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Leadership and Change in the Western Pacific

*Essays Presented to Sir Raymond Firth
on the Occasion of His Ninetieth Birthday*

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I begin by looking at Anutan chieftainship within the context of the island's social structure; then I examine basic concepts – *mana*, *aropa* and *tapu* – underlying the Anutan view of what it is to be a chief. Succeeding sections explore several points of strain that have confronted the Anutan chieftainship and responses to these pressures. From empirical analysis of pressures and responses, I will draw inferences about Anutan chieftainship as a cultural category.⁴ This, in turn, leads back to the initial questions of what makes a chief and maintains chiefly systems even in the face of potent contravening forces.

INTRODUCTION

Analyses of Polynesian chieftainship have focused upon two related issues. The first involves what makes a chief and differentiates him from his subjects; the second is why chieftainship – a seemingly anachronistic institution – has been retained by many Polynesian peoples even as they strive to come to grips with the political realities of the late twentieth century. Discussions of the former issue feature the idea of 'kingship' and the similarities of Polynesian chiefs to monarchs elsewhere. Sahlins' essay on the 'stranger king' in Fiji has been viewed as seminal in this arena.¹ Treatment of the latter question may be found in many recent writings on the major archipelagoes of western Polynesia as well as much of Raymond Firth's analysis of social change on Tikopia.²

In an attempt to bring these strands together into a coherent framework, Marcus (1989) has suggested viewing Polynesian chieftainship in terms of two opposing elements, which he terms 'populist' and 'kingly'. Both features, he contends, are present – although differently combined – in all Polynesian systems. To illustrate his point, he offers an examination of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa where, he argues, 'chieftainship has survived most saliently and on a large scale' (1989: 180).³

I agree with Marcus' suggestion that Polynesian chiefs combine an aura of extraordinary – perhaps superhuman – power with the role of local benefactor. However, to reduce their essence to articulation between principles of 'kingliness' and 'populism' strains common understanding of these terms and gives too little credit to the complexity and subtlety of Polynesian chiefly systems. Here I explore such a system on Anuta, a community which has retained its chieftainship in as close to pristine form as any in the modern world and as 'saliently' as in the Tongan and Samoan archipelagoes.

THE ANUTAN POLITY: AN OVERVIEW

Anuta is divided into four major social units, termed *kainanga*. With some reservations (see Feinberg, 1973, 1981a, 1990), I have followed Firth's (1957) lead and glossed them as 'clans'. In order of ritual and political precedence, they are the *Kainanga i Mua*, *Kainanga i Tepuko*, *Kainanga i Pangatau*, and *Kainanga i Rotomua*. The first two are led by *ariki* 'chiefs'; the third and fourth are chiefless.

The head of the *Kainanga i Mua* is the senior chief, known as *Tui Anuta* or *Te Ariki i Mua*; the head of the *Kainanga i Tepuko* is the junior chief, designated by three titles: *Te Ariki Tepuko*, *Te Ariki i Muri* and *Tui Kainanga*. The chiefs are the community's political leaders; their commands are to be obeyed absolutely and without question. They make decisions regarding the community's economic life and oversee organization of 'public works' activities. They may place taboos on crops, or remove them, at their pleasure. They are responsible for maintenance of public order and can enforce their decisions by having violators whipped, confiscating garden lands, or execution via exile to the sea. The entire island and surrounding ocean are under the control of the two chiefs, who exercise arbitrary power over life and death in their domain.⁵

People are expected to show consummate respect for chiefs. They speak in hushed tones when a chief is near; are prohibited from standing near a chief while he is seated; may not turn their backs on chiefs; and do not touch a chief except upon his invitation. Inside a house, the chief alone sits on the ritually superior seaward side. Others sit with legs crossed or pointing away from the chief; and if one wishes to depart a house while a chief remains inside, one crawls out backward through a low door on the inland side. Should one meet a chief while walking on a narrow path, one steps aside until the chief has passed. When an *ariki* sits with other people on the beach, he is elevated by a

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mat or stone or stool while his companions sit directly in the sand. When a chief leaves on a lengthy voyage, he is carried down the beach to his canoe. Similarly, attendants carry him back up the beach on his return. And occasionally at feasts and celebrations the chiefs are carried to the ceremonial ground as a sign of honor and respect.

In return for such signs of obedience and honor, the chief is held responsible for the community's well-being. In pre-Christian times, the chief was the high priest, ultimately responsible for communication with the most powerful gods. It was his duty to obtain from ancestral spirits sufficient rain and sunshine to ensure fertility of crops, an adequate supply of fish, and safety from natural disasters and devastating epidemics. Today, the chief appeals not to the ancestors but to the Christian God. Still, he is felt to be responsible for the island's welfare.

Below the chiefs in rank is a group of retainers known as *nga maru*. *Maru* may be glossed as 'men of rank' or, more generally, 'protectors', and they serve as the chiefs' executive officials (cf. Firth, 1936, 1959, 1964a, 1970). They include all adult males in the two chiefly 'clans'. The *maru* act as advisors to the chiefs, speak on the chiefs' behalf at weekly island-wide assemblies (*pono*), communicate the chiefs' decisions to the mass of people, enforce the chiefs' pronouncements, and share responsibility for less than popular decisions.

Parallel to *maru* in pre-Christian times were *mataapure* 'ritual elders'. These people were responsible for conduct of the kava ceremonies through which Anutans paid homage to their gods and requested assistance. Ultimately, it was the chiefs who represented the community, but the *mataapure* facilitated their communication with the most powerful ancestral spirits. The leading *mataapure* was from the *pare* 'house' of Pu Paiaki, genealogically the most junior line of the Kainanga i Mua. The most recent man to occupy this post was Pu Raropuko, who lived at the turn of the century and was in office at the time of missionization in 1916. Pu Raropuko was a tremendously influential man, widely respected, and described as having almost chiefly stature.⁶ The title of *mataapure* has now been vacant for three-quarters of a century.

The *maru* exercise secular authority but occupy no formal ritual position. By contrast, the *mataapure* held great authority in the religious system but little in the non-religious sphere. Chiefs differ from each in that they simultaneously wield power in the two arenas. Pu Raropuko was like a chief in that he exercised both forms of power, but he did so by holding two distinct positions.

The lowest major segment of the population is known as the

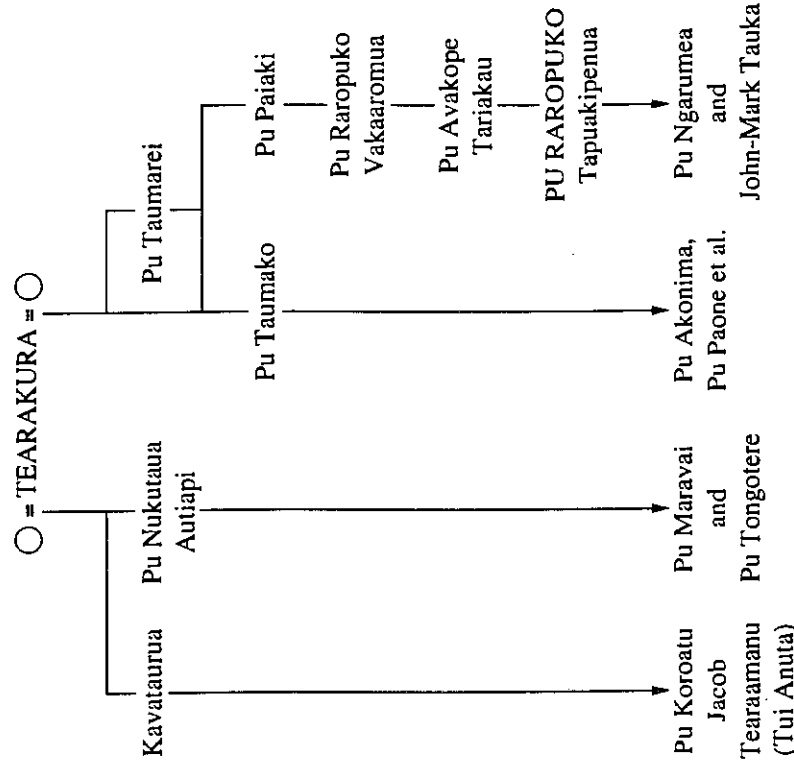


Figure 2.1 Abbreviated genealogy showing relationship of Pu Raropuko to other major lines of Kainanga i Mua

pakaaropa 'commoners'. Literally, the word means 'sympathy-producing', perhaps even 'pitiableness'. The *pakaaropa* include all persons in the two non-chiefly 'clans'. Members of these 'clans' had household ancestors to whom they might appeal for assistance; but they had no direct access to the most important deities and were thus dependent on the chiefs and their assistants. *Pakaaropa* might gain respect by virtue of their intellect, moral character, physical strength, navigational acumen, or for playing a role in the church. Honor and authority deriving from association with chiefs or leading pagan spirits, however, were unattainable for the *pakaaropa*.

A final position of outstanding importance, and one that crosses several of the others is *pau penua* 'island binder'. A *pau penua* is someone who, because of physical, moral or intellectual prowess, takes on special responsibilities for guarding the community. A *pau penua* exercises secular authority, but that authority derives from the chiefs' mystical or spiritual potency. Men of the second ranking line in the Kainanga i Mua – the line presently represented by Pu Maravai and Pu Tongotere – exercise a leadership position among the *maru*; and representatives of this line speak first at island-wide gatherings (*pono*). In 1972, during my first visit to Anuta, Pu Paone occupied a similar position despite representing one of the more junior lines in the first *kainanga*. His position as *pau penua* was based on his intellectual acumen, oratorical skills and moral stature. About four generations ago, Pu Raropuko of the senior *kainanga*'s junior line (see above), in addition to serving as *mataapure*, was *pau penua*. He was admired because of his physical strength and martial skills which, combined with his spiritual role, made him the most important leader on the island for a period of many years. And members of the Api Tavarei in the Kainanga i Pangatau, one of the *pakaaropa* lines, have a tradition of serving as *pau penua*. Members of this line have earned a reputation for unparalleled strength combined with intellectual brilliance, quiet bearing and unflinching loyalty to the chiefs. Pu Nukumanaia, the senior representative of this 'house' at the present time, is regarded as the island's strongest man, navigator *par excellence*, and bastion of calm dependability.

