PACIFIC STUDIES

Vol. 19, No. 1 March 1996

LAND TENURE AND HIERARCHIES IN EASTERN MELANESIA

Jean Guiart
Musée de l'Homme, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle
Paris

THE SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS HAVE BEEN A LABORATORY for social anthropologists for the best part of a century. Theoreticians have come and gone, but the field still yields rich data and continues to raise questions about the operation of island societies. However, too much description has been spoiled by giving greater weight to models stemming from Western culture than to observation of the way people actually live. With regard to land tenure and social hierarchies, the result ignores the flexibility that is so characteristic of island life.

On the other hand, islanders have never been sure of what could be safely entrusted to the hands of anthropologists. They have tended to resist our inquisitive curiosity. Although they have answered what questions were put to them, they did not volunteer answers to those that were not asked. Some relevant questions emerged only recently because of the dominance of Western models. Others were raised by earlier scholars but were not taken up until years later.[1]

Land tenure and social hierarchies have been shown to be linked since the earliest research in Polynesia and Fiji, but experience from Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and the Loyalty Islands points to some still underexplored research areas. I have had unique opportunities to follow the dynamics of contrasting systems in these islands, by virtue of my long stay there (since 1947) and the fact that my wife is linked by descent or marriage to most of the chiefly lines in the Loyalty Islands. These circumstances have brought a great deal of spontaneously given data my way, as well as providing the facilities to check this information over time.

Models

Following Radcliffe-Brown and later Lévi-Strauss, anthropologists have often been zealously seeking models, to extract the generalities and to illustrate the rules that we thought governed different cultures and societies.[2] Such things do exist, and islanders can be brilliant in their expression of them, having even created some quite satisfying mathematical models.[3] The unhappy fact is that they also spend as much time evading the consequences of the theoretical models as following their component rules.

For example, after having had explained to me marriage rules in northern Malekula, I was flabbergasted to observe no actual marriage. One year later, I was informed that the people had decided to stop all marriage preparations while I was present, because each of them would have been conducted contrary to the given rules. The very simple reason was that, according to those rules, there was no marriageable girl present because of a sex ratio of 140 males to 100 females in the area.[4] Other institutions have been influenced in parallel ways by a fluctuating population, as in the system of titles linked to land tenure and social control in central Vanuatu[5] or the survival of the traditional social structure in a New Caledonia continuously raked with rebellions and bloodied by military repressions.[6]

Models do express a certain reality. As long as there are islanders to outline such complexities, partly through relating them to foundation and other myths, models will be part of anthropology, if not the complete answer they were thought to be. They sometimes function at a more sophisticated level than was thought. For example, I have been able to show, on the basis of named titles controlling land tenure and social status extending from Efate to southeastern Epi in central Vanuatu, that the system was known to every single adult member of the population in such a way that the information drawn from each island, each village, and each family was found to be logically coherent all over the area. The computer analysis of the mass of data obtained was one of the very first attempted in anthropology.[7] The fact that any partial amount of data obtained from any of more than three thousand informants fitted in the whole without showing any logical fault has important theoretical consequences.

All formalized aspects of social and cultural life fit inside specialized systems (language, kinship, exchange of goods and artifacts, rites of all kinds). The problem is in envisaging a "system of systems." Thus, the functionalist idea that a cultural whole was so interconnected that it would crumble under the onslaught of the West has been proven wrong. Island societies have survived and adapted, which means the systems were flexible, never fixed. For example, rules for hypergamic marriages among chiefly lines in

Lifou were evaded in three generations of my wife's family, as her mother's brother's father, mothers brother and his eldest son, as well as her mother and mother's sister, thwarted parental will. The autonomy of individuals is always a factor even if the notion of a cultural whole remains a useful device for thinking about societies.

The Concept of "Variants"

Claude Lévi-Strauss started a brilliant career by noting what should have been discovered earlier. His well-made point was that, analytically, there is nowhere any "authentic tradition." Myths as well as institutions are only known by their local variants.[8] Each of these presents an identical interest for research. The existence of such variation, often justifying the original settlement of a local residential or kin group, has been extensively documented by social anthropologists since 1930, although the theoretical implications have not always been recognized. This fact, with the differing shades of behavior or expression by local groups, explains a recurrent problem in anthropology, when each published variant of a myth or of the workings of an institution finds determined opposition as each group claims that only its variant is the "correct" one.

Therefore, scientific practice points to the necessity of taking all variants into account. This means working in the field with every existing lineage or other local group, checking facts with all the neighboring groups, and, in each, finding out what every person--adult men and women of all ages, and even children--has to say, and continuing this work over a matter of years. An individual who makes a pretense of being ignorant one day can very well become a first-class informant some years later, when he is considered to be an adult in his own society (that is, has married and sired his first child).

Lévi-Strauss explains that all these variants, the theoretical number of which is indefinite, tend to coalesce in what he calls a "transformation system," which easily covers an area in which a number of languages are more or less understood by all.[9] For example, in the north-central islands of the former New Hebrides, earth-diving, from a specially built tower in Bunlap and the neighboring villages of South Raga, is linked to the yam firstfruits ritual. On the eastern coast of Malekula, at Onua Point, the dive is from the top of a banyan tree and is incorporated among the rites giving access to the higher level of the grade-taking hierarchy.[10]

Eastern Polynesia is by all means such a transformation system and eastem Melanesia, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa can easily be analyzed as another one. In such a transformation system, one will find all the possible logical oppositions, each variant having its opposite or inverted example somewhere in the

area. It is with ideas of flexible systems, variants, and transformations described to this point that one can study land tenure and hierarchy from central Vanuatu to New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands, Fiji, and parts of Polynesia.

Land Tenure

The length of time before social anthropology fully realized that there is a link between social structure and land tenure could be explained by the lack of specialized training for anthropologists in the field. Land tenure means survey work. Few of us have learned even part of this trade.[11]

However, another reason might be more fundamental. Land tenure seen through Western eyes has a legalistic dimension. The language is one of ownership as explained since Roman times by generations of lawyers and as applied by as many generations of magistrates. When there have been problems about land tenure in the colonies, local administrations have always had recourse to people lacking anthropological training but learned in law[12] and administration.[13] Anthropologists were not available or not interested. On the part of those trained by Radcliffe-Brown, this could be easily understood, but Malinowski's pupils should have been more open-minded and could have expanded beyond the spatial model of the Kiriwina village. Of course, in the colonial situation, matters of land were often investigated so as to take land away from the people and hand it to individual settlers or to the plantation system. Anthropologists were understandably loath to get caught in this unsavory game.

Real life shows that Pacific island societies and their component units are linked with land in every instance. Social anthropology has long recognized this fact through studies of residential patterns. Nevertheless, none of Malinowski's pupils has taken easily to his attempt to address the issue in ***Coral Gardens and Their Magic.*** Pioneering studies include those by Oliver in Bougainville, and Murdock and Goodenough on Truk.[14] Almost a decade passed before the work of Lawrence on the Garia, followed by that of Nayacakalou in Tonga, Samoa, and Fiji, and of Sahlins in Fiji.[15] Later the subject became somewhat more fashionable,[16] partly under pressure from geographers coming into the field.[17]

The consequences of mistaken directions plagued older attempts at dealing with the matter. Ownership was more or less consciously--anthropologists usually have no legal background--thought to be of the European type, that is, the fundamental right to "use and abuse land." This legal conceptualization did not really fit the picture, so authors chose not to dwell at length on land tenure. Anthropologists could not ignore the contradictions between

this legal conceptualization and the situation before them; the usual answer was that ownership of land was in every case deemed to be collective, as imagined at first by the French social theorists of the last century before the founders of Marxism took over the same idea.[18]

The problem then became one of determining which was the landowning group. It was always possible to obtain the assistance of kind informants, who had reasons of their own to be helpful, to decide which social unit assumed control over land. This method did not work so well that researchers could be satisfied with the results. Often they had to be contented with publishing a résumé; nothing in their training helped them to sift apparently contradictory statements.[19]

Any analysis citing landowning units is in contradiction with the everyday mechanics of land tenure itself.[20] Land is tilled by individuals and the members of their nuclear family,[21] who band together with others each time there is a material reason for doing things that way. No concept of collective ownership lies behind more than one man and woman working, for instance, on a yam or taro plot. Collective use of land goes with collective physical investments made in the same land, as in the case of the big Melanesian irrigation systems for taro cultivation or the complex drainage systems for sweet potato cultivation in the high-valley swamps of New Guinea.

