruct is the most transitory of Vitu rights in land. Controllers or leaseholders may grant the use of a portion of their land for life, or for a shorter period, to affines or to persons to whom they owe a debt.[1] Vitus regularly grant usufruct to widows and widowers. A widow may continue to harvest coconuts on her husband's land until she remarries, but she must use the coconuts to feed her children rather than to aid other members of her lineage. A widower may use the coconut palms that he has planted on his wife's land to feed his wife's children, but he may not use the coconuts to feed his children by other wives. Vitus also grant usufruct, occasionally, to distant kinsmen with little land. Donors frequently express fears that the recipients of the rights will plant coconut palms in order to establish stronger rights in the ground. Frequently, their fears are well-justified.

Right-Holding Categories

The groups of persons who use lineage lands include controllers, lease-holders, and holders of rights of usufruct together with dependents of members of these categories. The first two of these categories are equivalent, respectively, to those of lineage member and lineage descendant (Figure 5). The ideology of kinship discussed in Chapter IV is clearly reflected in the relationships of persons through land. The matrilineage possesses land as a permanent corporation but descendants of lineage men have rights through cognatic descent in their ancestor's properties. The strength of these rights depends on the amount of blood the descendant derives from the lineage, i.e., on his genealogical distance from his ancestor of that lineage. The rights in land which an individual inherits from his mother differ from those that he inherits from his father. The payment that an individual makes to his father and the latter's matrilineal kinsmen, symbolizes the affinal relationship between ego's lineage and his father's lineage. Lineage mates never pay one another for land.

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[1] Traditionally, an heir might give usufruct to a person, who had aided an old person with few kinsmen, after the old person had died. Another traditional method of gaining usufruct was to undertake mourning duties when the father of a distant relative or friend died. The relative would grant usufruct as compensation.

Land-using groups which crystalize on lineage land consist of members of the various right-holding categories, but do not reproduce these categories. In order to become members of land-using groups, Vitus must activate their rights. Usually individuals have rights in land that they do not, or cannot, activate. So land-sharing groups include only a fraction of the total number of right-holders. In the following pages I describe means by which individuals gain access to land.

Activating Rights Based on Genealogical Criteria

Every member of a lineage has the right to work on his own lineage land. Vitus believe that a lineage leader should allot garden space to a person who wishes to use lineage land but has not inherited access to it. Today, it is difficult for lineage-leaders in some densely populated parts of Vitu to grant use of land to disinherited lineage members.

Vitus say "Land follows the trees". By this, they mean that individuals possess land when they possess the trees that grow on the land. Lineage leaders can direct the use of unplanted land but they cannot interfere with an individual's use of his own trees. By planting trees, individuals effectively remove land from common use. Even in pre-contact times, individuals planted trees in areas of land that were associated with their families. Today, coconuts and other useful trees cover most of the land in the western peninsula of Garove. In such densely planted areas, individuals can only activate rights through inheritance. People who now live in the territory where their lineage owns land almost always have access to land through inheritance from their mothers. However, persons who are born outside of their territories, and who have not inherited land there, may not be able to acquire land, if they return.

Inheritance

When the Vitus state that they "follow both sides together", they assume a situation in which an individual inherits land from both his parents. The following figures represent a sample of one hundred adults who had gained access to land in Balangore I:[2]

Mother only	16
Father only	21
Both parents	63
	100

Parents who had adequate resources had distributed land to all their children. People who owned little land and migrants who had land in another territory only gave to some of their children.

Husbands and wives have few rights in one another's land, but they usually consult each other about the disposal of their joint resources to their children. Figure 7 shows the sources of the properties of one Vitu couple and the way in which they distributed them to their children. The holdings of the couple, Lumbo and Buloi, illustrate the differential access that Vitus have to land. Buloi had inherited a substantial area of ground from three of her grandparents; Lumbo has little land because his father was a migrant and because his own lineage had lost most of its land when it was defeated in war.

Lumbo gave most of his land to his eldest child. Individuals who have little land often adopt this strategy, although some people prefer to disinherit their daughters

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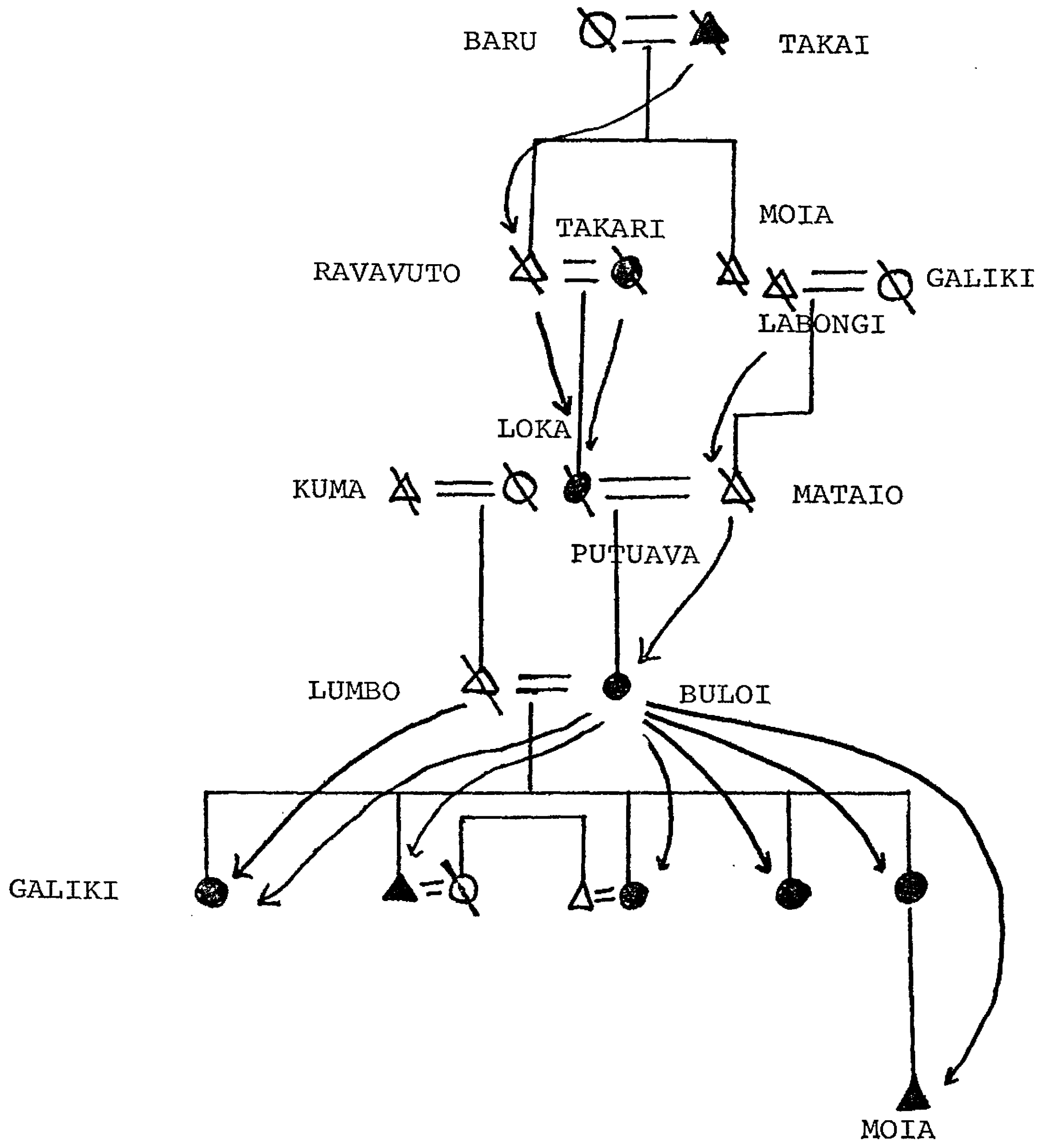
[2] Some younger people will receive land from a second parent when he or she dies.

FIGURE 7 - INHERITANCE OF LAND


BARU
TAKAI
TAKARI
MOIA
RAVAVUTO
GALIKI
LABONGI
LOKA
KUMA
MATAIO
PUTUAVA
LUMBO
BULOI
GALIKI
MOIA

and only give land to their sons. Vitu men usually own more land than women and eldest children own more than younger children. Buloi, like most Vitus, favoured her eldest child, but she also gave land to each of her younger children. Sometimes the youngest child of a large family receives little or no land. Often, his parents plant no trees for him and then die when he is young.

Individuals usually keep trees that they have inherited from their parents until they are old and plant new trees for their children. A few parents retain control of their children's trees until the latter marry, but most people give their teenage children the trees that they have planted for them. Some children make copra with their own coconuts in order to finance their high school education. When parents die or become too old to use their land, heirs receive the balance of their inheritance. Should a parent die before all of his children are adult, the eldest child acts as executor and distributes the land according to his parent's wishes.

Acquisition of Land from Other Kinsmen

Most individuals only acquire land from their parents, but a few receive resources from other kinsmen. A close relationship exists between a child and the person who gave him his traditional name. If a name-giver has access to a large amount of land, he may give his protégé a few trees. The name-giver is most apt to be generous if he or she is a close relative. Grandparents, in particular, sometimes give land directly to children whom they have named.[3]

Several methods whereby individuals gain access to land through re-distribution are exemplified in Figure 8. Mangai, a Kara man who owned land in Balangore II, died without heirs. There were no more representatives of his lineage in the territory and a bigman who was related to the lineage looked after the land. In order to reestablish the Kara lineage on its land, the bigman gave two grandchildren of Mangai's sister who lived in Balangore I, the names of previous owners of the land. One of these children, Laure, belonged to Kara clan, while Mangai, the other child, was the son of a Kara man. When the children became adult, the bigman gave them the land. In areas such as Balangore II, where land is scarce, squatters often move into unused land. So it is necessary for lineage leaders to recruit eligible persons to occupy such areas.

Besides acquiring land in Balangore II, Laure received a great deal of land from his father. His wife, Galiki, had also inherited a considerable amount of land from her parents. The couple had no children of their own, but had adopted two sons and a daughter. Two of the

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[3] Buloi (Figure 8) gave land directly to her grandson Moia, whom she had named.

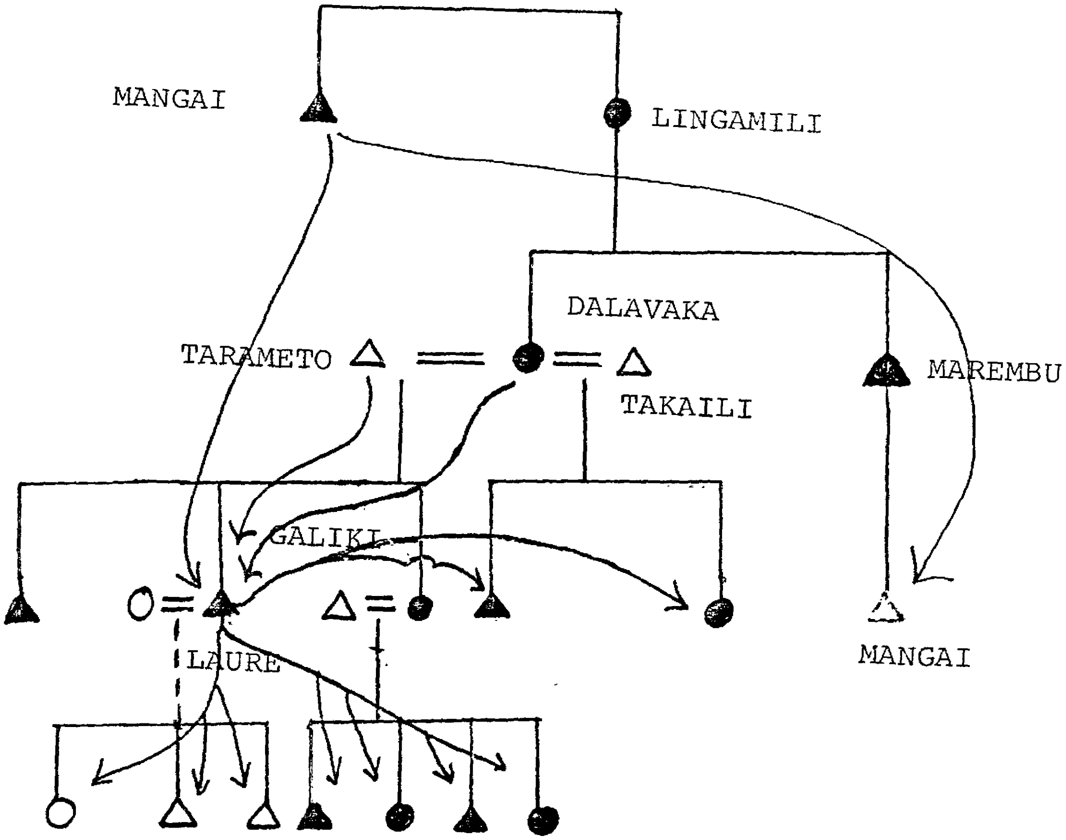
MANGAI
LINGAMILI
DALAVAKA
TARAMETO
TAKAILI
MAREMBU
GALIKI
LAURE
MANGAI

FIGURE 8 - REDISTRIBUTION OF LAND AMONG KINSMEN

children belong to the Ngepi clan of Galiki, one is a child of Laure's cross cousin. Vitus who adopt children usually are childless or else have few children. Parents tend to adopt children who are members of categories that have rights in their land. Of the fourteen adoptees in Balangore I, eleven share clan membership with an adoptive parent, while the other three are cognatic kinsmen of their adoptors.

Besides giving land to his children, Laure also distributed his land to various other people. His mother had married twice. The children of her second marriage received little land, so Laure gave his half-brother and half-sister his scattered trees. He kept the larger, more compact plantations for himself. Laure says that he will bequeath these plantations when he dies to his full sister's children. Transferences of land between siblings, and between mother's brothers and sister's children, are rare in Vitu. They occur only when a couple have few or no children, yet have access to a large amount of land.

Acquisition of Land from Affines

If a man receives little land from his kinsmen, he is dependent on the resources of either his wife or his father-in-law. Sometimes a father-in-law bequeaths his land to his son-in-law in preference to his own daughter. In order to earn land, a son-in-law must work for his father-in-law. He also must provide his father-in-law with grandchildren. When the older man dies, the son-in-law pays pigs to his father-in-law's lineage for the land. His status then becomes that of lessee, and he may distribute the land that he has received as he wishes. Nevertheless, should the son-in-law distribute land to children other than those of the previous owner's daughter, quarrels will occur among his heirs.

Land-Using Groups

Land-using groups are aggregations of persons who activate their rights to use lineage land. The groups consist of varying proportions of controllers, lease-holders and possessors of usufruct. Vitus have rights in several land-holding groups in terms of their various category memberships. Usually they activate these rights as a result of inheritance from their parents but there are other means by which heirs receive surplus land from individuals who hold it.

The proportions of the different right-holding categories present in a land-using group depend on the number of lineage members who wish to use the land in relation to the amount of land available. Lineage members do not try to prevent the children of lineage members from using lineage land, but if they perceive that land is in short supply they may put pressure on more distantly related lineage descendants to leave their land or to strengthen their rights in it by marrying lineage women. They may offer younger lineage descendants the opportunity of marrying particular lineage women. Alternatively they may spread hostile rumours which suggest to lineage descendants that sorcery may be used against them if they do not leave.

Usually only a fraction of potential right-holders use lineage-land, so lineage leaders are able to find new recruits if lineage membership declines. The fluctuation in the size of matrilineages over time does not affect the status of matrilineage land as an administrative unit. Even if a matrilineage becomes extinct, a lineage descendant may administer the land, at least for a time. The idea of the matrilineage as the category on which the land-using group is constructed survives even in the absence of active members.

Earlier in my study, I suggested that it would be inappropriate to refer to land-using groups in Vitu as local descent groups. Land-using groups exist on matrilineage land, and concepts of matrilineal descent are instrumental in the formation of the groups but the groups themselves are not matrilineages. Instead, land-using groups crystallize in terms of matrilineal and cognatic descent constructs, the rules of land tenure, and many other variables, including factors as diverse as demographic fluctuation and the care with which individual parents plan for their children's future.

CHAPTER VI

RIVALRY BETWEEN KINSMEN

In the last chapter, I described the differential rights that lineage members and lineage descendants hold in land. In this chapter, I examine the relationships that exist between these two categories of right-holders. I suggest that the relationship between controllers and lease-holders is essentially one of rivalry. This rivalry is increased by certain Vitu institutions that support male dominance and solidarity and de-emphasize relationships through women. I discuss the effect that the virilocal residence rule and the planting of permanent tree-crops has had on the inheritance of land, then I describe the nature of the tensions between kinsmen who share land. I suggest that Vitus attempt to resolve these tensions through marriage. Finally, I show that conventional behaviour between non-kinsmen, matrilineal kin, and affines may be associated with rivalry that develops between kinsmen over land, and that the local organization of Vitu society reflects values associated with the marriage rules.