TERMS FOR CHIEFS

The usual Anutan term for 'chief' is *ariki*. This is cognate with words found throughout Polynesia. Anuta's two chiefs are both described as *ariki* and have the term incorporated into their titles: Te Ariki i Mua and Te Ariki Tepuko.

In addition to 'chief', *ariki* in Anutan can mean 'boss' or 'leader'. The most accomplished sailor aboard a canoe, or the captain of a ship is called *ariki vaka* 'boat *ariki*'. The Bishop of Melanesia is *te ariki o te pekau* or *ariki o te rotu* 'the *ariki* of the church'. Prior to Solomon Islands independence, district officers and district commissioners were referred to as *ariki*, and the Western Pacific High Commissioner was *te ariki maurunga* 'the high chief'. An employer or the owner of a company is *ariki* in relation to those working for him. The president of my university was described as my *ariki*, as is the president of the United States.

As this list indicates, bases for *ariki* status vary from religious potency (the bishop) to political and military force (colonial administrators) to economic power (as in the case of an employer). Since Polynesian chiefs combine within themselves all of these forms of potency, they are archetypal *ariki*. Perhaps for this reason, Anutans recognize the chiefs of other Polynesian communities as *ariki* in the same sense as their own, and show them similar respect. Such respect is acted out regularly only with regard to Tikopian chiefs, as these are the only ones besides their own with whom Anutans interact with any frequency. In principle, however, they speak of Tongan, Samoan and other Polynesian chiefs with similar expressions of respect and awe.

Unlike Tikopians, Anutans do not use *ariki* purely as a term of honor, without implications of authority. Firth (1990) notes that Tikopians have sometimes addressed him as *ariki* as a gesture of respect. Indeed, Tikopians have even addressed me as *ariki* on the basis of my physical appearance. Like Firth, I see this as a form of courtesy, similar to the English use of 'sir' or perhaps even 'boss' in American slang. By contrast, I have never been called *te ariki* by Anutans, for whom this term implies real power.

In addition to *ariki*, the term *Tui* is sometimes incorporated into chiefly titles (e.g. Tui Anuta, Tui Kainanga, Tui Tonga). *Tui* in Anutan is cognate with *Tu'i* in Tongan, *Tui* in Samoan, and *Ti* in Tikopian. 'Lord' may be a reasonable gloss. Unlike *ariki*, *Tui* never is a common noun but is only used in titles of high chiefs; and it is not used with the definite article.

Other terms for chiefs are more allusive or metaphorical, focusing on particular chiefly characteristics. Thus a chief may be described as *te pokouru* 'the head' of his polity or as *te maru* 'the protector'. The latter underscores his role as guardian of the community's well-being. On occasion, a chief is termed *tamana* 'father', emphasizing his leadership, authority and responsibility to the community. The chief

is a senior kinsman to his followers, and in a sense, regardless of particular kin relationships, they are all his 'children'.

WHAT MAKES A CHIEF?

Elsewhere (Feinberg, 1978, 1981a) I have described Anutan chieftainship in structural terms, outlining the rules of succession and an articulation between concepts of *manuu* (*mana*) and *aropa*. Here I expand upon the major points.⁷

Mana and Tapu

Anutan chieftainship is based primarily on primogeniture and seniority of patrilineal descent. The senior chief claims descent through a line of males from Tearakura, a chief who lived about nine generations ago, at a time when Anutan social structure came to assume its present shape. Similarly, the junior chief claims descent from Pu Tepuko, Tearakura's younger brother. Pu Tepuko succeeded to the throne upon his elder brother's death. Normally, however, a chief is his predecessor's eldest son.

To say that chieftainship is based on genealogical seniority and primogeniture presents both answers and more questions. In particular, what is there about a senior male descendant of Tearakura or Pu Tepuko that qualifies him for leadership? This seems to be the major question to which Marcus (1989: 181) calls attention in suggesting a shift of focus from social structural to cultural issues. A starting point for such discussion is the concept of *mana* or its more common Anutan equivalent, *manuu*.

My observation that Anutans use *mana* and *manuu* synonymously (Feinberg, 1978: 26; 1981a: 160-3) has raised expressions of doubt from a number of ethnographers and linguists since there are other Polynesian languages in which both words exist with different meanings. In Samoan, for example, *mana* is defined as 'supernatural power', whereas *manu* means 'good luck' or 'good fortune' (Milner, 1966: 128, 130). My Anutan finding, on the other hand, corresponds with Firth's report that Tikopians 'use two words, *mana* and *manu*, for the one idea' (Firth, 1967: 179). Nonetheless, because of questions from my colleagues, I asked a number of Anutans on a later visit to elucidate the issue.

In the opinion of Frank Kataina (Pu Teukumarae), one of my most articulate informants, there is no difference in the meanings of *manuu* and *mana*: '*Te poi atamai e tai pe!*' 'There is but a single meaning!' He translated both terms as meaning 'power'. When I

asked if there was even a small difference, he insisted that there was not.

The conversation was then joined by Moses Purianga, the acknowledged expert on Anutan history. Moses agreed that *mana* and *manuu* are now synonymous but asserted that this was not always so. Rather, he averred, *manuu* came to Anuta from the Mota language which had been for many years the lingua franca of the Melanesian Mission. Frank insisted that the Mota word was *mana*, but recalled that when he was a child the elders used *manuu* differently from present-day Anutans. For example, when someone came back from fishing, others might ask, *E manuuia ko koe?*, to which the answer would be the number of fish caught. *Manuu* or *manuuia* here means something like 'lucky' or 'successful'. *Mana* to Frank's knowledge, was never used this way. Like some of my informants on Anuta in the early 1970s, Frank suggested an association between *mana* and the word *tamana* or *mana* meaning 'father'; and he noted its appearance in the English language where (according to his understanding) it means 'respect'.⁸

This discussion underscores the danger of assuming antiquity for current usage. It may support Keesing's suggestion that *mana* and related terms, during the pre-contact period, were more likely to be used as verbs than at the present time, and that this change has come about largely through church influence (Keesing, 1984). In fact, it is likely that both words have been in Anuta's lexicon for a long time, and they once had different meanings – echoing the contrast still seen in Samoan. Codrington (1972 [1891]: 101-13) seems to suggest that *mana* is also a Mota word of some antiquity. Under European influence, the meanings of the two Anutan (and Tikopian) words likely began to converge, and by the time of Firth's first Tikopian research neither community differentiated clearly between them.

Raymond Firth, in his now classic article, argues that *mana* and *manu* in Tikopia do not refer to abstract qualities but always apply to a particular object.⁹ Anutans may attach the concept to particular objects as when fishermen were asked, '*Ne manuuia ko koe?*' But it is also used to indicate a general ability to affect one's surroundings. Although a kind of generalized *manuu* inheres in a person, however, one must demonstrate *manuu* by producing tangible results. Chiefs are described as being specially endowed with *manuu*, the implication being that they can bring storms or calm, rain or sunshine, health or illness, feast or famine, success or defeat in warfare. A chief need not be muscular or skilled at the techniques of warfare.¹⁰ He 'just sits' (*e nopo pero*), allowing others to work, speak or fight on his behalf. But

his associates' success depends on his *manuu*. In a well known story of the demise of Anuta's original inhabitants (*nga apukere*), the autochthones embarrassed a powerful Tikopian chief. The Tikopian returned home to his island and caused storms, drought and a famine to devastate Anuta. As the story goes, the *apukere* 'ne maua te manuu o te ariki' 'encountered the chief's *manuu*'.

Manuu may be an adjective (*te ariki manuu* 'the *manuu* chief') or verb (*Ne manuita ko koe?* 'Were you *manued*?').¹¹ However, it most often is a noun. It is not thought to be free-floating; but Anutans often speak of *manuu* as if it were a substance which inheres in people, objects and spirits, and which may be transferred from one object or being to another. Anutans state that a war club carried to the island by Pu Kaurave, an immigrant from Tonga and the first leader of Anuta's present population, has exceptional *manuu*. It has the ability to leave its bearer's hand, strike down his opponent, and return to the original bearer without exposing him to risk of battle. This *manuu* is said to be derived from the club's association with Pu Kaurave.

For human beings, *manuu* passes primarily from father to son, with a disproportionate amount going to the eldest son. A chief's first-born son, then, usually receives most of his father's *manuu*, and this is why chieftainship normally follows principles of genealogical seniority and primogeniture.

As is true of other Polynesians, Anutans link *mana* (or *manuu*) with *tapu*. *Tapu* can mean 'sacred', 'holy', 'forbidden' or 'commanding respect or deference'. The church building is *tapu*, as are the cross and other key religious symbols. Parents are *tapu* to their children in the sense that they must be treated with respect. One's personal name is *tapu* in the sense it may not be uttered by one's children or certain other kin (see Feinberg, 1978, 1981a, 1982, 1983). Crops which have been placed off-limits are described as *tapu*. The dolphin is *te ariki o te moana* 'the chief of the ocean', and is *tapu* in the sense that it may not be injured, killed or eaten. And chiefs are *tapu* in the sense that they must be respected and obeyed.

Firth's informants claimed the head to be the locus of one's *mana*. 'The gods take and place it on the head of him who has asked for the *mana* to be given to him' (1967: 190–1). Anutans did not give me comparably explicit assertions, but a multitude of statements implied that they share this general conception. Thus, the head is the most *tapu* part of the body and may not be touched by persons of lesser rank. Objects that come into contact with a person's head, such as a pillow or head-rest (*urunga*) are similarly *tapu* and may not be used

by social inferiors. Significant in this respect, the eldest member of a sibling set is termed the 'head' (*te uru* or *urumatua*) and must be honored and obeyed. And a chief is said to be the *pokouru* 'head' of his polity.

Manuu is reflected in the world of psychic powers as well as physical accomplishment. For example, I was told that if someone in Honiara, the Solomon Islands capital, focuses his thoughts upon a person dwelling on Anuta, well over 600 miles distant, that person can see him. One does not discern the details of particular events, but the object of one's thoughts will sense that a relative is thinking of him and be able to communicate that he is healthy and happy.

