AGNATION, ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES, AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN CHOPI SOCIETY

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Contents

Figures

Maps

Cases

PART ONE

THE PROBLEMS AND THEIR SETTING

Chapter I

Introduction

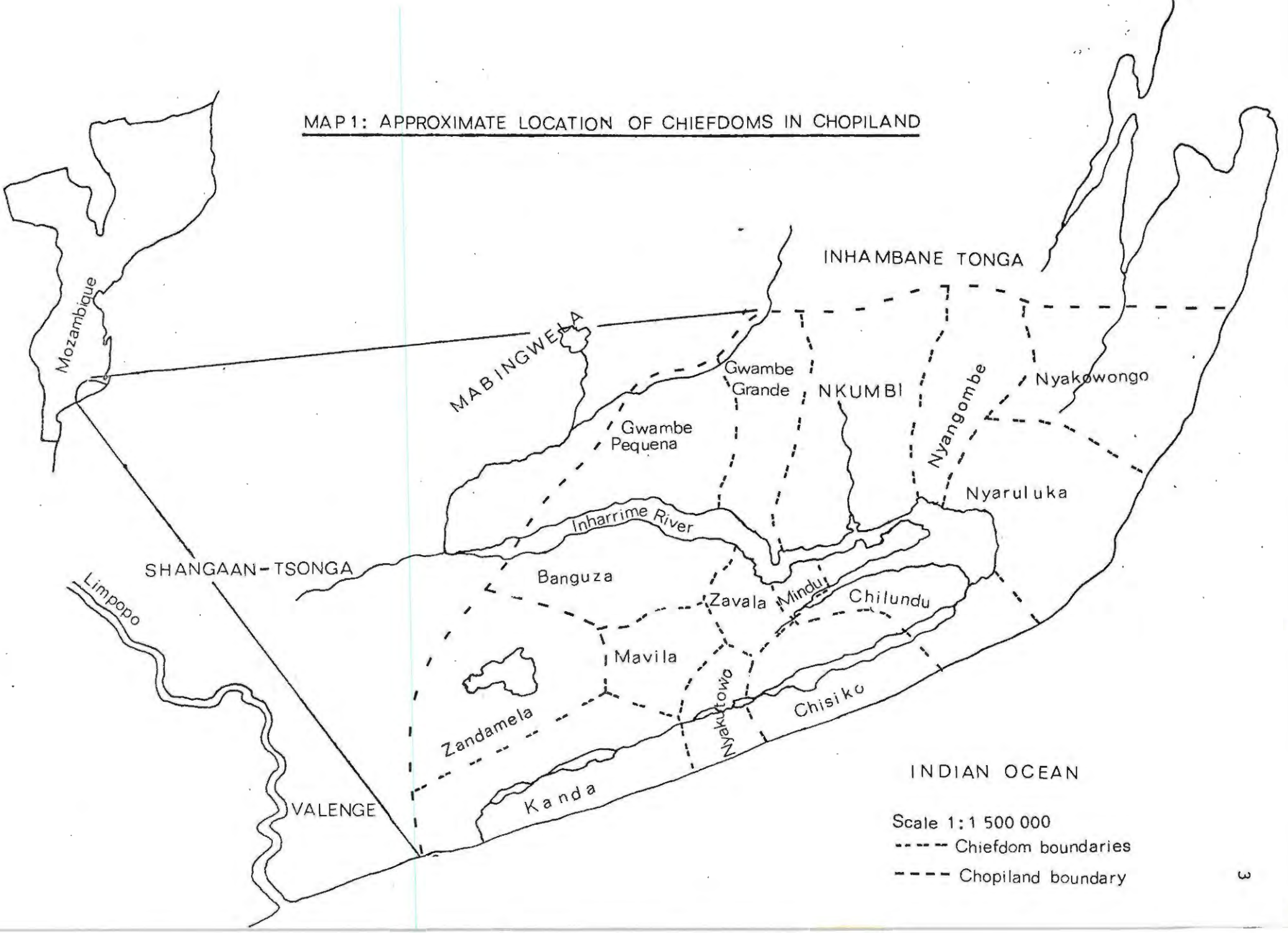
Ecology and Environment

The Chopi are one of the smallest ethnic groupings in Mozambique, inhabiting a small tract of land which is bounded on the southern and eastern sides by the Indian Ocean, longditude 34°E on the western flank and latitude 24°S to the north. Map 1 provides an illustration of the position of the Chopi, both in relation to neighbouring peoples and in its setting in the southern part of Mozambique. Despite the relatively small land area in which they live, the population density is one of the highest in all of Mozambique, being 20-40 people per square kilometre (Atlas do Mocambique). The total population of the Chopi has been estimated at 240396. (Herrick et. al. 1969:66) but these figures must be treated with caution, as censuses are rare and inadequately managed.

Chopiland is entirely low-lying, the area being dominated by the hydrographic basin of the Inharrime river, which is a broad, slightly saline river which flows into a series of lagoons that run southwards parallel to the coastline with only a bank of sand dunes separating them from the ocean itself. The country to the north of the river is mostly undulatory lowlands, heavily wooded, except for the occasional grassy basin, or where the vegetation has been cleared for agricultural purposes. The small ridges and hills that form the higher areas seldom rise to a height of more than 200 metres above sea level, while the low lowlying areas are often as little as 30 metres above sea level even 100 kilometres inland.

To the south of the river one finds a triangular shaped stretch of territory which is predominantly low lying and marshy. The centre of this area is occupied by a shallow lake (which is greatly reduced in size in the dry season) called Marangwa. Throughout the region, the soil is of an extremely sandy nature, which provides many problems for the

MAP 1: APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF CHIEFDOMS IN CHOPILAND



agriculatural Chopi, not least of which being that when it rains the sandy surface becomes hard-packed and the rain merely runs off. The paucity of topsoil (fertile soil is found to a depth of about 15cm.) also produces difficulties in relation to ploughing. Tractor or oxen ploughing turns too large an amount of soil, exposing the infertile soil beneath. One finds therefore that the Chopi till the soil with a small hand-hoe (nkwati).

The climate is semi-tropical with very hot summers and warm winters. The district has an indice of aridity of 30-40 and a rainfall of about 35 inches per year. The soil, climate, topography and rainfall are sufficient to produce good crops of cassava, maize, groundnuts, pumpkins, calabash, sweet potato, bananas, pawpaws and pineapples. Perhaps more important than any of these are the indigenous trees and plants which are used by the Chopi. Most notable of these is probably the cashew tree (which is not indigenous, but which now forms an essential part of the forests). The cashew fruit comprises two parts - a fleshy, juicy fruit, the shape, but not the colour, of a green pepper, beneath which protrudes the shell of the cashew nut. The red or yellow fleshy fruit is predominantly used for making either a type of cider, or it is distilled to make a strong alcoholic beverage called sope.

The other important tree that is extensively used by the Chopi is indigenous, and is called ucusu. This is a versatile tree, which is used to make wooden utensils, and its fruit provides both food and a soap-like substance, used for washing.

The Social and Cultural Context

In general features of society and culture, the Chopi have many similarities with the Tsonga who surround them, and yet they are significantly different in some aspects. The Chopi are a small pocket in the midst of a very large area of so-called Tsonga-Shangaan peoples. Earlier writers, such as the Junods and Tracey have, I believe, overemphasised the uniqueness of the Chopi. It has been argued, for example,

that the Chopi and Inhambane Tsonga (to the immediate north of the Chopi) are in some sense autochthonous (vide, for example, H.-P. Junod 1927), but there seems little evidence to support this contention. Certainly, there are important social and cultural features which distinguish the Chopi from their neighbours (some of which will be dealt with shortly) but, when compared with the Nguni and Sotho to the south and west, they undoubtedly form part of the Tsonga culture-area.

H.-P. Junod, in his classic The Life of a South African Tribe, has provided an overview of Tsonga society dating back to the turn of the century, and in many respects, the Tsonga have changed little. The salient features which set them apart from other southern African Bantu-speaking peoples include their economic activities, for they depend almost entirely on cultivation. Tsonga and Chopi practice swidden aagriculture[1] using fields for periods of about five years before either leaving them fallow or abandoning them altogether. Cattle are rare because of tsetse fly, and goats are the most common form of livestock, and fowl are plentiful (both of which are used for sacrifice in ritual). In this they differ from Sotho and Nguni, who use cattle as sacrificial animals, but who are similar to the Shona and other central African peoples, who commonly use fowl in sacrifice. Coastal or riverine Tsonga and Chopi also commonly trap and eat fish which, traditionally, many Sotho and Nguni groups did not, because of a taboo placed on fish in those societies. The Tsonga culture-area is also characterised by political systems which are headed by autonomous chiefs, each ruling over a small chiefdom which comprises several sub-chiefdoms and smaller units. Perhaps because of the relative abundance of land, the Tsonga have no centralized seat of power in the Nguni mode. Even the conquering dynasty of Soshangane and his grandson

(1) Vayda (1961: 346) quotes Conklin (1954: 133) as defining swidden agriculture as, 'always the impermanent agricultural use of plots produced by the cutting back and burning off of vegetative cover.'

Ngungunyane lasted only seventy-odd years.

It is in the field of kinship that the Tsonga grouping differs most markedly from their neighbouring Southern Bantu. While the Nguni and Sotho have the Iroquois-type system of kinship terminology, the Tsonga (including the Chopi and Inhambane Tonga) possess variations of the Omaha-type. Briefly, the main differences between these two types of system are to be found in the terms applied to cross-cousins. In both systems, parallel cousins are assigned sibling terms, but in the Iroquois-type, both sets of cross-cousins are called by one term (Nguni: umzala; Sotho: motswala). In Omaha systems, maternal cross-cousins are called 'mother' and 'mother's brother' (or 'mother's father') for female and male referents respectively, and paternal cross-cousins are called 'grandchild' (Chopi MBs: koko, MBd: mame, FZs/d: ntukulu).

The kin terms are of particular relevance when read with exogamy rules. The Tsonga forbid marriage with any person of one's father's or mother's clan, which is also the case with most Nguni. This is in strong contrast to the Sotho, who permit marriage with both father's and mother's relatives and, indeed, prefer marriages with MBd and even FBd (a person regarded as one's 'sister'). Thus, while many Sotho groups such as the Lobedu (and the Nguni Swazi), practise matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, which has the effect of linking any one descent-group to two others, as wife-givers and wife-receivers respectively, the Chopi-Tsonga system has the effect of spreading marriage alliances throughout society, so that any one clan is linked to a multiplicity of others. This phenomenon, as I hope to demonstrate in the body of the dissertation, is one of the main contributory factors which give rise to another feature of what I believe to be a characteristic of Tsonga societies: the marked degree of individuality, or at least latitude, for individual expression and choice of action to be found among Mozambique peoples.

Having placed the Chopi in their broad context as being a part the Tsonga culture-area, it must now be pointed out that there are also

marked differences between the Chopi and their Tsonga neighbours. Perhaps the most noticeable of these is language, for chiChopi is very different to the Tsonga and Shangaan dialects that are spoken by their neighbours to the south and west (the Inhambane Tonga to the north speak a language that is incomprehensible to both Chopi and Tsonga). There are, of course, vast differences in dialect among the Tsonga-Shangaan peoples who stretch from the Save River to Kosi Bay, but they all exhibit Nguni influence, probably because of conquest by Soshangane and his Zulu invaders.

Map 1 shows that Chopiland is bounded on the east and south by the Indian Ocean and that the north east is bounded by the land of the Inhambane Tonga. These Tonga, as has been mentioned, speak a language which is mutually incomprehensible with Chopi. In general culture and political organization however, they are very similar. There has been much marriage and interpenetration between the two peoples and they have religious beliefs and practitioners that are almost identical. Their cosmology is peopled with malevolent spirits, ghosts, witches and their familiars, which provide much work for the many diviners and spirit mediums to be found in both societies. Indeed, the agents of misfortune and the ways of dealing with them are another characteristic of the entire Tsonga grouping which links them to Central Africa and distinguishes them from the Nguni and Sotho. The Inhambane Tonga are generally more westernized than the Chopi, no doubt because they are clustered around the port of Inhambane, and have been in contact first with Arabs, then Portuguese, for a number of centuries (Portuguese contact began in 1498).