Any quarrel over land always finishes by being discussed in public, at the successive levels offered by residence and descent groups. This practice gives an ***appearance*** of group ownership and control. If questions are asked in terms of such ownership and control, answers are invariably given in the same terms. (If the quarrel is over a pig, discussions are at the same levels, without anybody implying that ownership or control of the pig is vested in any of the interlocking groups.) The group scale of discussion is there to prevent quarrels from turning sour. Any residential or descent group will strive to prevent open rifts from provoking physical violence between its members. The control exercised is on the members, in the hope they can listen to reason, not on the object of the quarrel.

We have been carried away by our own implied cultural and philosophical certainties. The "landowning group" is a Western concept, superimposed upon the Pacific islands reality, in the same way as was the genealogical model introduced by W. H. R. Rivers.[22] Pacific islanders may manipulate genealogies in practice, but they respond well to questions phrased in the genealogical method. In the same way, they respond to the "landowning group" concept because it is convenient for them. They can talk back to the white man in terms he thinks he understands, thus ensuring that he does not interfere in the detail of their lives.

When the people want to reclaim land, as in New Guinea or New Cale-

donia, linking the claim to a residential group recognized by the colonial system (often under the name of "clan") has been quite a practical proposition In Vanuatu, people managed the same results by being content to speak only of villages, because they were confronted with minimal resistance on the part of the white plantation owners. What they really wanted back in each case was a block grant of land, leaving them free to let their own social practices operate internally without interference either by foreigners or by the governments of the newly independent countries.[23]

The idea of landowning social units had already been questioned in the analysis of Deacon, who, in 1924-1925 in southwestern Malekula, recognized that territorial ownership as such did not exist but was replaced by ownership of the well-worn path going through the land being used.[24] I later found such a situation on Lifou, where the path going to the gardens belonged to the owner of the said gardens. Where it is inconvenient, due to the ruggedness of the coral outcrops, to have as many paths as there are different plots, a single road exists, the limits of each landowner's domain being marked alongside, and only there.[25]

With two wrong preconceived ideas, one about the unquestioned existence of ownership as such,[26] the other about ownership by social units,[27] it took me ages to unravel the land-tenure situations I was confronted with. After thirty years it dawned on me, and was confirmed by the people themselves everywhere, that the real system--which they had never explained because they had never been asked the right question--was that ***land accompanied social status and both came with the name given at birth.***

I was at the time doing genealogical coverage of part of inland Lösi, on Lifou, and linking every individual with his legitimate (that is, accepted by all) land-tenure claims.[28] In one case, I needed explanations: a young man bore a name that had nothing to do with the set of names belonging to his lineage of birth, and he possessed a domain outside that lineage's territory as I knew it. Then, what had evaded me for so many years was explained: that negotiations preceded birth and that the family meeting called for choosing a name could be enlarged by representative(s) of another lineage, offering to give one of the names it controlled to the newborn child, giving him at the same time the social status and land tenure going with the name.

Thus did I learn too the reason for my wife's being called Pawe. She had thereby taken over the name of an elderly, high-born lady called Pawe Wazizi, the last female representative of an extinct lineage. The lands of that lineage had been taken over since her death by the Hulicia chieftainship, which is in permanent prestige competition with the Wahnyamala chieftainship to which my wife belongs. The name given her was meant to allow one day for a claim to part of the Wazizi domain. This strategic information did

not come to me through a stroke of anthropological genius but by dealing with my Melanesian in-laws, who did not imagine they could hide from me such simple facts of life.[29]

This is one possible variant of a system we never thought of, or which got concealed as a form of adoption. The link between the name given at birth[30] and social status and land tenure offers an extraordinary advantage. It creates a flexible situation, with the capacity for all sorts of adaptations. It can fit equally well unilineal or nonunilineal descent systems. That may be why it has been so little noticed, except in the case of systems of titles, which have been observed since the very beginnings of Western contact. Although such titles have long been thought of as a Polynesian trait, the people of south-central Vanuatu also extracted the name as an individualized concept, theoretically separated from its living bearer, and created a system organized by titles, inherited or acquired, whereby access to land and to social status could be gained later in life, and even be changed more than once.

As in variations in the Pacific way of assuming positions of authority, access to land by individual name or title can also take different forms. The following examples are offered as illustration, not a model: at birth (for example, New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, southern Vanuatu, northern Malekula, Fiji, south-central Vanuatu); more than once (south-central Vanuatu); acquired (Shepherd Islands) or inherited (Efate, southern and central Vanuatu); available to every member of the male population (Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, southern and central Vanuatu); patrilineal and patrilocal (New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, southern Vanuatu, Malekula, Fiji) or matrilineal and matrilocal (Efate, western Aoba, northern Pentecost, Banks Islands); differentiated according to the status of lineages (Loyalty Islands, Fiji); with a single dynastic title for specific lineages (New Caledonia, Loyalty Islands, Fiji); with alternating dynastic titles for specific lineages (New Caledonia), and so forth.

My judgment today is that the concept of the landowning unit is an unhappy legacy from Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown and that there is no formal ownership of land in Western terms anywhere. Rather, we find in eastern Melanesia systems regulating access to land for each individual in each generation, the land being handed back at death to the person bearing anew the same name or title, by choice or inheritance, and not to any landowning social unit, This judgment, made on the basis of observations in areas with systems of titles to which the individual can have access according to specific rules with regard to lineage and individual strategies, is validated in principle at least from central Vanuatu to New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, and beyond to Polynesia.

Control by the relevant social unit involves only those locations having

mythical implications for the entire group and where rites are practiced. Each such location has a "servant" or "master" or "priest" who acts in the name of the group and for its benefit. These locations together define a sort of global territory (but again not in Western terms) where the rites being enacted in the name of the group protect the individual's undisturbed control of his own land rights. The choice of the word ***maître*** (master) by Maurice Leenhardt was a good one.[31] The "master" is the one who controls specific locations by virtue of the name(s) he holds. There can easily be more than one name, some of which can be that of the principal location he holds or one or the other of those his ancestors held. It can be his residence or a former residence of the people of his lineage.

Two different systems dealing with land are thus superimposed and interlock with one another, neither of which is ownership in Western terms of reference.

Individual privileged access to land does not always mean that physical limits are placed around a plot or cluster of plots. Indicators of such access are placed along paths and are verified through the use of place names. Paths going through a tract of land belong to the beneficiary (unless the path crosses more than one tract) and no one can go through the path without permission. In the Shepherd Islands, south-central Vanuatu, plots linked to an elective title are never contained in a single cluster but systematically dispersed over an entire district, an island, or even more than one island. This effectively prevents any violent quarrel or war from erupting over land ownership.

The social role of the group involved, whatever the scope or size of membership, is to make the decision about who is the next rightholder, only interceding later if the designated person relinquishes those rights through a lengthy change of residence. Everywhere in this part of the Pacific a long absence means that individual rights are, provisionally at least, put in abeyance. Rights can be taken over by an elder brother or a lineage chief,[32] and their return negotiated later. There have been thousands of such cases since Western contact. The responsibility of the lineage chief or of a high-ranking individual is to organize the meeting where a decision will eventually be made, not to decide on his own. In the same way, higher-placed chiefs--not "village chiefs" since the extant villages are usually missionary or administrative creations--can be called upon to arbitrate land matters or to take over land in trust when a lineage has no male heir. These chiefs also determine not the final placement of a particular plot or set of plots but the day of the decisive meeting.

Thus, these persons of authority exercise the right to convene a meeting but not the right that so many white people have imagined, which is to

simply determine land rights on their own authority. Often outsiders are led to this mistaken notion by an interested party who knows the advantages that could be derived from being believed to be solely in charge. It is true that in the translation of the decision taken, the person of highest rank present is usually said to have made the decision, but this is only a formal recognition of rank, adding greater prestige to the outcome. Such niceties of formal language, into which islanders automatically fall when speaking of these subjects, have too often been taken at face value. Much of what the "informant" says can only be understood in more general conversation about these matters.