When the events concern a chief, these powers are magnified. For example, several years ago Anuta's two chiefs went to Tikopia with several other men to build a canoe. While there, the Ariki Tepuko accidentally cut his leg with an adze. People on Anuta did not know just what had happened to whom; but they could sense that there was something seriously wrong with one of the *ariki*.

This clairvoyant power shows itself especially in dreams. During the early 1980s, at a time when the senior chief was under severe criticism (see Feinberg, 1986, and below), he went onto the hill to live by himself. He did this because God had appeared to him in a dream and informed him of an assassination plot. The alleged plotters denied it, but he was forewarned and knew what he had to do. During this period, the only people to go to the chief were his wife, his son and Pu Paone, his strongest supporter.

Another seminal dream occurred around that time. The chief dreamed that he looked out of his house and saw the Bishop of Melanesia standing there in full regalia. Next to the bishop was a pool of water. The water was blood red. The bishop explained what the chief already understood: that this represented the community's unsettled state – *te kovi*.

Then the *ariki* saw another pool of water. This was white, like coconut cream. The chief expressed the hope that the white, which represented good, would mix with and overcome the red. But the bishop quickly dashed that hope, explaining that times had changed. In contrast with earlier times, the red was here and would not go away. Red and white would flow side by side. Occasionally, one or the other might dominate temporarily, but they would always be around in a kind of dynamic equilibrium. Through this dream, the chief was able to foretell the island's future.

The ultimate source of *manuu* on Anuta, as on Tikopia (see Firth, 1967: 189), is the spirit world. In pre-Christian times, this meant the

pagan deities. Now the Christian God is said to be *te tapito o te manuu katoa* 'the source of all *manuu*'.

People are assumed to have *manuu* in more or less direct proportion to their genealogical seniority. Children have little or no *manuu*, but acquire it as they grow older. And women are rarely described as having great *manuu*, although there are exceptions. For example, Nau Ariki, Tearakura's elder sister, has been called *te ariki papine* 'the female chief', and is said to be among the most powerful persons ever to have dwelt upon Anuta.

Manuu (or *mana*) on Anuta clearly resembles the analogous concept on Tikopia (Firth, 1967) as well as other Polynesian communities. It may justifiably be translated as 'power', 'success', 'efficacy' or 'potency'. The association of *mana* with supernatural or religious forces, as proposed by Codrington (1972 [1891]) and his successors, fits the Anutan data. Hogbin's (1936) suggested analogy between *mana* and 'luck' is somewhat less appropriate as Anutan *mana* (or *manuu*) implies causality rather than fortuitous correlation.

Marcus (1989: 195) groups Tikopia, and by implication Anuta, with Samoa as emphasizing the 'populist' side of chieftainship. In these communities, he states, mystical power (*mana*?) accrues from possession of a chiefly title and is not (as in Tonga) an indivisible characteristic of the person.¹² On this point, Anutan (and also Tikopian) data are equivocal. Much *manuu* resides in chiefly titles; and when one becomes a chief, one's *mana*, *tapu* and political authority increase qualitatively. On the other hand, persons installed as chief are already near the apex of the social hierarchy, possessing in their persons prodigious *mana* and being treated with unusual respect.

When Anutans are away from their home island, their commitment to traditional gestures of respect is somewhat attenuated. Chiefs travelling overseas continue to receive tokens of chiefly honor, but ritual concomitants of rank for non-chiefs may be overlooked. Still, many Anutans feel such neglect, even overseas, to be offensive.

For this reason, Frank Kataina ate and slept by himself in an oven house rather than with other Anutans in one of the sleeping houses during my 1988 visit to the Anutan community in Honiara. Under normal circumstances, such behavior would be viewed as highly antisocial, and even in this case it evoked some bemused comments. The reason for his actions, he explained to me, was to express dissatisfaction with the lack of respect paid to the chief's son (Harry Matakai, Pu Parikitonga), who was visiting Honiara at the time. As the chief's son, Matakai should have been given a special separate

serving of food, known as *te pakaariki* – a ritual portion presented to the chief and members of his family. But instead he was served from the same pool as everyone else. It was not a problem for Matakai to eat from the same food basket as the rest of the community. But it should be *his decision*. Frank, as the chief's brother, was especially sensitive to such slights. He did not complain to the community because the house in question did not belong to him. Rather, he registered his protest indirectly. In addition, he noted that Pu Teraupanga, a member of the *pakaaropa*, had recently visited the Honiara community and was so offended at the absence of respect for Matakai that he went back home in protest on the first available ship. He and Frank discussed the situation, but neither of them made their feelings widely known.¹³

Chiefly Demeanor: Aropa and Dignity

An Anutan chief acquires *manuu*, and eventually his title, on the basis of his genealogical position, and chiefly behavior should demonstrate extraordinary *manuu* by unusual accomplishments. However, unrestrained and egoistic use of *manuu* is unseemly in a chief. Rather, chiefs should use their potency to protect their subjects by ensuring the fertility of crops, success in fishing, and freedom from epidemic disease. In this way, chiefs express their *aropa* 'compassion', 'sympathy' or 'pity' for their people.¹⁴

Aropa is the Anutan form of a pan-Polynesian term. Other variants include *aloha* in Hawaiian, *aroha* in Maori, *alofo* in Samoan, *ofa* in Tongan, and *arofa* in Tikopian. It is a key value for Anutans, underlying rank and kinship. Kin express *aropa* for one another through sharing of material goods. Persons of auspicious rank – particularly chiefs – express *aropa* by using their *manuu* to promote the welfare of their lower-ranking fellow islanders, while people at the lower reaches of the social hierarchy express their *aropa* (in this case perhaps best translated as 'appreciation') for those above them by conceding honor and obedience. Ordinary people obey and pay homage to their chiefs out of respect for their *mana* and because they fear that disobedience or failure to respect a chief (or parent or other social superior) will bring on illness or misfortune (see Feinberg, 1979b, 1980a). Demonstration of *aropa* through appropriate channeling of *mana*, however, is the basis of chiefly legitimacy.¹⁵

In addition to behavior that embodies *aropa*, chiefs should comport themselves with dignity. They rarely speak or act, but make their power felt by the sheer weight of their presence. A good chief is slow to anger and conducts himself with an air of overt humility.¹⁶ This

point was recently expressed to me in an assessment of the present senior chief and Mataki, the heir apparent.

Since 1972 I have had a close relationship with Pu Koroatu, the current chief, whom I have found to be friendly, intelligent, outgoing, assertive, decisive and a little mercurial. By contrast, I have found Mataki comparatively dull and difficult to get to know. He rarely speaks except when spoken to; and even when addressed directly his responses tend to be terse and uninformative. He appears to take little initiative, and often gives the impression that he lacks awareness of his surroundings.

The Anutan chieftainship is under stress, and I have been concerned about its future. Thus on a recent visit to the Solomons I asked Frank Kataina, as Mataki's paternal uncle, what he thought about his nephew – his chiefly potential, leadership and problem-solving abilities.

I was surprised to learn that Frank's assessment of Mataki's ability was directly contrary to mine. He held that his nephew will make an outstanding chief *precisely because he rarely talks*. He just sits, listens and thinks. '*Kairo karanga. Nopo pero. Maanatu pero.*'

He then criticized his brother's chiefly style, noting that he talks too much and gets too easily excited. In Frank's view, Pu Koroatu's 'mind is very fast' ('*na atamai e maatea na vanave*'). In other words, he is too quick to react – an undesirable trait, especially in a chief. If a chief talks too much, people get irritated and do not listen. If a chief just sits and makes his presence *felt* – then, when he does speak, his words carry weight.¹⁷

Still, I asked if Mataki was bright enough to do the job. '*E potope kairo?*' This question was prompted, I explained, because Mataki had told me that although he always wears a wrist watch, he wears it only for decoration and does not know how to tell time. And despite his schooling on Anuta and his time in Honiara, he speaks neither English nor Pijin (Solomon Islands Pidgin English). For that matter, I noted, when I speak to him even in Anutan, he seems not to hear what I am saying.

Frank insisted that Mataki is *very* bright. Exceptionally so! He was dissembling when he told me he could not tell time. Moreover, he knows both Pijin and English very well. He does not talk much by intention. All his life, his father has admonished him always to speak slowly, softly, and only after due deliberation. But he hears everything and is always thinking. Later, when I had a chance to travel with Mataki by sea to Temotu Province, I got to know him rather well and found Frank's assessment very accurate.¹⁸

Pu Koroatu's grandfather and predecessor as chief, Pu Teukumarae, is said to have been very much like Mataki; and many people remember him as an outstanding chief. Ideally, chiefs are said to be 'like women' (cf. Shore, 1976: 286). They are not physically active but 'just sit' (*nopo pero*). They are not *toa* 'warriors' and do not become too actively involved in everyday affairs. Rather, they rely on their *manuu*.

Tearakura, the chief *par excellence*, met this description despite his leading the slaughter of the island's male population nine generations ago. He was not a *toa* and did not kill people himself. That responsibility fell upon his youngest brother, Tauvakatai. But he was renowned for his ability to curse. '*E maatea na tautukua.*' Similarly, in worship ceremonies (*pai kava*), the chief 'just sits'. The person who actually 'does the work' (*e paipekau*) is not the chief but his *mataapure*.

In this respect, Anutan chiefs resemble those elsewhere in Polynesia. On Tikopia, Firth (1970: 40) notes that a chief 'spent much of his time in his own dwelling, visited by his close agnatic kin . . . he rarely visited the houses of other people. . . . *Ali'i* 'high chiefs' in Samoa are analogous to Anutan *ariki* as repositories of honor and restraint, and contrast with *tulafale* 'orators' who resemble the Anutan *maru* (cf. Shore, 1976: 286; 1982: 1989). A similar parallel might be drawn between the *ariki* *maru* relationship and that of Tongan *eiki* to *matāpule*, or historically between the Tu'i Tonga and cadet lines of the Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua and Tu'i Kanokupolu.

passive	vs	active
dignity	vs	power
Mataki	vs	Pu Koroatu
ariki	vs	maru
~		
ali'i	vs	tulafale
eiki	vs	matāpule
Tu'i Tonga	vs	Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua
Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua	vs	Tu'i Kanokupolu

Passivity and honor, then, combine with *tapu*, *aropa* and *mana* to define the essence of Anutan chieftainship. Chiefly power is greatest when presented with an air of dignity and not used outright but held in reserve. Still, dignity and honor must be backed with power or the chief may well lose both.¹⁹ Passivity implies a combination of chiefly power to do as one wishes and restraint, which keeps a chief from overusing his power out of a sense of compassion (*aropa*) for his

subjects. Active pursuit of trivia is beneath chiefly dignity. Instead, a chief should hold his best card in reserve and play it only as a last resort.