Local Groups

In pre-contact times, local settlements in Vitu consisted of hamlets and small nucleated villages whose inhabitants exploited the land of the local lineage. The settlement pattern was fluid, and elderly informants state that even in the early decades of the twentieth century, people moved to new sites every few years. The flexibility of the settlement pattern and the multiple rights that individuals held in land ensured that members of a land-owning lineage were dispersed throughout their own territory and even beyond its boundaries.

Kopytoff (1977:544) suggests that widely dispersed lineage members may engage in corporate activities. He notes that the Suku of Zaire have strongly corporate lineages, even though members live in scattered settlements in an area of approximately two hundred square miles.

Among the Suku, the area within which lineage members are able to live is restricted by the time that it takes individuals to travel to the lineage centre. In traditional Vitu, social and political factors limited the area within which the lineage could function. Local territories, ranging in size from two to six square miles, were autonomous and usually hostile to each other. Sub-lineages that established themselves in other territories soon became independent administrative units.

Within the territory, lineage members did not have to live on their own land in order to participate in lineage affairs. Although lineage members lived throughout the territory, the majority either lived on their own lineage land or on the land of neighbouring lineages. Lineages that possessed adjacent land inter-married intensively, so most people could easily cooperate with lineage-mates and harvest tree-crops on their own land.

For the past thirty years, Vitus have lived in centralized villages within their territories. As a result, the settlement pattern is more stable than it was in the pre-contact era. Most matrilineage members live in the same village. However, even in the contemporary society, members who live outside their own territories are unable to participate fully in the affairs of their own matrilineage.

In Kopytoff's view (1977:544) a virilocal residence rule need not necessarily affect a lineage's ability to administer its property. While it is true that dispersal *per se* does not prevent lineage members from meeting to make decisions about corporate property there are sociological aspects of virilocal residence that have the effect of weakening the matrilineage.

Although Vitus gain controlling rights in land through matrilineal descent, they inherit the use of land through cognatic descent. So in order to retain control over their corporate property, matrilineage members in Vitu must gain access to land as well as rights in land. The combination of cognatic descent and virilocal residence tends to favour inheritance from the father rather than from the mother.

Virilocal residence also works to the disadvantage of the matrilineage because it concentrates power over property in the hands of the husband and his patrikin. In societies where sister's sons inherit property from their mother's brothers, this concentration of power is less significant because men both own and transmit the property. In Vitu, matrilineal property is usually passed from mother to child. Here, the virilocal residence rule makes it difficult for women to gain access to as much land as their brothers. Vitu lineages therefore lose more land through their men than is transmitted to members by women.

Economic Norms and Residential Patterns

Economic cooperation and residential patterns are closely associated in Vitu. In general, people who live together, work together. Vitus express two norms concerning economic cooperation that are relevant to residence: first, "the woman follows the man", and second, man should work with his father until the latter dies. Both norms emphasize values pertaining to male solidarity and cooperation, and deemphasize ties through women. Men claim that they have the greater role in agricultural production and should therefore have authority over women. Men should make decisions about residence and economic cooperation because "Everything comes from the hands of the man; the role of women is to stay idly at home". This stereotype, expressed by Vitu men, dates from the pre-contact society, when men did the bulk of agricultural work and women stayed close to the settlements because of the threat of abduction.

In the traditional society, young married couples lived patri-virilocally. A man worked with his father and his brothers and cooperated with other men of his community in such tasks as fence-making and in men's cult rituals. These activities reinforced the bonds between father and sons and among the men of a community in general.

In contrast to their husbands, women moved away from their own communities at marriage. Affines paid bride-price to a woman's kinsmen, and subsequently expected her to work almost exclusively with them. Until the birth of her first child, a woman shared the house of her mother-in-law and conventions of affinal behaviour demanded that a wife treat her affines with respect and be obedient to them. So although women inherited land, the residence pattern, and their role as daughters-in-law, gave them little opportunity to utilise their resources.

The siting of houses in Balangore I still reflects the norm of patri-virilocal residence for young couples. Twenty-two of the twenty-four young men with a surviving parent either shared the house of their widowed parent or lived near their father's house-site. The parents of both men who did not reside patri-virilocally lived outside the village.

Today, the Catholic mission insists that each newly-married couple have their own house. Table 4 summarizes the contemporary household composition of one Vitu village and indicates that in modern Vitu most households consist of a nuclear family with the occasional addition of a widowed or unmarried kinsman.

The nuclear family is the main productive unit in subsistence activities in modern Vitu. But a considerable amount of food-sharing still occurs between parents and married children. Also fathers and sons usually make copra together.

A major change in the family's subsistence activities has resulted from the fact that most Vitu women now participate fully in subsistence agriculture. However, women continue to work predominantly on their husband's land, and although they now rarely marry outside their own community and are able to interact frequently with their kinsmen, the virilocal residence pattern still influences the direction of their cooperative activities.

Belief in male superiority still persists in Vitu and men continue to propound the ideology of female unproductiveness. Men insist that they do not expect women to work hard in subsistence agriculture or in cash-

TABLE 4

COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN BALANGORE I

Nuclear family	45
Nuclear family and adopted or named children	8
Nuclear family and unmarried brother	2
Nuclear family and parent	2
Nuclear family and grand-parent	2
Nuclear family, widowed parent, widowed sister and her children	1
Polygynous family	4
Widow(er) and children	6
Widow and grandchildren	1
	75

cropping; women engage voluntarily in these pursuits. Since a minority of women conform to the male stereotype, there is some justification for the men's view.

Following the death of his father, a man may live where he chooses. He may continue to live near his brothers and cooperate with them. But siblings sometimes inherit land in different areas, and one or more brothers may find it convenient to cooperate with a mother's brother or with affines.

Residence tends to be virilocal because the siting of the house reflects the political and economic interests of the husband rather than of the wife. Some Vitu men may inherit land near to that occupied by their affines, and they may find it convenient to live near these kinsmen and to cooperate with them in making copra. A woman whose husband cooperates with her kinsmen in this way is still said to follow her husband. In Vitu, the saying that "the woman follows the man" means primarily that the woman depends economically on her husband. Vitus say that a man is "following" his wife only if he uses her resources. In terms of Vitu culture, it is relevant to speak of uxorilocal residence only when a man is economically dependent on his wife.

Men with an adequate amount of land tend to use their wives' land only occasionally. Such men are able to maintain the prestigious male role of provider. A man who uses his wife's land constantly, has a somewhat ignominious position in Vitu society. Vitus describe his wife as "strong" because she is taking the male role.

In Balangore I in 1975-6, only four of sixty-four married men "followed" their wives. Two of these men were the sons of men of migrant lineages; two were orphaned when they were small children. In 1975, the wives of two uxorilocal men paid pigs to their husband's siblings in compensation for the loss of their brothers' labour. Informants did not regard these pigs as repayment of the bride-price. Instead, to quote one informant, such payments were "bridegroom price". Vitu women who pay bridegroom price are the only ones who have real control over their own land.

The Residence Rule and Lineage Solidarity

In Vitu, the economic and cooperative relationships between father and son, and the dominance of men over women, clearly run counter to the interests of the matrilineage. Individuals inherit their own matrilineage land from their mothers. In order for a matrilineage to maintain its authority over its land, inheritance must not be biased to allow men greater access to land than women. Women must be able to pass land to their children who are their matrilineal heirs. In fact, virilocal residence and economic subordination to a husband makes it difficult for a woman to develop her land. Men increase their control over land by planting trees on undeveloped areas. Women habitually cooperate with their affines and rarely plant trees on their own land for their children.

Although a woman "follows" her husband in subsistence activities, her family expect her to "follow both sides together" in other matters. A wife must exercise great tact in order to fulfil her obligations to her affines and to her consanguines, and women frequently are the focus of contention between their two sets of kin. Parents expect that their married daughters will visit them often. They also expect their sons-in-law to cooperate with them occasionally and sometimes utilize their daughters' land. In the Vitus view, married daughters should take an active part in lineage affairs by engaging in exchanges and such activities as naming children. If a man prevents his wife from fulfilling her duties, affines are apt to spread gossip about him until he is shamed into paying compensation in order to clear his name~~s~~.

Parents sometimes give their sons more land than their daughters because the latter will be able to use their husband's land. Occasionally, a parent with little land will disinherit a daughter. When they die, the sons give their land to children who belong to other lineages, while the daughters have little land to give to children who are lineage-mates.

If women marry men from other territories they have little opportunity to look after their own land. Consequently they usually leave their inherited land in their brother's care. Often, a woman who lives outside her territory gives all her land to one child, usually a daughter. The latter , most often, marries a man of her mother's natal territory. Other children inherit land only from their father and so lose rights in the land of their matrilineage. Landless migrant lineages develop from the descendants of such disinherited children.

If a woman who marries outside her territory neglects to send any of her children to look after her land, her brother most often will take the land for his children. In such cases, the land passes outside the woman's lineage. Only a small number of parents disinherit their daughters, and only a few women marry outside their territories in each generation. However, over time, both the disinheritance of women and marriage outside the territory weaken the matrilineage as a land-holding corporation.

Tree-crops and Social Structure

Tree-crops are important in the Vitu diet. Each individual needs access to coconuts because, in the dry season, almost all surface water in Vitu evaporates.

People eat breadfruit daily at certain seasons of the year, and most people habitually chew areca nut.

Epstein (1969:139) points out a connection between the growing of long-lived tree-crops and the inheritance of land by the sons of matrilineage men. In Matupit, a man may only plant trees on the land of his own matrilineage. But sons sometimes help their fathers to plant coconuts and when their fathers die, the sons claim an interest in the trees. If the father's matrilineage recognizes the son's claims, the latter may be able to retain the land of his father's matrilineage and even pass it to his own heirs.

In Vitu, fathers customarily plant trees on their own land for their sons. When members of the filial generation inherit land, they make further improvements and transmit the land to their own sons. In theory, lineage descendants have the right to use lineage land for four generations. However, in modern Vitu, land is scarce and descendants are unwilling to leave once they are established on the land. When they have exhausted their rights to lineage land, they are able to argue their rights to the trees that stand on the land. Lineage members usually are not able to oust lessees from lineage land without violence. Although the members of the land-owning matrilineage have theoretical controllorship of the land, they are not always able to assert their rights. Virilocal residence and cognatic inheritance allows groups of patri-linked kin to become entrenched on matrilineage land.

Vitus place value on the matrilineage as a corporate owner of land, but they also value the link between father and son and put value on the right of a child to inherit land from his father. The presence of these mutually exclusive values in the domain of land tenure causes conflict between individuals who, in particular instances, argue in favour of one or other value. Although individuals favour distant lineage-mates before distant cognates, they always favour their own children before lineage mates and favour close cognates before more distant lineage-mates.

Tensions Between Kinsmen

Tensions begin to develop between lineage members and lineage descendants when the former start to suspect that the latter are depriving them of land that they require for themselves or their children. Usually these tensions do not develop for several generations but, in some cases, even siblings may become rivals on behalf of their children.

Relations between cross-sex siblings in Vitu tend to be cooperative and friendly, particularly when the siblings are young. If a man quarrels with his wife, he expects to receive both food and sympathy from his sister.

A woman expects her brother to take an interest in her children and to look after her land should she marry outside her territory. As siblings grow older, their relationship becomes more distant. Vitus claim that the presence of their sibling's husband or wife makes them feel shame, so that they do not visit their siblings often. Vitus treat their siblings-in-law with restraint in direct interaction but people often make hostile remarks about absent affines that indicate that hostility as much as shame is a component of the affinal relationship.

One aspect of rivalry between affines focusses on land. Men sometimes declare that parents should only give a small amount of land to their sisters so that affines cannot use the land for their own purposes. Brothers carefully observe their brother-in-laws' activities on their sisters' land, and such surveillance is possibly one reason why some men rarely use their wives' land. Sisters also are suspicious of their sister-in-laws' activities, particularly if the latter are only distant relations or come from other territories. One woman who had been acting as executrix for her father complained to me that, because her elder brother had assumed her administrative duties, her younger siblings would probably lose their inheritance. Her brother's wife would climb the palms and would think that they belonged to her husband. She would tell her children that the palms belonged to them, and the latter would keep the trees from their father's younger siblings. Although the woman who made these statements was primarily expressing her annoyance at giving up the privileges that accompanied the role of executrix, Vitus typically complain that women "pull" the land of their husband's lineage for their children.

As the children of siblings grow to maturity their land may become a focus of rivalry between their respective parents. However, the element of conflict is greater between a father's sister and a brother's child than it is between a mother's brother and a sister's child, because the latter pair are within the same matrilineage.

Tension exists between a woman and her brother's children because, although the latter are not lineage-mates, they share her children's land. They may even deprive her children of their land should she marry outside her territory and not send a child to look after the land. Members of migrant lineages frequently complain that they do not have access to their lineage land because it is occupied by descendants of their mother's or their grandmother's brother.

Vitu men emphasize that their sister's children are their closest lineage-mates. As senior members of the mother's lineage, they have some authority over her children. If sister's children inherit land from their mother they may cooperate in cash-cropping with their mother's brother. A mother's brother takes an interest in the welfare of his sister's children, contributing to the bride-price of the males and arranging the marriages of females. Nevertheless a man's children and his sister's children become rivals for the land that they share. In such cases a man always supports his own children against even close lineage-mates.

Rivalry may become pronounced between cross-cousins and accusations of sorcery may accompany verbal disagreements. A typical example of a disagreement between cross-cousins concerns a man I shall call Raphael, who inherited a large amount of land from his father in Balangore I and a small parcel of land from his mother in Balangore II. Raphael began to work as a carpenter at the mission at Balangore II, and he left his land in Balangore I in the care of his brother. He used his mother's land in Balangore II and asked Albert, the leader of his lineage, for more land. Albert had nine children and a great many grandchildren and great grandchildren. In addition, his wife had inherited none of her own very crowded lineage land, and so had nothing to give her children. Neither Albert nor his descendants welcomed Raphael's request. Raphael complained that Albert's descendants should use their own lineage land and allow him access to his properties. His cross cousins replied that since Raphael's mother had married a Balangore I man, Raphael should use his father's land in Balangore I. If he wished to re-establish a link with his mother's clan he could arrange for one of his children to marry a member of her lineage. Subsequently, several deaths occurred in Raphael's family and rumours circulated that his cross-cousins had worked sorcery.

The opposing values associated with matrilineality and patrifiliation are evident in Raphael's dispute with his cross-cousins. Raphael insisted that, as a lineage member, he had the right to use his own lineage land. His cousins justified their refusal to allow him access to his land by citing the ideal residence rule with its patrifilial bias. The case illustrates that lineage members have little control over land that entrenched lineage descendants occupy. It also suggests that, in spite of a rule that gives priority to lineage members, even lineage leaders favour the rights of their own children over those of their sister's children.

A large number of people shared limited resources on Raphael's lineage land. When land is plentiful, tensions build up more slowly. When a lineage is in decline, lineage members are content to share their land with distant lineage descendants. Patrilineages may control their membership through marriage but a matrilineage must depend on its own women to increase its members. The size of Vitu matrilineages may change radically within a generation, so the integrity of the lineage as a corporation depends on the abilities of its members to transfer property to descendants who will represent the lineage. A man who is the only representative of his lineage may still control lineage properties if he is a good administrator.

In practice, the extent to which lineage descendants are welcome on lineage land depends less on their rights in the land through descent than on the availability of land. Even if there is adequate land, lineage leaders may be wary of allowing lineage land to remain in the hands of other lineages for more than a few generations. They are concerned that if lineage members "forget" their genealogical connections with the descendants, then, the latter may claim that the land they occupy belongs to another lineage. Eventually, lineage members demand that distant lineage descendants leave the lineage land or reaffirm their rights.

Marriage Rules

As I have discussed, lineage descendants are usually unwilling to relinquish lineage land and lineage members cannot easily expel distant cognates from their property. Knowledgeable informants suggest that in traditional times, controllers did not use physical force against lease-holders. Today, rumours of sorcery sometimes cause people to relinquish the use of areas of land, but evidence from Vitu society suggests that lineage descendants may succeed in expelling lineage members by sorcery as well as *vice versa*.

Instead of using violence, Vitus readjust relations between lineage members and lineage descendants through their marriage system. In the last chapter, I noted that Vitus allow lineage descendants to lease lineage property in the expectation that eventually, the lessees will marry members of the controlling lineage. The idea of land controllers and lease-holders as marriage-partners is basic to an understanding of the Vitu alliance pattern.

In Vitu, cognatic inheritance ensures that lineages continually lose their land as children succeed their fathers. In order to place an obligation on their children's lineages to return their land, Vitus insist that the exchange of women must be reciprocal. Intermarrying lineages regularly alienate areas of one another's land; to regain control of their land they must arrange further marriages. Vitus insist that individuals marry relations so that women and land circulate within a limited universe of kinsmen.

Ideally, the Vitu lineage is the focus of a marriage universe that consists of a limited number of lineages that exchange women and land among themselves. Values associated with this pattern of alliance are clearly reflected in the political organization of Vitu society. The conventional behaviour that occurs between matrilineal kin, non-kinsmen, and affinal kin also appears to be appropriate to the kinds of tensions generated by the ideologies of descent and alliance in Vitu (Table 5).