To the north, one finds Shangaan [1] and Tswa peoples. The Tswa appear to be a Tsonga group that was heavily influenced by Zulu, because they have a number of Nguni words in their lexicon. They are

(1) The name Shangaan derives from Soshangane who, with a band of followers, fled from Shaka Zulu. He conquered and/or plundered the whole of southern Mozambique, and it appears that those Tsonga tribes which he conquered were thereafter called after him.

identified (by non-Tswa) with the Bushmen (San), and it is alleged that the characteristic sibilant (s) of the Tswa language derived from contact with San peoples. This is apparently a misapprehension: San languages are characterized by clicks, and a linguist informs me that the sibilant is characteristic of Shona dialects (C.H. Borland: personal communication). Nevertheless, the Tswa are identified with the San, and are called vaTswa (the Tsonga term for San or Bushmen) by their neighbours. The peoples to the west and south west of the Chopi are also called Shangaan, and are Tsonga in reality. The southern neighbours were studied by Dora Earthy circa 1920, and were then known as vaLenge, a name which has now disappeared. From her book and other publication s it is apparent that she was dealing with an area which comprised people from diverse backgrounds who had been thrown together as a result of the raids of the Nguni invaders, notably Soshangane, and more recently, his grandson, Ngungunyane.

The material culture of the Chopi differs quite markedly in some aspects from their neighbours, perhaps the most notable example being the fine xylophones, known as timbila, which they craft from a very hard wood. This craft is unique to the Chopi in Mozambique, as the infinite care and craftmanship which goes into the manufacture of an instrument is documented by Tracey in his book, Chopi Musicians.. The musicianship of the Chopi is highly regarded by Tracey and other musicologists, and is far more complex than that of any of their neighbours. The music is played in orchestras which range in size from about five timbila to massed orchestras of up to fifty. The music is intricate, being composed by an individual and rehearsed by the orchestra. There are also complicated dances and songs which are set to the music. The manufacture of bark cloth, though a dying craft, also set the Chopi aside from thier Shangaan and Thonga neighbours, who in pre-European times used to wear animal skins.

Above all else, it is the Chopi sense of identity which sets them

apart from other peoples with which they have contact. It is expressed in a feeling of pride in their 'Chopiness', an indefinable group identity. It is given focus in their language (chiChopi) patterns of marriage, which link the various clans to each other, cultural homogeneity, and most important, in their music, which chrystallizes their identity, and the lyrics of which often focus their in-group feelings against outsiders. The musicians and dancing teams incorporate aspects of segmentation, with fission and fusion of the group, which is determined by the scale of the opposition. Thus there are contests between headman's districts, which groups combine if the contest is between chiefdoms, until one finds on the goldmines of South Africa that all Chopi identify with their musicians at Sunday dances, and it is here, more than in any other aspect, that they are made aware of their identity. Indeed, the Chopi are aware of their musical and dancing talents, and regard the efforts of other peoples with a great deal of disdain (cf. chapter ten).

Like most southern Bantu, the Chopi are subsistence cultivators, living in scattered homesteads. They are not pastoralists, having very few cattle. Their livestock comprises mostly goats, supplemented by pigs and poultry, with the first and last mentioned being used for ritual slaughter. The ideational system of the people asserts an agnatic kinship system, but observation of action patterns reveals cognitively unacknowledged, but very important matrilateral ties and what I have termed 'alternative structures'. In the field of kinship, however, it is almost as if there exists a latent bilateral system or what Firth has called an ambilateral system (R. Firth 1929; 1963:30-32) which can be activated by an individual.

It will have been noticed that I have been referring to the Chopi as a people rather than a tribe. This is because they lack an overall circumscribed political structure, which I regard as a prerequisite of a tribe. Yet the Chopi do have a common culture and identity and to call them a 'people' appears more accurate.

Thus the Chopi people are divided into fifteen autonomous chiefdoms, each chief acknowledging no superior. The chiefdoms vary in size, but average about 15 000 people, with the largest having a population as high as 22 000. Despite the political autonomy of the chiefdoms, there is a large volume of interaction on the grass roots level between chiefdoms. Indeed, mobility of individuals and the distribution of areas of origin of spouses is proof of this, as is later demonstrated. Each chiefdom is divided into sub-chiefdoms, headman's districts, sub-headman's districts, and lastly, but most importantly, from the point of view of everyday interaction, the vicinage.

Historical background

The history of the Chopi presents a number of problems to an ethnographer. The main difficulaty is the paucity of written records, which has resulted in a tendency to rely on oral traditions, which are notoriously inaccurate. One must therefore treat any reconstruction with caution. The work of H.-P. Junod appears to be largely based on oral tradition, but he fails to indicate sources, which makes it difficult to evaluate his work. Even so, much of his work is contradictory, and most of my own reconstructions are at variance with his. It is unfortunate that most writers who have dealt with the Chopi since Junod's work was published, have tended to accept his assertions uncritically. This has compounded some glaring errors, not least of which being a misconception as to the size and extent of Chopiland.

It is beyond the scope of this brief introduction to go into great detail, but I must take issue with H.-P. Junod on the question of the true extent of Chopiland. Junod (1927) asserts that the northern limit of Chopiland is the Inharrime river, and Tracey (1949) publishes a map of Chopiland (at end of book) which depicts a triangular stretch of territory to the south of the Inharrime river. Even in the 1970 reprint of this book, Tracey ignores the people to the north of the river. I confess my interest in the problem is subjective: my fieldwork

was done in the Chiefdom of Nkumbi, which, as can be seen on Map 1 (page 3), is to the north of the river.

My opinion needs little support beyond making the point that linguistically and culturally the people on either side of the river are identical save for small differences in dialect, and tellingly, the people to the north identify themselves as Chopi. Also, all writers appear to agree that when Father André Fernandes wrote in 1560 (G.M. Theal 1898: 141) from the chiefdom of Nyakowongo, he was indeed among the predecessors of the modern Chopi. Map 1 demonstrates that this was, and is, one of the northern chiefdoms. Finally, Junod himself (1927-29: 60) asserts that there were two original clans which comprised the 'true vaChopi', these being Nkumbi and Vilankulu. He believed both to have all but disappeared, but if he had inquired to the north of the Inharrime, he would have discovered that the largest chiefdom of the area is that of Nkumbi, with an estimated population of 22 000 people.

One feature stands out when one views the history of the people known as Chopi today, and that is their fragmentary past. The first written record relating to this people dates from 1560, with the correspondence of two missionaries, Father André Fernandes and Father Dom Goncalo Silveira (G.M. Theall 1898: 54-129). They recorded that they were living among a group of invaders called Mokalanga, while all the other Africans around them were called Bongas. From that time to the present, there is evidence of immigrant groups settling among the indigenous population.

These groups of immigrants become merged, over a number of years, into the general social and cultural milieu which is the Chopi nation. To what extent they influenced, and were influenced by, the indigenous population can only be speculation, but it is reasonable to suppose that each affected the other to a greater or lesser extent. The Mokalanga immigrants reported by Fernandes seem to have been a fairly small group, but they appear to have possessed the xylophone, which today is perhaps

the greatest distinguishing feature of the Chopi. The description of the 'Bongas', who appeared to be the indigenous people, tallies in certain respects with what we know of the Chopi, especially the fact that they were clothed in bark cloth.

That there were later immigrations there can be no doubt. The oral tradition of most clans in Chopiland today points to this fact. It is frustrating to try to find a clan which can claim to be of 'true' Chopi origin; most can point to a genesis among other peoples, such as Ndau, Tswa, Thonga, Sotho, Shangaan, etc. Even H.-P. Junod, who was a protagonist of the Chopi being a 'pure' tribe admits to this (H.-P. Junod 1927-29: 60).

Junod, in this same article on Chopi origins, asserts a Bvesha and Venda derivation to certain clans. He does not reveal his sources, but they appear to be based on oral tradition. That there is a connection between Chopi and Venda is fairly plain, but whether it was initiated from the Mozambique or South African side is uncertain, although many Tsonga fled to the Transvaal to escape Soshangane. Both the Chopi and the Venda play xylophones, although there are significant differences in the design and use. There is a Chopi clan called Gwambe, and a neighbouring tribe of the Lobedu is also so called.

Another parallel worth noting is the social importance placed on the person of the father's sister, both in the north-eastern Transvaal and among the Chopi. This woman wields influence and authority to a far greater extent than among other Mozambique and South African peoples, and most significantly, may perform ritual functions if her brother, who would normally perform these, is either absent or dead. (Cf. E.J. and J.D. Krige 1965: 75-77.)

The similarities in certain aspects of culture between the Chopi and the peoples of north-eastern Transvaal may also be partly due to their common early contact with the Shona-speaking Karanga of Rhodesia. It

is known that the Venda are of Karanga extraction (Junod 1927) and the Mokalanga group referred to above by Fernandes also claimed to have fled Rhodesia, and are undoubtedly a Karanga group.

The historical fact of the patchwork-like composition of the Chopi people gives emphasis to certain themes that I draw throughout this thesis: I maintain that while agnatic kinship does play an important part in social organization, it is of less importance than that which one encounters in other southern African peoples; allied to this, we find an emphasis on allegiances with diverse people, including a large proportion of non-agnatic kin. This is not surprising when one discovers that there is in any one headman's district a number of clan fragments which are of widely differing origins.

The fragmentation of the Chopi, and indeed all the peoples of southern Mozambique, was either brought about or greatly magnified by the invasion of three Zulu groups which were fleeing from Shaka. These were led by Nxaba, Zwangendaba, and Soshangane respectively, the last mentioned having the greatest and most lasting impact on the area. The Nguni impact cannot be underestimated and I therefore devote some space to a brief reconstruction of this. The two sources which have been most useful are A.T. Bryant (1929) and P.R. Warhurst (1965).

After a series of unsuccessful campaigns against Shaka, the Ndwandwe clan was finally defeated in 1819. Shortly afterwards Soshangane and a small group of followers, which Bryant numbers at 'not more than a hundred' (1929: 448) fled north-eastwards into Mozambique. Their presence onthe east coast was recorded in 1822 by Captain W. Owen of the British navy, who estimated his force at two to three hundred (Bryant 1929: 449).

At about this time Soshangane attacked and defeated Nxaba, who had preceded him from Zululand, and who then fled northwards through Chopiland, raiding and plundering as he went (Nxaba's group, some time and many battles later, settled on the shores of Lake Victoria). Soshan-

gane remained on the banks of the Limpopo for some time, strengthening his forces by raids on Tembe, Tsonga, and Chopi. In about 1825, the formidable Nguni moved northwards across the Limpopo into the territory of what is today Chopiland, laying waste the countryside, taking women, and conscripting men into the army. Soshangane slowly moved north to the Sabi (Save) River, and at the point where it intersects the present day Rhodesian border, he set up camp, which was to become his capital.

In quick succession, Soshangane fought and defeated his two Nguni rivals who were not far from his capital, Zwangendaba and Nxaba. Both fled north westwards through Rhodesia, Zwangendaba's people to settle near Lake Malawi. Soshangane now ruled a vast empire stretching from the Zambezi in the north to well south of the Limpopo. He plundered far and wide, shattering tribes, and such was his power that he attacked Lourezo Marques in 1834, killing the Portuguese garrison and the govenor.

Soshangane died in about 1856, and a dispute over the succession took place between his sons Mawewe and Mzila, the former emerging victorious. A few years later, with Portutuese aid, Mzila overthrew his half -brother. This internecine struggle gave the ravaged countryside some respite, and it was not until about 1880 that the Nguni marauders began their pillage on a comparable scale again. This was when Mzila died and was succeeded by the notorious Ngungunyane.

It was Ngungunyane who had the greatest impact upon the Chopi, for while they had experienced occasional raids from the other Nguni rulers, Ngungunyane moved his capital from the Save River to a position fifty kilometres north of the Limpopo, which today is called Manjacaze (a corruption of the name of his capital, Manhlagazi). This is on the western boundary of Chopiland, which became the favourite hunting ground of the raiders. In 1891 Ngungunyane brutally subdued an uprising by the Chopi, which was one of the few

real occasions of resistance with which he had to deal until his capture in 1895. His ruthless methods and widespread raiding parties earned for him the title 'disturber of the land'.