Aga and Amio: Anutan Analogues

Marcus illustrates the view of chiefs as exemplary persons with a discussion of Samoa and the concept of *aga*. He accepts Shore's (1982, 1984) characterization of *aga* as referring to the positive, human, social, restrained part of the self. *Aga* contrasts with *amio*, which is the unrestrained, egoistic, impulsive, antisocial aspect. Samoans should emphasize *aga* in their behavior, but, as fallible human beings, *amio* is also present and sometimes becomes dominant. Chiefs, however, are expected to banish all traces of *amio* from their behavior and act with restraint, dignity and control – in other words, to express *aga* in all of their actions. It is in this respect that Samoan chiefs embody features most admired in their subjects. Discussions by Freeman (1984, 1985) and Mageo (1989) suggest that both *aga* and *amio* are less unitary and more complex than Shore's treatment would lead one to believe. However, there is general agreement that the behavior Shore describes as expressing *aga* is proper chiefly behavior.

Anutans share the word *anga* but use it in a somewhat different manner. *Anga* in Tikopian designates an inclination or orientation to act in a particular way (e.g. a *tangata anga marie* is a 'man of good behavior' (Firth, 1985: 10–11)). However, it may apply to negative as well as positive characteristics (e.g. *anga pariki* 'inclined toward evil'). 'Character' would seem to be a reasonable gloss. The form in which I have most often heard Anutans use the term is *pakaanga* (pl. *pakaangaanga*). As is true of the Samoan *aga*, this term highlights the contrast between social and antisocial behavior, but *pakaanga* represents the *antisocial* – 'to turn against' – and it particularly indicates opposition to chiefs. *Pakaanga* is related to *tautuku* 'to curse'. Unlike *tautuku*, however, which requires spoken words to bring about misfortune for another person, one who is guilty of *pakaanga* brings misfortune on himself. In this sense, one might render the term as 'taboo violation'. Today, the church has consciously forbidden the practice of *tautuku*, although occasionally curses are still uttered during fits of anger. *Pakaanga*, by contrast, remains as much as ever an Anutan concern.

I have described, on previous occasions, the case of a boy who allegedly became deranged as a result of *pakaanga* to his grandfather, the junior chief (see Feinberg, 1979b, 1980a). When Pu Pareumata, the chief, became an old man, 'na atamai ne reku' 'he lost his mind'.

This was a form of psychological disturbance – 'e *pakapea mo te varea*'. Yet, despite a chief's disturbance, he must be respected as a chief. The grandson's failure to do so resulted in the illness passing on to him upon the old man's death.²⁰

Anutans, then, do not speak of *anga* as a special characteristic associated with chiefs – except perhaps in the negative sense of *pakaanga*. Nor have I come across the word *amio* in Anutan speech. However, emphases on *aropa* and quiet dignity suggest that the Anutans look for many of the same characteristics in their chiefs as do Samoans.²¹

THE ANUTAN CHIEF AS POPULIST AND KING

Clearly, the Anutan chief has several features that have been associated with kingship. A chief is normally his predecessor's eldest son, and, once installed in office, he rules for life. In theory, he has absolute authority. His persona is fortified by spiritually derived power to affect the world around him, and in that respect he rules by divine right.

On the other hand, he is only a *stranger* king in a very limited sense. He claims descent from immigrants, but so does everyone in the community.²² Two major lines – the Api Tavareji in the Kainanga i Pangatau and the entire Kainanga i Rotomua – are traced to much more recent immigrants; yet, in terms of ritual priority, these are two of Anuta's lowest ranking descent groups. The chief is a stranger in the sense that he is different from his subjects; but that point is almost tautological. Were he no different from the rest of the community, there would be no basis for his leadership.

Similarly, a chief might be described in some sense as a populist. He does not defend the poor, downtrodden masses against depredations of the high and mighty. Nor are chiefs 'exemplary persons' in the sense that they possess those characteristics of personhood that are most ardently admired in everyone else. A quick-tempered, dictatorial, self-centered, mean-spirited chief is still a chief and should be respected as such. Moreover, chiefly attributes may well not be admired among commoners. As elsewhere in Polynesia, commoners who emulate chiefly behavior risk condemnation for pretentiousness (cf. Mead, 1928; Firth, 1964b: 149–50). However, a chief represents his people in relations with divinity and with the outside world; and he promotes collective welfare. People respect and obey their chiefs to the extent that they believe chiefs guarantee the general well-being. When opposition to the chiefs arises, as it did during the mid-1970s

(see Feinberg, 1986, and below), it grows from suspicion that they are no longer serving the community's collective interests. And when chiefs have overcome their opposition, it is because they demonstrated (kingly) spiritual power by causing disaster to befall those who opposed them.

To understand the principles underlying Polynesian chieftainship, it is useful to examine how it works in practice, particularly under conditions of stress. Thus the remainder of this essay will address two recent challenges: opposition to chiefly authority that developed during the 1970s and continued for almost a decade; and the problem of succession for a childless chief. This discussion should illuminate the basis of Anutan chieftainship and the maintenance of chiefly power in the modern world.

ECONOMIC DISSENSION

The crisis began during the mid-1970s when several 'houses' (*pare*) began selling food for cash to other islanders. Goods of European manufacture had long been exchanged for money. However, to sell locally produced food to other Anutans was a breach of *aropa*, and the senior chief forbade the practice.²³ Despite the chief's objection, however, the food-sellers persisted and, for a while, the practice spread. Many people criticized the chief as standing in the way of progress. Most damaging to his position was that several *maru*, who should have been his most trusted supporters, were instead among his strongest critics.

Pu Paone was the one exception. He stood by the chief, eloquently defending him and fighting to restore some semblance of order. '*Kairo e tangata e pakapea*' 'There was no one like him.' He maintained his energy and dynamism even as he was dying of tuberculosis.

The day he died, he was in Pu Koroatu's house. The two chiefs were laying hands on him, attempting to infuse him with their *manuu* and restore him to life. Finally, he said, '*Tangaata*, my body hurts so much. Please leave me. Let me rest. Allow me to go on to the next world. But please watch over my children when I'm gone and take care of them for me.'

The chiefs let go of him. Pu Koroatu said 'Yes, brother-in-law. I will watch your children. You are free to go; you've earned your rest.'

Pu Paone's death was a devastating blow to the chief. Still, he remained committed to defending what he took to be the island's ancient custom. His first line of defense was secular.

In 1981 his brother Frank visited Anuta while on leave from his

job with the national police force. During this visit, Frank threatened the recalcitrant *maru* that, if they should continue as they were, he would abolish their office and title. Either there would cease to be Anutan *maru*, or they would be chosen individually by the chief.

The *maru* retorted that the chieftainship depends on them as they are required to install chiefs in the first place. Thus, if their position were abolished, the chieftainship would also cease. Frank did not deny their premise, but he countered that the two chiefs were installed before the present *maru* took office, so his action would have no effect on the *ariki*. In the end, the threat was not put to the test as the crisis was resolved by other means.

During the same visit, Frank issued a second ultimatum. He said he would go back to Honiara for three years. If order had not been restored by his return in 1983, he would have offenders individually punished. Anyone who refused to come over to the chief he would have tied to a tree and covered with biting ants. Or he would have the Tavarei Brothers (Te Paanaunga i Tavarei - Pu Nukumanaia and Pu Tuapipi) hold the offenders' arms while he (Frank) beat them. The House of Tavarei is important despite its being among the *pakaaropa* because it has historically provided strong men, loyal to the chiefs. Despite the fact that they are not *maru*, they are among the chief's *taangata tu*, 'standing, leading, or important men'. The brothers supported Frank, and since they are the strongest of this generation of Anutan men, the threat carried weight.

Taangata tu (sing. *taangata tu*) are disciplinarians, while the chief is expected to be empathetic and compassionate. In extreme cases, a *taangata tu* sometimes even sentences offenders to exile on the ocean. Typically, the chief will then commute the sentence, ordering the culprit to remain ashore. Thus, despite some serious offenses and sentences of exile, none in recent generations has been implemented.²⁴ On occasion, however, milder sanctions are enforced.

Taangata tu are more inclined than chiefs to enforce discipline through physical sanctions. Thus Frank argued that if evil (*te kovi*) were to be banished from Anuta, the chief would have to exercise his power ruthlessly. He should have offenders publicly bound (*pakakikiro*) and whipped (*taiaia*), and incorrigibles perhaps even put to death (*taa mate*). The chief objected to imposing discipline through naked force, noting the biblical commandment that 'Thou shalt not kill.' Frank replied that this was the only chance to restore order to the island. And if the safety of one individual who was destroying the community were to be weighed against the public good, it ought to be no contest.

This option, he conceded, was more viable in earlier times – as during his grandfather's reign, when Pu Tavarei served as *pau penua*. If Pu Tavarei told someone to prepare his canoe and go to sea 'to find an island for himself' ('*o kumi ni penua moana*'), the culprit would obey in preference to facing the enforcer's wrath. Still, physical intimidation remains a possibility. Few people, Frank believed, would wish to challenge Pu Tavarei's sons, Pu Nuku and Pu Tuaapi. And if they were to do so, he noted that he has a rifle which he would use should it prove necessary.

A second source of trouble for the chief was his doubling as catechist in one of the community's two churches. The *maru* demanded that Pu Koroatu either step down as catechist or resign as chief. The reason they gave was that the chief is a 'king' and should not 'work'. The chief's supporters argued that the Bible refers to Jesus as a king, and yet he certainly 'performed work' (*ne pai pekau*). It was at this time that the chief went by himself to live on the Anutan hilltop (see above).