Relations among Matrilineal Kinsmen

In Vitu, the clan is the unit of exogamy. Clan membership cross-cuts territorial boundaries and allows Vitus to establish relationships with persons throughout their islands. Clan-mates are members of a corporate category with common rights in land and personnel, so mutual obligations cause all matrilineal kinsmen to give one another aid in situations of need and in times of war. Clanmates within a territory also support each other politically and aid one another in making exchanges during the life-crises of their members.

The lineage is the unit in terms of which Vitus try to achieve balance in the exchange of women and land. Within the lineage members share controlling rights in land and in personnel. As units that share rights and property, the clan and the lineage are exogamous, marriage between members would compromise the integrity of the corporation.

Clanmates may eat together, joke and make requests of one another. As owners of common property they never engage in commercial exchange and ideally, do not place reciprocal obligations on one another. Therefore, behaviour among matrilineal kinsmen tends to be open and free from tension.

TABLE 5

	MATRILINEAL KINSMEN	NON-MATRILINEAL KINSMEN	NON-KINSMEN
PROPERTY	Share property (Inclusive relationship)	Exchange property (Reciprocal relationship)	Steal property (Exploitive relationship)
MARRIAGE	Exogamous	Affinal	No marriage relations
SOCIAL INTERACTION	Free interaction	Restraint and avoidance	Open hostility
FOOD SYMBOLISM	Commensality	No inter-dining exchange of food	Cannibalism

Relations among Non-kinsmen

In Vitu non-kinsmen cannot become affines. In the traditional society, Vitus excluded non-kinsmen from their moral universe. Transactions with them were always competitive and usually hostile. Often non-kinsmen engaged in warfare and the theft of goods or women. Anti-social behaviour culminated in the cannibalism of the enemy dead.

All lineages within a territory inter-married to some extent, but territories themselves were largely endogamous, so most people in other territories were non-kinsmen and therefore enemies. The political boundary corresponded approximately to the marriage universe.

Although there has been no inter-territorial warfare in Vitu for half a century, the pattern of hostility between territories is still evident, for values associated with the marriage rules have not altered. Vitus still believe that only relatives should marry and they strongly disapprove of marriages between lineages that have not previously exchanged women. In traditional times, the theft of women was an act of war and in the contemporary society elopements between local women and men of other territories still lead

Vitus to contemplate violence.[1]

The comparative lack of kin ties between territories allows quarrels between a few individuals of different territories to escalate easily into inter-territorial confrontations. Today physical violence between villages consists only of brief brawls, but Vitus may signify that a state of war exists between villages by suspending all reciprocal relations between themselves and the enemy village. In order to symbolize the negation of kin-links, village officials order that only monetary transactions may take place with the enemy. In 1976, officials of Rangu village fined people who gave food to persons in the enemy village of Goru without receiving payment.

Both matrilineal kin and non-kin are unable to marry, but while matrilineal kin cannot become affines because they share property and blood; non-kinsmen are prohibited from marrying because they share nothing. The only way that non-kinsmen can gain access to another's property is through exploitation.

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[1] In one case of elopement a girl from Balangore I and a man from Rangu decided to marry. The girl's kinsmen forbade the marriage, but the man arrived at Langu Plantation, near Balangore I with a motorized canoe and the couple fled to Rangu. The men of Balangore I prepared weapons, and attacked a group of Rangu men who had come to Langu to sell copra. The Rangu people, who were more afraid of sorcery than of further physical violence, collected a large bride-price and brought it to the house of the girl's sponsor. Although peace was established between the new affines, the husband's family allowed none of his sisters to go to high school in case a Balangore I man should work love magic on her in revenge.

Relations among Affines

Structurally, affines are intermediate between non-kinsmen and matrilineal kinsmen. Affines are distant kinsmen and should not kill one another. Ultimately, however, they are rivals because they belong to different lineages and have different interests. I have argued that affinal rivalry results from competition for land, and that reasons for intermarriage between lineage members and lineage descendants may be understood in the context of this competition.

Restraint and balanced reciprocity characterize behaviour between affines. The respect that affines must show one another restricts interaction and conceals their essentially hostile relationship. Although affines may slander one another in private, and even practice sorcery against one another, they must treat one another with restraint in direct interaction.

Competition between those who share land also results in the balanced exchange of women: Vitus regard affines as rivals who find it necessary to marry each other in order to retain their rights in land. Lineages try to ensure that exchanges of both women and land are balanced and that they regain through the marriages of their women what they lose through the marriages of their men.

Although most lineages within a territory inter-marry, some lineages inter-marry more frequently than others. So the network of affinal ties is not uniform throughout a territory. In general, Vitus prefer to marry people with whom they already have close ties. Traditionally, the preference for marrying within the local sector decreased the radius over which the matrilineage extended and produced a local group that contained a high proportion of couples whose members belonged to neighbouring lineages.

"Alliance groups" continue to exist in the contemporary society. In pre-contact times these groups were geographically discrete. But there are often no obvious physical boundaries within a modern village. Nevertheless, interest groups based on marriage and shared rights in land are discernible in the siting of houses and gardens. Often, members of the alliance group cooperate in copra making and other activities. For example, in Balangore I, a group consisting of a number of migrant lineages and adjacent local lineages share a common copra account and invest common funds in a store. Since palms belonging to members of several lineages are interspersed on lineage land, the alliance group can more easily exploit its joint properties than can the lineage.

In the traditional society individuals rarely visited areas of their territory where they had no close kin. According to informants, trespass was sufficient justification for a feud resulting in assassination or sorcery. Such hostility was both a cause and a result of the concentration of marriage between geographically close lineages.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the tensions that are inherent in a society which incorporates two different descent principles in a single social domain. The interaction of matrilineal and cognatic elements in the system of land tenure in Vitu has created two sets of right-holders who become rivals under conditions of perceived land shortage. Virilocal residence and the planting of treecrops strengthens ties through men and increases the difficulty that the lineage has in controlling its land. Vitu marriage rules offer a solution to rivalry between lineage members and lineage descendants by defining them as marriage partners. Values associated with this pattern of marriage correlate with the conventional behaviour between clan-mates, affines and non-kinsmen. The highly atomized pattern of Vitu territorial organization also may be interpreted in terms of the demands of the marriage rules.

CHAPTER VII

CEREMONIAL EXCHANGE

I have argued that competition for land gives rise to rivalry between lineage members and lineage descendants, and that Vitus try to resolve tensions resulting from this rivalry through a system of reciprocal marriage among a limited number of lineages. In this chapter, I investigate the ceremonial setting in which the exchange of women and land takes place.

I begin by discussing the symbolic aspects of exchange in Vitu, then give details about the succession of exchanges that occur during an individual's life. I discuss some of the variables that influence the composition of exchange groups, and note the criteria that individuals use when deciding which groups to join. Finally, I describe the activities of persons who organize exchanges, particularly those of the sponsors of childhood ceremonies and marriage.

The Symbolism of Exchange

Vitus describe exchanges between social groups as though they were exchanges between exogamous clans (ruka). However, it is between lineages not between clans that Vitus attempt to achieve balance in prestations. Balanced exchange of land and women between clans occurs only in so far as there is symmetry in the relationship between constituent lineages.

In the last chapter, I noted that the relationship between affines is competitive and Vitus try to minimize conflict by equalizing the movement of women and land between lineages. Equivalence between lineages is not achieved immediately. Instead, transactions become balanced over time, provided that Vitus obey their marriage rules. Vitus stress the value of balanced exchange between lineages in all domains of social life. In ceremonial exchange the emphasis is on equivalence. Affines should give one another pigs for pigs, valuables for valuables and food for food. So in a mortuary ceremony, it is common to see two piles of food, each accompanied by one or more pigs arranged symmetrically outside the House of Respect[1] (Thogo).

The exchange of similar items between groups symbolizes the ideally symmetrical relationship between lineages. In addition, the ritual of exchange dramatizes Vitu society as an orderly social process. Exchanges mark stages in an individual's life and define his place in a configuration of cultural categories and a complex of social relationships. The two groups that crystallize to exchange on behalf of a new born child represent the lineages and, by extension, the clans of the infant's mother and father. The two groups re-affirm their interest in him or her as they continue to exchange during a series of childhood ceremonies. When he or she marries both the maternal and paternal groups co-operate in providing food for prestations and in collecting the bride-price for a boy. Later they continue to act as partners when they make exchanges on behalf of the children of the marriage. When an individual dies, the representatives of his or her lineage and the representatives of his or her affinal lineages exchange for the last time.

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[1] The term House of Respect was used by an Unea man John Pulata (1974:34) in an article describing the construction of a memorial to a dead man in his island.

The Cycle of Exchange

The ceremonial aspects of exchange were very elaborate in the pre-contact era. Today, Vitus have reduced the size and frequency of their exchanges, but they have not modified the structure of the exchange groups nor the stages of the cycle of exchange.

Birth Exchanges

Ceremonial activity begins on behalf of a firstborn child while he or she is still in the womb. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, an important exchange of cooked food and live pigs takes place. All those who have given bride-price exchange with those who have received it. After the birth has taken place, the new mother remains for five days, confined in her house with the child. Then her kinsmen and her affines gather in front of the house and a close relative, usually a father's or a mother's brother, carries the child outside. A senior kinsman of the child then names the infant.

As the kinsman names the child, he anoints the infant's head and ears with coconut oil from a specially prepared packet of food; then he pulls the child's ears. The symbolism of pulling the child's ears is obscure, but the ritual takes place on other occasions when cooked food is exchanged. The action appears to dramatize the consanguineal link between the anointer and the subject of the exchange.

Although only firstborn children are named publicly, all children have name-givers. The relationship between namer and child is of considerable significance to both parties. Because individuals belonging to a variety of lineages have an interest in a child, there must be some institutionalized means of deciding who will direct his ceremonial life. The name-giver becomes the sponsor of all exchanges given on behalf of the child as he or she matures. Eventually, he arranges his protégé's marriage. The sponsor may represent the kin of either the mother or the father of his protégé. A senior member of the other parental group arranges counter-prestations in childhood ceremonies.

Exchanges for Firstborn Children

Vitus treat firstborn children as representatives for all those that follow. Unless a name-giver or parent is anxious to gain prestige, he only sponsors exchanges to mark stages of social development in the life of an eldest child.

Some stages in a child's life are customarily celebrated with small prestations. Minor exchanges occur after a child's first smile and his first sensible words. Exchanges also take place when a boy catches his first fish and when a girl climbs her first areca palm. Relatively larger exchanges occur when a wife returns to her husband's community after the birth of her first child, when a child has his first haircut, and when he goes on his first canoe trip. Lesser exchanges only involve vegetable food. Large exchanges involve pigs and valuables as well as food. The sponsor of an elaborate exchange may arrange for a dance to take place in honour of his protégé.

Most exchanges for firstborn children take place between close matrilateral and patrilateral kinsmen who live within the child's territory. But relatives from other territories sometimes sponsor elaborate exchanges when a child visits their territory for the first time. In pre-contact times, travel between different territories was dangerous for people who were not known kinsmen. The exchange held at a child's first visit to a territory provided a context in which a child could be introduced to his kinsmen.

Supraincision

Vitus supraincise boys between the ages of eight and fourteen. The ceremony is held in conjunction with mortuary ceremonies and takes place outside the House of Respect. Traditionally, the boys went into seclusion outside the village after their operation and were looked after by their name-givers. Vitus no longer seclude their sons, but sponsors and parents still exchange pigs on the occasion of the ceremony. Supraincision serves as an occasion for the last major exchange in honour of a boy before his marriage.

Betrothal

When marriages were politically important, sponsors traditionally arranged infant betrothals. The boy's representative approached the girl's representative and, if the latter was agreeable, marked the girl on her head and stomach with red paint. Subsequently, the two children carefully avoided one another, but their parents constantly reminded them that they would marry. The boy's parents periodically sent food to the girl's parents, and when the children eventually married, paid only token bride-price because of the help that they had given in feeding the girl. It was forbidden to work love-magic (moramora) on a betrothed girl (matuani); and to avoid such interference with their plans, parents often sent a daughter who had not reached puberty to live with her prospective affines.

Marriage

Sponsors did not always arrange infant betrothals. Most marriage negotiations began with poitama, a prestation of coconuts and areca nuts that the man's relations made to the woman's relations. Parents who approve of a match between their children still make this prestation. If a girl's sponsor considers the match suitable, he accepts the prestation from the man's relations. Then he collects money and valuables from the girl's kinsmen and gives them to her parents in compensation for their up-bringing of the child. Subsequently, the sponsor takes charge of all marriage negotiations and the girl moves to his house until the day of her marriage ceremony.

After they accept the poitama,the bride's kinsmen send a prestation of uncooked food (paro) to the bride-groom's family. Later the bride-groom's family returns a similar offering. The paro exchange may be repeated several times. One informant called the exchange "fighting with food", but the intention of each group is to equal rather than surpass the prestation that their potential affines have made. Exchange items are sent in the same baskets that served as containers for food during the prior prestation.

Paro clearly symbolizes the ambiguous nature of affinal relationships. The ideal of balance in inter-lineage relations is inherent in the equal prestation of the affines, but a competitive spirit is evident because each prestation represents a challenge to affines to return a similar offering.

Today the sponsor and the bride-groom's other kinsmen collect one or two hundred *kina*[2] as bride-price and give it to the bride's sponsor. The latter distributes the money to the bride's kinsmen. The Bali-Vitu Local Government Council probably introduced this mode of bride-price, for it has no traditional equivalent.

The presentation of the traditional bride-price (*kandia tavine*) occurs when kinsmen decorate the bride with paint and ornaments and carry her to the village of her affines. As the bride leaves her village a kinsman swings a bull-roarer (*lavena Kaka Paraǥa*)[3] to symbolize the consent of the ancestors to her departure. The wedding ceremony itself illustrates clearly the role of marriage in resolving hostility, for the participants enact a process of reconciliation during the course of the ceremony. When the bride arrives at the village of her prospective affines, her kinsmen attack the groom's representatives, using small hard fruit as missiles. In earlier times, they also destroyed property. When calm returns, the bride sits across the legs of two female affines, and individuals representing the lineages of the groom's parents place lengths of cloth and sums of money on the bride's head. After the presentation of the bride-price, the groom's kinsmen provide coconuts, areca nuts, and sometimes food for the bride's party. The bride distributes food to the women, and the bride-groom distributes food to the men. The ceremony, which began with an expression of hostility ends with the giving of food.

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[2] The *Kina* is the official currency of Papua New Guinea.

[3] *Lavena Kaka Paraǥa* may be translated "The voice of the Ancestor".

Food plays an important part in the symbolism of affinal exchange. During preliminary marriage negotiations exchange partners give only uncooked food and affines "fight with food". At the marriage ceremony, a mock-battle provides a dramatization of the competitive aspect of affinal relations. But after kinsmen transfer rights in the bride to their affines, a closer, more amicable relationship develops and the bride-groom's family offers cooked food to the bridal party.

Post-marital Exchanges

After marriage, the affinal groups of both parents perform exchanges in anticipation of the birth of the first child, who will create a blood link between them. Such exchanges occur after the initiation of sexual relations between the married couple and after the wife's first menstruation.

Traditionally, Vitu girls married before puberty. Sexual relations began when the girl began to show signs of maturity, but might commence before menarche. When a girl indicated to her parents that her husband had had sexual relations with her, the two affinal groups exchanged cooked food. A second exchange, also involving cooked food took place when the girl began to menstruate. The substitution of cooked food for uncooked food in these exchanges marked a closer relationship between the affines than that symbolized by the uncooked food given in pre-marital exchanges (cf. Levi-Strauss 1969 passim, Turner 1974:204).

Neither of the two post-marital exchanges take place today. Vitus believe that virgins do not menstruate. Vitu girls now marry between the ages of about fifteen and twenty two. Since Vitus expect brides to be virgins, they do not celebrate the first menstruation of their unmarried daughters. When the woman becomes pregnant the cycle of exchange begins again for the new born child. Married adults are the subjects of no more exchange until they die.

Death Ceremonies

Death is an occasion for two types of affinal exchange. First, exchanges occur that terminate the affinal relations between the lineage of the deceased and the lineage of his marriage-partner. Second, the deceased's offspring pay debts for land to members of the lineages of patri-linked kinsmen.

In the traditional society, Vitus wrapped the bodies of the dead in pandanus mats and tapa cloth. Today, the deceased's consanguineal and affinal kin cooperate in constructing a coffin. The mourners place the deceased in the coffin and carry him to the houses of members of his spouse's lineage. The affines mourn the deceased and place exchange goods on the coffin. The mourners then carry the coffin to the houses of the deceased's lineage-mates and other kinsmen. They remove the exchange goods and place a reciprocal presentation on the coffin.

The widow or widower, and perhaps other close kin confined themselves in the deceased's house in pre-contact times. Vitus buried a person's corpse in a shallow grave and built a fire on top. After the body had decomposed, the deceased's affines initiated an exchange called Malaia. In Malaia, participants placed poles upright in the ground and piled food between them. The assembled kinsmen mourned the deceased, then the chief mourners left the dead person's house, and the two sets of kinsmen exchanged the food piled between the poles. A close kinsman of the deceased removed the latter's jaw bone from the grave and kept it with other relics until the mortuary ceremony.