When Ngungunyane moved south from the capital on the Save River, his army comprised a vast majority of Ndau, the Shona-speaking people who inhabited that area, with a minority of Tsonga, and even fewer Zulu. Indeed, it is quite remarkable that so few Nguni warriors who originally left Zululand, could have such a vast influence over so enormous an area and population. Testimony to their influence is the huge area and number of people who today are called Shangaan (after Soshangane).

It will be recalled that Soshangane left Zululand with about 100 warriors. Even if this is an underestimation, this group would have been decimated, not so much by enemies, but rather by illness, such as malaria, bilharzia and dysentry. This in fact is the fate that befell Shaka's warriors who were sent to destroy Soshangane in 1828. The failure of this campaign was one of the contributory factors in Shaka's final downfall.

It is no doubt because of the factor of illness which greatly reduced their numbers together with the fact that as conquerors they took concubines rather than wives, that Nguni culture and language did not become widely accepted[1]. Thus, even though the Nguni culture would be expected to predominate, it does not. A woman who is a concubine will raise her children in her own fashion (she will not have learnt the language or culture of her master, and he will probably communicate with her in her own language). The children are constantly in their mother's care and thus grow up as Chopi children, (or Tsonga, as the case may be). In a few generations all that will remain is the Nguni clan name, (assuming the conquered people to be patrilineal).

(1) I am indebted to Professor Monica Wilson for pointing this out to me. She makes this point in (1969: 80-82).

Although the cultural impact of the Nguni was small, the social impact was enormous. The raids that took place were largely for the purpose of feeding the army, so the targets tended to be crops. But at the same time women were captured, and men were conscripted into the army. This larger group needed more food, so there were more raids, etc. This process was interminable, and people often fled in the face of the raiders. Thus tribes became fragmented and mixed, and this is one of the reasons why the Chopi clans have traditions of diverse origins.

It has been suggested that the tribes of southern Mozambique lack highly centralized political systems because the Nguni either destroyed them or pre-empted them. This appears to me to be a facile argument. The early written records available and oral tradition, point to the fact that this region has always comprised many small autonomous chiefdoms, and there was an absence of any kingdom, such as flourished among the Zulu and Swazi. To summarize, it appears trom form a very early date, certainly before 1500, the inhabitants of the area known today as Chopiland were infiltrated by groups of immigrants from various directions - the Karanga (Mocalanga) from Rhodesia, Bvesha from the Transvaal, Tsonga from the south and west, Ndau and Inhambane Tonga, and finally of course, the Nguni. All these groups of diverse origins make up the Chopi today, together with the indigenous population.

Ironically, it seems that the Chopi owe what sense of identity they possess to the invading Nguni, who provided them for the first time with an external threat of a large scale which brought a self awareness and identity into sharp focus. To illustrate the conditions prior to the arrival of the Nguni, let us look at an oral tradition gathered by Dora Earthy (1933: 3) from one Johane Makamu:

> 'Starting long ago, when the VaNgoni had not yet arrived, the VaTsopi and VaLenge had been one race from very old indeed . . . when they see each other, they call each other by the direction of the winds, like this: on the side of the west, they call it VuLenge, . . . while all are of one race. Seeing the side of the east, they call it VuTsonga, and this means VuTshopi . . .'

Makwamu touches the heart of the matter when he says,

> 'And also after that when the VaNgoni arrived, they find all the countries with their own chiefs. And all the chiefs had fortified kraals and their people. The fortified kraals resemble cattle kraals. When the army of the VaNgoni arrived, then they run, they enter into their kraals. Also those chiefs, they did not join up with another chief, but each one reigned in his own kraal with his people, while they were all one race, the VaTsopi.'

The impression one gains is of an area which has cultural homogeneity, but politically was made up of contiguous yet autonomous chiefdoms. The invasions of Nxaba, Zwangendaba, and Soshangane provided the stimuli which forced the inhabitants of the land to band together on a scale greater than they had previously been accustomed, and which helped chrystallize their identity.

This argument gains credibility when one examines how the Chopi obtained their name, which was acquired at the time of the Nguni invasion. None of my informants could recall a name by which the Chopi were called prior to their present one. There are geographical names, clan names, names of chiefdoms etc., but none which symbolized the whole Chopi nation. Nor have any other writers recorded any such name.

It appears that the name was acquired at the time when the Nguni groups were moving northward and raiding as they went (roughly the year 1824). There are two versions of the story: the first, told by the Chopi themselves, claims that the Nguni, when they fought these people for the first time, were suprised by the weapons with which their opponents fought - the bow and arrow (as opposed to the Nguni weapons of shield, assegai and knobkerrie). The Nguni thereupon dubbed the archers 'vaChopi' (from kuchopa, which H.-P. Junod translates as 'the drawers of the bow').

The second (and more likely) version, is supplied by H.A. Junod in The Life of a South African Tribe, where he translates vaChopi as 'those who are transfixed with weapons', which is a rather free translation. He explains this by saying, 'as their country was the favourite hunting ground of Ngungunyane'. Both versions could con-

ceivably be correct, but it matters little which is the true explanation. The important consideration is that the name came about as a result of conflict with an outside group, and was not the chosen name of a self-conscious nation.

The question arises as to why Soshangane met with such success in his conquest of Mozambique. It appears that he left Zululand with only about a hundred supporters (Bryant 1929: 448, Wilson 1969: 100), a position exacerbated by the decimation of the Zulu by sickness (Wilson ibid: 101). Yet in a short space of time, he had managed to pillage and raid a vast area of land, bringing most of the Tsonga chiefs under his direct rule or suzerainty. The explanation I propose to put forward attempts to account for the relatively easy passage of the Nguni and takes issue with the argument that the present-day Tsonga culture trait of shallow, or non-existent lineages or kinship groups is a result of the Nguni raids, whch shattered chiefdoms and clans, leaving only 'truncated lineages'. In chapter five of this dissertation, it is asserted that Chopi 'lineages' in the area of study are, on average, three generations deep, and that this scarcely warrants the term, since it is little more than an extended family. A similar case can be made out for Tsonga groups such as the Tembe who, it has been claimed, have no lineages at all (Krige 1969; W. Felgate: personal communication; Preston-Whyte, 1974: 195-6).

The hypothesis that the existence today of shallow lineages can be explained by invasion and, in the scattering of the local population, lineages became truncated, appears to be focused on epiphenomena, and not the real issues. Surely, if lineages of say, six generations in depth originally existed, then there is no reason shy, after the traumatic event, the six-generation system should not regenerate. I believe a far more convincing case can be made for the explanation that the Tsonga (and especially the Chopi) have always had a kinship system characterized by shallow lineages and, perhaps, a weak

agnatic principle. The early missionary letters of André Fernandes (G.M. Theall 1898: 61-152), and the oral tradition recorded by Earthy (quoted above), give the impression of small autonomous political units. Unfortunately, there is no comment on the kinship groupings. If one could take models of Zulu and Chopi/Tsonga societies of the recent past and project them back to some time before 1820, then a cursory comparison would show that while Zulu have a strong agnatic principle and lineage depth of about six generations, among the Chopi, agnation is weak and lineage depth is three generations. Furthermore, the Zulu have an age-grade and regiment system, together with a centralized political system, while the Chopi do not have such pantribal institutions. Thus, if conflict were to occur between the two groups, one would expect the greater organizational capacity of the Zulu (through their social institutions) to give them an advantage over the Chopi.

Soshangane, despite the small size of his original band, quickly conscripted conquered Tsonga into his regiment until he had a sizeable army, well trained and disciplined. Against this, one finds the Chopi/Tsonga, who had no practice in uniting on a large scale. They inhabit an area where, even today, land is not scarce, and there is a tendency to form small, self-sufficient groups (also, kinship groupings are small and weak, vide infra). What groupings exist that are wider than kinship and which may act in a corporate fashion? It seems that a small territorial grouping (which is called a vicinage herein) is the level at which social and political life is lived most intensely. The vicinage is a co-operating group of kinsmen and neighbours headed by a leader. But this is a low-level political organization, and higher-level groupings, such as the headman's district and sub-chiefdom, are poorly articulated and social action at these levels is almost impossible. So then, the Chopi (and I suspect, most Tsonga), do not conceptualize their kinship on a large scale, so that this is of no use when a principle for organizing large scale defence is

needed. In territorial and political groupings, the vicinage appears to be the only truly effective unit, and this usually consists of only about six or seven homesteads (and therefore about ten fighting men). Clearly, such small units would be unable to stand up to a well-disciplined band of over a hundred men.

My argument is in some ways similar to the recent debate over the nature of Nuer and Dinka interaction. The debate began with Sahlins' 1961 article which postulated that the Nuer segmentary lineage system was an (evolutionary) adaption which was particularly well-suited to predatory expansion, especially against Dinka, who could not organize as efficiently, nor on as large a scale (ibid: 323, 328, 335). Newcomer uses a similar, but more environmentally based, argument to Sahlins, claiming that the segmentary lineage is a 'social mutation' (1927: 7) that is particularly well adapted to warlike activities. He quotes Lienhardt as saying that 'Dinka recognise that Nuer are able to unite on a larger scale than Dinka' (ibid: 8). Finally, Glickman also argues that Nuer have greater organizational capacity than Dinka (1972(a): 587). Because of the regular operation of their segmentary lineage system, Nuer are used to co-operating on a large scale, while Dinka do not have the same ability, and consequently are on the receiving end of Nuer cattle raids and territorial expansion. My argument is not that the Zulu have segmentary lineages (they don't), but that their kinship groups operate at a higher level, and thus, when combined with their age grade and regimental system, gives them the edge over more individualistic societies, such as the Tsonga. This then, may explain why Soshangane and his fellow Zulu, Nxaba and Zwangendaba, all overran the local Tsonga population with apparent ease.

The People

Perhaps the first thing a visitor to Chopiland notices is the gregarious nature of the people. Vasco da Gama, in his voyage of exploration at the end of the 15th Century, was attacked every time

he tried to land for fresh water, until he reached the land of the Chopi. Here he was welcomed, and he named the place aguada da boa paz, 'the watering-place of good peace', and the terra da boa gente, the 'land of the good people'. (1) Indeed, I was fortunate to find myself among such co-operative people who, after the inevitable initial polite restraint, were remarkably generous in their acceptance of my wife and myself. Among themselves, the Chopi spend much time visiting, drinking, and passing the time of day with friends and neighbours. They get great enjoyment out of congregating to hear an orchestra of xylophones play, accompanying a team of dancers in a song and dance suite. These dances are held on regular occasions, frequently in the form of competition between neighbouring or rival districts, and the occasion becomes a mêlée of people seeking out old friends with whom to chat, gossip, and exchange bits of information.

A high value is placed on friendship (vide chapter seven), and Chopi recognise various types, ranging from casual acquaintances to a form of 'special' friendship, which is almost a form of blood brotherhood, a bond almost as strong as kinship. Interestingly, when I was collecting kin terms from one informant, he insisted on also giving me the term ndoni, which is the special friend. He explained that such a friend was 'as good as' a kinsman. An important aspect of social life which has received too little attention in the literature (with the notable exception of Gulliver, 1971), is that of neighbourhood and neighbourship. Chopi, who do not have large corporate kin groups, perforce have many neighbours who are not directly related by kinship, and a strong ethic of good neighbourliness has developed. Often one finds exchanges of small food products taking place between neighbours. A man returning from the forest with a basket of mushrooms, or a woman from the fields with a couple of sweet potatoes, will

(1) It has been thought that this last phrase referred to the Inhambane Tonga, but an historian now believes it was further south, in Chopi country (Axelson: personal communication).

often stop and share the goods with the people of the homestead next door.

There is a highly elaborated code of greeting, and to the interested observer, the relative status of the participants quickly becomes apparent. When a man greets another who is in high office, his demeanour is extremely respectful, eyes downcast, knees slightly bent and, if a handshake is proffered, the subordinate supports his right forearm with his left hand because, 'a chief's handshake is "heavy"' (important). Women are expected to treat their husbands and in-laws with similar respect in the greeting, sometimes kneeling to do so. For the most part however, a strong streak of egalitarianism is manifested, men greeting each other with terms of kinship or friendship, neither acceding to the other. The ordinary daily greeting follows a formalized pattern, with the initiator remarking on the time of day (for example, dichide, it (the sun) has risen; mitsikari, it is high; or diswide, it is setting). The second person repeats the one-word greeting, and then it is up to him to reciprocate the interest shown by asking, wahanya? 'you are alive?' There follows a long monologue, with the first speaker listing the state of health (physical and spiritual) of all his close kin, then detailing any events of interest which have occurred since their last meeting. Each remark made is acknowledged by a grunt or the word ina ('yes'). The roles are then reversed, the second speaker making an inventory of health and events of relevance to himself. This process can consume ten minutes, even between kinsmen or neighbours who saw each other only the day before.