Another concept that has had a detrimental effect on our understanding of land tenure is "tribute." This term, stemming from classical civilizations or earlier, connotes a political system based on some form of taxation. There is no tribute of this kind given to anyone in eastern Melanesia. Rather, gifts of agricultural produce, fish, or artifacts go from people classified as junior brothers or headmen of junior lines to elder brothers or representatives of senior lines. These gifts call for two things: a countergift of lower value from the recipient, and the obligation of the recipient to feed the donor and host him overnight if he lives far away. The yams, for example, given by a man must never be given to him to eat. It is the responsibility of special ceremonial jobholders at the chief's court and of the chief's legitimate first wife (a firstborn daughter of high rank) to administer such a situation and to see to it that no visitor ever goes hungry.[33]

The importance of names--personal names obtained at birth, successive names indicating successive ranks, place names defining land rights, place names defining where the human society talks to the other world--is being more readily recognized today. As previously noted, Bateson's earlier work was not sufficiently attended at the time. He was talking of secret names, the knowledge of which gave rights over land. These could be lost if the holder became so provoked to fury in debate that he would blurt out the names in public, thus losing his rights. Transfer of these to the orator who had obtained this public revelation was an individual affair. The winner would immediately impose new secret names to insure he kept his prize. Here again, there was no landowning unit acting as such and no direct interference of the lineage in the verbal fight.

Because of the importance of public discussion, there are plots of land with no recognized rightholder since the meetings convened on the matter were unable to reach a consensus or the reponsible person of rank never (for reasons of his own) convened the necessary meeting.[34] Other plots are left unused because of a curse having been laid, threatening anybody who tries to work the land with, for example, death without a male heir.

When populations were in decline, the provisional answer was to put on one individual more than one name, more than one social status, and thus multiple land claims. In the presence of a belligerent European settler class, the use of Christian names helped to hide this particular adaptive process from inquisitive European eyes. Today, when population has been increasing for the past thirty years, parents have gleefully given their long-hoped-for children all the names inherited from earlier times, thus reviving one after the other claims on land taken over by planters and settlers. In most of the tens of cases where people told me in Vanuatu[35] and New Caledonia about their strategy to use new generations of children to create further pressure for return of former lands, they have won their cases. Often this was done with some help from me, as the acknowledged price for their talking freely.

Today we are approaching population numbers in most islands approximating those when whites came to the South Pacific two centuries ago. Cases of overpopulation, some severe, are evident; there is not sufficient land for adequate fallow, and the crops are smaller each year. This has happened in Méré Lava before the island exploded and had to be abandoned, it is happening now in the Poindimié and Cape Bayes "native reservations" in New Caledonia, and surely elsewhere. For a number of years, the Shepherd Islands people have quietly resorted to making two land-tenure titles out of one by adding to it a qualifying adjective. This is comparable to the multiplication of titles in Western Samoa, while in Tonga the constitutional right of each young couple to enough land to build a house and raise its own food is slowly becoming a dream of the past.

Hierarchies: The Loyalty Islands

It has long been accepted that Polynesian societies operate on a hierarchical model. However, Hocart showed us that a Fijian hierarchy could be a complex working system, with people established in all sorts of positions whereby their allegiance to the titular head was defined in all sorts of ways. This could be interpreted as creating many sets of conditions for the functioning of links between hierarchy members, without which the system would wane. The principal link is one between so-called chiefs and talking chiefs, which at least in Samoa looks suspiciously like a dual chieftainship. In a brilliant paper, Christina Toren shows how this duality works in the minds and the behavior of Fijians.[36]

I myself showed some twenty years ago for Melanesians in Ouvéa that the ***than*** did not exist without the members of his court who exercised special privileges within it. These were: the ***hingat in than,*** builders of houses

and canoes, advisers with the privilege of physically beating the chief for misconduct; the ***hnyimen than,*** the chief's mouthpieces who learned from their forefathers to speak on their own, without specific instructions from the chief; the ***tang tangen than,*** who keeps the chief's treasures at the latter's will; the ***ahnyaba,*** the only person who can sleep with the chief in the ***hnyeule,*** the hut containing the chief's yam provisions,[37] and can eat the fruit of the banana tree at the foot of which the chief relieves himself at night; and the ***obotrkong,*** "sacred basket," who concludes discussion at day's end in the chief's meetinghouse and voices the decision arrived at by consensus or the disagreement. The chief talks in a low voice during the meeting and cannot impose his views easily on those who are present, because they constitute among themselves the only visible structure of the chieftainship. As such, they dominate him as much as the reverse. Any of these privileged persons wanting to assert his autonomy will not be present at the meeting but will delegate in his place the head of a junior lineage. Such a delegation has at times become permanent.

Chieftainships are thus surrounded by lineages, the titular heads of which are striving to stay as independent as they can. One way is to formalize the relation with the chief in a yearly offering, ***tang sahac,*** brought when the lineage head decides to and consisting of what he has decided to give. In this way, the lineage head is not buried in the throng of ***je ditr,*** the lineages most closely related to the chief, bringing in the ***fat,*** the firstfruits of the crop to fill the chief's yam house.

The oral traditions belonging to each such chieftainship in eastern Melanesia bring out the differences between them. The Lifou ***atresi*** do not beat their chiefs but may kill them. At other times, murderers are threatened with a divine curse, stemming from the outer world, the one of the ***haze.*** One lineage descending from a murderer of one of the paramount chiefs of the Wetr district is to be found, under another name, in the nearby Gaica district. The curse had apparently fallen only on the name assumed before the murder. In the same way, one will find paramount lines having lost their status, living in the same or adjacent districts, under different names. Although Father Dubois described for Maré a society where the older lineages controlling land were victims of a wholesale murder--***"le massacre des élétok"*** --descendants of these same lineages have been found living quietly at some distance from their former residence, under other names, having lost their former control of land.

Another aspect of these very flexible hierarchies is that they are paired; no chieftainship is self-contained, nor can it be isolated for description or analysis. Every chief has a paired rival, and their competition usually continues over centuries. In this competition, each chief seeks help from a sup-

porting lineage nearby. All decisions must be taken with the approval of the head of this supporting lineage. Although theoretically there are paramount chiefs in Ouvéa, the presence of other lineages and the need to seek their support constrain the power of any chief.

Colonial authorities and mission authorities have utilized what thus appeared as rivalries for their own ends, but the Melanesians have in turn pursued strategies that incorporated the administration and missions. For example, the Bahit chiefs were living close to the Imwene chiefly line in northern Ouvéa. The Bahit became Catholics and enlisted the Marist fathers on their side, waging war once more against the now mostly Protestant south and also against the Imwene, who had become Protestant so as not to fall under the Bahit's power. The war was won by the Catholic side. The Imwene had to flee to Fayawe, the seat of the Hwenegei chieftainship, then the Hwenegei and Imwene had to flee together to New Caledonia proper for some years. They were brought back to Ouvéa by the French troops who took possession in 1864.

The Imwene chief had to become Catholic to protect his peace. All the dependents of his lineage remained stoutly Protestant and went on to build a village and a London Missionary Society (LMS) church in the bush, on farmland. They called Gosana the place that had earlier been known as ***hnyebuba,*** "the yam fields.' In 1988, the reigning Bahit chief accused the Imwene people of being responsible for an attack on the Fayawe police post in which four gendarmes were killed. The village was occupied by the army and the people manhandled. A few years before, the Bahit had accused three young people from Gosana of having set fire to the hotel in Fayawe, but the court found no proof of the accusation. With twenty-four murders on its books, the administration finally awoke in the fall of 1988 to the plight of the Gosana people and gave belated official recognition to the Imwene chieftainship, releasing the people from the Bahit's effort to put them under his dominion. The Bahit chief died a few weeks later, from overindulgence, but it was rumored that his death was really the revenge of the dead, living from time immemorial in a cave that had been invaded by the army with guides supplied by the Bahit.