Rathea, an exchange called after the ashes worn by the chief mourners, took place several months after a death. Persons who contributed food and cooked pig to this exchange indicated their willingness to provide live pigs at the mortuary ceremoney. Although they no longer wear ashes, Vitu still hold this exchange, especially if they intend to hold a mortuary ceremony for the deceased. If kinsmen do not intend to hold an elaborate mortuary ceremony, they may hold an exchange in conjunction with the men's cult activity Lileki[4], or take part in a series of all-night vigils at which mourners sing dirges.

Mortuary Ceremonies

Mortuary ceremonies represent the most elaborate of the death exchanges. They conclude the exchanges made between the lineages of the deceased and the lineage of his spouse and are the occasion on which rights in land and lineage property are transferred to successors. If the children of the deceased or a surviving spouse intend to honour the deceased with a House of Respect, a series of ceremonies are held in the year that precedes the final ceremonies. However, not many people undertake the expensive and time-consuming activity of building a new

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[4] There are two stages to the Lileki performance in Vitus. First, relatives of the deceased destroy property in the village and the gardens while impersonating spirits. Second, a performance of a spirit song is held and pigs are exchanged.

House. Instead, they hold a mortuary ceremony in front of a memorial constructed for another kinsman. Men's cult activities associated with mortuary ceremonies disrupt normal village life for a period of approximately two weeks. Consequently, several people, or groups of people usually sponsor exchanges on the same occasion. Mortuary ceremonies themselves may continue for several days if there are many people to be commemorated. After a mortuary ceremony, mourners burn the possessions of the dead persons, and the exchanges conducted on behalf of the deceased are complete.

I have suggested that the cycle of exchanges provide a means whereby Vitus can perceive their society as having order and structure. But the exchanges have a social context as well as a cultural meaning. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss two social aspects of exchange in Vitu; first the composition of exchange groups, and, second, the roles of the principle actors in exchanges.

The Composition of Exchange Groups

In societies that fit well into the "primary segment" model, individuals only have limited interests in lineages other than their own. Members of a lineage choose the marriage partners of their lineage-mates and make presentations at ceremonies marking their life-crises. Kinsmen who are members of other lineages are minimally involved. In such societies also, there is a close fit between the lineage as a descent category and the group that represents the lineage in exchange. So for example, Wagner (1967:235) describes the Daribi clan as "a group that shares wealth and exchanges women". Similarly Counts (1968:159) says that among the Kaliai of the Northwest coast of New Britain "recruitment to the kingroup is based on consanguinity and defined by exchange". Among the Daribi and the Kaliai, local descent groups tend to act as exclusive exchange groups.

In Vitu, the situation is more complex. The composition of exchange groups, like that of other groups, is based on an ideology of matrilineal descent. But, as in other groups, lineage descendants as well as lineage members may participate. Close affines and clan-mates may also take part in exchanges. Husbands and wives frequently aid each other's kinsmen. Clan-mates may aid one another because, ideally, the unit of exchange is the clan. If a lineage of their clan within the territory is small, clan-mates will often contribute to a presentation.

In Vitu, different exchange groups crystallize around each individual subject of exchange, for every individual has a place in a unique configuration of genealogical relationships. Vitu exchange groups last only for the duration of an exchange and they do not always resemble residential or land-holding groups. Migrant lineages do not have corporate rights in local land, but they do have rights over their members. They may therefore act as a focus of an exchange group.

In cultural terms, exchange groups represent lineages and by extension, clans. In social terms, they consist of a variety of kinsmen who define themselves as matrilateral, patrilateral or affinal kin of the subject of exchange. Individuals within Vitu territories have multiple ties of kinship with one another. In an exchange situation, kinsmen publicly demonstrate one particular kind of relationship to the subject of the exchange, so that the latter is able to classify his kinsmen in a meaningful way.

Criteria for Joining Exchange Groups

In Vitu, contributions to presentations are voluntary. Accordingly, it is not possible to predict with accuracy which persons will participate in any given exchange. Some of the factors that influence the sizes and shapes of exchange groups are demographic and genealogical, some are political or personal.

In Vitu, individuals often contribute bride-price because of their relationship to the bride-groom and later receive payment because of their relationship to the bride. In other exchanges individuals only participate in the exchange group to whose members they are most closely related. Whether an individual aids any group at all is influenced by his own kin configuration and that of the subject of exchange and his sponsor. In one exchange that I attended in Balangore I, the matrilateral and patrilateral grandfathers of the subject of exchange both belonged to the same lineage. A sponsor usually expects to receive help from members of his own lineage as well as that of the mother or father of the child. But on this occasion, the patrilateral grandfather received little assistance because most of his lineage-mates were more closely related to the child through his maternal grandfather. These people did not take part in the exchange.

Whether an individual aids a distant kinsmen depends partly on demographic considerations. Presentations by each exchange group should include a similar amount of goods, so a similar number of people should contribute to each exchange group. If a small lineage makes an exchange with a large lineage, members of the small lineage frequently receive aid from comparatively distant kinsmen. So the proportion of lineage members to other categories of persons representing a lineage in an exchange varies considerably on different occasions.

An individual's decision to join a particular exchange group may be influenced by consideration of friendship or personal advantage. People who are not closely related to the subject of the exchange often aid kinsmen with whom they wish to align themselves politically. Sometimes close kinsmen, including full siblings with different interests, join opposing exchange groups[5].

Larger political processes within a community may also affect the composition of exchange groups. In 1975, a young man named Andreas died in Buka. Andreas' father was a Kulu man of Balangore I; his mother was a Ngepi woman of Balangore II. When the deceased was brought to Vitu, the relatives in the two villages disagreed about where the body should be buried. The mother's lineage declared that Andreas should be buried in his own lineage land in Balangore II. The father's kinsmen quoted the virilocal residence rule and claimed that the young man should be buried in his father's community. Finally, the two groups reached a compromise whereby the maternal kinsmen would mourn the deceased in Balangore II. Later, the father's kinsmen would bury Andreas in Balangore I. This was done, but the controversy caused such bad feeling between the two sets of kinsmen that the people from Balangore II did not come to the funeral. As a result, the leaders of Balangore I village faced the problem of creating a group to represent Ngepi clan in the funeral exchanges; the dead man's mother was the only mature member of her lineage living in

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[5] In a case that I observed in Balangore I, a man who lived uxorilocally aided his father-in-law, while his sister aided her distant clan-mates.

Balangore I village. The groups that eventually made the funeral exchange are illustrated in figures 9 and 10.

The form of the Kulu group followed the conventional pattern of a lineage core aided by lineage descendants and some close affines. But the quarrel between the mother's and father's kinsmen drastically affected the composition of the Ngepi group. At the exchange, only descendants of the lineage and one member of a closely-related Ngepi lineage took part. This incident illustrates very clearly the distinction that Vitus draw between lineages and the groups that represent lineages in the context of exchange. In spite of the absence of the actual members of Ngepi lineage from the funeral exchanges, the flexibility of the Vitu exchange system was such that Ngepi lineage descendants could organize a group to represent the lineage for the duration of the exchange.

Names and Sponsors

In some societies, the group that makes exchanges is permanent and multi-functional. In Vitu, exchange groups form only on specific occasions. Usually a specific sponsor is instrumental in bringing an exchange group into existance. At a death, leaders and bigmen of the lineages of the deceased person and his or her spouse initiate funeral exchanges, while the children of the deceased, with the aid of lineage leaders, celebrate mortuary ceremonies. At all

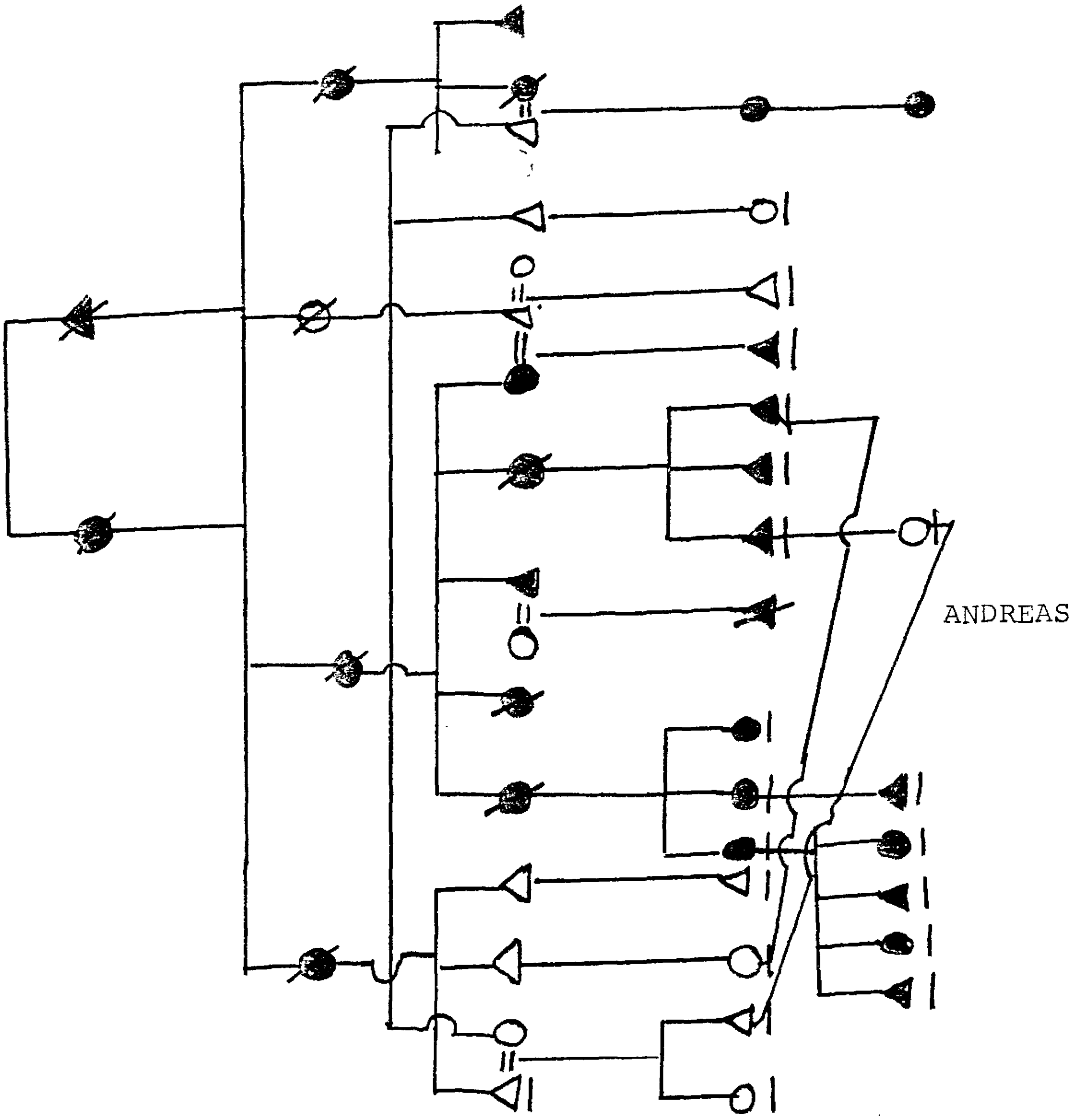

FIGURE 9

KULU PRESTATION AT THE DEATH OF ANDREAS

▲ ● kulu clan

——— present at the exchange

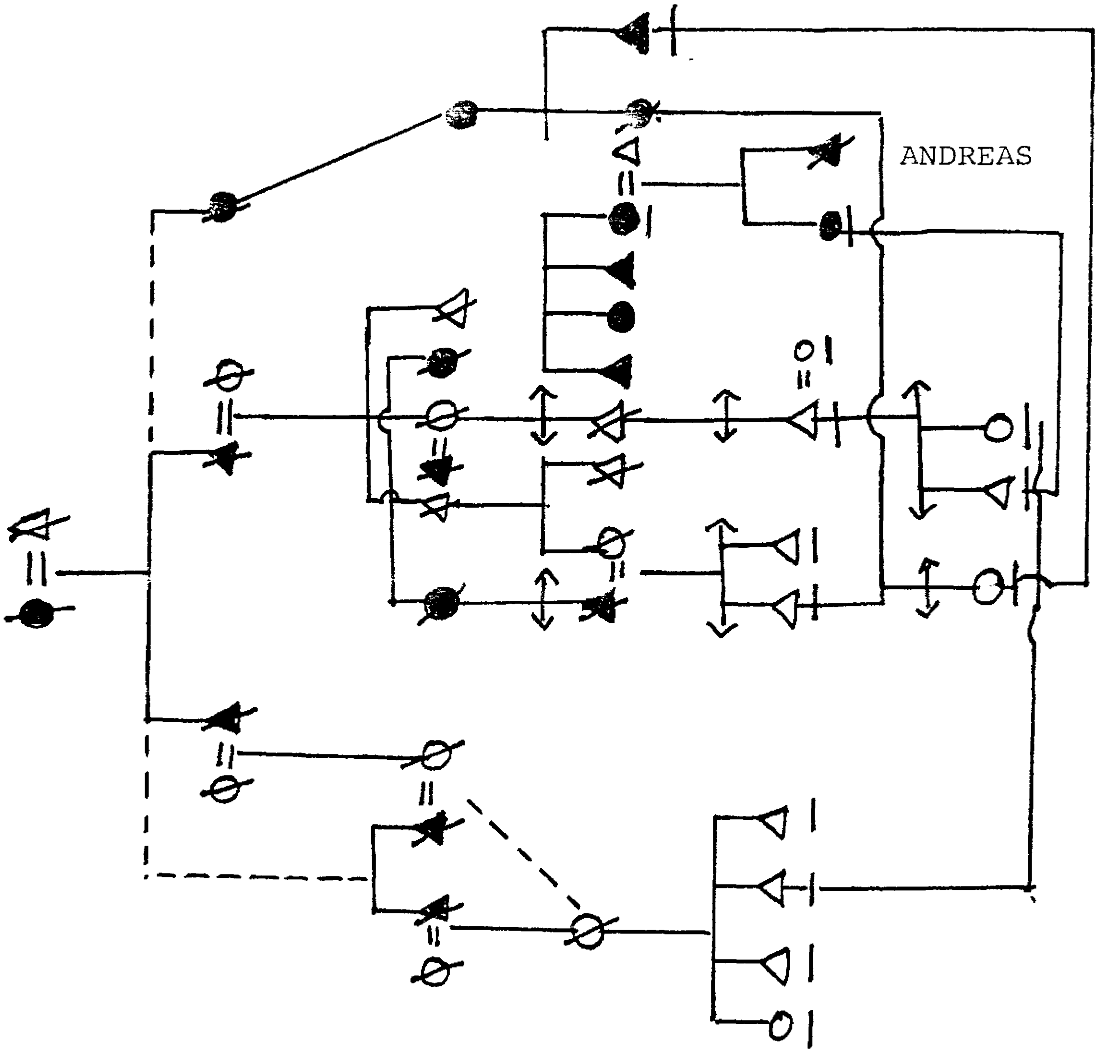

FIGURE 10

NGEPI CLAN PRESTATION AT THE DEATH OF ANDREAS

▲ ● Ngepi

—— present at the exchange

other exchanges the namer or sponsor of the subject of exchange is the initiator.

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the role of the sponsor in exchange activity but I did not fully discuss the significance of the institution of naming. Most Vitus have several names, including nicknames and one or more Christian names. In addition, all Vitus have lineage names which they describe as their true names. The name which an individual receives from his sponsor at birth is the property of a specific lineage.

A sponsor may give a child a name that belongs either to his lineage or that of the child. Alternatively he may give the name of a close cognate of himself or the child. Sometimes the sponsor gives the child his own name; more frequently he names the infant for a parent, a grandparent, or for some more distant lineal kinsman. He may use the name of one of his own siblings or of a sibling of an ancestor who died without issue. If an individual receives a name that belongs to another clan, he or one of his lineage-mates will eventually return the name by giving it to a child of the appropriate lineage. Possession of a name indicates a blood-link with an owning lineage and an interest in its property. If a lineage constantly uses a name that it has borrowed, the owners of the name become angry and demand compensation.

Vitus say that a patrilateral kinsman should name a firstborn child because father's kin pay bride-price. A member of the mother's lineage should name the second child. People prefer the first child to be a boy and a second child a girl. A boy lives near his father and aids him. A girl is useful to members of her own clan because she is able to gain land for her lineage through marriage.

In a sample of one hundred names of persons in Balangore I (25% of the population), the following kinsmen named individuals.

mother's mother	12
father's father	12
father	10
mother	15
father's sister	1
mother's brother	6
mother's clanmate	26
father's clanmate	9
others	8
	100

Although sponsors who are close relatives are equally matrilateral and patrilateral kin, there is a matrilateral bias among more distant kinsmen. This bias supports my contention that while Vitus value close cognates above matrilineal kin, they value all matrilineal kin above distant cognates.

Paternal grandfathers and maternal grandmothers respectively, usually name first and second born children. Vitus value the two eldest children highly, and they do not believe that subsequent children are as important. Traditionally, infanticide of third and later children was common. Either side of the family may name third and later children. People who wish to become sponsors approach a child's parents. Parents themselves may offer the privilege of naming a child to a particular kinsman, and they may name some children themselves.