Esther Goody (1973: 49) has likened greetings to gifts among the Gonja, and such a formulation seems no less true for the Chopi, for is takes the form of exchange of respect, and a greeting given demands its own reciprocation. It is considered grossly insulting for a person to pass another without participating in a greeting,

and even if one is in a hurry, the very least that decency demands is to shout dichide' before passing by. Even this is considered poor form, for no-one should be in such a hurry as to cut the greetings short. The usefulness of this system of formalized greetings should now be apparent. One of its main functions is to spread information, and news of the movements, state of health and activities of everyone within at least a headman's district, is available to anyone who is interested. The formalized salutation is therefore a vehicle of information and as such, can be manipulated. A man can keep a check on a political rival's activities, especially if he is courting support, or he can use the system as a 'grapevine' for disseminating false information about his own activities. On many occasions I heard interesting gossip in this way, only to find that it was not true.

Let us move now from symbolism in interaction to another idiom of symbolic exchange: that of food. Generosity is a value both preached and practiced, and no person would refuse a thirsty traveller a drink of water (indeed, no permission need be asked; one may drink from a homestead supply, no matter how low it is, or how far the woman of the home must go to fetch more). Food too, is freely shared, and women (working in the fields) often make a gift of raw cassava (manioc), groundnuts, or pawpaws to a passerby. On a more formal level, anyone who is more than a casual visitor to a homestead is offered food which, naturally, etiquette demands he should accept (on some days, for example, I was forced to eat three or four heavy meals in a morning as I went about my interviewing). Meat is particularly scarce and especially esteemed. Domesticated animals are only killed for rituals or celebrations, so any other meat is welcome. Men spend far more time hunting than their rewards merit, and many fish and set traps. Many men, when asked their reasons for participating in migrant labour, placed 'good meat' at the top of their lists. The desire

for meat is carried to extremes, so that traps are set for field mice and cane rats, and certain varieties of snake (especially python) are eaten.

The ethic of sharing and generosity is nowhere better illustrated than in the situation where a person walking past a homestead will shout, 'gunzala'.' ('I'm hungry') and he will invariably be offered some food. Much can be learned from this custom for, depending on context, the relationship between passerby and homestead owner is revealed. If the two are neighbours, kinsmen or friends, the fact of a gift of food being requested by the passerby, rather than offered by the resident, bespeaks of a relationship of amity and closeness. The food is gladly given, with no mercenary thoughts of immediate return; it is a relationship of long-term trust and affection (cf. Bloch 1973:75ff), it is a relationship of what Sahlins has called 'generalized reciprocity (1965:147). But the call of 'gunzala' goes out between mere acquaintances and sometimes strangers. In this context, the passerby is deliberately placing himself in a position of subordination or inferiority, for he is requesting food (it is not being offered) that he knows he is unlikely to be in a position to reciprocate (since he scarcely knows the giver). The gift is therefore unilateral or asymmetrical and is a symbolic demonstration of the superiority of the giver: the 'hungry' passerby can only reciprocate with the intangibles of gratitude and respect. The obligation incurred here is short-term and of no political consequence, but two men who are political rivals are careful not to allow themselves to participate in such exchanges, since it may result in a gain in prestige for the one or the other (cf. Strathern 1971:10).

The most pleasant time of year (in Chopi eyes) is midsummer. Work in the fields stops (only harvesting need be done) and all activity is concentrated upon the fallen fruit of the cashew tree. The fruit has a juicy, fleshy part, beneath which protudes the nut. The

inextricably part of the money economy, they have rationalized the situation to the extent that a person who has not been to the mines, is not regarded as being a man; migrancy is almost a form of secondary initiation. Migrant labour, and the effect of impinging administrative and wider economic structures have had a large impact on Chopi society. They have provided new areas for resourceful individuals to exploit, providing an environment where 'new men' can emerge: entrepreneurs, brokers, patrons, etc; and have provided new and political advantage in traditional spheres. Traditional political offices, such as chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen, are by no means irrelevant, but politics takes palce most intensely at the micro-political level of the vicinage (vide chapter four). In fact, migrancy has little effect on these higher offices, because they have traditionally been held by the older men (succession is adelphic).

In general, however, the Portuguese administration rested uncomfortably on the shoulders of the peasant. Although Mozambique was officially a part of greater Portugal, few Africans had any say in the wider political system of the Portuguese parliament. Furthermore, despite the absence of an official colour bar and the prejudice and discrimination that invariably accompanies such a construct, there was a large amount of de facto discrimination against blacks. One must hasten to add that there were, nevertheless, some opportunities for blacks to advance in the Administration, and the discrimination that did take place was of nowhere near the scale and harshness of the South African situation.

Mozambique was essentially a Portuguese colony. In 1951 the Portuguese attempted to divert anti-colonial attacks in bodies such as the United Nations, by changing their colonial terminology. Thus, the African colonies became known as 'overseas Provinces', and in 1973 the name Province was changed to 'State'. In fairness, most Portuguese regarded the African Colonies as being integral with the Metroppolitan State and refer toAfricans as Portuguese 'citizens'. But

nuts are stored and the pulpy portion is put into large earthenware pots and left to ferment. In this season, men and women congregate in convivial groups, drinking the fermented wine (mpwebwe) as they distil the rest into an extremely alcoholic fluid called sope. It is at this time too, that the older men and women, contented and relaxed, amuse their fellows with songs, stories and riddles. It is here that oral traditions are passed on, and minds are exercised on conundrums. It performs an important socializing purpose for the young men who will shortly go to the South African gold mines for the first time. The more experienced men set them imaginary problems to solve, many of which bear a close resemblance to those which are asked at the Chamber of Mines training centre, in tests used to select recruits for higher-responsiblity (and paid) jobs.

The relaxing period of midsummer soon gives way, however, to the hard work that characterizes the rest of the year. The normal daily round is arduous, men and women rising before dawn. Women and their daughters arise at about 4.30 a.m. to wash and go to fetch water, carrying it in earthen jars on their heads. By about 5.00 a.m. husbands and wives are in their fields, working side by side, to get the heavy work of the day done before the sun becomes unbearable. At about 10.00 a.m. they stop for their first meal of the day, which is usually the cold leftovers of the meal cooked the day before. Work in the fields now ceases as the sun reaches its zenith and the heat and humidity makes any heavy exercise intolerable. Men and women now visit their friends or sleep in the shade, until about 2.00 p.m., when they return to the fields. Work stops again some time before dusk, as the women return home to prepare the evening meal. After the meal, eaten in the twilight, people tend to go to bed unless they prefer the excitement of a séance at the homestead of the nearby n'anga (spirit medium). Not much night visiting is done however, because, people say, there are many thickets inhabited by ghosts, evil spirits and witches' familiars.

The Chopi diet is a healthy one, despite the paucity of protein in the form of meat (malnutrition is almost totally absent), and it is interesting to note the skill with which the fruits of the forests are used to supplement their diet. The variety of leaves, roots, vines and tubers that are assiduously collected by men and women (as well as mushrooms, which are in great profusion) ensure that one need never go hungry. The expertise with which Chopi use the bush around them, in hunting with their bows and arrows, the ingenious traps they set, and use of natural resources seems to point to a stage when hunting and gathering was their main source of sustinence. Their bushcraft extends to the manufacture of bark cloth, bark rope, beehives made from the outer bark of a tree, and small canoes fashioned from the bark of the same tree. Finally, the sandy countryside is like a newspaper to Chopi. They all recognise each other's footprints, and can follow a track with great skill.

The Impact of European Contact

This is very difficult to estimate because, despite nearly five centuries of contact with Europeans, very little has been written about the inhabitants of this part of Mozambique. The impact of the economic frontier has been large and, no doubt, traumatic. There is a demand for Western commodities, especially clothing and foodstuffs and, for the elitists, transistor radios and bicycles. Labour migration, predominantely to South Africa's gold mines, but also to Mozambique's towns (where work is poorly paid and scarce), has become a way of life. So too, have the well-known deleterious effects of migration: impoverishment of social life, (with many, sometimes 40 per cent, of the young men away), venereal disease, etc. Harris (1959, 1960) and RitaFerreira (1960) have debated the causes and effects of migrancy, and I do not wish here to enter the debate (1). Harris outlines an agreement between the Transvaal Chamber of Mines and the Portuguese authorities where by the latter will supply labour to the mines in return for the economic advantage of certain import

(1) A separate paper on labour migration is in preparation.

preferences that will be channelled through Lourenzo Marques to the South African hinterland. There is also an agreement that half of the migrant's wages are held back from him and only paid on his return to Mozambique, where the authorities deduct his taxes. To ensure migrancy, legislation exists in Mozambique that only allows 7 per cent of all male activities revolve around the homestead. Harris argues that this has been at the 'expense of the development of native agricultural enterprise' (1959: 63).

In reply, Rita-Ferreira argues that with the advent of pax Lusitano, tribal warfare ceased, European implements became widely used, and game is becoming extinct. All these factors, he claims, have reduced the economic work load of a Tsonga man to one month a year. He also asserts that men are not needed to clear fields because the Tsonga lowveld is sparce savannah with low trees, and that poor soil and rainfall has forced men to migrate. A balance must be struck between the two sides of this argument. Cause and effect are very difficult to separate and, while there is merit in some of the points made by both Harris and Rita-Ferreira, both seem misguided in other aspects. The latter's claim, for example, that men are not needed for the clearing of fields is true only for a small portion of southern Tsongaland, and it is argued (in chapter ten) that a class of entrepreneurs has arisen, who exploit the niche left by absent migrants: they hire out ploughing services on credit to such men. From interviews with informants, it appears that in the earlier days, many migrants went in search of work voluntarily, but today it seems that there is little choice. The taxation system of the Administration is undoubtedly a strong motivating factor, for penalties for tax-dodging are heavy. The mines are, however, recognised as a source of wealth (despite the low wages paid) and are a means of raising bridewealth money and cash for various enterprises, such as the purchase of a plough or barque, which may enable an individual to become an entrepreneur.

Now that the Chopi (and presumbaly, the Tsonga) have become

despite the changes of name, there was little change in the power structures and colonial policy. After the uprisings in Angola (1961) and Mozambique (1964) there was an easing of some of the repressive and humiliating policies employed by Portugal in Africa. The unpopular Chefe de poste (the use of local, often coloured, men as administrative overseers) was abolished, and corporal punishment was abandoned and forced labour reduced.

The assimilado system, whereby Africans could become certified as acculturated Portuguese was also phased out at about the time. This system was unpopular because to qualify, one had to renounce one's own culture and in effect become a black Portuguese, accepting their law and custom. It had its greatest effect in the urban areas, where it gave impetus to th emergence of a lower middle class from the black proletariat. In the rural areeas, few people became assimilados because it meant driving a wedge between themselves and their kinsmen and neighbours, and it was difficult to renounce one's own culture when surrounded by it. Western education has reached a minority of individuals in Mozambique. This is partly because of the war against Frelimo insurgents, which sapped 45 per cent of the Portuguese national budget, leaving few funds for development and education.. The position is exacerbated by the fact that in rural areas in the Catholic Church had a monopoly of rights to schooling, and no new Protestant missions, which might alleviate the shortage of schools were allowed into Mozambique. Ultimately then, the Chopi peasant had not the facilities eduction or opportunities to advance in the western economy, and consequently gained few of the advantages of it, while the political and administrative structures were keenly felt[1].

(1) The fieldwork for this dissertation, and the vast majority of the writing-up was, of course, completed before Portugal withdrew from Mozambique, handing over power to the Frelimo provisional government, pending full independance in June 1975.