In Fayawe, where the bulk of Melanesian speakers of the island live, the paramount chiefs are two, Hwenegei and Draume. The Draume are the older residents, the Hwenegei having immigrated from New Caledonia where they were makers of shell money on the west coast, in the south of the Voh district. Draume never accepted Hwenegei's usurpation of paramountcy and has remained independent. The two groups have been fighting each other since, for more than four hundred years, though they live less than two hundred yards from each other. The Draume is considered in Lifou to be an offshoot from the principal landholding lineage around

Drueula, in the Gaica district. However, the chief insists on expressing that tradition in the reverse order and continues to call Hwenegei the foreigner.

In the Wetr district of Lifou, conversion to Christianity was led by the principal ***atresi,*** Upinu Waleweny, who had prophesied that a new faith and light would come from the east. The Ukeinesö lineage (as it was then called, or Sihaze since a murdered chief was replaced by a man chosen from a lineage in Ouvéa) then called for French Marist fathers to come in an effort to keep some of its independence from the growing power of LMS missionaries. The LMS missionaries were viewed as favoring the Bula chiefly line in the Lösi district and the Waehyna chiefs in their Xepenehe domain in Wetr. Similarly, the ***isola,*** mother of the young Zeula chief in the Gaica district, herself originating from the Xetriwaan chiefly line of Touaourou in New Caledonia, brought Catholicism to one part of her son's chiefly court. In this way, he kept some independence from the pressure of Lösi district and its paramount chief, Bula.

My wife's mother's brother was Noeja Wahnyamala, the principal chief of the Lifou village of Kejany in the Lösi district. His lineage had been in competition, over generations past, with the Hulicia line coming from the Wedrumel village in Gaica, where the Wahnyamala have a good third of their dependents. Noeja had been imprisoned before World War II for having refused to let his young men work on the roads for the government. A Hulicia had been put in as village chief in his stead. Some years ago, the old Hlonu, ***ten adro,*** "master of the land," became very angry at the young Hulicia chief, who had given permission for people of a nearby village to cut wood in Hlonu's domain, ignoring Hlonu himself. The old man went to see Noeja Wahnyamala, and told him: "Hulicia has betrayed me. I am coming now on your side, so that the Wahnyamala will finally have won the day." Noeja thanked him ceremoniously but spent the greater part of the year trying to bring the two back together, even preaching in his role as deacon on the subject of Christian reconciliation.

This incident and others have led me to understand that these rivalries were at the very core of the workings of the social structure. They cannot be suppressed; only our Western naivete leads us to try to ask people to forget their quarrels. In these cases, as with land tenure, essential information comes from observing real behavior over long periods of time, not simply asking questions about principles or models.

Hierarchies: New Caledonia

It took me forty years to make a survey of all positions, functions, and privileges among the Melanesians of New Caledonia proper, lineage by lineage. The data were those that the possessors were willing to give, which I have

checked over the years through both interviews and observations. Chieftainships here have a knack of always changing shape. No one is identical to another; they come in all sizes, large, medium, small. If one thinks of a possible logical variant of the model expressed in general terms, it can be found in some corner, as well as those unheard of, nicely blending to the people's satisfaction what might seem to be contradictory principles.

These chiefs are always competing among themselves, each trying to maintain the greatest amount of autonomy possible for himself. Apparent links of domination are often parts of larger strategies, for example, establishing links in two directions to play one competing chief against another. Sometimes a ceremonial function will be conveniently translated into action only once a year as it suits the strategy of competition. As in the Loyalties, social and political unity is never the aim.

No chief exists without one or two rivals, each being the reason the others are able to maintain independence. A few chiefs hold court in a wide, walled enclosure, reigning over dignitaries following much the same model as in the Loyalty Islands. Some appear to hold a fraction of power only insofar as they belong to a system of horizontal relations permitting them to mobilize the support of others dispersed over a wide area. What seem to be local dependents operate largely independently, so long as they keep courteous relations with their nominal superiors, Nothing is more difficult to obtain from a New Caledonia Melanesian than the admission that he follows anyone's bidding. Nevertheless, hierarchical positions are all initially inherited, the flexibility of the system allowing for changes in status through prowess in war or political acumen.

One well-established institution is a web of formalized relations between lineages that claim the same, far-off place of origin. If one goes to that place, one learns that this single root in the soil is only apparent. For example, Mount Souma, overlooking the valleys of Poya in the west and Houaïlou in the east, is claimed as their place of origin by the larger part of the Paici-speaking people. This is only a symbol. Their real origins stem from further south through the Bourail and Kwawa valleys. At the bottom of the latter, the local myth explains that the chieftainship there is identical with that on the island of Muli, in the Ouvéa lagoon. If one were to go then to Muli, he would be sent back to New Caledonia.

There are at least two, and most probably three, webs of relationships recognized widely that cover the Loyalty Islands as well as New Caledonia. The movements along these webs have been so numerous over thousands of years that each is found to be extraordinarily complex. One practical rule is nevertheless rather simple: if a particular place of origin is claimed, relations operate both ways between the two points in space. This is most clear

between the north of Ouvéa and the Wetr district in Lifou. In both places, lineages claim the other side of the channel as their place of origin. New Caledonians tend to be more coherent in their presentation of such things, but traditional routes showing only one direction between A and B are only a literary device. Men and women ply these routes both ways, which is the important point.

One way of checking on this is through sifting the events of colonial history. For instance, who became Catholic or Protestant and for what reason (that is, in opposition to whom)? Where did the LMS and the French Protestant missions recruit their helpers, pastors ***(nata, hnamiatr, nahibat),*** and deacons ***(dikona)?*** Who were the privileged candidates for teaching or pastoral work and why? Since democratic elections have become well established, the supporters of the different candidates can be looked at, as well as the arguments that are used outside the presence of European politicians, even those belonging to the same political side. The name of one of the two principal webs of relationships appeared thirty years ago on the voting papers of an Ouvéa candidate, without any European official even noticing it. However, I did, and this started me on the road of mapping, slowly but precisely, this type of relationship. The result is so intermingled and detailed it has become unreadable, except by Melanesians themselves. Nevertheless, it provides an excellent guide to interpret events, even the most gruesome like the recent massacre in the northern Ouvéa cave.

One question hanging over the Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia is what has happened to the earliest inhabitants, those who are thought to maintain more ancient links with the other world and whose blessing is said to be needed by all later immigrants. The theoretical model offered by Maurice Leenhardt was the dual function served by chiefs, who were really eldest sons of the senior line, ***orokau,*** and so-called masters of the land, ***kavu neva,*** who controlled the interface between the land of the living and that shared by the gods and the dead. The problem is that the ***kavu neva*** can be at the same time ***orokau*** in their own lineage or group of lineages. Thus, the dual function disappears when it is lodged in a single individual. A number of chiefs are not ***kavu neva*** while others have no ***kavu neva*** associated with them, having deliberately sent them on their way. (The expansionist Paici chiefs had a habit of keeping authority among themselves by getting rid of older inhabitants who maintained solidarity links with potential foes.) ***Neva*** means landscape--in a sense, a territorial concept--but not the soil used to plant yam or taro. These ***kavu neva*** have little to do with land tenure.

There are other sorts of ***kavu.*** Among them, the ***kavu mëu,*** "master of the yam," who decides which day the first of the yam crop will be eaten by men (women and children eat them a month later), is easily the most revered and

most powerful, if power is the correct word. ***Kavu kare ma kwa,*** "masters of sun and rain," play an equally important role.

Today, as we have seen, in Maré the oldest lineages, the ***eletok,*** have been deposed and obliged to change names so as to loosen their former control of land. In Lifou, the ***ten adro*** are the intermediaries with the other world; most of the priests dealing with the innumerable ***haze*** are taken from their ranks. Thus, they cannot enter any chiefly court, being considered too dangerous because of their strong ***men*** (mana) derived from the ***haze*** invisible community. In the Wetr district they are called ***alalu,*** always found in pairs, and linked to a small number of special officers, the ***atresi. Atresi*** are meant to be chiefs of the ***alalu*** but in reality are their go-betweens, having no individual power over any ***haze*** except through them. In Ouvéa, the oldest inhabitants are called ***üay,*** but their membership is a matter of discussion, if not outright quarrel. Though some of them grace every chief's court, no one agrees on their specific function. That is, they are there because tradition says they should be, but they have lost any significant power or privilege.