Relations between children and their sponsors vary in intimacy. A few individuals adopt the children they name. Most help their protégés materially, by giving them food or looking after animals for them. They may help a child with school fees and they usually act as his or her godparent. In return a child helps his sponsor with labour and gifts. Frequently a sponsor names a child of his own clan and cultivates a close relationship with him. As one informant noted:

> He considers that the child is of his own clan. He is like a son who will help him look after the land. The child that he really fathered does not belong to his lineage.

The major responsibility of the sponsor is the arrangement of the marriage of his protégé. In consultation with other interested parties, he decides which of his own or his lineage's interests he will consider in arranging the marriage. Because the institution of naming is closely linked with rights in property and rights to arrange marriages, senior members of a community are chiefly responsible for naming children. Even when they do not bestow names themselves, lineage leaders and other respected men and women give advice about the giving of names. In particular, lineage-leaders try to ensure that the names of distant lineage ancestors are re-used so that lineage property is not lost.

Not all marriages in Vitu are politically important and lineage leaders vary in the extent to which they name children and arrange marriages. Nevertheless, all lineage-leaders use the system of naming to acquire rights to arrange marriages that will benefit their lineages by safeguarding its land. Typically, lineage-leaders arrange marriages that will compel distant lineage-descendants to return their land to the owning lineage.

There are three reasons why naming is less important in modern Vitu than it was in the traditional society. First, the sponsorship of exchanges is a less significant source of prestige than it was in the traditional society. Second, Vitus marry later than they did in the pre-contact era, and elderly sponsors die before their protégés marry. When sponsors die parents or senior mother's brothers acquire the responsibilities for arranging marriages. Third, Vitus have been influenced by the idea that people should choose their own marriage partners, and it is sometimes difficult for a sponsor to arrange marriages. Parents now complain that sponsors neglect their duties and claim that they themselves should arrange the marriages of their children. Nevertheless Vitu children continue to receive names in the traditional manner and their sponsors continue to make exchanges on their behalf.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the ceremonial aspects of exchange in Vitu. The ideology of exchange allows individuals to see their society in terms of orderly relationships between matrilineages for ideally, lineages exchange land and women reciprocally. In the ceremonial setting, balance and reciprocity are stressed. Ceremonial exchange also provides a context whereby individuals orient themselves in terms of other people in their society. It provides a view of life as an orderly process in which each life crisis is marked in a formal manner.

Ceremonial activities have a political as well as an ideological aspect. The flexibility of Vitu social structure allows individuals considerable freedom as to which exchange groups they join, and the form that exchange groups take reflect friendships and animosities on both a personal and a community level.

In Vitu, exchange is not one activity of a multi-functional group. On an ideal plane, lineages exchange, but in social terms, individuals and groups of individuals initiate exchanges. These individuals and the subjects of act as foci in the crystalization of exchange groups.

Most mortuary ceremonies are sponsored by the spouse or the children of the deceased and organized by senior lineage members. Marriages and children's ceremonies are organized by a sponsor or name-giver. Organizing exchanges is prestigious in itself in Vitu but the importance of the institution of naming is augmented by the ability of name-givers to arrange marriages and to influence the transfer of land between lineages. Most namers are senior members of Vitu society, and lineage-leaders in particular, name many people. Specifically the latter are concerned with naming children who will act as counters in the politics of marriage and land. In the present society, activities associated with ceremonial exchange are less prestigious than they were in the traditional society. Nevertheless, exchanges still take place and children receive names in the traditional way.

CHAPTER VIII

THE POLITICS OF MARRIAGE

In the previous chapter, I discussed the importance of balance in the ceremonial context of inter-lineage exchange. In this chapter, I discuss the reciprocal exchange of women and land in the social context. I begin by describing the rules of exogamy, endogamy, and reciprocity which are the basic elements of the marriage system in Vitu. I show that the rules of reciprocity demand both simultaneous and delayed exchange. I describe the kinds of exchanges that occur in contemporary Vitu society; then I discuss the delayed exchanges that lineage-leaders and prominent men arrange in attempting to make adjustments between lineages and their land. I examine the extent to which marriages are successful in resolving tensions that arise from the interaction of matrilineal and cognatic elements in the system of land tenure. Finally, I discuss inter-generational conflict in Vitu and consider the institution of marriage in relation to social change.

Elements of the Marriage System

Exogamy, endogamy, and reciprocal exchange are three significant organizing principles in the Vitu marriage system. There are two exogamous categories in Vitu.

One category includes those individuals whom the incest taboo prohibits as marriage partners. In Vitu, the taboo extends to first cousins, and the local origin myth suggests that marriages within this range incur supernatural punishment. Vitus respect the marriage prohibition and I found no examples of marriage between first cousins either in the contemporary society or in genealogical material.

The other exogamous category is the clan. Vitus do not regard intra-clan marriage as "wrong" because it is incestuous, but because it denies the principle of reciprocity between lineages. They believe that both clan exogamy and the reciprocal exchange of women began during the earliest period of Vitu history and the origin myth describes the initiation of both practices.

In an earlier chapter I suggested that Vitus should only marry kinsmen and that, ideally, they should marry into the lineages of patrilineally-linked kinsmen. By limiting their marriage universe, lineage members are able to retain control over their land despite cognatic inheritance and a virilocal residence pattern. Before discussing relationships between lineages and land, I describe the underlying principles of the marriage system in more detail.

Exogamy

Vitus disapprove of intra-clan marriages, and some informants claim that such marriages did not occur prior to contact. But genealogies suggest that a minority of Vitus have always married clan-mates and that the rate has not increased appreciably in the contemporary society. In some cases, young people make intra-clan marriages against the wishes of their elders, but if irregular marriages take place, sponsors may arrange reciprocal matches where women of the husbands' lineages marry men of the wives' lineages.

Two reciprocal marriages in Balangore I[1] were a source of disapproving gossip because the marriage partners belonged to two local land-owning lineages. Members of local lineages aid one another in exchange and Vitus believe that they have recent common ancestry. People do not welcome marriages between members of such lineages because they disrupt local patterns of sharing and because husband and wife "really" belong to the same lineage.

Marriages between members of local lineages and migrants belonging to the same clan cause less comment. Occasionally, sponsors arrange such marriages as a deliberate strategy, so that a man who is a member of a lineage that is becoming extinct can arrange for the transfer of controlling rights in lineage land to a child who shares both his clan membership and his blood.

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[1] There are three intra-clan marriages in my sample of sixty four in Balangore I.

Endogamy

The marriage records kept by the Catholic Mission since 1950 indicate that there are five comparatively endogamous groups in Garove. The four western territories of the island form separate marriage communities, and the three small territories in the east, remnants of the single, pre-contact community of Meto, remain as an undivided marriage community.

In Chapter 6, I argued that the boundaries of territories approximately circumscribe the marriage universe, and that a minority of lineages regularly exchange women over territorial boundaries. In Balangore I, one of the western territories, fifteen of the hundred and twenty eight married adults were born outside the territory. But with the exception of three non-Vitus, each of these people had close consanguineal ties with other residents of Balangore I.

Within territories, there is a preference for marrying close kinsmen. In Balangore I, the closest relationship that exists between marriage partners is as follows.

RELATIONSHIP	#	%
First cousin range	3	4.7
Second cousin range	24	37.5
Third cousin range	16	25.0
Fourth cousin range	7	10.8
Fifth cousin range	1	1.5
co-resident in village	10	15.6
non-Vitus	3	4.7
	64	100.0

Individuals do not regard themselves as related to everyone in the village. Some lineages are preferred marriage partners; some lineages rarely inter-marry; some lineages have never exchanged women. Nevertheless, when contrasting co-residents with persons in other territories, Vitus tend to classify the former as putative kin. Although Vitus do not approve of marriage between non-relatives, they accept marriages between residents in the same territory more easily than matches between non-kin from different territories.

In the traditional society, strong social pressures supported the rule of marrying relations. Women did not wish to marry outside their territories. If they did so, they risked losing their inheritance. Also, they disliked being isolated among hostile affines who might kill them for suspected adultery, and who accused them of treachery in wartime. In the contemporary society, women still prefer to marry men who are resident in their own territories. Vitu men beat their wives for suspected unfaithfulness, and women find it convenient to return temporarily to their parent's homes after a quarrel. Women who marry outside their natal territory cannot return home easily.

Men too usually found it convenient to marry close kinsmen. In the pre-contact society, they believed that only wives who were close relations would look after food-leavings and provide protection from sorcery. Men found affines who were close kinsmen less hostile that those who were more distantly related. Close kin also expected less bride-price. In modern times, men who share rights in the same land as their wives avoid much marital friction; so practical advantages still encourage a man to marry a descendant of a patrilineally-linked kinsman who lives within his territory.

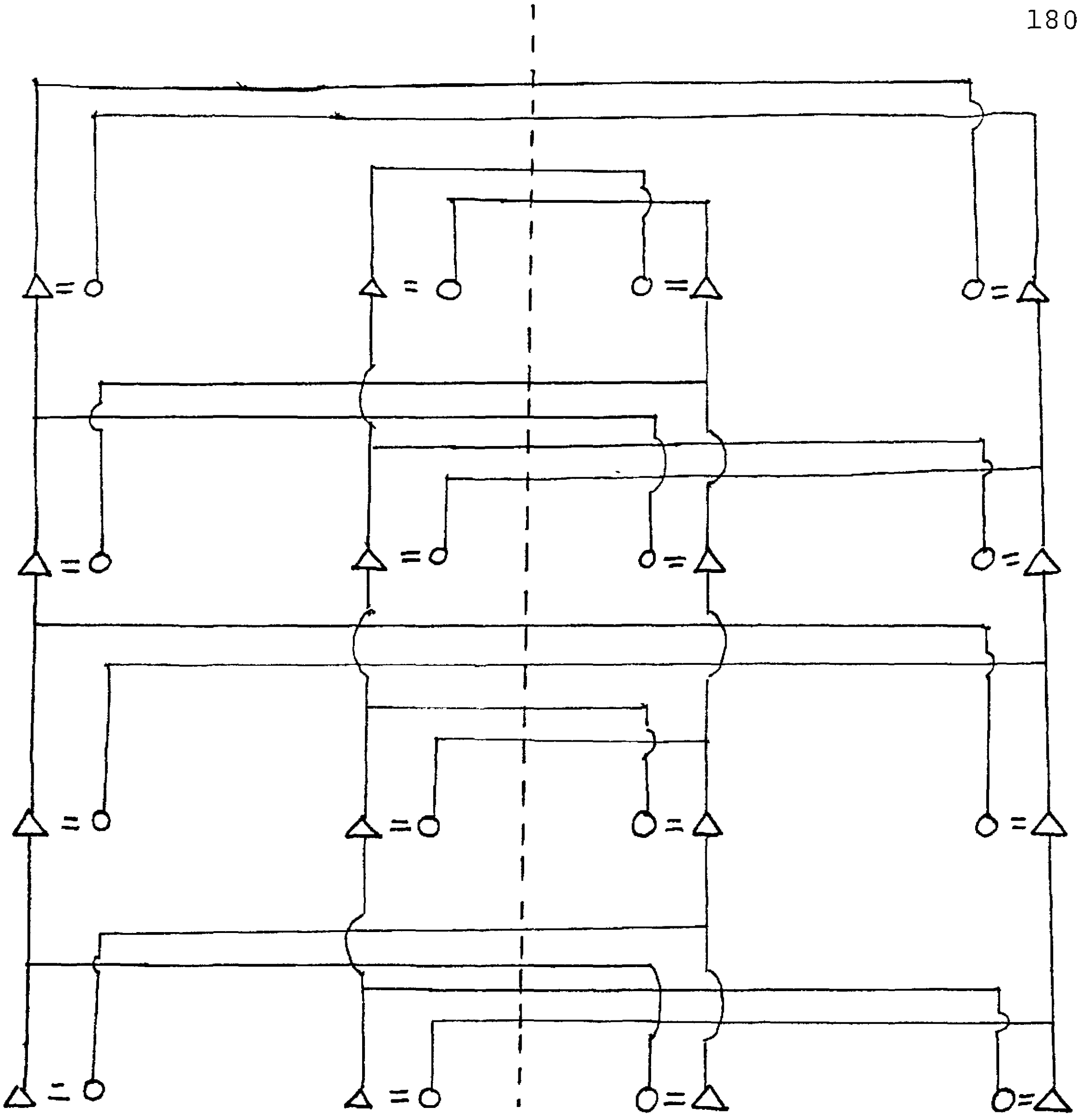
The disadvantages of extra-territorial marriages increase the divorce-rate among couples from different territories. Inter-territorial marriages are unstable. Although only a small proportion of marriages of Balangore I women have taken place with men from outside the territory, five of the eleven divorcees living in Balangore I village were once married to men of other territories.

Reciprocity

Vitus express several norms relating to the reciprocal exchange of women. First, they say "We exchange our sisters", and they support this injunction with the negative rule that a man should not marry a woman from a lineage to which his lineage already owes a woman.

The idiom of sister exchange suggests an exchange of women that takes place within a generation. Two norms that relate more closely to relations through land concern delayed exchange. First, Vitus say that a woman who marries away from her community should send back a child to replace herself. Second, a man who uses the land of a patrilineally-linked ancestor should marry a woman of his ancestor's lineage, so that his children have both use-rights and controlling rights in his land. Vitus call the latter marriage pattern "taking back the woman" or "buying back the land". An informant explained this marriage type by saying "We take back our blood in order to take back the ground".

I have incorporated the marriage rules and preferences associated with reciprocity in Figure 11. The diagram indicates a pattern of second cousin marriage. Vitus express a preference for such marriages and state that the descendants of a common greatgrandfather are ready to marry one another. The marriages indicated in the diagram are not typical of marriages in Vitu society in any statistical sense. The diagram only suggests the logic underlying the ideology. If Vitus followed their marriage rules, and if they lived in a society without demographic fluctuation, they would achieve equity in the exchange of women and land. However, in the real society, particular individuals find the marriage rules impossible, or unprofitable, to apply in specific cases. As Scheffler remarks (1965:294) "Norms and customs are not an independent system, but part of a larger system of social action". In Vitu, individuals use the marriage rules either to assert their rights to marry a woman, or to claim rights in a specific area of land.



LINEAGE A
LAND
LINEAGE B
LAND

FIGURE 11 THE MARRIAGE "RULES"

Claiming Rights to Marry Women

In discussing the rule of reciprocity, Vitus say, "We exchange our sisters", but the relationship between persons who are participants in an exchange is not always that of brother and sister. In Balangore I, thirty of the sixty-four currently married couples in the village were involved in marriages where an exchange of women had been completed. These marriages fell into the following categories.

True sister exchange	4
True sister and classificatory sister	4
Sister and half-sister	2
Classificatory sisters	1
Sister/sister's daughter exchange	5
Cross-cousin/sister exchange	4
Delayed exchange	10
	30

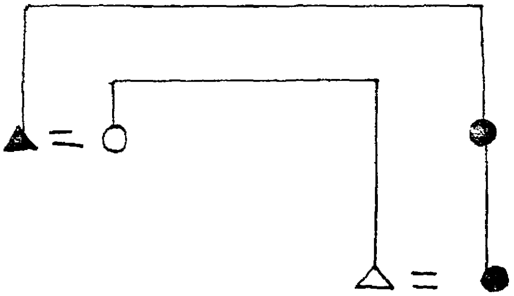
Only a third of the marriages involve exchanges between real or classificatory siblings. Fifteen exchanges concern persons belonging to different generations. In five of the marriages, exchanges had occurred where a man had married a particular woman and, in exchange, had arranged a marriage between his sister's daughter and his wife's brother (Figure 12a). In other cases, delays of one or more generations had occurred until a man or his sponsor claimed a woman from an indebted lineage. Except in cases of true sister exchange, exchange marriages rarely take place simultaneously. An individual usually marries into a lineage where lineage-mates have married before, but where there is no debt. Alternatively, he claims the right to marry a particular woman whose male lineage-mate is already an affine.

The ideology of cognatic inheritance of blood adds an element of complexity to the ideal of balanced reciprocity between lineages. Paternal kinsman often are sponsors and when they arrange exchanges, they may treat their protégés as though they were members of the paternal clan. This identification allows Vitus to equate a father's child with a sister's child, and to exchange a pair of cross-cousins for a pair of siblings (Figure 12b). Later a member of the lineage of the female cross-cousin may claim a woman from the lineage of their affines.

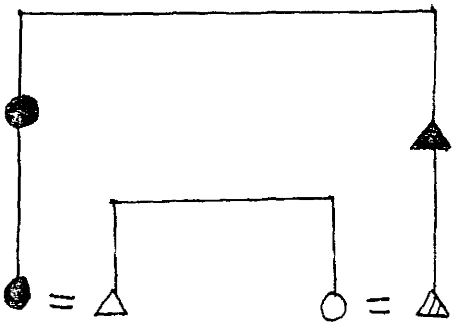
Vitu men sometimes marry the widows of lineage-mates or of cross-cousins. But if a man marries his cross-cousin's widow the latter's lineage-mates may request a woman in return. An example of such a case occurred when Maxmilian married Agnes, the widow of his cousin Pius (Figure 12c). Agnes' family asked Maximilian to give his daughter, Marie-Stella, in marriage to Gabriel, the younger brother of Agnes.