When the chief descended a month later, he walked into the village, swinging his bush knife about wildly and encouraging people to come to him and fight. Pu Teraupanga fell face down in the sand, crawled to the chief, and placed his nose against Pu Koroatu's foot, asking him to forgive the people.²⁵ Pu Nuku announced that he was standing by the chief and anyone who attacked the *ariki* would have to deal with him and Pu Tuaapi first.

Frank's assorted threats and Pu Nuku's expressions of support undoubtedly had some effect. And the chief's dramatic actions – going to the hill and then descending ready for a final confrontation – impressed people with how serious the crisis had become. But, in the end, Pu Koroatu's victory occurred when opposition to his *mana* brought his enemies to the brink of disaster.

In 1981, Frank warned the *maru* that they would pay a dear price for their opposition to the chief. They were skeptical at first, but over the next few years they came around.

According to informants, the first result of opposition to the chief was crop failure. Those crops which had been sold – taro, betel, banana and tobacco – were also those affected most severely.

Soon the island was in turmoil. An 18-year-old youth fell to his death from a cliff on Anuta's north coast. Rough seas made recovering the body difficult. This was followed by an epidemic of gastroenteritis, influenza and conjunctivitis. One woman died and everyone was incapacitated. For weeks, malignant spirits roamed about at night as people huddled in their houses, paralyzed with terror.

Then Nau Rotopenua, the wife of an important *maru*, became sick and almost died. Pu Rotopenua went to the chief, gave him \$10, begged forgiveness, and pressed his nose to Pu Koroatu's knee. He thought the chief had cursed (*tautukua*) him. But the chief said that he harbored no ill feelings toward Pu Rotopenua. He had nothing to do with the sickness except that this is what happens to 'a person who turns against the chief' (*te mea e pakaanga ki te ariki*). One 'grows sick or goes insane' (*e ngaengae pe e varea*).

Pu Tongotere also came around because of hard experience. His child sickened so that he and his wife had to take him to the hospital at Lata, the provincial capital. While they were there, Nau Tongotere also became very ill. She said to her husband that he should give up his opposition to the chief, or else they all would die. He replied, 'I know,' and joined the chief's supporters.

SUCCESSION

Marcus (1989: 181–2) suggests replacing social structural concerns, such as those addressed by Firth, with cultural ones. The second crisis illustrates that these approaches and concerns are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, an adequate account of social structure requires sound answers to fundamental cultural questions.

Earlier I indicated that chieftainship is based on genealogical priority: a chief should be descended through a line of senior males from one of two great culture heroes – Tearakura and Pu Tepuko. This, however, leaves the questions: What is meant by 'genealogy' and 'descent'? To answer such questions requires exploration of Anutan concepts we translate as 'kinship'. I have addressed this issue elsewhere (see particularly Feinberg, 1981a, 1981b, 1981c, 1990); still, it bears reconsideration in the present context.

I enter this discussion with some trepidation because my own treatment by Anutans supplies a major line of evidence. Informants often call ethnographers by kin terms, and sometimes even chiefly titles. However, such behavior has most typically been seen as metaphorical, emanating from a sense of courtesy (cf. Firth, 1936), while I have taken my informants' statements much more literally. Therefore, I should make it clear that I do not intend to claim extraordinary virtues for my fieldwork or disparage that of others by contrast with mine. Rather, my point is to analyze the way Anutans speak of issues they view as important and infer from their discussions some essential aspects of their thinking about chieftainship.

Anutans told me during my first visit, more than twenty years ago,

that 'kinship' for them is defined in terms of genealogical connection and behavior taken to express *aropa*. Ideally, both are present, and they reinforce each other. However, under certain circumstances, either one alone may be sufficient for inclusion in the kinship system. One such circumstance involves a long-term visitor from overseas who is incorporated into a domestic unit (*patongia* or *pare*).²⁶

I, as an anthropological fieldworker, fit this description. I was a long-term visitor, had been incorporated into the household of the senior chief, and shared a dwelling with his brother, Pu Tokerau. Islanders all called me by kin terms, interacted with me on the basis of the kin terms by which they called me, and expected me to do likewise with them. I was told that because I had been incorporated into the chief's household, had access to his economic resources, and shared mine with him, I was his *maori* 'true' or 'close' kinsman. Since the chief and I were deemed to be of the same generation, I was his *taina* 'brother; parallel sibling'.

Despite informants' protests to the contrary, I suspected that Anutans called me by kin terms out of a sense of hospitality – that they were trying to make me feel comfortable in a strange place, far from home, and did not intend their assertions to be taken literally. Yet I was repeatedly assured that I shared all of the restrictions, privileges and obligations falling on a brother of the chief – from incest prohibitions to the use of garden land and other property. In what I thought was a *reductio ad absurdum* I asked: if the chief, his brothers and his son all died, would I be next in the line of succession? To my surprise, informants uniformly answered that I would.²⁷

I noted this response in several of my writings (see particularly Feinberg, 1981a, 1981b). Despite some skeptical reactions (e.g. Firth n.d.: 3; Valeri, 1983: 165) I argued that, failing specific evidence to the contrary, Anutans should be taken at their word. Still, privately I shared my critics' doubts.

For years I had assumed that such doubts would go unresolved as I neither wished nor thought that my informants' statements ever would be tested. However, something very close to the scenario I posited has come to pass. The chief's only son has now been married for a decade and is childless. Two of the chief's three brothers have since died, also childless. The last brother was married for a few years, had no children, is now divorced, and has no intention to remarry. Thus, two generations hence, when Pu Koroatu (the present senior chief) and Matakai (his son) are no longer on the scene, the Tui Anuta line is in real danger of extinction.

In 1988 I asked a number of Anutans their opinions as to what

would happen to the chieftainship if Matakai dies without leaving progeny. The answers were enlightening.

Frank Kataina answered that the choice of a successor would be up to Matakai. He could name anyone in any line, if that were his wish. In contrast with Tikopia (cf. Firth, 1964b: 157), it is fairly common practice on Anuta for a dying chief to name his successor. Frank thought, however, that the line would likely be preserved by a young man of Tuvaluan birth named Pu Niukapu (Peepiti). Peepiti had been adopted as a teenager into the chief's household. If Pu Niukapu had a son, said Frank, that son would be the leading candidate.

I suggested that it might be relevant that Pu Niukapu is really a Tuvaluan, but Frank emphatically replied that he is *not* a Tuvaluan. 'He came to live with me on Anuta, has followed the customs of Anuta, and thus, *he is an Anutan!*'

This answer raised the old question of my place in the Anutan chiefly genealogy. When I was first told that I might be in the line of succession, the reasoning was similar to what I had just heard regarding Pu Niukapu. So I asked, half-jokingly, if Joey, my son, would not also be a likely candidate. Anutans knew Joe as a four-year-old from a five-month visit to the Solomons in 1983–84. That visit included one month on Anuta, during which we lived in the chief's house.²⁸

I was quite taken aback by the serious reply. Joey, Frank said, is not in the running at this time, because the chief must *live* on Anuta.²⁹ But if he came to live permanently on Anuta, learned the language, and followed the island's customs, he might very well succeed Matakai as chief.

This was followed by a serious discussion of prospects of Joe's moving to Anuta. The conversation focused on the recollection that when he was there in 1983 he had refused to eat Anutan food. Pu Koroatu had proposed that I leave Joe with him on my return to the United States. At the time I took the proposition as a joke. I was now told, however, that the chief had been quite serious and even commented that if Joe were to stay with him for just three months he would learn to like Anutan food. Then there would be no further problems!

A third possibility, said Frank, would be to pass the chieftainship to the Pare Tavarei 'House of Tavarei'. Members of this house had always occupied a pivotal position as *taangata tu* (see above). They were not *maru*, but stood between the *maru* and the *pakaaropa*. This was a line of strong men reaching right down to the present time. The chief's mother's brother, Pu Tavarei, is reputed to have been Anuta's strongest man, at least within the past three generations.³⁰

No Anutan since Pu Tavarei has come close to him in strength, but today the island's strongest man is Pu Nukumanaia. Also, Pu Nuku has the proper placid chiefly personality. He is exceptionally bright but only speaks when there is something of importance to be said. And then people listen.³¹

Some weeks after this initial conversation, Frank reintroduced the subject of succession and the island's welfare. First, he told me that he thought one day the island would again be fine. Then he said that some time, when Joey is older, with a better sense of himself and the world, he would like very much for me to take Joe for a visit to Anuta, just to give him a chance to look afresh at the island and its customs and see what he thinks.

I sensed that Frank had something more in mind, so I asked what he was thinking? He said he was thinking of *te noporanga* 'the seat'.

I paused, then asked, '*Te noporanga ariki?*' 'The throne'?

He said yes, and then proceeded to express concern about the absence of a chiefly grandson. If Mataki does not produce a son, '*te noporanga ariki ka reku ee rea*' 'the throne indeed will vanish'. It was his hope that Joe might step in and rescue *te noporanga* by assuming the chieftainship on Mataki's demise. This, however, would require him to have lived on Anuta for a long time, to have assimilated the language and customs, and to be equipped to handle the responsibilities. Therefore Frank hoped that Joey, on his second viewing of Anuta, might like the place so well that he would stay. He also said that this was why he wanted me to stop in at Anuta during my time in the Solomons in 1988 . . . so that I might have a chance to talk directly with the chief.

I asked whether this was his idea or if he had spoken with the chief about it. He responded that it actually originated with Pu Koroatu, and he seemed surprised that the chief had not brought up the subject during my previous visit, in 1983. This, in fact, was why the chief had asked that I leave Joe behind when I departed.

I suggested that Peepiti (Pu Niukapu) would make a better chief than Joe. He has lived on the island for a long time, speaks the language like a native, knows the customs, and is far more competent at the sorts of task Anutans must conduct than either Joe or me.³²

Frank's answer was that Pu Niukapu's son would be a possibility, but Joey would be more appropriate because Pu Niukapu is Pu Koroatu's *tama* 'son' while I am his *taina* 'brother'. This makes Joey senior to Peepiti's son and gives him priority.³³ As for lack of knowledge, he felt Joe could learn.

I asked rather pointedly if he was serious about all of this; he

replied that he was very serious. This, he asserted, is how custom works on Anuta; and he even seemed a bit offended that I raised the question. He asked if my *toa* 'formal friend' (by whom he meant Pu Tokerau, his elder brother) had not explained all this to me. I admitted that he had, but added that I had been somewhat skeptical. Frank admonished me for harboring such doubts and ended the discussion.