Hierarchies: Northern Malekula

The Big Nambas of northern Malekula are ruled by dual chieftainships, between which the form of competition alternates between war and the offering of hundreds of pigs. The chief, ***mweleun,*** presides in an alley of stone monoliths along which pigs are tied to wooden stakes. At the same time a ***mweleun*** gives a feast to his arch rival, he takes a degree in the local graded hierarchy specially reserved for chiefs. His men will bring in the pigs to be ceremonially clubbed by their ***mweleun,*** but they cannot compete for grades reserved for him.

The rival ***mweleun*** say they come from two fruits, each having fallen on one side of the stately roots of the ***nakatambol*** tree. The two children born from the fruits survived by sucking the trunk's nodes. When they grew older, they walked about in the open; each discovered the other and that they were born from a ***nakatambol.*** At first, they remained near their mother tree. Then people living on the land discovered them and installed each one as chief of a particular location.

Living people did not divide themselves between the two chiefs, as is the habit elsewhere in the islands, but stayed apart from them. The result is unusual. Wars and offerings of food and pigs are played out between the two chiefly lines, their junior lineages being those who rear the pigs and present them to their respective chiefs to be clubbed. These junior lineages will get their return when their particular chief is the recipient, rather than the giver. Chiefs and their men drink kava from the dry root in the evening in

the Fijian way, clapping cupped hands as each man in turn dips his face in the kava bowl and takes a long sip. If more than one chief or honored guest is present, a man of the host lineage will have to drink between each so men of rank do not drink in direct succession.

The former "masters of the land," the ***nembalian,*** do not participate, since they live in villages apart from those who support one of the dual ***mweleun.*** They rear pigs only for their own consumption. However, if there is a war, the chief of the vanquished side must offer a human victim to make peace with his rival. Although the ***nembalian*** do not participate in the war, they give one of their number to be sacrificed, hung by the legs to the eyes of a standing carved wooden drum, while the men of the victorious chief sing the chants and dance the dance dealing with killing men.

This is the theory The truth is that the victim is left alive but obliged to change identity; he is given a new name, a new lineage, and a new wife, and he must cut all links with his former kin and family. The chants are nevertheless sung and the dance performed. The ***nembalian*** say they are threatened with extinction if they do not offer such a victim at least once in a generation.

The ***nembalian*** have other functions. They are surgeons of true circumcision, this being one of the rare areas in Vanuatu (with northern Raga) where it is practiced. They are also the carvers of wooden drums, the makers of clubs and bamboo spears fitted with a wooden human head, and the sculptors of the tree fern finial carvings for the men's houses, the ***amel.*** If a young chief is in a hurry to take over from his father or from his elder brother, the ***nembalian*** will furnish murderers to swiftly dispatch the man at night.

Hierarchies: Shepherd Islands

Extending southeast from Epi to Mataso, this area encompasses the larger islands of Tongoa, Tongariki, and Emae. Here the ***nawothlam*** is at the top of a hierarchy made up of a number of lines, the head of each carrying one of a number of existing titles, organized in one of many parallel series. Some titles are only names; others carry specific functions directed toward the ***nawotalam.*** No such chief goes without his ***atavi.*** This man has the obligation of protecting his chief from anything coming from the other world. The chief is inaugurated on the ***marae,*** the square where dances are held, where men drink kava in the evening, and where each titleholder is allotted a stone seat along sides of the square. At inauguration, the specific stone is regarded as too powerful for the chief, who places his foot on a piece of hard wood slanting from the stone to the ground. Only the ***atavi*** is allowed to put his foot on the stone. For this power he was to be clubbed and buried while still

alive, so that his corpse would become the ***nawotalam's*** headrest when the latter died. On each side and at his feet, the chief would have one of his wives, buried alive after having been drugged with kava. Excavations by Jose Garanger throughout the area have produced conclusive evidence of this practice.[38]

The ***takalakal*** is the mouthpiece of the ***nawotalam;*** in eastern Melanesia as well as Polynesia, no man of rank should be without his orator. For an orator to deliver a speech in public is a mark of rank for the man on behalf of whom the speech is given. Only in certain parts of New Caledonia proper does the chief speak out in public on his own.

The ***manuvasa, munuay,*** or ***munue*** is the man who talks on behalf of the chief to the other world, praying to the god ***(nasumwaur)*** who protects the residential group--a thing the ***atavi*** cannot do. He is the person who has visions about the future. The ***namataisau*** is the carpenter who builds sea-going canoes; he also carves wooden dishes, clubs, and standing wooden drums. The ***takaori*** takes the lead in war; he also dispatches, by clubbing from behind, any ***nakainanga*** (a supporter of the chief because of linked titles) who has been condemned to death. He will also kill the chief's wives and ***atavi*** upon the chiefs death.

A key aspect of the system is that such titles are not inherited but attributed to a young man if and when he is regarded as capable of the responsibilities going with a title. ***Marae*** are not lineages but residence groups, and one resides according to the title he received. Titles can change according to different stages in life. For example, one can ascend in rank, in the same island or another. There are specific titles for elderly people who want to live a quieter life. Recited genealogies are thus pseudogenealogies, being in fact successions of titleholders to the same title and rank.

Throughout the area, subordinate titleholders give their ***nawotalam*** the firstfruits of the yam crop, adding a pig or two. This submission, called the ***nasaotonga,*** is regularly given within the ***marae,*** but at longer intervals between ***nawotalam*** of unequal rank. The members of a local residential system of titles are linked to other, more exalted ones and, through their chiefs, to other ***nawotalam*** in the same or another island. The value and power of a title is linked to the regular exercise of obligations, so that pigs may be sent by canoe as formal recognition of higher rank operating between ***marae*** in different islands.

Titles thus belong to systems of interlocking formal hierarchies, which appear to be rather stable, inasmuch as one finds in different places the same titles associated with each other, though not always in the same rank order. In a complete survey of this system, and that in Efate and the adjacent islands where succession to titles is matrilineal, each village knew its

local variant of the system and enough of the total to fit their own variant without contradiction. However, the system is not fixed: titles may be added or subtracted.

Certainly a key issue here is land, for a title gives access to land. Nontitle-holders, of whom there are a few, have to work on their father's or elder brothers land. But the landholding going with a title never is a single piece, but many plots, dispersed to provide drier soil for yams and sweet potatoes, more humid soil for taro, and protected areas for banana, sugarcane, and kava shoots. The holding may be in a single island or more than one. The result is that landholdings are mixed in such a way that interpersonal or inter***marae*** disputes (over pigs, women, or succession to a title) do not become a fight over land. One cannot take over another man's land as such; only taking over of titles is allowed.

Hierarchies: Tanna

Tanna in the south of Vanuatu is the island for which the most detailed information exists, because it maintained on its gentle slopes rising to a central plateau much of its former population.[39] I have published a complete survey of all social ranks, privileges, and functions for the entire island, data unfortunately ignored by more recent authors although organized by residential groups to be more useful.[40] It is perhaps the habit of what I call "prescriptive anthropology" that has distracted workers from using such material as ten pages of traditional names, with associated privileges and functions, found in the Waesisi district.

This extensive work is the basis for my judgment that the concept of "big-man" is not useful for analyzing Tannese material. The exchange of huge amounts of pigs in the ***nekowiar*** ceremonies does not in itself indicate a big-man, for pig exchanges are widespread in the Pacific. On Tanna, only certain ranking men, ***yèrëmërë,*** have the capacity to organize and lead a group of lineages, associated with a dancing square. (There are more than one kava drinking squares, ***yimwayim,*** for each dancing square.) The lineage members call on others with whom they are linked so that the throng on either side is never exactly the same at each ***nekowiar***: Nor is the leader of the host group the same man. The idea is that for the well-being of all the island responsibilities must circulate, each time on another dancing square, and all dancing squares are formally linked to others through parallel named routes. In this way, the fiction that the two sides at each ***nekowiar*** represent the entire island is preserved.