The marriages of both Maximilian and his daughter took place as a result of the Vitus' belief that lineage descendants inherit lineage blood. Maximilian could claim the right to marry Pius' wife because of his relationship to Pius' lineage. And he was able to send his daughter in marriage to a member of Agnes's lineage because he had transmitted his lineage blood to her. When Vitus make these indirect exchanges, they visualize exchanges between

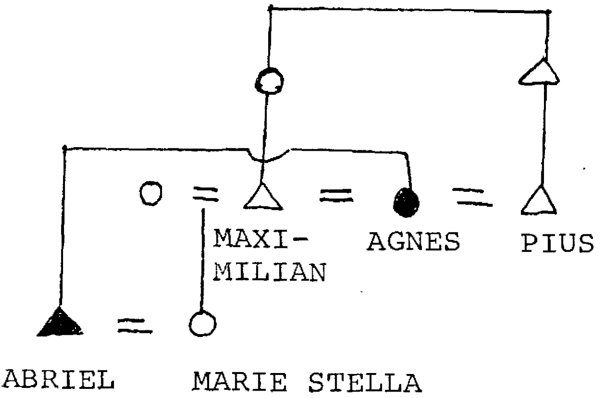
FIGURE 12a



12b

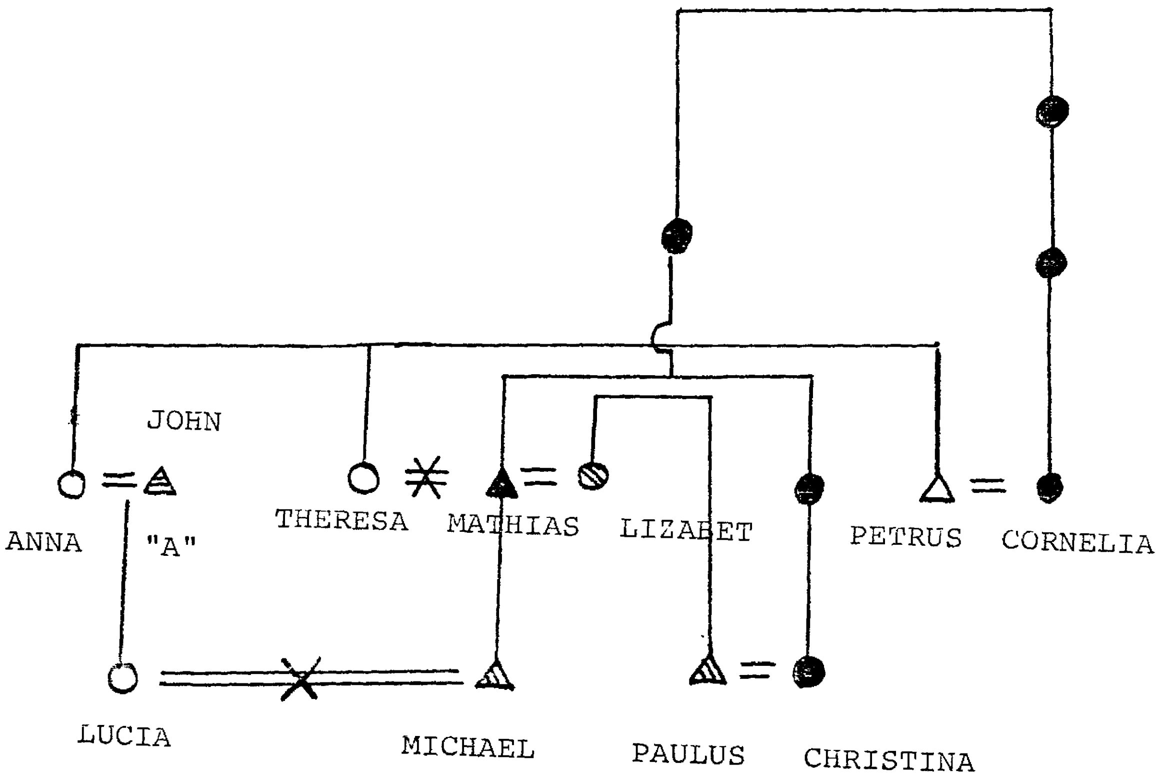


12c


MAXI-
MILIAN
AGNES
PIUS
GABRIEL
MARIE STELLA

matrilineages, but they make the exchanges in terms of an ideology of cognatic descent that allows a lineage descendant to represent a lineage. So exchanges that occur at an ideal level do not always coincide with exchanges that occur on the ground.

In the contemporary society, Vitus claim that they follow the norm of reciprocally exchanging women and do not take women from lineages to which their lineage already owes a debt. In two cases in Balangore I, where I knew this rule had been ignored, the marriages took place in spite of parental opposition. Yet, because the marriage universe is limited for Vitus, it is probable that people quite frequently neglect the rule of reciprocal marriage. Variation in the sizes of lineages and in sex ratios, personal preference, abduction, elopements and other factors make it unlikely that lineages achieve any real balance in the exchange of women. Particularly in the post-contact society, young people often insist on arranging their own marriages, so sponsors and elders must try to honour an increasing number of debts created by irregular marriages. Even one irregular marriage affects reciprocal marriages throughout the society by a kind of chain reaction. An example of problems caused by one irregular marriage is illustrated in Figure 13.


JOHN
ANNA
"A"
THERESA
MATHIAS
LIZABET
PETRUS
CORNELIA
LUCIA
MICHAEL
PAULUS
CHRISTINA

✳ unsuccessful match

FIGURE 13

CONSEQUENCES OF AN IRREGULAR MARRIAGE

When Anna of Balangore I married John of Balangore II, her brother Petrus refused to marry a Balangore II girl in exchange. Instead, he insisted on marrying Cornelia and in return for his marriage Petrus's family offered his sister, Theresa, to Cornelia's lineage-mate, Mathias. But Theresa died before the marriage took place and Mathias married Lizabet. The latter had been married to a man from Unea, but she ran away to Mathias. Subsequently, Lizabet's brother, Paulus claimed the right to marry Christina, the daughter of Mathias' elder sister. Some years later Anna sent a daughter, Lucia, back to Balangore to replace herself, and Anna's mother, who was the child's sponsor, decided that she should marry Mathias's son, Michael. However, Michael refused to marry her and she later was betrothed to another man. At present Petrus lineage still owes a woman to Mathias's lineage, and Lizabet's lineage owes a woman to the kinsmen of her former husband. These debts will probably be forgotten unless it is to a creditor's advantage to remember them. It is a significant feature of Vitu social structure that Vitus are able to use the values associated with reciprocity in the domain of inter-lineage politics. It is not necessary that marriage exchanges balance, only that sponsors are able to utilize the norm of reciprocity as a strategy in arranging marriages that are advantageous to themselves.

The Politics of Marriage and Land

Vitus usually obey the norms of exogamy, endogamy and reciprocity because they find it advantageous to do so. To ignore the rule of exogamy invites public censure, and marrying non-kinsmen creates marital difficulties. Conversely, the rule of reciprocity allows individuals rightfully to claim particular women as wives.

Most sponsors arrange reciprocal marriages in order to repay those that they or their lineage-mates have made. Unless they reciprocate irregular marriages, they arrange matches with individuals belonging to lineages within the alliance group. They also seek hardworking people of good character as husbands or wives for their protégés. Although sponsors arrange marriages that conform to the norms of exogamy, endogamy, and reciprocity, they are not necessarily directly concerned with the preservation of lineage land. This matter is usually the pre-occupation of lineage leaders.

In order that lineages retain their land, members must make two sets of exchanges. In a first exchange, they acquire land belonging to lineages whose members marry their women and they lose their own land to the descendants of in-married women. In a second exchange, lineage members gain back their land when lineage women marry men who occupy their land.

Provided Vitus always marry within the alliance group much of the land lost to descendants of lineage men returns automatically because it circulates among a limited group of kinsmen. But some individuals do not follow the norms and create problems for later generations. Those who marry outside their territories endanger the inheritance of their children; those that do not marry members of preferred lineages risk the loss of their own lineage's control over its land. Two norms of reciprocity, "sending back a woman" and "taking back women" enable Vitus to cope with anomalies, caused by irregular marriages,between lineages and their land.

Sending Back Women

Informants say that when a woman marries outside her territory, she should send back a daughter to replace herself. The child should marry a member of her mother's community and gain back land for her lineage. In order to facilitate this process, a mother sometimes sends a small daughter to live with a mother's brother, grandparent, or other sponsor who later arranges her marriage.

If they feel that the local membership of a landholding lineage should be strengthened, matrilineal kin strongly encourage lineage women who are married outside their territory to send back children. The women themselves are less concerned with the strength of their lineage than with their ability to transfer property to their own children. If a woman who owns a lot of property has no daughters, she will send a son to her community to look after her possessions. If she sends no one to utilize her land, she must continue to use the land herself. Otherwise, her brother's children or squatters will take possession of the land.

The few men in Vitu who live uxorilocally in their wives' territories also arrange marriages for their daughters in their own villages. No norm supports their actions. Their motive is simply the transference of land to heirs.

Once established, the exchange of women between members of specific lineages in different territories tends to continue. Individuals who marry outside their own territories frequently own trees in their community of birth. In every generation mothers send their children to look after their property. In 1976, all nine Vitu women who had been born outside Balangore I territory had close cognates in their husband's village. Seven of them had also inherited access to land and trees there, and six of the seven had a parent born in Balangore I. Four of the women had adult daughters and had already sent one of them back to the village of her birth.

Occasionally, parents disinherit daughters who marry outside their territory or only allot them trees in the territory where they marry. In these circumstances, women do not send their children back to their communities. One informant stated clearly her motives for not sending a child to live with her brother. She said that although her relatives had requested that she send a child to live with them, she would not do so because her kinsmen owned very little land.

Women usually send back only one child to inherit their land. Other children inherit only from their fathers and may lose access to matrilineage land. These children create or augment landless migrant lineages in their fathers' territories. Some members of these lineages may later move back to the territory where their lineage holds land. Otherwise, members of a well-established migrant lineage eventually may gain a portion of the host lineage's land through skilful political management.

Asserting Rights in Land

Members of land-owning lineages who live within their own territories have access to their lineage land. But they share their land with lineage descendants, and if lineage leaders are not watchful, controllors may lose their land to lease-holders.

It is the lineage-leader's responsibility to retrieve his lineage's land by arranging marriages between leaseholders and controllers. It is usually necessary to "buy back land" when members of lineages that are not regular allies gain possession of properties and do not arrange for reciprocal marriages. In this situation, members of local lineages lose areas of their own land without gaining equivalent areas of their affines' land.

The irregular marriages that individuals make in the present generation compound the problems of future lineage leaders. Today, bigmen are trying to resolve problems that were initiated several generations ago. When children marry outside the alliance group, fathers are prepared to disinherit daughters, so that their sons-in-law do not gain influence over their property. But fathers never disinherit sons, and the latter transmit property to children who belong to unrelated lineages. Bigmen of later generations must attempt to prevent the permanent alienation of this land.

Strategies for Preserving Land

When bigmen discuss "taking back the woman" or "buying back the land" in the abstract, they often give an example of second cousin marriage where a male descendant of a land-holder marries his grandfather's sister's daughter's daughter. This marriage pattern ensures that land returns to its owning lineage with maximum efficiency, but, in practice, it is rare. Most Vitus marry descendants of patrilineally-linked ancestors, but they do not marry specific relations. However, one example of this "ideal" marriage pattern took place in Balangore I when a local land-owning lineage succeeded in retrieving a great deal of land that they were in danger of losing permanently (Figure 14).

Philip had leasehold rights in a large area of land belonging to the _Kulu_ lineage of his maternal grandfather. Philip married a _Kara_ woman. Since _Kara_ disputed Kulu's rights to the controllership of Philip's land, the Kulu leaders were anxious that Philip should not transfer the land to _Kara_ children. They decided to offer Philip his grandfather's sister's daughter's daughter in marriage. So Philip married his second cousin and now intends that his children by this marriage shall inherit _Kulu_ land.

In this example, _Kulu_ leaders were anxious about the future of the large parcel of land that Philip leased. If the land had passed to _Kara_, it would have been difficult for _Kulu_ to retrieve it. In instances where less land is involved, lineage-leaders do not act so precipitately. Lineage-leaders cannot always find persons of the right age and sex in their lineages for whom they can arrange appropriate marriages with debtors, and it is probable that some small lineages permanently lose land to distant affines. Nevertheless, it is the mark of a good lineage leader to be able to assert control over land. Leaders should remember

FIGURE 14

TAKING BACK THE LAND

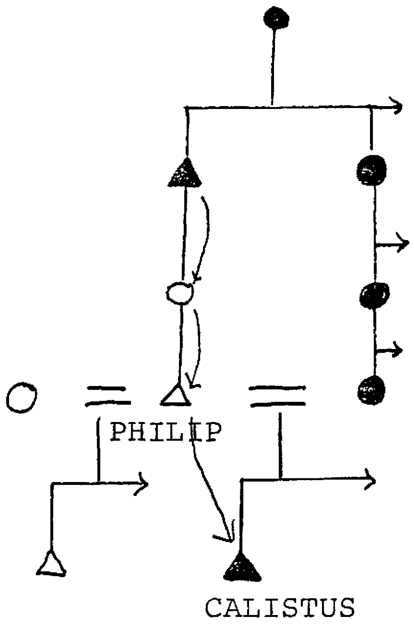
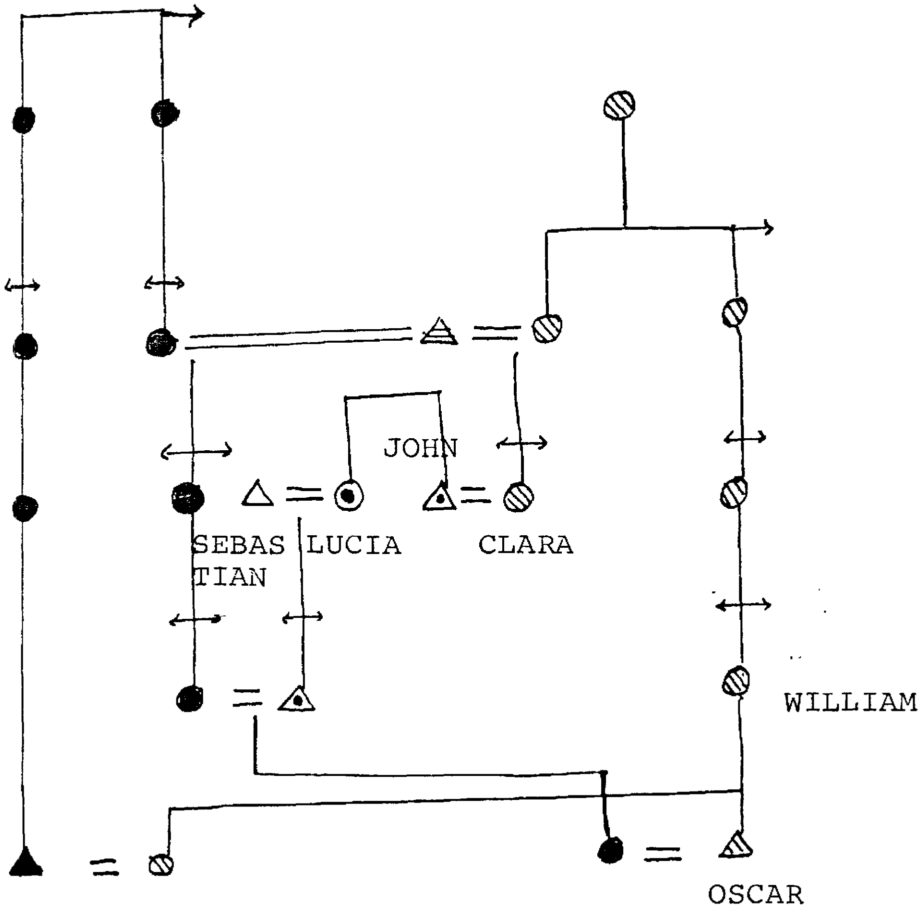

PHILIP
CALISTUS

FIGURE 15


JOHN
SEBASTIAN
LUCIA
CLARA
WILLIAM
OSCAR

the association of their lineage with areas of land, and arrange for marriages as soon as personnel are available.

New alliances between lineages usually begin with irregular marriages. As children inherit properties from their fathers, the parental lineages come to share land. Sometimes, however individuals acquire land by irregular means. Then lineage-leaders must arrange marriages *post facto* to create an alliance between controllers and those who use their land. An example of how a bigman regularized one relationship is illustrated in Figure 15.

Sebastian, a *Ngepi* migrant, married a clan-mate, Lucia. Lucia's brother, John, worked on the land of his *Kara* wife, Clara. Sebastian joined John, and the two worked together. After Sebastian died, his children continued to use Clara's land.