If neither Joe nor Pu Niukapu step forward, there are several other candidates. One informant suggested the son of Pu Rotomaru, who is Pu Koroatu's sister's son (*iramutu*). Another possibility is Pu Tongotere's son or grandson. This 'house' has always provided *pau penua* — prime executive officers who speak to the *pono* and enforce the chiefs' decisions (see above). Pu Maravai and Pu Tongotere hold this position because of genealogical entitlement. Others, like Pu Paone in the 1970s, and Pu Raropuko who lived at the turn of the century, have also been *pau penua* because of their personal qualities; but they have been in some sense interlopers.

As another possible alternative, I mentioned Benjamin, a boy who has been living in the household of the senior chief since about 1980 and has been treated by the chief as an adopted son. This suggestion was quickly rejected for several reasons. First, Ben is neither the chief's son nor his formal adoptee (*kauapi*). Rather, he is the son of Pu Koroatu's sister-in-law. The woman was unwed and would not reveal the father's identity. When she died Ben was an orphan, and the chief agreed to take him in. But despite Ben being the chief's *tama* 'son' (indeed, his *tama maori* 'true or close son'), this does not give him access to the chieftainship.

It was also pointed out that Ben and Mataki are *tau paanau* 'brothers', and Mataki has a clear claim on the chieftainship when Pu Koroatu dies. Since a chief is normally succeeded by his son and not his brother, Ben's claim would be tenuous at best. I pointed out that if Ben is excluded on these grounds, the same considerations ought to exclude Joey. My informant felt, however, that this was not a closed case — in part, because Joe is my son rather than Pu Koroatu's. Besides, Joey's relationship to me is firmer than Ben's to the chief.

This discussion demonstrates that in the absence of a clear genealogically appropriate candidate, criteria for succession are equivocal, and outcomes subject to complex negotiations.³⁴ On the other hand, where genealogical proprieties are clear, negotiations are unnecessary even if the heir apparent is less than a paragon of chiefly virtue.

For example, there is a consensus that a boy named Solomon, senior grandson of the junior chief, will be Ariki Tepuko one day. I noted that while Solomon was a young child he had a less than

admirable reputation. The reply was that this was irrelevant – chieftainship goes to the eldest son or senior grandson regardless of his mental state.

In fact, this is not always so. A dozen generations ago, Pu Rongomai was superseded by his younger brother, Pu Pongi. However, in this ancient case, there were other factors. Pu Rongomai was not the eldest of the sibling set. As the middle of three brothers, he challenged Pu Ratu, the eldest, to a fight. Pu Ratu refused to fight his brother, and instead he left Anuta – first for Tikopia, then for Tonga. But before he left he named Pu Pongi to succeed him. The chief (or, in this case, the heir apparent) has the right to name his successor. If he does not do so, and if genealogical proprieties are clear, however, they are scrupulously followed.

DISCUSSION

Marcus (1989: 192) states that Polynesian chieftainship survives 'most elaborately' in Tonga and Samoa. However, just what constitutes elaboration and how to measure it are not transparent. Possible indices include: number of chiefs in the community; number of chiefly grades; number of people commanded; number of major strata in society; tokens of ritual respect; kinds of coercive power exercised by chiefs; association of rank with supernatural or spiritual potency (*mana*); concentration or distribution of political and economic power; power to curse; and many others.³⁵ In most of these respects, except for those that are exclusively a function of demography, Anutan (and Tikopian) chieftainship seems as elaborate as Tonga's or Samoa's, and certainly more pristine. Thus Anuta ought to offer insights into chieftainship elsewhere in Polynesia.

The above account shows the Anutan chieftainship to share both Tongic and Samoic features; but on balance (*contra* Marcus, 1989: 195) it seems closer to the Tongan system. This may be seen particularly in the Anutan emphasis on genealogical seniority and primogeniture. For Samoa, chiefly titles are held by *'āiga* 'nonlinear descent groups', and an *'āiga* collectively bestows its title on the individual or individuals whom it deems most worthy, with little attention paid to questions of seniority. By contrast, on Anuta a chiefly title normally goes to a particular individual in a particular relationship to the former chief and ultimately to one of the great chiefly ancestors. Behavioral considerations are only brought to bear under extreme circumstances, since it is assumed that a person in the correct genealogical position will have the appropriate personal

characteristics. Moreover, chieftainship is a matter of concern to the community at large rather than the chief's particular descent line. Thus a chief is installed in office not by members of his own domestic unit (*patongia* or *pare*), but by *maru* of other units in his *kainanga*.³⁶

As in Samoa, chiefly titles convey extraordinary mana, thus qualitatively elevating the bearers' political authority and ritual respect. On the other hand, Anutan chiefs, like those of Tonga, come from aristocratic lines; and an heir apparent, even prior to his installation, carries mana and authority far in excess of an ordinary person. Moreover, it seems evident that titles are of vital interest to Tongans as they are to people of Anuta and Samoa. Tongan aristocrats may well be endowed with mystical potency by the very nature of their being. Still, if titles did not qualitatively elevate one's social stature, it is implausible that Tongans would devote the energy they clearly do (e.g. see Marcus, 1989: 201–5 and *passim*) to claiming them.

The idea of kingliness can fairly easily be made to fit Anuta. There, a chief is 'a male monarch . . . who inherits his position and rules for life' (Woolf, 1973: 635).³⁷ And he is a 'sacred being . . . generally mystified in status' (Marcus, 1989: 176). He is not really a 'stranger', but clearly he is 'separate from his people' (Marcus, 1989: 176) in the sense that he possesses characteristics differentiating him from them – otherwise there could be little basis for his superordinate position.

A chief's 'sacred', 'mystified' and somewhat 'separate' status is based on possession of extraordinary mana (*manuu*). His mana derives from the spirit world and makes his person *tapu* to the rest of his community. And the spirits (or now the Christian God) bestow mana on him because of his relationship to other chiefs and spirits. That relationship might be characterized in terms of 'kinship' or 'genealogy'; but these terms must be qualified if they are to reflect faithfully Anutan constructs. How Anutans define kinsmen, what constitutes a 'genealogical' connection, and how 'seniority' is calculated become particularly problematic when there is no obvious successor and a consensus about the most salient qualifications must be negotiated. Assessment of potential candidates and their respective qualifications confirms my earlier report that the appropriate behavior is as important as relations based on procreation for inclusion in the kinship system, and, under certain circumstances, for claims to chiefly titles. Not all the arguments about likely successors are consistent, and a few have the appearance of *post hoc* rationalizations for promoting one's favorite candidate. Agreement as to Solomon's acceptability as holder of the Tui Kainanga title (see above)

demonstrates the preference for a chief's son (or, in this case, senior grandson) even if his personality is viewed as less than ideal for a chief. On the other hand, the preference for Pu Niukapu – or even my son Joey – over Ben confirms my observation (1981a: 71–2; 1981b: 137–8) that immigrants may find it easier than native-born Anutans to establish close kin ties where previously none existed.

Central to Anutan concepts of kinship and chieftainship is food. *Aropa* is defined, first and foremost, in terms of sharing food (see Feinberg, 1978: 28–9; 1981a: 67–70; 1981b: 134–6; 1988b: 150; cf. Flinn, 1990: 107). The island's distinctive cuisine separates it from other communities.³⁸ And the ultimate test of a chief is his ability to guarantee his subjects an adequate supply of food.³⁹ Concern about my son's acceptance or rejection of Anutan food confirms the key symbolic role of food in Anutan constructions of social reality.

The idea of populism is more difficult to fit into Anutan culture. A chief need not be 'an exemplary being, respected and admired by his people for embodying the ideals of personhood that they all share and approximate in varying degrees' (Marcus, 1989: 176). A chief remains a chief whether or not he exhibits exemplary behavior. Even a senile or demented chief – like Pu Pareumata, father of the present Ariki Tepuko toward the end of his life – must be respected for his title. Nor is exemplary behavior for a chief always exemplary for others.

The more common sense of 'populist' as someone 'claiming to represent the common people', and believing 'in the rights, wisdom, or virtues of the common people' (Woolf, 1973: 985) is also difficult to sustain. Few chiefs would embrace such well-known 'populists' as Boris Yeltsin (before he ascended to the Russian presidency), William Jennings Bryant or George Wallace, and their claims to represent the oppressed masses against a small, elite minority. Still, the expectation that a chief ensure his subjects' welfare and prosperity might be termed, in some sense, 'populist'. In this sense, however, kingliness and populism need not be treated as distinct and separate. Sahlins, in his influential essay, argues that the king starts as a 'stranger', then undergoes a process of incorporation or 'domestication'; and it is this domestication that separates true kings from military despots. As he puts the matter, 'Above and beyond society and thus counterposed to it, the king also incorporates the society and thus represents the general welfare' (Sahlins, 1985: 91). But if chiefs (read 'kings') derive legitimacy by promoting their subjects' prosperity (Feinberg, 1978, 1981a: 160–3), then populism is an essential element of kingship. Therefore on Tikopia (Firth, 1970: 42), the 'mystical quality with

which the chief is endowed . . . came not from any elaborate religious rite but from the assenting action of the body of the people'. The chief is *tapu* in the manner of a king, but 'He is made *tapu* by the body of the people' (Firth, 1970: 42). In many ways, this issue grows more pertinent when turning back from culture to problems of social organization (Firth, 1959: 340–2; 1964c; 1964d).

As Firth (1964b: 147) observes of Tikopia, the chief's authority is limited 'by the very character of that authority. The efficacy of the limitations upon him depended . . . on his conception of trusteeship.' On Anuta, such trusteeship means ensuring general well-being. So long as people prosper, a chief is seen to be discharging *mana* according to principles of *aropa*. His subjects appreciate what he is doing and express their *aropa* by ceding honor and obedience. This, then, is the basis of chiefly legitimacy.