Chapter II

Themes and theoretical orientations

The preceding chapter provides a general background, a setting, in which the problems that are isolated for discussion can be viewed in perspective. The aim of this chapter is to provide a statement of intent, and to introduce and clarify the main themes and methods employed in this dissertation and the fieldwork that preceded it. The theoretical orientations are herein established before they are developed in greater depth in later chapters, where the ethnographic foundation can be properly laid.

The Fieldwork

The original period of fieldwork was undertaken from late January to mid-December of 1969, a period of eleven months. Various other short trips, ranging from two weeks to a month have subsequently been made, with the aim of filling gaps that only became apparent during writing-up, and the checking and corroborating of my original findings. Information of a generalized nature has also been collected from Chopi men working on the Gold mines on the Witwatersrand. In all, this dissertation is the fruit of about 14 months of fieldwork.

The northern Chopi chiefdom of Nkumbi was selected for fieldwork, and for the first two months my wife and I were resident in the capital and hamlet of Chief Samusson Nkumbi, who kindly spent much time describing customs relating to marriage, succession, inheritance and law. During this period, I was also able to observe the numerous court cases that are brought to the chief's court every day. This rather pleasant and gentle introduction to Chopi society and culture was further aided by my interpreter, Alberto Jotham Chirrucco[1], who patiently guided my hesitant stepts along the thorny path of a foreign language.

The only available Chopi Dictionary and Grammar were in Portuguese

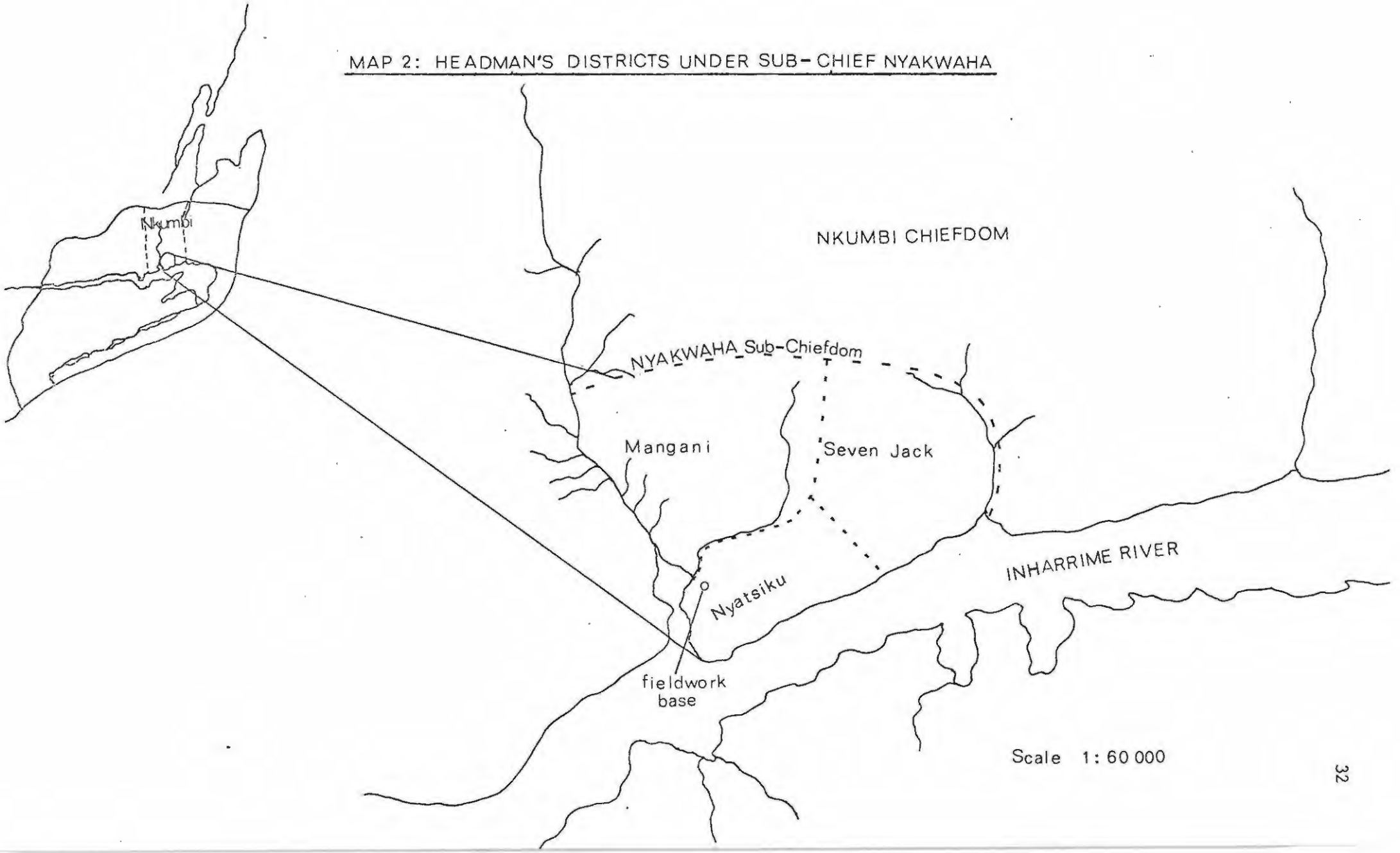
(1) In this dissertation, I follow Chopi custom in naming by providing a person's personal name, father's name and clan name, in that order. If only two names are given, then they are the personal name and clan name.

(a language I had not yet learnt) and were by no means comprehensive. The acquisition of chiChopi was, therefore, a long and difficult process. I was able to converse with the menfolk in funagalo, the lingua franca of the gold mines, but this was unsatisfactory, as it is predominantly a master-servant language, used for issuing simple instructions. My knowledge of chiChopi improved progressively, until I could pass the time of day with informants, and follow their conversations. I could not follow rapid speech or technical discussions however, and could not, in my first period of fieldwork, dispense with the services of my interpreter. My later field trips were conducted without an interpreter, and I managed to achieve a reasonable proficiency.

During these early months in Chopiland, I selected an area for intensive study, and had a homestead comprising three traditional huts built in the headman's district of Nyatsiku. Once established in the area, I embarked on an intensive study of this headman's district, which formed a circumscribed social, political and geographical unit (it was bounded to the south and west by the broad Inharrime river and a lagoon, to the north by a small stream, and to the east by an expanse of forest). In following up networks and in general social intercourse, I found myself being drawn into the two neighbouring headman's districts of Mangani and Seven Jack. The three districts form the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha.

By participant observation I attempted to immerse myself in this admittedly small and perhaps unrepresentative sample of Chopi social life. This raises the problem of the adequacy of my sample and the viability of my generalizations. The first point I should like to make in this regard is that in any event it is impossible to find a group that could be said to be typical of all Chopi. All one can do is ensure that one's sample is reasonably typical. By broadening my sample from one headman's district to three, I believe that in part I achieved this. However, they were all part of one sub-chiefdom and geographically the sample was very narrow. I attempted to overcome this by making short

MAP 2: HEADMAN'S DISTRICTS UNDER SUB-CHIEF NYAKWAHA



trips to other parts of the chiefdom of Nkumbi and also one trip south of the Inharrime river to the chiefdom of Chilundu. What I observed in these places gave no cause for me to believe that my sample possessed any serious abnormalities. Unfortunately lack of funds and assistants prevented me from using census techniques any where other than my small sample, which I was able to cover myself.

I constructed two questionnaires of the census type, and administered them separately (taken together, it would have taken over three hours to complete one interview, with the consequent danger of boredom for both interviewer and interviewee). The questionnaires covered such topics as genealogies, land tenure, effective networks in various situations (action sets), bridewealth payments, number of namesakes and relationship to them, and friendship. Personal ancestors, mobility patterns and frequency, income and expenditure, migrant labour record and experiences, etc., were also collected when it became apparent that these were significant features of Chopi society. With regard to genealogies, I found that I had collected many of what Barnes (1967) has called pedigrees, and that when I attempted to put together genealogies from these, they seldom tallied. The fact that the average pedigree seldom went further back than two generations was a complicating factor. This highlights certain significant tendencies with regard to the possibility of manipulation and the plasticity of kinship, themes that are developed in later chapters.

The collection of information on social networks was time consuming yet most rewarding, for it is these which illuminate the principles of organization and recruitment to such groups as factions, the vicinage, and also the effective circle of persons with whom an individual interacts in different situations. This information was gathered by two methods: first, the direct question as to whom one calls upon for help in work parties, rituals etc; and second, by observing who actually attended such and other functions. As far as possible the

complementary techniques of the extended case study and situational analysis were used.

Of course, such techniques can only have relevance when projected against a background of a traditional structural account, so much time was spent gathering information to this end. This was done by asking informants about the norms of their society, and also by observing what was considered to be correct behaviour. Court cases provided much material on these norms and customs.

Many of the problems raised and dealt with may appear to have resulted from social and cultural change. As a result of the relatively short duration of the fieldwork, I do not feel competent to assert this positively because of a lack of historical perspective. Phenomena such as individualism and what appears to be a process of emancipation of women etc., may well be the result of social and economic change. The problem here is that there are no useful written records of Chopi social life dating back any length of time at all, so there is no basis for a diachronic comparison. The approach used herein is such that it illuminates the processes whereby social change occurs. The study of individuals and the manner in which they exercise choice between alternative avenues of action, using different structures, and the way they manipulate these alternatives is a study of the dynamic processes of society, of which social change may be a part. I view my material then, as part of an ongoing process, which I observed in depth in 1969 in predominantly one headman's district, near the town of Inharrime in Mozambique. The analysis which follows is my interpretation of some of the major institutions and their flexibility, and the place of the individual in this system.

Main Themes

Let us take the hypothetical case of an individual in Chopi society today. He finds himself in a situation where he is faced with

a wide field of relationships, both actual and potential. The social system is such that many relationships are of a tenuous nature, and are easily emphasised or severed. Unlike Nguni systems, where one is faced with a deep and strong patrilineal group into which one is born, the Chopi do not have large, corporate patrilineal groups of kin. There is flexiblity with which rules of recruitment to kin and local groups are applied.

Certain institutions, such as that of naming a child after a living person, have built into them mechanisms which accentuate the formation of shallow ties which may be of short duration. In the case of naming, a person can be required to live with his namesake, who may be some distance from his parental home. After marriage, the young man can choose where to live, which again may well involve mobility. This mobility, which means that ties are made and broken, or at least suspended, is a part of the system in which an individual finds himself. This system is perhaps best characterized by the adjective 'plastic', which describes how affiliation to groups is flexible and open to manipulation. A feature of this system is what B. Sansom has referred to as a 'high tempo of sociation' (1972).

One of the main themes of this thesis therefore is the plasticity of Chopi social organisation, made possible by the absence of strong deep kinship groupings, together with the existence of alternative social structures as a means of recruitment to social groupings. These include an actual, but unverbalized bilaterality in kinship affiliation, the importance of contiguity, the institution of 'naming', the institution of special friendship, and the general emphasis on lateral rather than lineal kin. All these factors afford an individual wide choice in the creation of allegiances, in a social and cultural environment which provides for the satisfaction of the needs of status and political achievement through the judicious manipulation of allegiances, particularly in the gathering of adherents.

In the introduction, it was asserted that the Chopi are patrilineal. In the minds of anthropologists this probably triggers a set of cognitions of a theoretical nature, very often divorced from actuality. Despite recent attempts to break down the stereotypical view of lineality as an inflexible principle (Lewis 1965, Kaberry 1967) we tend to forget that in reality the principle is modified and altered to fit the matrix in which it is embedded. The degree of lineality differs in every society, as each social and cultural context differs.

It would be spurious however, to attempt to construct a scale whereby degrees of lineality could be measured. Lineality has interested anthropologists from the point of view of descent regulating recruitment to social groups. Kaberry (1967:107) questions the validity of constructing a model of society in terms of one principle only, and the Chopi material lends credence to her argument. The vicinage (see chapter four) is the smallest local grouping above a homestead, and recruitment to this neighbourhood group is revealing: the vicinage generally has a kinship core; indeed, kinship is an important means of recruitment to the group. But recruitment is not confined to the, admittedly dominating, patrilineal kin, for matrlineal and affinal kin may also be used, as well as relationships based on friendship, contiguity and namesakes.