William was a lineage leader who had married a member of *Kara* lineage and was himself a *Kara* descendant. In order to re-establish *Kara*'s interest in the land, he threatened Sebastian's descendants with eviction, unless they allowed a marriage between his son, Oscar, and Sebastian's granddaughter. The marriage took place; later, a man of the granddaughter's lineage claimed William's daughter in exchange for Oscar's wife.

In this example, William had arranged a marriage where a woman rather than a man "took back the land".

It is preferable in most cases for an owning lineage to claim back its land through a woman, because her children will also belong to the owning clan; but suitable marriage partners are not always available. By arranging his son's marriage, William was able to create an alliance that would enable Kara[2] to make other exchanges to secure the land. In addition, Oscar had a particular interest in Clara's ground because he had been the protégé of Clara's parallel cousin and had lived with her during his childhood. It was appropriate that Oscar should be manager of the land.

Vitu lineages fluctuate in size over time. When lineages become small, lineage-leaders encourage members of their lineage who live in other territories to return and use their land. They also name children as heirs to specific parcels. If there are no lineage members who can return to their land, the lineage-leader must "take back the woman" by arranging marriages between clan-mates and lineage descendants. A new controlling lineage becomes associated with the lineage land as the children of these marriages inherit clan membership from their mothers and the blood of the previous controlling lineage from their fathers. Over time the origins of the new controllers are forgotten.

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[2] Kara had no real lineage-leader at this time. William was a prominent lineage leader and his close kinship with Kara personnel gave them authority to act on behalf of the lineage.

It is probable that although Vitus tend to view their clans in terms of a segmentary model, the real relationships between lineages and their land are more complex.

Lineage leaders take considerable care to ensure the continuity of their clan on lineage land. In Balangore I, Philip was the sole representative of his clan. A clanmate owed a woman to the lineage of Philip's children, and he arranged a marriage between his protégé Vera and Philip's son Calistus. Vera did not know of these plans and decided to marry someone else. She ran away from school in Balangore II and went to stay with her prospective mother-in-law. Her family, greatly annoyed, fetched her home, but when Calistus, who was working in Rabaul, heard of her exploit, he refused to marry her. Meanwhile, Vera's family placed considerable pressure on her to conform to their wishes. Eventually, she took an anti-love potion to cure her of her feelings for her lover. Subsequently, with the connivance of her family, she successfully worked love-magic on Calistus. Finally, Vera and Calistus married in Rabaul. Although bigmen often complain that they are no longer able to arrange the marriages of the young, this example suggests that when large areas of land are involved, elders are still able to exert a great deal of influence over their protégés.

In some instances, lineage leaders must look to non-kinsmen to fill empty land, but they still use marriage as a strategy to ensure that their clan does not lose control over its land. Philip intends to give a large area of the land that he controls to Calistus and his other children, but none of his children wish to use an area of his land on the Balangore II boundary. Members of landless lineages from Balangore II asked for usufruct there, but Philip refused their request because he expected that they would plant trees and alienate the land from his clan. He told them they could use the land only if they married members of his clan. If any of the migrants accept Philip's offer, a new land-sharing group of lineage members and descendants will crystalize on the unused land.

When land is plentiful and lineages small, leaders allow clan members to exercise controlling rights in lineage land. When lineages grow large, clan-mates become rivals. That perceived land-shortage influences inter-lineage relations is evident in the attitudes of two segments of Boro clan, Dala and Veva, in different parts of Mundua Island (see Figure 1, page 67).

In Rangu, the local Veva lineage is becoming extinct. To counter this trend, the lineage leader has arranged a marriage between a Veva descendant and a Veva girl from Koravu, in the east of the island. But the leader's elder brother's son has already married a Dala girl, and the leader has named the child after himself and declared that this child will be the future manager of the lineage land.

In answer to qeustions about problems that may result from the child's Dala origins, the lineage leader says that there will be no difficulties because "We are all Boro". In Rangu, there is no shortage of land and consequently no rivalry.

In Koravu, in eastern Mundua, both the Veva and the Bala lineages are large. Dala are migrants and have little land. Some of them use Veva land, inherited from ancestors, but Veva do not regard Dala as controllers of this land. They express some apprehension at the presence of Dala on their properties, and they expect Dala members to make payments of pigs in recognition of their status as lessees.

Lineage leaders and other prominent men modify land tenure rules according to their perceptions of land shortage. When land is in short supply they give priority to lineage-mates. When their lineages are small they admit clan-mates as controllers. At such times, members of migrant lineages gain permanent rights on the land of local lineages and gradually become identified with them.

Under conditions of perceived land shortage competition may arise between local lineage members and members of migrant lineages who share their land. Land-owning lineages in the same territory exchange both land and women, but migrant lineages only exchange women with their hosts. Eventually, landless lineages claim that they share so much blood with their hosts that they should be allowed controlling rights in an area of their land. In Vitugu, on the western peninsula of Garove, migrants have persuaded members of the local land-owning lineage[3] to grant them controlling status. It is probable that there were similar successful attempts by migrant lineages to gain ground in the traditional society.

In Vitu, the resolution of anomalies in land tenure through arranging marriages is an important aspect of inter-lineage politics. Problems relating to land-rights develop slowly and become evident only one or more generation after the events that caused them. Lineage leaders and other politically prominent people gain prestige and demonstrate their administrative ability in recognizing and resolving these problems. In brief, lineage leaders mediate between social organization and culture because they bring irregular situations within the confines of the norm. They take back land from lineages that are not allies; they make allies of those who have acquired their land, and they recreate lineages that are becoming extinct.

Social Change

The standard against which Vitus judge their society is an idealized version of the pre-contact society. It is inevitable that the real society falls short of their ideal.

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[3] Due to extensive alienation, only one lineage in Vitugu had access to an extensive area of land.

Some complaints that Vitus make about their society result from the tensions among kinsmen that are an integral part of the Vitu social system. But other complaints refer to changes in the marriage system, and to concerns about the future of the matrilineage as a land-holding corporation. In Vitu, descent, inheritance, and marriage are closely associated within the social system. Alteration in any one of these institutions would lead to changes in each of the others. Contemporary concern about the institutions may indicate that structural change is in process within the society.

In modern Vitu, it is evident that arranged marriages are becoming less prevalent. Elders arranged only thirty of the sixty four current marriages in Balangore I. Young people arranged at least fifteen marriages themselves despite the opposition of their parents; nine of the marriages involved women who had left former husbands. Some of the other marriages were initiated with parental approval; some only with parental toleration.

Anthropologists have reported a decline in parental authority all over the world where young people are achieving education and financial independence, and are gaining exposure to western models of behaviour (Little 1973, Mair, 1969, Reay 1966, Rodman and Rodman, n.d.). In Vitu, these circumstances also have given the young an advantage in dealings with their elders. In pre-contact times, men abducted women and women ran away to lovers, but, generally, the young were more subservient to the wishes of their elders than they are now.

When Vitus began to seek work off their islands, the age of marriage rose, and individuals began to express preferences about whom they should marry. Men were financially independent of their parents, and could easily leave Vitu to avoid an unwelcome marriage. Women were less free to act, but they were prepared to run away with lovers to escape from arranged marriages. The Administration supported freedom of marital choice for the young, and the Local Government Council has continued to do so.

The increased tendency for the young to choose their own marriage partners has not yet altered the relationship between the lineage and its land very greatly. I have suggested that the Vitus continue to value the norms of exogamy, endogamy, and reciprocity, and usually obey them. Also it is still possible for lineage leaders and other sponsors to arrange marriages to "buy back the land". However, it is possible that more people marry outside the group of preferred lineages than was previously the case. Such a tendency would increase the problems of lineage leaders in retrieving their land in the future.

An important change in the marriage system has resulted because arranging marriages is no longer a prestigious occupation. The focus of prestige in Vitu has shifted from ceremonial activities to the organization of cash-cropping and other business undertakings. Sponsors neglect their protégés both for this reason and because they realize that the latter will probably insist on arranging their own marriages.

Match-making is not easy. During 1976, three marriages took place in Balangore I where sponsors had approached more than one individual in a set of brothers and sisters about a possible marriage. In one case, two families arranged a match between two young people, but the woman became pregnant and married the father of her child. A match was arranged with her sister, but she eloped with a lover. Finally, a marriage was arranged with a third sister.

Today, bigmen have begun to doubt the advisability of forced marriages, because they realise that they are unstable, yet they still believe that freedom of choice leads to social chaos. Vitus view the increasing freedom of the young and the decreasing ability and desire of the elders to arrange marriages as evidence of disorder. Lineage leaders frequently make remarks about the failure of women to take back the land. One bigman remarked:

> Some women cannot take back the land. They marry according to their wishes and they go all over the place. The rule is constantly to take back the land, but they marry according to their desires and their land becomes crowded. Marrying for love is all very well but you can't take back land that way.

Bigmen foresee that changes in the marriage system will affect the control of the lineage over its land. Some people suggest that the system of naming should be changed so that children are always given names belonging to their own clans. They claim that, in the future, lineage leaders will be able to tell the clan of a person occupying an area of land from his name. Nevertheless, changing the naming system will not solve the problem of how, in the absence of arranged marriages, land will return to its owning lineage. One old lineage leader, who was explaining an aspect of the Vitu social system to me suddenly remarked, "Our customs are very complicated. It would be much better if we just followed our fathers like the Bakove". It is possible that one day other Vitus may agree with him.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I briefly discussed exogamy, endogamy, and reciprocity, three principles that are basic to the Vitu marriage system. Vitus continue to value their marriage rules and usually follow them, so that to a considerable degree, the conflict between matrilineal descent and cognatic inheritance of land is minimized. Nevertheless, some anomalies do occur in the domain of land tenure and it is the function of the lineage leader to resolve these tensions by arranging appropriate marriages. In the present society, the relationship between a lineage and its land has not changed greatly since the pre-contact era. But the role of marriage in the political system is becoming less significant. Lineage leaders and bigmen see the lineage/land relationship as disorderly, because they no longer have full control over a marriage system that ideally mediates relationships between different kinds of right-holders. At present, Vitus are beginning to find their social organization unsatisfactory. Plans that include the alteration of the traditional naming system may represent the first steps towards changing it.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

In my introduction to this study, I stated that my intention was to present an ethnographic description of Vitu society, concentrating, in particular, on a description and analysis of Vitu social structure. I was specifically concerned with the interaction of the principles of matrilineal and cognatic descent in the society and with the role of these principles in the processes of group formation. I begin this chapter with a summary of the argument of my thesis.

In the first chapter, I suggested that some problems encountered by anthropologists in the New Guinea Highlands appear to resemble problems that I had noted in the preliminary stages of my study of Vitu social structure. In this chapter, I compare the integration of structural elements in New Guinea Highlands society with that in Vitu. I also compare Vitu social structure with that of culturally related societies in central New Britain. Finally, I discuss some of the theoretical implications of my study.

The Argument

I began my dissertation by asking how two structural principles, matrilineal and cognatic descent, both organizing principles within the domain of land tenure, could coexist within Vitu society, and how they related to the formation of social groups in Vitu. After an historical and ethnographic introduction, I discussed matrilineal and cognatic ideology current in contemporary Vitu. I suggested that matrilineal descent provides a conceptual framework in terms of which Vitus perceive their society oriented in time and geographical space, and a means whereby individuals calculate social relationships and their rights to become members of particular social groups. Matrilineal descent also provides a means of defining categories of people as controllers of specific areas of land.

While matrilineal descent divides Vitus into discrete categories, cognatic descent allows individuals considerable freedom of action in joining social groups. Social groups in Vitu, including land-sharing groups, include lineage members and the cognatic descendants of lineage men. Vitus trace rights in lineage property through several generations of lineage descendants,and individuals claim the right to utilize the lineage land of patrilineally-linked male ancestors, and to act as representatives of the lineages of these ancestors when groups form on ceremonial occasions.

Both men and women inherit land in Vitu, but cultural preference insists that in economic matters "The woman follows the man". This norm is associated with virilocal residence and with a cooperative pattern that allows women limited opportunities to retain control over land that they have inherited. Patterns of residence and inheritance both weaken the matrilineage as a land-holding corporation and strengthen ties among cognatic kinsmen.

In Vitu, matrilineal descent in the context of land-tenure means that members of land-holding lineages compete for land with lineage descendants. Since a lineage cannot easily expel its own descendants from its property, lineage members minimize competition by considering lease-holders as preferred marriage-partners. Each lineage is the centre of a limited marriage universe, consisting of closely allied lineages exchanging women and land. Associated with this marriage pattern is a society that traditionally consisted of hostile, largely endogamous territories, relatively isolated local alliance groups composed of inter-married lineages, and communities, consisting of cognatic kin, the majority of whom are members of the alliance group. The symbolism of ceremonial exchange in Vitu emphasises the significance of reciprocal exchange of personnel and property between allied lineages.

In the contemporary society, the marriage pattern still reflects the rules of clan exogamy and the reciprocal exchange of women. Elders still arrange some marriages and bigmen continue to negotiate marriages that adjust land/lineage relations. Nevertheless, many young people now arrange their own marriages, and, today, elders are concerned about the future of the lineage as a land-holding corporation.

Social Structure in Vitu and the New Guinea Highlands

In the introduction to this study, I noted that some aspects of Vitu social organization present a superficial resemblance to certain New Guinea Highlands societies. In Vitu, matrilineal descent categories coexist with social groups comprised of cognatically related kinsmen. In the Highlands, anthropologists have paid considerable attention to the relationship between the ideal of local patrilineal descent groups and the social reality of local groups that contain non-agnatic kinsmen.

There are a number of general resemblances between Vitu and the New Guinea Highlands societies. Traditionally, warfare was common in both areas and involved conflict between small, discrete, political groups. In both societies, men dominated women, and although beliefs in male superiority were not as extreme as in the Highlands, male solidarity was expressed in terms of virilocal residence in both areas. Despite these similarities, details of social structure differ considerably in the two areas.

Holy (1976:120) points out that the problem of discrepancy between ideology and actual behaviour in the Highlands results from the anthropologist's difficulty in explaining the native model with analytical tools available. Early researchers in the Highlands assumed that they could utilize concepts developed to describe African segmental societies. These concepts proved inadequate in the Highlands setting.

After the demise of the African model in the Highlands, anthropologists continued to analyse Highland societies in terms of local descent groups. According to de Lepervanche (1967:140), location is a "primary structural principle" in the Highlands. This approach seems appropriate because Highlanders themselves conceptualize local groups as sharing common descent.

In my study of Vitu social structure, I have tended not to emphasise location. Vitu clans are primarily non-localized marriage categories. Lineages are associated with particular areas of land, but individuals do not lose membership in their lineages if they do not live on lineage property. In Vitu, membership in a lineage and membership in a local group are discrete statuses. In the Highlands, there is a tendancy to equate membership in a local group with membership in a clan. A single polysemic name may refer both to a descent category and to a local group. Although Highlanders may be conscious of the distinction between the two referents, the close association of descent category and local group allows for easy transference from the status of co-resident to that of agnatic kinsman. Thus Strathern (1973:26) argues that, in Hagen, there is "a partial fusion of descent and locality ideology". The differences in the relations between descent and locality in Vitu and in the Highlands may be clarified by comparing the processes of group formation in both areas.

In the Highlands, recruitment to local groups is potentially bilateral. A man is able to join the group of either parent without suffering discrimination. Affines may also join local groups but the rights that they enjoy vary in different Highland societies. In practice, recruitment to groups is influenced by the norm of patri-virilocal residence. In order to justify the residence rule and the norm of patrifiliation associated with it, many Highland societies such as the Daribi (Wagner 1967) and the Enga (Meggitt, 1965) give child-price payments to affines.

Highland ideologies of patrilineal descent support the residence rule and local beliefs about male dominance over women. The degree to which cognatic links are eliminated from higher levels of genealogies varies from society to society but, in many areas, high level segments appear as patrilineal categories that serve both as an ideology of inter-group relations and as a way of perceiving the environment in a socially meaningful way. At lower genealogical levels, patrilineal ideologies also occur.

In some societies, they are expressed in terms of paternal substance transmitted only through men (cf Salisbury 1964:57, Strathern 1973:11). These ideologies do not usually define the membership of local groups.

Those anthropologists who accept that the composition of local groups in the Highlands is influenced by more than one cultural principle are less concerned about why membership of local groups is non-agnatic than with the process whereby non-agnatic members of local groups become identified with the associated descent categories. According to Strathern (1973:28), individuals become identified with local groups after their ancestors have lived there for some generations. Identification occurs not only because apical ancestors have been forgotten but because of the association of known ancestors with clan land. Among the Siane, individuals acquire a paternal spirit upon birth in clan territory (Salisbury 1964:72) and their identification with their territory increases through their association with ancestral clan symbols during ceremonies. In Hagen (Strathern 1973:33) and among the Siane (1964:72), persons also become associated with a clan by eating food grown on clan land. In brief, it can be argued that intimate association with a local group effects a change in clan membership.

Both patrilineal descent and bilateral affiliation influence the membership of local groups in the Highlands. In Vitu, as in the Highlands, unilineal descent and cognatic descent are relevant to the formation of local groups. In both Vitu and the Highlands, individuals perceive their history and their local environment in terms of a unilineal model. In both Vitu and the Highlands, recruitment to local groups is potentially bilateral and in both areas there is a norm of virilocal residence.