For this reason, Firth's statement (1979: 139) that the Tikopian chiefs 'no longer perform any sacred roles' would be an exaggeration in the Anutan case. *Mana* is derived from a new deity; but it is still provided by the spirit world, serving as the basis of the chiefs' authority and *tapu*. Tikopian chiefs may have 'abandoned their former sacred rites and not undertaken any corresponding position in the Christian field' (Firth, 1979: 139). Anuta's chiefs, however, are still held responsible for *both* the spiritual and temporal welfare of their island. Therefore they continue to take prime responsibility for operation of their island's church (see Feinberg, 1978, 1981a).

A corollary to this point is that the Polynesian chief, like any leader, must be concerned with the opinions of his followers. For Polynesians, religion and politics are closely intertwined, and both are oriented toward practical short-term benefits. People obey their leaders because they anticipate maximizing rewards and minimizing penalties. Therefore when the island suffers terrible misfortune despite obedience and honor given to the chiefs, the latter's support begins to erode. This is the situation faced by Tikopia's Ariki Kafika during the famine of 1952 (Firth, 1959, 1960, 1970; Marcus, 1989: 175).

Even under less tense circumstances, a chief must be concerned with popular opinion. People are most likely to obey a chief's commands if he demands the course of action they would take in any case. If this is the norm, he can on occasion command his subjects to act counter to their wishes. However, if he does this too often or if he should exercise his prerogatives in areas about which his subjects feel strongly, he evokes resentment. Should he then persist, resentment may turn into outright opposition. This is what happened

to Pu Koroatu on the issue of food sales; and had not the matter been resolved, chiefly authority could have been permanently compromised.

The ideal chiefly personality, emphasizing passivity, dignity, *aropa* and overwhelming potency held in reserve is well-adapted to this practical reality. A chief who chooses not to flaunt his power creates a store of loyalty and goodwill. Thus when an issue he perceives as vital does arise, he can exercise his leadership with confidence that he will be obeyed. It is for this reason that Pu Teukumarae is remembered as among the finest chiefs and Matakī is expected to perform with comparable deftness. It is also for this reason that Pu Koroatu is viewed more equivocally.

In addition to standards for chiefly personality and conduct, structural safeguards normally protect a chief from antagonizing his followers to the point where he risks open opposition. The *maru*, in particular, hold this responsibility. They keep the chief apprised of popular opinion so he does not inadvertently antagonize his subjects. If the *maru* do their job, the chief should know what policies will be widely accepted, which can be implemented despite some popular resentment, and which will arouse such opposition that their implementation will seriously undermine his authority. The *maru* actively discourage chiefs from making unpopular decisions, thereby insulating people from their arbitrary power. When chiefs do take strong, potentially unpopular positions, the *maru* inform people of the policies and are responsible for their implementation, thus deflecting much of the resentment onto themselves. Indeed, the *maru* act as enforcers of the public order while, typically, the chief buffers the *maru*'s harsher discipline. In this way, chiefs express compassion, thus evoking in their subjects feelings of goodwill and loyalty. Firth (1964a) makes comparable points in his well-known article on public opinion and the Tikopian chiefs. And it is because of the pivotal role played by the *maru* that their desertion of Pu Koroatu in the early 1980s was such a serious blow to his leadership.⁴⁰

In some respects, these observations can apply to any system of leadership. Whether leaders are chosen by democratic vote, inherit their positions, or gain office via military usurpation, they can only remain leaders as long as people follow their instructions. People may obey their leaders out of fear of sanctions, belief in the leader's legitimacy, or both. But even kings must be concerned about public opinion; and few careers have shorter life expectancies than military dictator.⁴¹ The 'populist' side of Polynesian chieftainship is a recognition of this common fact of political life combined with Polynesian

views of 'kingship'. The power of the chiefs derives from the people, while the people's basis for existence is found in their chiefs.

NOTES

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1 See Sahlins (1985); also Hocart (1969 [1927], 1970 [1936]), Dumézil (1949 and elsewhere). For a review of this and related literature, see Marcus (1989).

2 E.g. see *Rank and Religion in Tikopia* (Firth, 1970) for discussion of the fate of Tikopian chieftainship in the aftermath of the community's conversion to Christianity. A more recent treatment is Firth's 1979 article, 'The sacredness of Tikopia chiefs'.

3 Later, he asserts that Tonga and Samoa are 'the two societies of contemporary Polynesia, where society-wide systems of chiefly offices survive most elaborately, and where the sacred (kingly) side of chieftainship is most sharply differentiated' (Marcus, 1989: 192).

4 For my position on the epistemological relationship between culture and social action, see Feinberg (1979a).

5 In theory, chiefs may exercise all sanctions listed in this passage. Implementation of the more extreme penalties, given current political realities in the Solomon Islands, is more problematic. This is an issue to which I return below.

6 It should be noted here that Raropuka, the Tikopian equivalent of Raropuko, is important in the old religious system of that island. When Metikiki first pulled Tikopia from the ocean floor, the island was inhabited by two spirits, one female and the other male. These were Te Atua Fafine and Te Atua i Raropuka respectively. Later, the Raropuka 'lineage' provided some of Tikopia's most prominent ritual elders. While Anutans claim no special kin tie between Pu Raropuko and Tikopia's Raropuka lineage, the coincidence of names may be more than fortuitous.

7 *Mana*, when italicized, refers to a word in some Pacific Island language – most often, Anutan. When in roman type, it designates a word that has been incorporated from Austronesian into anthropological English.

8 This, in turn, led to discussion of linguistic change. My informants recalled that, when they were young, the standard Anutan greeting was not the contemporary *E verei te pongipongi nei*, *E rerei te vaatia nei*, or *E rerei te poouri nei*. Rather, people used the English equivalents: 'Good morning', or 'Good day' or 'Good night'. These greetings had been introduced by the mission, and only later were translated literally into Anutan. Once again, the church's influence on indigenous speech is evident.

9 Shore (1989: 138) similarly observes that 'This is another manifestation of the more general Polynesian epistemological bias that things be known in their

specific contexts and through their perceptual effects in the world rather than in terms of essential, intrinsic features.¹⁵

10 Indeed, in pre-Christian times Anutan chiefs died rather young. Tearakura died before reaching old age; and when he joined the spirit world he made sure all of his successors followed his example. The only exception was Tearakura's brother, Pu Tepuko (Kavekau). It was for this reason that Pu Raropuko, around the turn of the century, served as the island's leader for many years. He did not wish to install Pu Teukumarae as chief too soon after his father's death because of the chieftainship's effect on life expectancy. Since the establishment of the church, matters have been different. In more than seventy years there have been only two chiefs for each *kainanga*.

11 Cf. Keesing (1984).

12 Thus Marcus (1989: 175, 177) introduces his discussion of Polynesian chieftainship with Firth's description of Pa Fenuatara, son of Tikopia's Ariki Kafika. Pa Fenuatara was widely admired and respected for his judgment, intellect, moral fibre and leadership abilities. Yet he was denied the sacred aura of kingship because he lacked the *tiile* of *ariki*.

13 Anutans overseas treat many signs of rank with some ambivalence. For example, some attempt is made to maintain the Anutan system of sociospatial symbolism (cf. Feinberg, 1980b, 1988a). Yet several members of the White River Anutan community, near Honiara, commented to me that they could not identify *mataapare* (the ritually superior 'front' side of the house) and *tuauumu* (the back of the house) in their European-style building (*pare pakapaparangeli*).

14 See Feinberg (1978: 19-28, 1981a: 67-70; 1981b: 134-6) for more detailed discussion of *aropa*.

15 It is well to point out certain similarities between Polynesians' ambivalence toward their chiefs and Western feelings about divinity. On the one hand, God is described in terms of love and mercy; on the other, we are taught to fear a vengeful, jealous God. Similar ambivalence is felt for human beings in positions of authority (e.g. police and governmental leaders). Perhaps it could be said in general that people fear the arbitrary use of power by others while they hope that those with power will use it for their benefit. If they do, they are loved and respected; still they evoke fear among those they rule because the danger of abuse is always present.

16 Cf. Howard's description of the Rotuman leader, Wilson Inia. Although Inia never held a chiefly title, the combination of humility and dignity that he embodied enabled him to exercise almost chiefly authority (Howard, Chapter 7). In Melanesia, the Kwar'ae *aofia* were expected to show similar personality traits (see Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, Chapter 10 this volume).

17 As a negative example of chiefly behavior, I was told of an occasion recently when Pu Tuaapi and Pu Koroatu were in White River and some people organized a party. The two men said they would have a few drinks, dance a little while, and then go to sleep. In the event they stayed up partying until early morning, and the next day both were very sick as a result of having acted in a manner contrary to the demands of chiefly dignity.

18 While we were in Lata, capital of Temotu Province, we attended an evangelical video presentation at one of the local churches. The program was late at night, included two very long tapes of poor sound quality, and one of the tapes featured a Korean who spoke English with a strong accent. Mataki stayed

through the entire event, maintained his concentration, and was able to discuss the presentation afterward with a good deal of understanding.

19 A well-known illustration of this point involves Tonga's dynastic history (Gifford, 1929). Initially, traditions indicate, both ritual honor and political power were joined in the Tu'i Tonga. After many generations, the Tu'i Tonga handed political power to the junior line of the Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua while keeping for himself the sacred title. But soon the Tu'i Tonga was eclipsed by the politically dominant line. Several generations later, this story was repeated with the Tu'i Ha'a Takalaua handing power to the lower ranking line of the Tu'i Kanokupolu, and eventually losing its ritual privilege along with political authority. On Anuta, the first chief, Pu Kaurave, eventually lost power to his junior colleague, Pu Taupare, from whom all subsequent chiefs are descended. By contrast, about nine generations ago, Tearakura's position was threatened by a man named Ranginapa and his brothers. Tearakura and his allies defended their title by force, held their positions, and are now regarded as the founders of Anuta's present social order.

20 It is not always clear whether a particular case of illness or misfortune is caused by *pakaanga*, *tautuku* or some other mechanism. For example, I was told that Pu Pareumata, eldest son of the present Ariki Tepuko, was very sick. He lost most of the fingers of one hand to *te para* 'rot, ulceration, gangrene', and his leg was similarly affected. The hand problem developed after a wound he suffered in Honiara while he worked for the police. The leg problem began after he wounded it on a stone on Anuta. But really, I was told, the reason for his problem stemmed from his refusal to return from Honiara to his mother on Anuta while she was on her death bed. I asked if she had 'cursed' him. The immediate reply was no, but then my informant changed his mind. The decisive fact was that Pu Pareumata's condition tended to improve when he stayed in Teakena, house of the senior chief, but when he went back to his own house he would suffer a relapse.