The concepts of plasiticity and what are here referred to as 'alternative structures' are two sides of the same coin: plasticity refers to the considerable amount of flexibility in recruitment to important social groups and in the manipulative possiblities of the kinship system; alternative structures represent the choice open to an individual when forming relationships. It was found that in social action, individuals activated relationships with others, using whatever ties were amenable. Most groups centered around individuals who were recruited by diverse structural principles: agnation, matrilateral kinship, friendship, etc. These alternative structures were activated almost as frequently as agnatic kinship itself (vide infra, chapter nine).

The use of the term 'alternative structures' must be clarified. Having asserted that the Chopi are patrilineal, we have accounted for one of the primary principles of their social organisation. The lineal principle is something of an obsession in anthropology, and we reflect this. With this as a given, it is noted that there are other important structures, other principles of organisation which complement or compete, according to context. Some of these have been listed above. There are undoubtedly more structures than are listed here, but these that have been concentrated upon are major components which are perceived and manipulated by the people themselves.

There is an emphasis on individual, personal ties in the Chopi social system. This is accompanied by a tendency towards family line ownership of land and property. At any one time, an individual can only use certain members of his potential network, and his effective network comprises individual ties with other persons. For example, when an individual calls a work party, perhaps to thatch a hut, he expects certain people to attend, and specifically asks others. There is an ethic of mutual aid amongst kinsmen, and he has the right to assume that his agnatic kin will attend. However, life is not as uncomplicated as this, and there are always contingencies which intervene: there may be rivalry between ego and a fellow agnate; someone else may have called a work party on the same day; some may live too far away for it to be feasible to attend. In short, one's agnatic kin do not form a corporate group on whom one can rely. Those that attend the work party do so not only because they are kinsmen, but because they are in some way special, on friendlier terms.

It will become apparent as the thesis is developed that in any one area, an individual has only a few agnatic kin in any case. Even in their entirety, they would be insufficient in number to form a large work party. Given the fact that ego can seldom rely on them to turn out, he necessarily has to recruit non-agnates. These include other

categories of kinsmen, quasi-kin, and friends. The relationship between a man and his namesake is a particularly important one. It is maintained by, firstly, coresidence, but later by a chain of reciprocal services. The relationship is one of ritual affiliation, very much like the institution of godparenthood. This type of relationship (and there are others) modifies and, in a sense, balances the principle of patrilineality.

Apart from the alternative structures mentioned above, the Chopi kinship system itself embodies the concept of plasticity. In Chapter five, a large amount of space is devoted to one of the most interesting facts of the kinship organisation, that which tends to emphasise laterality rather than lineality. In a sense this observation is nothing more than commonsense, because clearly most of one's lineal kin are either dead or as yet unborn, whereas lateral kin are the living and therefore effective members of the kinship group.

But there is more to this situation than this very pragmatic interpretation. An analysis of the pedigrees of informants reveals that most do not recall ancestors more than two or three generations back and lineages of only two generations depth is most common (if, indeed, one may speak in terms of lineages at all). One finds, therefore, that ego takes cognisance of his cousins and other kin of the same or approximate generation, while the lineal kin do not feature to the same extent. The boundaries of the effective kin groups are correspondingly vague, and since depth is lacking, one can never be sure as to whether individuals have manipulated their pedigree. The two-generation amnesia makes cross checking of genealogical claims an almost impossible task.

To summarise then, an individual finds himself faced with a social system which lacks deep functioning kinship groups. The plasticity of the kinship system, where emphasis is placed on laterality, is matched by a general fluidity of the social system, where alternative structures to patrilineal kinship play an active part in a social field which accordingly allows an individual a wide range of choice. An individual is

therefore confronted by a social system where one achieves individual satisfaction and the approved goals of society by the manipulation of allegiances which are contracted between him and other individuals or groups. The element of choice is important: a man may choose to stress or even create certain ties and decide whether or not is is expedient or even morally right to consider one relationship more important than another in a certain situation. The migrant labour situation is interesting in this regard, as it offers a temporary 'opting out' of the system altogether.

The Individual

The potentialities of the system dealt with thus far (plasticity and alternative structures) are made explixit and brought into focus by the actions of individuals. The individual then, is an important unit of analysis in this thesis. I am not interested in individual motivations, but am dealing with what might be termed the 'social individual', who must be seen in his social and cultural context, seeking to achieve certain socially determined goals, choosing between competing ends, and using resources from the social and physical environment. Indeed, it is by studying the actions of individuals, that one is able to discern the flexibility and potential of the social system, the principles of recruitment to groups, and the processes of social action.

In the chapters which follow, a solid base of ethnographic evidence is laid to show that the ecology and society provide an environment in which the development of individualistic traits is able to flourish. There is no shortage of land in Chopiland, which means that as a political resource it is not as important as say, the Transkei, where overpopulation means that chiefs and headmen have a powerful weapon at their disposal. Partly because of the easy access to land, and partly because of a combination of social institutions, there is a high degree of physical mobility among the Chopi. In early life, a young child is brought up and nurtured by his parents. But shortly after birth, a naming ritual takes place, in which the child is named after some other person, usually

living (as opposed to deceased ancestors). This inter vivos name-giving gives rise to an alliance between the parents and the donor of the name which is a form of ritual co-parenthood. But the custom also has implications for the child, for he[1] now has two sets of parents, one actual, one ritual, and he is expected, after the age of about five, to live with his namesake, who may live some distance away from the parental home.

Later in life, perhaps at the age of about eighteen, a young man will embark on his first trip to the gold mines of South Africa, and on his return, will turn his thoughts to marriage. The unmarried migrant labourer usually returns to his father's homestead, while a married man usually sets up his household near his father's home, or neolocally. The adult male may well make yet another major move in his lifetime, according to evidence gathered (it is presented in chapter six). This geographical mobility (some being traumatic, as when the five-year-old has to leave his parental home, or when the young man goes on his first migrant labour trip to the mines) has a profound impact on society and the individuals who compose it. Each move, while being physical and geographical necessitates, most importantly, a restructuring of an individual's social network, sometimes a radical reconstruction. From the age of five then, an individual is plunged into a series of situations is which he must meet, get to know, and form some kind of semi-permanent relationship with, people who are strangers to him. In some situations, it is a relatively simple process, for all he has to do is activate dormant relationships, as with kin whom he has not met before, but in others, he has to work much harder and has to create new bonds. It is contended that this constant practice in social network management is a contributory factor towards the development of the individualism characteristic of the Chopi.

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(1) When writing about individuals, I refer to them in the masculine form. This is merely a matter of convenience, and the argument applies to women.

In chapter five, it is argued that the kinship system, despite its apparent emphasis on patrilineality, is in fact far more flexible than this, and that matrilateral and affinal kin are almost as highly valued. Certainly, when one looks at the composition of significant groups with which individuals surround themselves, they appear to be cognatic and multivalent. A feature of Chopi kinship that immediately strikes an observer is its shallowness. Genealogical amnesia sets in very early, and few informants can recall kin more than two generations above themselves. Indeed, this tendency is so marked, that one is constrained to refer to the kinship system as being patrilateral rather than patrilineal. This is another aspect of the system which contributes to its flexibility, individuals tend to take advantage of this and falsify their pedigrees in order to strengthen a dubious claim to, say, a political office.

The rules of succession and inheritance themselves, as is shown in chapter six, are exacerbating factors, for they too, place an emphasis on laterality rather than lineality and, it is demonstrated, this too allows scope for individuals to push their own claims. Succession is collateral, whereby access to political office passes down a line of brothers[1], then to the sons of the second eldest, and so on. After two generations, it is difficult to unravel, and after three, it is almost impossible. In effect, it means that any adult male of the clan has a good chance of succeeding the previous incumbent and, once again, the stress is laid on the individual. In order to succeed in these conditions, a man needs to gather more supporters than his opponent.

One of the important themes of the thesis therefore, is the individualism that is permitted, and which blossoms, in the social and ecological matrix of the Chopi. This argument is carried further in chapters nine and especially, ten. The focus on the individual emphasises that each case must be seen in its context, and the importance of choice cannot be

(1) The sons of a man are graded in seniority according to the order of marriage of their mothers, the first married being the most senior.

minimized. In any given situation, an individual must select which of a number of possible structural relationships to activate, because in each case there may be a number of structures, existing in a social field. The individual is the common denominator, making decisions as to whether he should make use of relationships belonging to one structure rather than another, or in what combination they should be used. This rather misleadingly presents a picture of a person choosing structures; in fact he is choosing individuals, with their institutional status, or the nature of their relationship to ego, being of greater or lesser importance, according to the occasion and its context.

A problem arises out of the use of the individual as a unit of anthropological analysis: what control does one have over the representativeness of one's sample? In other words, how can one establish whether the behaviour one observes is the norm or the idiosyncracies of an individual? There are positive and negative answers to this: in the negative sense, if the behaviour is atypical, it is likely that some form of social sanction will come into action, thus emphasising the norm; in its positive sense, if no social sanctions are incurred, then one may assume either that it conforms to social expectations, or at the very least, the social system is elastic enough to permit this behaviour. As Leach (1962:133) has remarked, if a system is to be viable, there must be an area where the individual is free to make choices so that he can manipulate the system to his advantage.

Barth takes this argument even further when he asserts that anthropologists study the regularities of social life, which can be characterized as observable frequency patterns of behaviour.

> 'The most simple and general model available to us is one of an aggregate of people exercising choice while influenced by certain constraints and incentives'. (Barth 1966:1).

Barth therefore sees the social system defined in terms of the concept of choice and that we observe 'cases' of human behaviour, not 'customs', and that the regularities we perceive are due to the constraints and

incentives that canalize choices. This model is an extremely useful one for the interpretation of much of the Chopi material, and it is accordingly central to this thesis.

Individualism can only thrive in a social system in which individuals are given recognition and respect for certain talents and skills. Coupled with this must be the possibility of achieving status, prestige or other desired goals through the acquisition and utilization of these skills. In chapter ten, it is demonstrated that this is indeed possible in the Chopi case, even in circumstances where one might expect status to be ascribed, as one would expect to be the case in the political office of headmanship. Even here, where the folk model has it that there is ascribed succession, in effect the rules of inheritance and succession are such that, within the clan group, there is succession and room for manoeuvre (see above). The competition is, however, confined to the circumscribed boundary of the clan. There are other goals and statuses which can be achieved outside the political and kinship systems. Most of these are attained through the possession of some talent or skill, or what can only be termed 'charisma'. They include such things as being a successful composer or dancer, nhanga (spirit medium) or wahombe ('big man' in a quasi-political sense).

In summary, we confront the problem of individualism and the manipulation of relationships. People are caught up in a network of cross-cutting ties and allegiances. Each individual, in the matrix of his own personal network acts at one time within one set of interests and then within a different set. In some cases, particularly within the modern economic sphere, the individual may attempt to stress his independance from the group completely. The concept of individualism is therefore developed, both as a problem in itself, and also as the crystallizing agent in social situations, for it is in the choices and actions of individuals that we see the dynamic processes of social life being acted out.

Evidence as to the adaptability and self-reliance characteristic of individualism is available in the form of work records on the gold mines. Here, a cross-cultural comparison is possible, because illiterate and semi-literate Africans from the entire sub-continent are brought together for a common purpose. Evidence provided in chapter ten, and by Naude (1962:77,120), shows that Chopi, as part of the broad Shangaan (Tsonga) ethnic grouping, do significantly better in aptitude tests that other Africans of similar formal education and mining experience (especially when both have neither). The Chopi/Shangaan ethnic group also provides a disproportionately large number of 'team leaders', which are the top leadership positions open to Blacks (cf. chapter ten). It is reasonable to presume that Chopi society provides ample opportunity for individuals to acquire skills in both these spheres.

Theoretical Orientations

In this dissertation, I have not relied exclusively on any one particular theoretical orientation; I have borrowed from various sources, some of which may appear to fit poorly at first sight, when juxtaposed with others. I believe however, that the insights provided by the various anthropologists used herein, are valuable and even if some appear mutually contradictory, they do in fact blend well together in the overall scheme of this thesis. One of the first tasks of an anthropologist is to order his material; consequently, the opening chapters provide a general description of the social morphology of the Chopi, in a mode reminiscent of the traditional structral-functionalists. Having established such a base, one is then able to go on to show variations from it. The actuality of social life is far more complex than equilibrium theory is able to portray, but as Leach (1964:ix,285) has so convincingly shown, it is important to take cognisance of the normative structures in any study that focuses on social processes.