A major difference between Vitu and the Highlands is that, in Levi-Strauss' terms (1949), the relationship between the descent rule and the residence rule is harmonic in the Highlands and disharmonic in Vitu. In the Highlands, virilocality and patrilineal descent reinforce one another, and the former encourages the transformation of coresident cognates into agnatic kinsmen, and the blurring of the distinction between the local group and the associated descent category.

In Vitu, matrilineal descent and virilocal residence are at odds. In order to retain their rights, matrilineage members must ensure that the distinction between descent category and local group is never blurred. A result of this structural difference between the two societies is that in the Highlands, longterm residence on clan land strengthens rights. In Vitu, rights in clan lands and property decrease as the generations pass. Highlanders change membership of descent categories by ignoring the descent category/ local group distinction. Vitus preserve this distinction but manipulate the category membership of people who will one day utilize lineage land, when they arrange marriages that will produce offspring of appropriate clan membership. In both areas, non-unilineal kin share land that, in theory, belongs to unilineal corporations. In each society, this feature results from the combination of a flexible residence and inheritance pattern and from an ideology that involves exclusive, unilineal categories. However, in the case of Vitu and the New Guinea Highlands, quite different social processes produce similar groups.

Regional Comparisons

Descriptions of descent in Vitu and the New Guinea Highlands support Leach's (1961) and Needham's (1974) contention that it is not useful to classify societies in terms of a single descent rule. More than one descent principle may structure the formation of groups in a single society. Often, as in Vitu and the New Guinea Highlands more than one principle may be involved in processes leading to the formation of a single kind of group. In each society, descent principles and other structural principles interact in different ways. Considerable variation in social structure may occur among societies that are culturally closely related.

In West New Britain, all the societies belonging to the Kimbe language group[1] recognize close cultural ties, and informants in Vitu and Bulu believe that some societies within the group have common origins. Although principles of matrilineal descent, cognatic descent, male dominance, and virilocal residence occur widely, the social structure of each society has unique characteristics. All the societies using languages of the Kimbe family are situated on the central northern coast of New Britain. They include Bulu, Bakove, Xarua and the various dialects of Nakanai, as well as Vitu and Unea.

Bakove

Among the speakers of the Kimbe languages, most Vitus believe that the Bakove are least related to them. Some informants say that the Bakove "like the Tolai", are relatively recent migrants. Nevertheless, Vitus have traditional trade links with the Bakove and there has been some intermarriage.

The only information published about the Bakove is provided by Kroll (1939). Kroll (1939:376) suggests that the Bakove have patrilineal totemic clans. Brief conversations with Bakove indicate that they also have patrilineal (or patrilineally-biased) land-holding groups. Superficially, they appear to have a social structure that in some respects resembles that of the Kove or the Kaliai (cf Counts 1968). However, little can be said about Bakove social structure until further research has been conducted.

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[1] The Kimbe languages were isolated as a language group by Ann Chowning (1971).

Bulu

The Bulu live in two villages at the tip of the Willaumez Peninsula. They claim a common historical origin with the Vitus and until recent years members of the two societies were trade partners. Matrilineal, cognatic, and patrilineal principles are all significant in the organization of Bulu society. The Bulu people have exogamous matrimoieties, but recruitment to corporate land-holding groups is bilateral. The groups themselves resemble patrilineages with some non-agnatic accretions and are five or six generations deep. The patrilineal bias results from the norm of patri-virilocal residence and from inheritance rules that prevent women from inheriting rights in corporate property. The corporate group (kambu) resembles local groups among societies to the west of the Willaumez Peninsula (cf Counts 1968). Bulu social structure has possibly been influenced by their inter-marriage with the Kove and Bakove. The Bulu resemble societies to the east only in their possession of a matrilineal descent principle.

Unea

Stories of migration to Vitu include accounts of clans that have their origins in Unea. It is probable that Vitu and Unea have influenced one another greatly. Intermarriage has always taken place between members of the two societies and there were close trade-links.

Unea has no matrilineal clans. Instead there are cognatic categories, eleven to sixteen generations deep (*ǥambu taranga*), that descend from a usually mythical ancestor and are oriented along a line of firstborn children, descending from the ancestor.

The *ǥambu taranga* in Unea differs from the cognatic category that bears the same name in Vitu. Vitu *ǥambu* descend cognatically from a human ancestor belonging to a land-owning lineage. Vitu *ǥambu* are much shallower than those in Unea.

Residence in Unea is virilocal and women move to their husbands' communities at marriage. Unea women, unlike Vitu women, may not inherit land, but their sons may inherit from either their fathers or their mother's brothers. In practice, local groups have an agnatic bias because only one man in a set of siblings usually acquires land from his mother's brothers. A few people own land belonging to both their paternal and maternal kinsmen, and Uneapa consider that an individual has potential rights in the land of any ancestor for as long as a cognatic connection is remembered.

However, in contemporary Unea, land is not plentiful and most people can only acquire land through inheritance.

Marriages between Vitus and Uneapa are quite common and a number of persons consider that they have land-rights in both areas. Although Unea women have no rights in land, Vitus and Uneapa regard their patterns of land tenure as quite similar. In both societies, local land-holding groups consist of cognatic kinsmen, each of whom has potential rights in other areas of land.

Marriage patterns in Vitu and Unea differ in that Uneapa may marry their first cross-cousins, but there are some similarities. Uneapa give the same reasons for marrying cross-cousins as Vitus give for marrying relations. Members of both societies claim that marrying relations ensures that wives are not treacherous and guard their husbands from sorcery by looking after their food leavings. People also claim that marrying relatives prevents the alienation of land. Both Vitus and Uneapa marry related women in order that the descendants of their kinswomen may regain use of the land in which they have rights. When real or classificatory cross-cousins marry in Unea, the father of the woman may give land to his son-in-law, since the latter already has potential rights in his land.

The limited land area of Unea may have encouraged the practice of marrying kinsmen and preserving the use of land for a limited number of cognates. It is unlikely that the pre-contact population of Unea was less than a hundred people per square mile, and it was probably higher. In 1901, the Malaria Survey Team estimated that the population of Unea was between one and three thousand (Bodrogi 1971:49). At this time, the population would have been less than in the pre-contact era due to the effects of the 1897 smallpox epidemic.

In Unea, the preference for marrying relations may have been influenced by the importance of tree-crops to the islanders. Before ground on Unea was cleared to make room for coconut plantations, perhaps a third of the trees on the island provided either food or building material. When comparing themselves with societies on the New Britain mainland, Uneapa frequently draw attention to their own large groves of useful trees. In Unea, women continue to have access to their brothers' trees after marriage. Cross-cousin marriage enables their children to use them too. When the Unea people migrated to Vitu, it is possible that they took their marriage pattern with them.

Marriage between Vitus and Uneapa continues today. Both societies have similar ideas about the reciprocal exchange of women although the social groups that make the exchange differ, Unea does not have matrilineal clans but Unea people living in Vitu can be fitted into the Vitu system. Particular groups in Unea are associated with the fertility of certain crops and Unea people living in Vitu use these crops as emblems (ruka). They pass the emblems matrilineally to their children.

The Nakanai

The Nakanai inhabit a long stretch of the north New Britain coastline. There is some cultural variation in the area. The more easterly groups are organized into matrilineal moieties as well as clans (Van Rijswijck 1966). The western groups only have clans. The Bileki, the most westerly Nakanai group, have been studied most extensively (Chowning 1958, 1966; Goodenough 1954, 1962, 1976; Valentine 1954, 1965). This group will be the subject of the following discussion. The Vitus believe that they are related both culturally and historically to the Xarua who used to live on Garua island, but are now settled to the west of the Bileki. The latter appear to be similar to the Bileki in language and social organization and have intermarried with them (Goodenough 1976).

Contacted and subjected to European influence later than the Vitus, the Nakanai had retained much of their traditional culture when they were first studied in 1954. The political community consisted of a territory composed of one or more villages, divided into hamlets. Their settlement pattern probably resembles that of the Vitus in the pre-contact era.

As in Vitu, the Nakanai clan system is an integral part of local cosmology. Nakanai clans resemble Vitu clans in their association with plant and animal emblems, but in addition they are associated with mountains and with bodies of water. Nakanai, like Vitus, acquire clan membership at birth and do not change it if they are adopted or move their residence. While consanguineal links are important in the local context, clan membership provides links over considerable distances, and allows individuals and groups to find refuge in times of war.

The father/child relationship is important in both Vitu and Nakanai but in the latter society, the roles allotted to matrilateral and patrilateral kin apparently are more specific than in Vitu. The father and the father's brothers have responsibility for a child's food, education, marriage and ceremonial life, while matrilineal kin are concerned with property rights, with protection from attack, and with avenging death.

Nakanai clans are not localized. Lineages are associated with specific areas of land but lineage membership does not control residence. Some people never live on their own lineage land. As in Vitu, residence is virilocal and married couples live near the husband's father or a father substitute until the latter's death. Subsequently, a man may live on his own lineage land or that of his father, grandfather, or on the land of another lineage of his clan. The only restriction to which a man is subject is that he cannot hold a community office except on his own lineage land. So ambitious men tend to reside on their own lineage land.

The population density in Nakanai is lower than in Vitu, and this factor perhaps accounts for the greater flexibility of the residence pattern in Nakanai. Individuals have no difficulty in acquiring land in areas where they have rights. A core of lineage members is maintained as mature men shift their residence to their own lineage land.

Goodenough (1962:9) claims that the Nakanai settlement pattern is based on groups of kindred. An individual may live near kinsmen to whom he is related either by blood or marriage. As a result, hamlets are composed of kinsmen but not necessarily of cognatically related kinsmen. In Vitu, there are now no discrete hamlets, but land-sharing groups are related through cognatic descent, a consequence of the inability of Vitus to acquire land other than through inheritance.

Patterns of restraint towards affines and cross-cousins in Nakanai resembles that of Vitu. This pattern contrasts with that in Unea where a mild joking relationship exists between cross-cousins.

The social structure of Vitu partly resembles that of Unea and partly that of Nakanai. It is possible that the reasons for these resemblances are historical, and that the matrilineal aspects of Vitu derive from Xarua while the cognatic elements derive from Unea. Whether or not this is true, it is apparent that similar elements in the three societies are combined in quite different ways.

Processes of Group Formation

In my introduction, I noted that Keesing found the "primary segment" model inappropriate for his analysis of Kwaio social structure. The society was very mobile and groups could best be described as crystalizing in specific social situations, rather than as representing permanent social units. In his study of the Kwaio, Keesing regarded social groups as secondary phenomena and concentrated on the social principles and processes that were relevant to group formation. Among the Kwaio, cognatic descent allocates rights to membership in a variety of groups, and individuals have considerable choice between groups they could join.

Societies in which unilineal descent is a significant organizing factor may also fit badly into the "primary segment" model. For example, in the New Guinea Highlands, societies do not fit the model because unilineal descent does not allocate membership of local corporate groups. In societies such as Vitu and Nakanai, several cultural principles may interact in the formation of social groups.

In the segmental model, only one descent principle is taken into account.

Societies with disharmonic descent and residence rules do not fit the primary segment model because members of corporate categories tend to be scattered and cooperative groups based on co-residence tend to develop. In societies such as Vitu, individuals belong to a variety of different kinds of groups, each of which crystallize in different social circumstances. My analysis of Vitu society indicates that the processual approach that Keesing uses to describe the Kwaio is effective in describing a society where matrilineal descent allocates rights in unilineal corporations, but where other principles and norms also are relevant to the formation of groups.

In analysing processes leading to group formation in Vitu, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the membership in a category that allocates rights to join social groups, and membership in the groups themselves. The Vitus themselves implicitly recognize this distinction. Individuals belong to a matrilineage that represents a segment of one of ten matrilineal clans. At the ideal level they perceive their society as divided into matrilineal segments. But they relate to the matrilineal framework through an ideology of cognatic descent that allows them to claim membership of a number of groups.

Although most social groups in Vitu are ultimately based on the lineage, the relationship between lineages and social groups is not direct. The lineage is an administrative group, represented by a lineage leader, but it is also a cultural category that faciliates the organization of groups that consist both of lineage members and lineage descendants. Individuals may join groups that represent not only their own lineage but the lineages of their lineal ancestors for four generations.

In Vitu, each individual joins many kinds of social groups. Social groups may crystallize briefly on a specific occasion and then disband. The personnel of more long-lived groups may vary over time , according to the changing interests of members. Groups that form in one context usually differ from those that form in others. Various cultural principles in addition to descent influence the formation of land-using groups, residential groups, and groups that form to cooperate in economic tasks or ceremonial exchanges.

Keesing describes Kwaio society as "neither agnatic nor cognatic, but to some extent both" (1971:161). In addition, he suggests that "cognatic descent principles are often operative in societies with marked emphasis on unilineality in the structure of corporate groups", and he claims that even such a classically "patrilineal society as the Tallensi may have a secondary principle of cognatic descent that produces a residual category of non-unilineal descendants. He indicates that the realization that cognatic principles exist in such a society may "lead us not to think in terms of typological contrasts in descent systems - with cognatic societies as a typological waste-basket - but rather in terms of variation in the ways and contexts in which the same descent constructs are used" (Keesing 1971:153).

In general, the societies described in this chapter provide evidence in support of Keesing's contention that it is inadequate to describe societies in terms of a single descent principle. Like the Kwaio, Vitu and Nakanai cannot be described as either unilineal or cognatic societies. In both societies, matrilineal descent organizes corporate categories, but the social structures of the two societies are different because other organizing principles in the societies differ.

Anthropologists have tended to classify societies according to descent principles that allocate rights to join corporate groups. Some anthropologists (e.g. Leach 1962:214; Firth 1957:196) have drawn a distinction between unilineal and non-unilineal systems on the grounds that unilineal descent defines membership of corporate groups, while non-unilineal systems are optative. However, the evidence from societies such as Vitu suggests that the situation is more complex. Descent only defines eligibility to join groups; it does not define membership of groups themselves. In many societies, the role of the descent rule that allocates corporate rights is to restrict the number of corporate groups in which an individual can exercise full rights. But individuals do not always find it convenient or even possible to join such groups.

In Vitu, matrilineal descent allocates controlling rights in corporate property to lineage members. But not all qualified persons exercise those rights. Some individuals find it convenient to join groups in which they enjoy only minor rights.

In many societies where unilineal descent allocates full corporate rights, a second social principle allocates limited rights in corporations. So in "unilineal societies" there is usually some degree of flexibility in joining groups although the degree of choice varies considerably in different societies. In segmentary societies, secondary rights may be available through complementary filiation. In societies such as Vitu,individuals receive substantial rights in a number of corporations through their descent from lineage members.

In unilineal systems, secondary principles act to expand the range of choice open to an individual. In societies where rights in corporations are allocated through cognatic descent, secondary principles usually restrict choice. In societies such as Kwaio (Keesing 1971), Maori (Firth 1929), or Kwakiutl (Goldman 1975) a secondary patrilineal principle associated with a norm of patrilocal residence ensures that most men affiliate to their father's group.

In describing the kinds of options associated with recruitment to corporate groups, Firth (1957) distinguishes systems in which individuals make their own choices about which group they will join from those systems in which people are assigned to groups. For example, among the Maori, men could choose whether they joined the group of their mothers, their fathers, or those of more distant ancestors. In contrast, in Mangaia, relatives of prospective parents decided whether a child should remain in patrilocal residence with his father, or whether one of his maternal kinsmen should adopt him (Buck 1934). Kwakiutl elders also controlled the group affiliation of young people by granting titles belonging to their group to children or descendants.

Firth also distinguishes between systems in which individuals could belong simultaneously to more than one group and those in which group membership was exclusive. He noted that in most Polynesian societies, decisions about group membership were not irreversible but that most people remained committed to membership of a single group. Nevertheless, multiple membership occurred in a few societies, and Firth suggests that the evidence indicates that Maoris could belong simultaneously to more than one hapu. In Melanesia, Kwaio individuals frequently changed their residence in order to join local groups where they had rights.

Firth's discussion of optation refers only to societies where recruitment to corporate groups is cognatic. But although matrilineal descent allocates controlling rights in Vitu corporations, the extension of modified rights to lineage descendants means that recruitment to property-holding groups is as flexible in Vitu as it is in cognatic systems. Although Vitus can only join land-holding groups if they have actually inherited land from ancestors, they can choose to join any group where they have access to land. In addition they can exercise rights in the lineages of any of their lineal ancestors for four generations by joining any ceremonial group that represents them. They may belong simultaneously to more than one social group of the same type.

In this study, I presented a study of social structure in Vitu. I have been specifically concerned with the interaction of cognatic and matrilineal descent in the society, and in the role of the two principles in the processes of group formation. In this chapter, I compared processes of group formation in Vitu with those in Highlands, and I considered structural similarities and dissimilarities between Vitu and other societies in north central New Britain. I suggested that the structural variety in this area supported Keesing's contention that it was more useful to consider the differential interaction of various structural principles within societies than to typify societies as matrilineal, patrilineal or cognatic. Finally, I noted that although anthropologists have suggested that the element of optation in joining social groups is greater in cognatic than unilineal systems, evidence from Vitu tends to contradict this theory.

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