21 A possibly related word with positive associations is *angaa*, which designates a major ceremony performed for children and adolescents. The *angaa* is performed collectively by the community, often under the direction of a chief, to honor a child and mark his incorporation as a responsible member of the community. In this respect, the term reflects the subordination of individual impulse to the community's collective interests. Anutans also use the term *roto* (or *atamaa*) in a manner similar to the Samoan use of *lotu* (Mageo, 1989).

22 In this respect, Anuta differs somewhat from Tikopia, where several lines claim autochthonous descent, at least tangentially, but where the ancient gods of Kafika, the leading lineage, were driven off, later to return as human conquerors (see Firth, 1961; McKinnon, 1990).

23 Several other instances of chiefs attempting to present themselves as guardians of custom, both in Polynesia and Melanesia, are depicted in this volume. In particular, see chapters on Rotuma (Howard, Chapter 7), Kwar'ae (Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, Chapter 10) and Manam (Lutkehaas, Chapter 11). However, chiefs have often undermined their claim to such a role by exploiting their positions to gain disproportionate material benefits in the new economic order for themselves and their immediate kin. Such an occurrence, to my knowledge, has not transpired on Anuta.

24 Actually, there was one equivocal case during the middle 1980s. A Tikopian came to Anuta as a school teacher and married an Anutan woman. According

to informants, he was caught in an adulterous affair and committed suicide by paddling out to sea. Anutans say he did this out of shame (*pakamaa*) despite efforts to dissuade him. Tikopians, on the other hand, contend that he was forced into exile. This has been a source of friction between the two communities for several years.

25 Pu Teraupanga's decision to approach the chief is of special significance since it was his brother and nephew, Pu Maevatau and Pu Raropita, who had initiated the sale of food.

26 My Anutan observations correspond with Howard's statement (1990: 266) that, for Oceania in general: 'on the one hand, kinship has to be validated by social action to be recognized; on the other, kinship status can be achieved through social action (i.e., by consistently acting as kinsmen even though genealogical linkages may be questionable or unknown)'.

27 In retrospect, this is in keeping with the common Oceanic view of kinship as contingent, and ethnic boundaries as permeable (see Linnekin and Poyer, 1990). These features of Oceanic culture have led Howard (1990: 268) to suggest that most Pacific islanders were 'prepared to accept . . . outsiders fully into their social fabric provided they behaved appropriately'. Anuta, then, is not unique in this respect. Thus, O'Meara (1990: 37-8) reports an experience in Western Samoa that is parallel to mine. And Firth (1964b: 156) notes that among Tikopians an adopted son may supercede natural sons in chiefly succession.

28 During that visit to the Solomons, Joe was given an Anutan name: Toomotu. The name is from the House of Tavarei, not that of the chief. Several Anutans commented that the most recent bearer of the name had been a renowned story-teller, carpenter (*tipunga*), sea expert (*tau tai*) and strong man (*toa*). Thus members of the chief's domestic unit accepted this as Joey's local name despite its being from a different line.

29 Firth (1964b: 147) observes to similar effect for Tikopia that, 'although at least one case is recorded of a chief having been elected as a minor there is no case of a chief having been elected in *absentia* . . .'

30 His closest competition was his brother, Pu Veterei, who is famous for stopping a truck with his bare hands. Pu Tavarei is said to have been even stronger. Once, according to a local story, a Tikopian strong man visiting Anuta proposed that just the two of them try carrying a large canoe up from the water near the passage. The canoe, *Puinga*, is 32 feet long and requires many strong men to carry it. Back then, its hull was even thicker than it is today. The Tikopian lifted the bow, and Pu Tavarei got at the stern, where all the weight was concentrated. They both lifted and the canoe surged forward, striking the Tikopian from behind and crushing his back. He returned to Tikopia soon afterward, where he died of his injury.

31 Pu Nuku's youngest brother, Moses Purianga, tends to be the same way, while the middle brother, Pu Tuapipi, is described as much more like the present chief. In fact Frank later commented that all the chiefly brothers of this generation – including himself – are like that. Pu Tokerau, the second brother, was particularly volatile. He would try to laugh under duress; but he was quick to anger and unsuccessful at hiding it. When he laughed while his face was turning red, people knew to brace for an explosion.

32 I speak Anutan fairly fluently, but certainly not as a native. I am a reasonably good fisherman, swimmer and diver; and I know how to sail and paddle. But

I am not skilled at operating an outrigger canoe, nor do I fish as well as most Anutans. Gardening is not among my favorite activities. I have never climbed a coconut tree, carved a wooden bowl or built a canoe. And in most of these respects my skills are more developed than my son's.

33 Since Frank was the one who had initially brought Pu Niukapu to Anuta, he may have thought of him as his son rather than the chief's. In actual years, Frank is probably older than me, which would still make Peepiti's son genealogically senior to Joey, although of a lower generation. However, Frank may also have been figuring that I would take the place of my deceased namesake, Pu Tokerau, who was Frank's elder brother. This would have made me senior to him and Joe senior to his son.

34 This complexity and ambiguity is reminiscent of debates among Kawara'ae over competing claims to leadership positions (see Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo, Chapter 10 this volume).

35 Among criteria for determining degree of social stratification, Sahlins (1958) lists the complexity of a community's ranking system (i.e. the number of discrete social strata), degree of chiefly control over land and other resources, and the availability of secular sanctions to enforce the chief's decisions. Anuta has three or four distinct strata; the chief in theory has absolute power of life or death; and he controls garden land and distribution of its produce.

36 Tikopia takes this even further: a chief is installed by *maru* of the other 'clans' (e.g. see Firth, 1964b: 160).

37 Firth (1964b: 160-9; 1970: 35 and *passim*; 1979: 142-3) emphasizes that Tikopian chiefs are 'elected' and that an eldest son is therefore 'their presumptive' rather than heir apparent. While this is technically true, the presumption clearly favors the chief's son unless there are important contravening circumstances (e.g. see Firth, 1964b: 154; 1970). Indeed, 'Primogeniture was . . . the normal Tikopia mode of succession. . . . No case is recorded where a younger son succeeded his father as chief when his elder brother was still alive' (Firth, 1964b: 155). On Anuta, the presumption favoring a senior candidate – usually an eldest son or senior grandson – if anything seems even stronger than on Tikopia, perhaps reflecting somewhat greater Tongic influence (cf. Feinberg, 1989).

38 This point is made repeatedly in many different contexts. Among the more dramatic is a story of a man named Rangitauka, who signed on as crew aboard a European ship. The ship was wrecked, and Rangitauka drifted to Rotuma where he washed ashore. Some generations earlier, the crew of a Rotuman canoe is said to have been slain on Anuta, and there were bad feelings between the two islands. Therefore, Rangitauka claimed to be a Tikopian, and on that basis was allowed to settle, marry and raise children on Rotuma. Eventually, he gave himself away by making a taro pudding called *poke* and rolling it into little balls after the Anutan fashion. When the Rotumans discovered Rangitauka's hoax, they attacked him, killing the Anutan and his half-Rotuman sons.

39 At the time of my first visit to Anuta in 1972-3, the island was recovering from a minor famine. During the period of recovery, the senior chief proclaimed that the entire island would act as a single domestic unit, harvesting and preparing food as one. All food for collective ovens, he further announced, would come from gardens of his *kainanga* (see Feinberg, 1978, for further discussion of these events.) Similarly, Howard (1985: 67-8) observes for Rotuma: 'Of fundamental concern is the issue of prosperity – the prosperity of the island as manifest in human fertility and the productivity of the land.'

The central symbol is food; its abundance is indicative of a proper political order, its scarcity indicative of political malaise. The ultimate source of prosperity is the spirit world, but it is the primary responsibility of chiefs to act as intermediaries with the gods who dwell there . . . and so influence them to act benignly. . . . The relationship between people and chiefs is finally construed as one of complementarity, with the people producing food (and other goods and services) for the benefit of chiefs, who intercede with the gods, who provide abundance to the land.⁴

40 Mechanisms limiting the arbitrary power of chiefs elsewhere in Polynesia and Fiji are discussed by Besnier, Hooper, Luem and Shore, all in this volume.

41 This is not to say that leaders always lack coercive power or that the majority always rule. However, leaders must pay some attention to the concerns of the led. When a military dictator loses the military's support, he also loses control of his country, and there are often limits to an army's willingness to use force against its own people. History provides few better object lessons than the recent demise of the Soviet Union.

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3 *Authority and Egalitarianism: Discourses of Leadership on Nukulaelae Atoll*

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Polynesian societies are commonly represented in traditional anthropological depictions as founded on highly visible systems of hierarchy and stratification. While cross-societal differences are acknowledged in the degree to which hierarchy is elaborated, and while the reasons for this elaboration are the subject of debate, Polynesia, as typified presumably by such societies as Samoa and Tonga, remains a textbook case of centralized chiefly systems. In recent publications, some scholars have subjected these traditional characterizations to critical scrutiny (see Howard and Kirkpatrick, 1989; Marcus, 1989, for overviews), and these re-evaluations have mitigated the classic depiction of Polynesian social structures. For example, even in societies of the region where chieftainship (and hierarchy in general) is most elaborated, it rests on at least two broad parameters, which Marcus (1989), echoing analyses advanced by Firth in past decades (1949, 1960a, 1979), terms *kingliness* and *populism* (see Feinberg, Chapter 2 in this volume, for further discussion). In a particular society, more weight may be given to one parameter than to the other, and each parameter may manifest itself variously across the societies of the region. An important consequence of this account is that Polynesian chieftainship and its concomitant categories are not monolithic entities, but multidimensional concepts.

Delving further into the ideology and praxis of Polynesian chieftainship and hierarchy, some researchers have identified ambiguities and contradictions, even in Polynesian societies traditionally recognized as highly stratified. The resulting conflicts undermine the textbook presentation of Polynesian chieftainship as essentially stable over time and space. Shore (Chapter 5 in this volume) presents a compelling example from Samoa: there, the social order is constantly