Tanna is a society of carefully preserved rank, organized in such a way that few people outrank all the others. Formal privileges and functions are

strongly adhered to and transmitted patrilineally. There are those who have the privilege of carrying a small white plume ***(mëruk, nuwamëneng)*** stuck in the hair; those who have the right to a short or tall vertical contraption ***(küeria)*** made of coconut fiber and covered with white feathers, so tall and heavy that it must be carried on the right shoulder instead of the head and be supported on sticks by the followers of the ranking man; those who have the right to receive and cook any turtle that is caught; those who have the privilege of coming at night to open the oven and eat the head of the cooked turtle, everyone else recognizing the next day that the special right has been exercised; those who cook the special, hairless black pigs ***(poka kepwie)*** killed at a ***nekowiar,*** to be eaten by all the guests at their residences; those who plant, care for, and are the only ones to distribute the ***nekaua topunga,*** the special kava plant whose stem has been partly covered with soil to concentrate the drug; those who are said to be cannibals, but who in fact have links to similar lineages with whom they exchange corpses that they never eat but pass along until decomposition demands that the corpse be buried; and those who are brought the firstfruits of the yam crop (often enough bearers of ***küeria).***

Lesser-ranked dignitaries are those who are the surgeons incising the foreskins of boys, those who possess specific traditional medicines, and those who are the masters of the rites to ensure sufficient supplies of crops or fish in a given area. Each of the last-named owns a stone (or stones, though they often speak as if there was only one) that is washed annually in a wooden dish in the shape of a canoe hull ***(niko, nengoo)*** in water or occasionally coconut milk. These stones have to do with all the important crops, including kava, with fish generally or specific fishes, or turtle. The possessors of stones allowing for control of rain, sun, storm, and thunder are among the most revered of these so-called magicians, who are in fact priests calling on the dead and the gods to give them satisfaction.

A single man, on the plateau, has the privilege and responsibility of ensuring that all the Tannese will have full bellies all year long. In a special room in his house, he has on the wall a large pandanus basket filled with a number of smaller baskets, each containing a symbol (leaf or twig) of a different vegetable food. Each year all old baskets must be burned and replaced by new ones made by his wife to ensure the overall well-being of all the people throughout the island. He is the only person to have this particular privilege.

All the holders of what may be called fertility stones know each other, by specialty, and act in coordination with one another. They start with a specific rite each year in the northwest of Tanna, for example, for bananas. A message is sent to the next holder of banana stones in a southeasterly direction

so that, in the course of a few weeks, the whole round of the island is completed, crop by crop. Many proud possessors of fertility stones also hold other privileges, but no rule governs this. Traditionally recognized diseases are also linked with stones, the washing of which is added to the use of medicinal plants to achieve a cure.

At least one-fourth of the men in the island thus hold one or another of these privileges and proudly assume its possession as a sign of rank. In such a formalized society, it makes little sense to speak of big-manship, for one always knows who has, or who hasn't, the right to lead an exchange of pigs because such a right has been inherited.

A very special institution on Tanna is linked with the existence of two nonmarital moieties, Numrukwen and Koiometa.[41] These moieties were meant to govern peace and war--no easy task. Numrukwen and Koiometa populations lived intermixed throughout the island, neither group being consolidated on a large tract of land. Thus, if war occurred, it was only between a fragment of Numrukwen and another of Koiometa, with what support they could muster. War consisted of surprise raids and the burning of houses, so that the vanquished group had to flee and negotiate later to be allowed to return. Here entered a special dignitary, ***yani niko*** or ***yani nengoo,*** each having his own messenger, to carry out negotiations allowing resettlement. No conquering group was permitted to deny original residents their land for more than one generation.

The ***yani niko,*** "holder of the canoe" symbolizing the social unit, linked to his kava drinking square and one dancing place only, held sway over more than one residential group. This is what seems to resemble a chief most in Western eyes. He is an anomalous person who can betray his own people and secretly plot to bring war down upon them if he feels they do not pay due respect to him because they have been enjoying peace for too long. After having seen them chased away, he can then change tack and become again, as were his forefathers, the savior of his own people who cannot negotiate their return without his active presence.

Moiety structure might not be the best name for this institution. There is a third group,[42] Kowut Kasua, which manages to avoid the conflicts between the others. In the context of ***nekowiar,*** Numrukwen and Koiometa approximate ceremonial moieties.

At the time of independence, I was called into the Yanamwakel kava square by Rengyao, the ***yani nengoo,*** whom I had earlier registered as belonging to Kowut Kasua. He asked me to drink kava with him, then pointed to two stones protruding from the volcanic soil. He said he had a dream about the location of lost Numrukwen and Koiometa stones, and had dug them out at the precise spot indicated in his dream. At the same time, he

was telling me that the choice of all Kowut Kasua on the island was for the independence of Vanuatu, but that this choice was about peace in the present, not a promise for the future. Some time later the Kowut Kasua switched sides, and the Vanuaaku Pati lost the provincial elections.

The conquest of most of Tanna by the Presbyterian mission, and the return after May 1941 of most of the island to traditional ways through the John Frum movement,[43] provided insights on the inner workings of Tannese society. All privilege holders cooperated enthusiastically in my global survey of the island, so each could have his name registered as he wanted it. Later they came on their own to be shown exactly how this personal information had been written down.

In the course of this work, I was confronted with a number of unresolved land cases. These were created by Presbyterian missionaries following the same policies as had the LMS under John Williams,[44] deciding that land tenure should be defined as it was at the onset of Christianization, allowing for no new claims. As a result, a number of groups of some importance who had been trapped in exile after a lost war were unable to return home. Missionaries, and the British administration following their lead, refused to allow any change.

Land-tenure problems that had arisen from the building of overly large Christian congregations disappeared along with their villages in 1941, as each lineage returned to its premission residence. The exceptions involved the exiles, who called on their ***yani niko*** to intercede once more on their behalf. They therefore got into trouble with the Condominium administration, which refused to budge any more than it had before based on the same justification. The exiles then came to me.

I discussed the situation for some months with Dr. Armstrong, a very liberal missionary doctor who disagreed on this and other points with his more orthodox colleagues. (Consequently, while they lost their Christian flocks, he managed to keep his patients, even attending to the wives of John Frum adherents who came to deliver babies under his care.) I decided on a strategy that would address the entreaties, repeated since 1948, of James Yehnayeu, former assessor in the native court, deacon in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and ***yani niko*** for one of the aggrieved parties. I contacted the descendants of Loohmae of Lenakel (the very first convert of the Reverend Frank Paton), who had used missionaries to help him grab land belonging to a group in exile on the other side of the mountain. These descendants came to a meeting with the claimant group; I had bought a pig and fed them well. After having eaten together, Loohmae's ranking descendant stood up and declared his people were ready to return the land. It was concluded in a matter of months, similar land claims finding at the same time an equally happy resolution.

The only place, to my knowledge, in Tanna where offerings are still made to the god Mauitikitiki, under that very name (Mwatiktik), is in Port Resolution, southeastern Tanna.[45] There a young yam tuber will be put under a rocky, underwater ledge by a diver, the god said to be living at the top of Mount Melen.[46] A parallel is found in Emae, in the Shepherd Islands, where a white rooster will be left to rot, his feet securely tied, at the god's altar. Both of the priests entrusted with these rites live in a Melanesian village, speak a non-Polynesian Austronesian language, and are nominally Christians.

The myth of Mauitikitiki is as well structured in the center of Vanuatu as in eastern Polynesia, except that his fishing up of islands is done by swinging from a rope fastened to a horizontal branch of a banyan tree, that he uses his fishhook and not his maternal grandfathers lower jaw, and that his death is yet to come. Other so-called Polynesian gods are known under cognate names (for example, Karispunga and Tafakisema, as in Maori Karihi and Hema) and with the same stories told, although the name Tangaloa is only applied to a sea snake in Tanna. When this snake was killed and buried, the first coconut tree sprouted from its eyes.

To see Mwatiktik associated with Melanesian institutions might seem like heresy, but only if one has a simplified view of an opposition between Melanesia and Polynesia. The fact is that a version of this deity is found widely and that hierarchies are equally widespread. However, in Tanna, they are not always visible, coming to the fore particularly during ***nekowiar*** periods and lapsing at other times into relative insignificance.

One of the analytic problems I did not see clearly at the start of my work in Tanna is that the society that Tannese rebuilt when they abandoned Christianity lacked its former flexibility. As a kind of ideological blow against Western dominance, they presented a global display coming straight from their remembered past in the last century but a reconstituted culture said to be timeless and unchanging. Brand new interpretations presented as local myths, hundreds of visions in the evening at kava time, or prophetic dreams in the dead of night put movement back into the picture.[47] In fact, Tanna is always dynamic and on the move, although Tannese will stoutly deny this at every opportunity.