In conjunction with the normative description in the early parts of the dissertation, I have chosen to use what has been called the 'theory of

social exchange', or transaction theory, where the data appear to warrant it. In the Chapters dealing specifically with kinship, I have borrowed freely from both alliance and descent theorists and have used the techniques of the American cognitive anthropologists. (1) In later chapters, much use is made of network analysis, where a great debt is owed to Gulliver's recent (1971) work, and the analysis of factions. The dissertation therefore moves from an analysis concentrating on sociocentric phenomena to the examination of individuals and how they manipulate the social and physical environment in which they find themselves. It is hoped that this thesis succeeds in combining such disparate interests.

Theoretically, therefore, my approach is syncretic and, while the value and economy of using one theoretical orientation throughout is recognised, it seemed impossible to do justice to the diversity and subtlety of the data through the restrictions imposed by any one approach. What is attempted ia a descriptive integration of the material, using the techniques and theories which fit best, to analyse particular areas of social life. One of the greatest influences on this thesis, in general style, rather than specific context, has been the work of F.G. Bailey, who provides a valuable approach to the study of social dynamics and change. The problem of a dissertation such as this is to reconcile the dynamics of social action with the static models of social structure. In a book such as Tribe, Caste and Nation, Bailey provides a solution to this dilemma. His model comprises competing individuals attempting to achieve various goals, using and manipulating the principles and structures available to attain their purposes.

The model has here been adapted slightly to cover everyday kinship action among the Chopi, as well as social change. This model depicts individuals, faced by a particular problem (for example, the need to

(1) For justification of this synthesis, see introduction to chapters five and especially eight. It is argued that it is a valuable exercise to view any given problem from as many standpoints as may be necessary to give a comprehensive analysis.

raise a work party), putting together coalitions of other individuals by activating moral or transactional bonds that bind them together. The relationship can be defined structurally, and much of the analysis concerns the structural types and their combinations that go to make up such coalitions, factions and action sets. An individual is therefore immersed in an existential problem of everyday decision making, manipulating relationships. The flexibility of the social system, and the expertise which most Chopi acquire in adjusting to new situations, makes them well equipped to deal with, and accept, new situations and new structures; in short, social change is not traumatic to this progressive society.

In his analysis of the political systems of Highland Burma, Leach (1954: 285) asserts that the three patterns of political organization he presents,

> 'are largely as if descriptions - they relate to ideal models rather than real societies, and what I have been trying to do is present a convincing model of what happens when such as if systems interact'.

Like Leach, it is argued that if any sense is to be made of the mass of data which make up social reality for the Chopi, it is necessary to postulate 'as if' models - which present an idealisation of the society. It is useful to assume that the Chopi social system is an integrated and functioning whole, comprising a number of structures which themselves are ideal systems, not necessarily reflecting an exact reality. To this must be attached Leach's disclaimer:

> 'In practical fieldwork situations the anthropologist must always treat the material of observation as if it were part of an overall equilibrium, otherwise description becomes almost impossible. All I am asking is that the fictional nature of this equilibrium should be frankly recognised'. (Leach 1954: 285).

Bearing in mind the idealised status of the models, the actual social situations and case material that are presented in this thesis should be seen as the result of actors making choices of potential courses of action. There is a difference between ideology and practice, which causes Firth to distinguish between two realities which are different levels of abstraction. Firth (1951: 35-40) describes these as social structure and

social organization, where social organization is the operative, flexible counterpart on a lower level of abstraction to a relatively stable set of structural principles which he calls social structure.

Social Structures

The term 'structures' for many anthropologists conjures up notions of rigidity, no doubt derived from the writings of the early structuralists such as Radcliffe-Brown. Perhaps because of this, many writers, especially those who emphasise social life as a process, have discarded the concept of structure (for example, Swartz 1969:2-3). It is argued that this rejection of the usefulness of 'structure' is based on a misconception, for it need only be as rigid and inflexible as one defines it. This contention is amply supported in the literature (viz. Leach 1954; Barth 1966; Bailey 1960, 1969), where it is not only demonstrated that structures can be flexible, but also that they can be constructively used together with a processual analysis.

Bailey has defined structure as,

> 'a set of generalizations abstracted from regularities of behaviour or from statements about what ought to be regularities of behaviour'. (1960, 238).

This emphasises two most important aspects of the concept: the empirical reality of observed behaviour which, through repetition, allows a pattern to be abstracted, i.e., the normal; and the normative aspect, which is the 'folk' model of how the actors should behave. Barth (1966:1, also see above p.42) concurs with Bailey's requirements when he urges that

> 'our first descriptive characterization of our findings, then, must be one involving frequencies'.

He goes on to emphasise the choice open to individuals, 'influenced by certain constraints and incentives'. These presumably include the normative and pragmatic sanctions that are contained in the folk model of expected behaviour.

We have thus far been looking at structures from the inside, so to speak. Let us now turn our attention to the external relations between structures. The heading for this section was Social Structures - the

emphasis being placed on the plural aspect. This is a result of the belief that society or even smaller social groups do not have a unitary social structure; there exist in each case a number of structures (cf. Nadel 1957:153-4).

This dissertation postulates the existence of principles and structures available as social resources to a Chopi individual. Chopi culture places more emphasis on some then others, but this does not reduce the potential effectiveness of these other structures, which, given favourable situations or 'technical facts' mentioned above, may be equally, if not more, important than the culturally favoured structures. An individual, for example, has roles to play in the structures of kinship - patrilateral, matrilateral and affinal, and also in the other two institutions which appear to be of special significance - friendship (undoni) and the sharing of names (unadine). If an individual is living apart form his patrilateral kin, they will be of little consequence for him, and an actor will have to make use of other individuals, in other structural relationships to him, to fulfill his social needs.

The point that is being laboured here is that, pragmatically, the five types of structural relationships mentioned are equally available and of potentially equal status, depending on contexts. It is for this reason that I have not referred to the relationship with matrilateral kin as complementary filiation (Fortes 1953). This term seems to have the (perhaps unintended) connotation of secondary status. I am in agreement therefore, with Leach (1961:122), when he argues

> 'Thus Fortes, while recognising that ties of affinity have comparable importance to ties of descent, disguises the former under his expression "complementary filiation"'.

Leach then explains what is meant by this term:

> 'In the terminology favoured by Fortes and Goody they are patrilineal systems in which the complementary matrilineal descent line assumes very great importance'. (1961:122).

I do not intend embarking on a discussion of the merits and demerits of alliance and descent theories; I believe rather that to change the emphasis to that of alternative social structures may be heuristically

useful, since, it steers a middle course between them. This approach makes no judgements as to which structure or principle is primary - it merely points out the normative 'weighting' placed on certain structures by the culture, while in many cases the pragmatic and dynamic contexts render them of equal potential 'weight'.

Chopi culture has placed slightly more emphasis upon one structure: that of patrilateral kinship. (I prefer to refer to patrilateral rather than patrilineal kinship because the emphasis is on lateral rather than lineal kin, as is shown in chapters five to nine). This structure, out of all possibilities, is the one that in broad terms regulates the transmission of office, status, and inheritance, (insofar as these are inherited and not achieved, as is often the case. If these are achieved, then other structures are potentially of equal, if not more, importance, as is shown in chapter six). The patrilateral emphasis may, indeed, be little more than a post hoc rationalization of a fait accompli[1].

It is also the patrilateral principle which underlies the system of kinship terminology, which is of the Omaha type. Murdock (1949:239-41) considers Omaha terminology distinctive of a pre-eminently patrilineal social organization indeed, 'typical of the patrilineate in its most highly developed form'. (op.cit.). The emphasis on lateraility rather than lineality is again demonstrated in chapter eight, which is an analysis of the Chopi kin terminology.

These are the folk models or cognitive systems of the people. They are relevant only in the areas of social life in which status etc. is ascribed. There is however a vast area of social life where the goals are achieved, often by the use of pragmatic as well as normative rules and structures. It is for this reason that the concept of alternative structures is used. To typify a social system by one structural principle, that is, to call it patrilineal, is one sided and, indeed, I believe it distorts social reality.

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(1) I am indebted to Professor W.D. Hammond.Tooke for pointing this out to me.

Patrilaterality, therefore, is a structural principle which classifies and regulates numerouskin relationships. My analysis of the vicinage however, shows that the corporate functions that are often associated with descent and descent goups may be fulfilled by structures other than patrilaterality (although this is usually also present).

Social field, Arena and Environment

The concept of a social field has long been in use in anthropology, particularly in the writings of authors such as V.W. Turner. Bailey (1960: 238-41) postulates that a social field has within it two or more structures governing social relations. My model includes five structural principles, although this does not pretend to be exhaustive. A social field varies in size and inclusiveness, depending upon the scale of social action. In this thesis the population and resources of the vicinage, with its leadership as the goal, are the social field where individuals manipulate the structual relationships with individuals available to them.

The arena, according to Swartz (1969:10) encompasses the field and comprises the individuals and groups directly involved with the constituents of a field, but not necessarily themselves involved in the processes. In my Chopi material the arena tends to be the vicinage itself, although like the field, it can vary greatly in size, depending on the scale of social action in progress. In another sense the vicinage is one arena where the social play of life is acted out, and as such it forms an important part of my analysis. The environment of the social system comprises social relations, cosmologies and idea systems, the population, and the physical and social habitat. All these provide the resources of social action - the people and materials which make social life possible and yet places restraints on social action.

PART TWO

SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL GROUPINGS

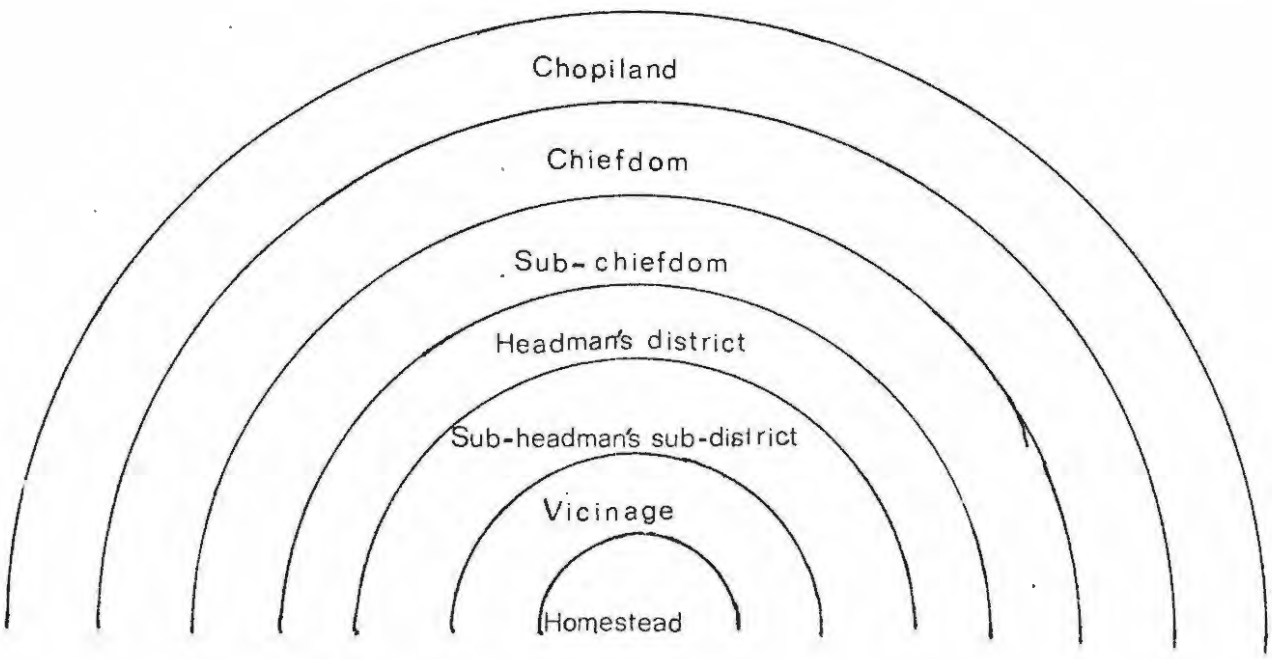
Chapter III

Residence Patterns and Political Organization

In the opening two chapters, the main themes and general background were introduced. It is now necessary to flesh out the bare skeleton a little since, in a dissertation of this kind, where analysis is largely directed at the social actions of individuals in unstructured situations, it is important to provide a description of the general socio-political morphology. Such an overview of the main social and political structures provides a backdrop against which the actions of individuals can be seen in perspective; it also provides the setting for the important arena of the vicinage, which is the level at which much of the analysis in later chapters is focussed.