Conclusion

This article has presented for an English-reading audience a wide array of data on land tenure and hierarchies in eastern Melanesia, bringing to the fore information too often overlooked because originally published in another language. However, there are some larger theoretical points to be made. One is to attack once more an artificial distinction between "Melanesia" and "Polynesia" that is not supported by cultural studies. A second is

to emphasize that too heavy a reliance on Western concepts, especially notions like "landowning group" or "chiefs versus big-men," obscures rather than advances our understanding. Rather, actual observation of people's activities, ideally made over long periods of time, is the appropriate methodology. Finally, the material presented should show how capable Pacific islanders are of managing their social lives in a flexible, therefore appropriate, manner so long as outsiders do not constrain these working systems with ideas not really applicable to those lives.

NOTES

1. For example, in 1936 Gregory Bateson established links between land-tenure claims and myth among the Iatmul in the middle Sepik area of New Guinea, and Douglas Oliver did the same for the Siwai of Bougainville in 1949. However, neither had much impact on other anthropological work at the time. Gregory Bateson, *Naven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936); Douglas L. Oliver, "Land Tenure in North-East Siuai, Southern Bougainville," *Peabody Museum Papers* 29, no. 4 (1949).

2. For a general discussion of such viewpoints in the philosophical background of anthropology, see S. Lee Seaton and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo, "Meta-anthropology: The Elementary Forms of Ethnological Thought," in K. A. Watson-Gegeo and S. L. Seaton, eds., *Adaptation and Symbolism: Essays on Social Organization* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1978), 173-218.

3. See A. Bernard Deacon, "The Regulation of Marriage in Ambrym," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 57 (1927), 325-342.

4. Jean Guiart, "L'organisation sociale et politique du Nord Malekula, Nouvelles-Hëbrides," *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 8 (1951). Recent demographic trends have allowed the sex ratio to return to normal.

5. Cf. Jean Guiart et al., *Système des titres aux Nouvelles-Hébrides du Centre, d'Efate à Epi* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1973).

6. For the anthropology and ethnohistory of New Caledonia, see Maurice Leenhardt, *Notes d'ethnologie néo-calédonienne* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1930); Jean Guiart, *Structure de la chefferie en Mélanésie du Sud,* rev. ed. (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1992 [orig. 19631); Alban Bensa and Jean-Claude Rivierre, *Les chemins d'alliance: L'organisation sociale et ses représentations en Nouvelle-Calédonie* (Paris: SELAF, 1982); and Alain Saussol, *L'héritage: Essai sur le problème foncier mélanésien en Nouvelle-Calédonie* (Paris: Publications de la Société des Océanistes, 1979). For the Loyalty Islands, see Guiart, *Structure de la chefferie,* 1963 edition (for Maré and the Isle of Pines) and 1992 edition (for Lifou and Ouvéa).

7. Guiart et al., *Système des titres.* The computer analysis was the work of the specialized laboratory of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, under Jean-Paul

Gardin, using Euratom computer time, under the aegis of Professor Claude Lévi-Strauss, at whose seminar the data had been presented and discussed.

8. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1966), and *Du miel aux cendres* (Paris: Plon, 1972).

9. See Frederick Damon, *From Muyuw; to the Trobriands* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990), for an interesting translation of the concept of "transformation" as applied to the northern half of the "*kula* ring."

10. Personal fieldwork, 1951.

11. I learned surveying work in the mountains around my home town of Lyon during the war years with one of my older brothers, who was studying engineering at the École Polytechnique, and by practicing the art as a student in the hills around Paris with the late Professor Lucien Bernot. Because of the complete lack of maps when I began fieldwork in Melanesia, I had to survey villages, paths, and cultivated plots for years, until the time came of systematic coverage of the islands by aerial photographs and the publishing of accurate maps by the Institut Géographique National (IGN). One of my greatest professional satisfactions came when I found that my map of the mountain villages of Espiritu Santo was quite in agreement with the new and modem map published by IGN. The aerial photographs done by the U.S. Air Force during the war were unavailable.

12. For a perceptive assessment, by a law specialist, of the description of a land-tenure system written by an anthropologist, compare Peter G. Sack, "Mythology and Land Rights in Wogeo," *Oceania* 46, no. 1 (September 1975), 40-52; with H. Ian Hogbin, 'Wogeo Land Tenure in New Guinea," *Oceania* 10, no. 2 (December 1939), 113-165, and Hogbin, "Land Tenure in Wogeo," in Peter Lawrence and Ian Hogbin, eds., *Studies in New Guinea Land Tenure* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967), 1-44.

13. See Colin H. Allan, *Customary Land Tenure in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate: Report of the Special Lands Commission* (Honiara: Western Pacific High Commission, 1957); R. G. Crocombe, *Land Tenure in the Cook Islands* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984); Peter Larmour, ed., *Land in Solomon Islands* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies and the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Solomon Islands, 1979).

14. Oliver, "Land Tenure"; George P. Murdock and Ward H. Goodenough, "Social Organization of Truk," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1947), 331-343.

15. Peter Lawrence, *Land Tenure among the Garia: The Traditional System of a New Guinea People* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1955); Rusiate Nayacakalou, "Land Tenure and Social Organisation in Tonga," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 68, no. 2 (June 1959), 93-114; R. Nayacakalou, "Land Tenure and Social Organisation in Westem Samoa," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 69, no. 2 (June 1960), 104-122; R. Nayacakalou, "Fiji: Manipulating the System," in Ron Crocombe, ed., *Land Tenure in the Pacific* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1977), 206-226; Marshall Sahlins, "Land Use and the Extended Family in Moala," *American Anthropologist* 59, no. 3 (June 1957), 449-462.

16. For example, Michel Panoff, "Land Tenure among the Maenge of New Britain," *Oceania* 40, no. 3 (March 1970), 177-194; Eugene Ogan, "Nasioi Land Tenure: An Extended Case Study," *Oceania* 42, no. 2 (December 1971), 81-93; Crocombe, *Land Tenure in the Pacific;* Henry Lundsgaarde, ed., *Land Tenure in Oceania* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i, 1974); Henry J. Rutz, "Fijian Land Tenure and Agricultural Growth," *Oceania* 49, no. 1 (September 1978), 20-34. Many studies submit to the old concepts about land tenure and are not as useful as they could be.

17. For example, Harold C. Brookfield and Paul Brown, *Struggle for Land: Agriculture and Group Territories among the Chimbu of the New Guinea Highlands* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963).

18. Socialist theory applied in the field gave queer results. Governor Guillain, a disciple of Saint-Simon, gazetted an Order in Council (22 January 1868) declaring the ownership of land in New Caledonia vested in the tribe and controlled by the paramount chief. This became the legal basis to justify collective punishment--that is, confiscation of land--each time a European settler claimed to have been mistreated by a Kanak. The extent of the limits of the "tribe" (the people living inside a "reservation") was determined by the colonial authorities, and the paramount chief (the so-called *grand-chef)* was chosen by the governor.

19. Some of the best papers are marred by the persistent notion of the social unit as land-owner. Another problem is the resort to administrative files dealing with land quarrels, as the only possible shortcut if one has not been trained in surveying work and thus lacks the capacity to deal with the tenure system plot by plot. For Fiji, see Tony Chapelle, "Customary Land Tenure in Fiji: Old Truths and Middle-aged Myths," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 87, no. 2 (June 1978), 71-88; Michael A. H. B. Walter, "The Conflict of the Traditional and the Traditionalised," ibid., 89-107. For Tonga, see George E. Marcus, "Succession Disputes and the Position of the Nobility in Modem Tonga," *Oceania* 47, no. 3 (March 1977), 220-242. For Samoa, see Sharon W. Tiffany, "Politics of Land Disputes in Western Samoa," *Oceania* 50, no. 3 (March 1980), 176-208; Walter W. Tiffany, "High Court Influences on Land Tenure Patterns in American Samoa," *Oceania* 49, no. 4 (June 1979), 258-269, and W. Tiffany, "Applicability of Western Judicial Concepts to Polynesian Land Disputes: High Court Use of the Adverse Possession Principle in American Samoa," *Oceania* 52, no. 2 (December 1981), 136-153.

20. I deal here with *rights,* which concept gives a good approximation of the reality, an approximation lost when segmented into primary, secondary, and subsidiary rights (and so forth) on the basis of observations made from a Western viewpoint. See the pragmatic and excellent discussion of Fijian land tenure by Rutz, who shows how wrong in fact are the official notions about communal ownership of land written into the Native Lands Ordinance of 1905. Rutz, "Fijian Land Tenure."

21. Cf. Chapelle, "Customary Land Tenure in Fiji," 73ff.

22. Cf. P. J. Epling, "Lay Perception of Kinship: A Samoan Case Study," *Oceania* 37, no. 4 (June 1967), 260-280; Jean Guiart, "Généalogies équivoques en Nouvelle-Calédonie," in *Langues et Techniques, Nature et Société* vol. 2 (Paris: Klincksiek, 1972), 37-51.

23. Cf. Jean Guiart, "Un problème foncier exemplaire en Nouvelle-Calédonie: La vallée de Tchamba," *Le Monde Non-Chretien,* ns (July-December 1960), 182-196.

24. A. B. Deacon, *Malekula: A Vanishing People in the New Hebrides* (London: George Routledge, 1934). I checked Deacon's data, as admirably put together by Camilla Wedgwood, on the spot with his principal informant, Amarantus, in the fall of 1950.

25. Cf. Guiart, *Structure de la chefferie,* chapter on Lifou.

26. Cf. Ralph Piddington, "A Note on Karadjeri Social Organization," *Oceania* 41, no. 4 (June 1971), 239-243, who questions the value of a Western concept of ownership among Australian Aborigines.

27. Ogan, "Nasioi Land Tenure," is one of the rare authors not writing in terms of specific landowning groups and presenting, for the matrilineal Nasioi of Bougainville, a more flexible approach.

28. "Right of" or "claims to" direct use, as defined by Ron Crocombe, "An Approach to the Analysis of Land Tenure Systems," in Lundsgaarde, ed., *Land Tenure in Oceania,* 1-17. In my view, corroborating Crocombe, there are no systems of land tenure as such, but systems of rank and of control of the environment, which take land tenure into account. Subsidiary rights may be added. Residual rights are peculiarly important, since they can be resurrected even after many generations have passed. The introduction of cash crops inevitably brought great changes, except as regards the coconut tree, which can be worked for copra at the same time as yams or sweet potatoes are planted underneath. (As Codrington noted long ago, ownership of the land and of the trees planted on the same land can differ.) See Crocombe, *Land Tenure in the Pacific.*

29. It is interesting to note how Lamont Lindstrom came to the same conclusion about the link between name giving, land, and social status, proposing more or less the same view, including changing names by collective fiat (or name stealing, as first noted by Bateson, *Naven).* Lamont Lindstrom, "Personal Names and Social Reproduction on Tanna, Vanuatu," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 94, no. 1 (March 1985), 27-45. My complete survey in 1952 of names and social statuses, published in Guiart, *Un siècle et demi de contacts culturels à Tanna* (Nouvelles-Hébrides) (Paris: Publications de la Société des Océanistes, 1956), gave a good half of the clues needed.

30. For the beginning of an anthropology of names see, in addition to works by Bateson and Lindstrom already cited, William L. Rodman and Margaret Rodman, "Rethinking Kastom: On the Politics of Place Names in Vanuatu," *Oceania* 55, no. 4 (June 1985), 242-251; James West Turner, "Some Reflections on the Significance of Names in Matailobau, Fiji," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 100, no. 1 (March 1991), 7-24. A reviewer in *Oceania* once asked why I published such long lists of names. The answer is that these lists, in their organized way, are the real models in working order; they are closer to the everyday life of the people than the structural rules favored so long by social anthropology.

31. Maurice Leenhardt, *Documents neo-calédoniens* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1932). In the same way, Lévi-Strauss's recent proposal of *maison* (house) instead of lineage or clan is also practical with little danger of confusing the discussion.

32. The use of the term "chief" here is pragmatic. Although commonly used over two centuries, the term is not without its problems.

33. In writing about "tribute," many authors have said turtles were reserved for the chief's table. In fact, once brought inside the chief's courtyard, killed and cooked there, turtles are eaten by the chiefly family, its servants of both sexes, *and the very people* who caught the turtle and presented it in the first place.

34. An example comes from the village of Jozip, in Lifou, where the chiefly line for generations on end kept the coastal area planted in coconuts, to make copra for its own benefit, through the simple device of never convening the meetings that could deal with redistribution at times when a lineage had been extinguished or reduced to females only. More recently, the population explosion has forced this redistribution as coconut groves are transformed to village plots for housebuilding.

35. See Guiart et al., *Système des titres.*

36. Christina Toren, "All Things Go in Pairs, or the Sharks Will Bite: The Antithetical Nature of Fijian Chiefship," *Oceania* 64, no. 3 (March 1994), 197-216.

37. The chief's legitimate wife cannot do this.

38. José Garanger, *Archéologie des Nouvelles-Hébrides: Contribution à la connaissance des îles du Centre* (Paris: ORSTROM and Publications de la Société des Océanistes, no. 30, 1972).

39. This contrasts with the demographic disasters on Eromanga and Aneityum, fueled by constant reintroduction of gonorrhea. The strong-willed kava drinkers of Tanna escaped this tragedy.

40. Jean Guiart, *Un siècle et demi.*

41. Cf. John Lynch and Kenneth Fakamuria, "Borrowed Moieties, Borrowed Names: Sociolinguistic Contact between Tanna and Futuna-Aniwa, Vanuatu," *Pacific Studies* 17, no. 1 (March 1994), 79-91. I do not agree with the notion that institutions in Melanesian-language-speaking islands are necessarily borrowed from Polynesian islands, even if these are nearby. The implication is of a form of cultural superiority inherent in Polynesia, which cannot be scientifically verified. See Jean Guiart, "A Polynesian Myth and the Invention of Melanesia," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 91, no. 1 (March 1982), 139-144. It is more likely that borrowing is done by a demographically smaller society from a larger one, and most Polynesian outliers are quite small. Thus, the Polynesian outliers in Ouvéa, Ivira, and Emae show strong borrowing from Melanesian neighbors, evidently through marriage as in the case of Futuna-Aniwa from Tanna.

42. Parallel to the two nonmarital, political and ceremonial moieties in northern New Caledonia, Ohot and Hwaap, lives a third group, composed of the fishermen's groups settled along the west coast of the island. These refuse to be part of the others and call themselves Gwalaap. Special marital practices for chiefly lines only (for example, cross-cousin marriage permitted once in a generation to the Hienghène and Pouebo chiefly lines) may

be an adaptation to the nineteenth-century demographic situation or a result of chiefs representing the ideal model, all others marrying as they will. Intermarriage at the chiefly level had the consequence of constraining war between those lineages. These chiefs tended to stay alive in wars.

43. The exception was the *yohnanaan*, the woman paid for introducing youths to sex life. Tannese women stoutly refused to see this practice come back.

44. It would be interesting to know if the latter's death on Eromanga had something to do with this.

45. See C. B. Humphreys, *The Southern New Hebrides: An Ethnological Record* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926); and Guiart, *Un siècle et demi.* Katharine Luomala, in her monograph on Māui, did cite these instances, but without drawing the obvious conclusions. Katharine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-Thousand-Tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, no. 198 (Honolulu: The Museum, 1949).

46. A modem addition to the local legend says that I visited him there in the fall of 1952. I found that, without prompting on my part, a wide road had been cut beforehand by the so-called John Frum cult followers, allowing an easy walk to the summit. I found, too, that fieldwork went much more smoothly from that time on.

47. A good part of the information presented by Joël Bonnemaison is of this type. See his *La dernière île* (Paris: Arlea and ORSTOM, 1986) and *Tanna, les hommes-lieux* (Paris: ORSTOM, 1987). Bonnemaison is a geographer, not an anthropologist, and shows an unfortunate tendency to discard any data coming from Tannese who supported the independence movement. Those who appeared to be in favor of continued French rule were regarded as good informants, others being classified as acculturated and not to be trusted. His published data must be evaluated in that light.