This, and the following chapter therefore, provide background ethnography which is necessary for the development of the arguments to be found in later chapters. Absent from the present discussion are the categories of kinship, which are described in chapter five. The local and territorial categories of the Chopi may be diagramatically represented as a series of concentric circles, with the homestead as its focal point, and the Chopi people as a whole as the widest overarching group.

Figure 1: Territorial categories



Each category represented above will be taken in turn, and elaborated. Starting at the bottom of the hierarchy, with the homestead one finds that, as in most polygynous societies, the homestead itself can be subdivided into family groupings.

The Family

Starting at the lowest level, the nuclear family: it was found that 49 per cent of the families (in the sample of 86 homesteads) were monogamous nuclear families, composed of a man, his wife, and their unmarried children. The types of families found in the sample (which encompassed two headman's districts to broaden the representation) are classified on the following figure:

Figure 2: Family types

	number	per cent
Monogamous families	42	49
Polygynous families	22	26
Joint families	10	12
Residual families	12	14
	86	101

Informants claim that polygamy is becoming less frequent, but the figure of 26% is relatively high for the southern part of Africa[1]. The polygamous family was usually composed of a man, two wives, and their children. Only, two cases arose where a man had more than two wives. The joint families encountered did not reveal any recurrent pattern - five cases were men, their wives, with their married sons resident in one homestead; three cases were two brothers sharing a homestead; one case was a man sharing a homestead with his sister's son; finally, two brothers were living with their mother, who had recently remarried (uxorilocally).

(1) While polygyny rates are difficult to discover in southern African ethnographies, Clignet (1970:18) provides comparative material based on the calculation of married women per 100 married men. The dates of census material vary from 1921 to 1946, which means that comparisons must be treated with caution. However, if anything, the polygyny rate is likely to have dropped rather than risen since these earlier dates. Clignet's figures are:

Basutoland	114	(married women per 100 married men)
Bechuanaland	112	(" " " " " ")
Swaziland	168	(" " " " " ")
South Africa	112	(" " " " " ")

to be measured against these figures is my sample of 138 married women per 100 married men for an admittedly small area of Chopiland (see p181).

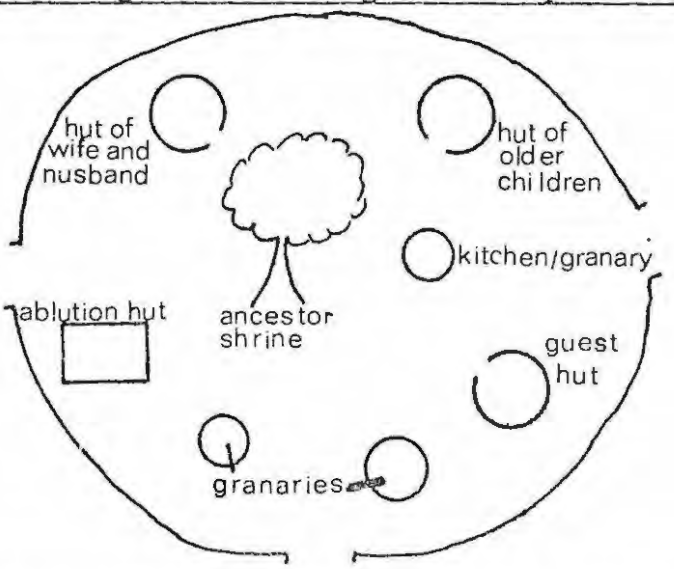
The 12 residual families encountered comprised two widowers, three male divorcees, four widows, and three female divorcees. The term residual family (cf. Wilson et. al. 1952:55) refers to the phase where the children have all left home, leaving a man and his wife who is past child-bearing age. In the statistics provided above, however, I have taken the term to mean a broken household, where one spouse, usually with children, remains after the death, separation or divorce of the partner[1].

The homestead

Homesteads vary in size according to the number of inhabitants and the occupational and ritual status of the head. The typical homestead has two or three dwelling-houses (tinyumba; nyumba, sing.), a couple of granaries (usually built on stilts), and a hut used for a kitchen (frequently the kitchen is placed under a granary). Most homesteads (miti; inti, sing.) also possess a rectangular enclosure used for ablutions, and many have a small hut, which serves as an ancestor shrine.

The homestead is typically circular in shape, with the residential houses placed on its circumference. Their entrances face the centre of the circle, the ancestor shrine, the most common being a large tree, at the foot of which sacrificial offerings are made. This shrine can, as mentioned above, take the form of a small hut.

Figure 3: Diagram of a monogamous Chopi homestead or inti



(1) The divorce rate of the Chopi is the comparatively high figure of 51,7 divorces per 100 marriages (for other calculations see p181).

In polygynous homesteads, the ranking of the wives is not reflected in their location in the circle of the homestead, as is the Nguni custom, and (in this connection) there is no cattle byre, since the Chopi are not pastoralists. Many homesteads (as the case in figure 3 shows) possess a spare house, which is used for visitors and storage. Geographical mobility is high, and these houses are frequently used by kinsmen, friends or namesakes, who may be staying for varying lengths of time.

The majority of homesteads (56 in number, 65% of the sample) have married men as the head. The remaining male heads of homesteads were men who were either widowers, divorcees, or unmarried men who had formed a reasonably stable relationship with a woman, who is referred to as a chikaba, roughly translated as 'girlfriend'.

Figure 4: Heads of Homesteads

86 Homesteads

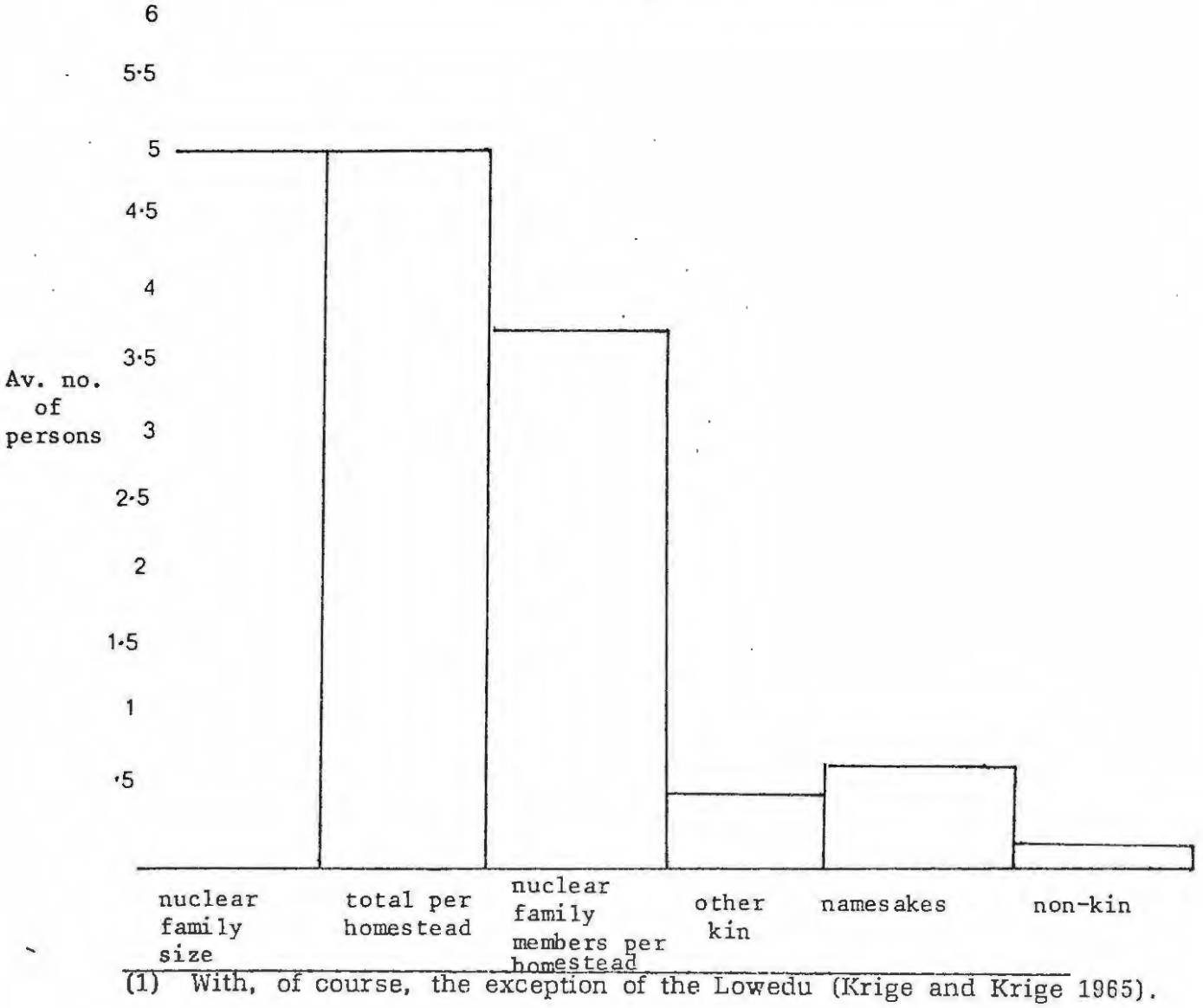
Married men	65%
Widowers	5%
Divorcees (male)	5%
Unmarried men living with women	6%
Widows	12%
Divorcees (female)	7%
	100%

A widow need not surrender her rights over a homestead after the death of her husband and, unless she re-marries or forms a stable relationship with another man, she will usually become the head of the deceased's homestead. Women can hold rights in land: the rules relating to land tenure vest rights in men, as the norm, but a wife is given fields to exploit and develop, and these remain hers even after the death of her husband. A divorced or unmarried woman may be given land on which fields and a homestead may be built, although these will usually fall under the ultimate jurisdiction of a senior male kinsman. (The subject of land tenure is expanded in the following chapter.)

Women are permitted a degree of responsibility which is not often

manifest among most southern African peoples[1]. This norm is illustrated by a particular case where a senior widow of a polygynous homestead has taken over its leadership and administration. Her three co-wives are still resident in the inti some four years after the death of their husband. The senior widow manages to hold this potentially fissile situation together through strength of character and more importantly, an economic tie. As her husband's first wife, she was found to be barren; she thereafter worked to raise money to pay for the bridewealth (lowolo) of her three junior co-wives. She is now regarded as the 'father' of the homestead, and any man wishing to marry one of these women will have to repay her.

Figure 5: Homestead composition (Sample of 85)



(1) With, of course, the exception of the Lowedu (Krige and Krige 1965).

The histogram shows that the average family is composed of five members and the average homestead also contains five members; but only 3,65 of these homestead members belong to the nuclear family. The sample of 85 revealed that 50% had kinsmen other than nuclear family members, 62% had at least one namesake,[1] and 23% had persons resident who had no kinship ties to residents of the homestead.

The reason for the fact that, on average, nuclear kin provide 3,65 members per homestead must be sought in institutions such as the special friendship, namesakes, and pseudo-adoption of children by grandparents. Marriage also removes from the homestead young men and women, who set up their own homesteads virilocally. Considerations such as apprenticeship to a skilled or professional person such as an mbila (xylophone) maker and musician, or an n'anga (shaman) with his acolytes, also increase the number of extra-familiar members of a homestead.

The age and status of the family members who are not resident in the homestead (average 1,35 members) depends upon which stage of its developmental cycle the individual family has reached. In its early stage with young children present, the absent members are most likely to be one or more of the children who have been 'called' to live with their namesakes. Failing this, grandparents have the right to request a young grandchild to live with them and help with domestic or goat herding duties, thus rejuvenating a residual family which can no longer produce any more children of its own, and whose own children have married and moved away. Later in the developmental cycle of the family, young men and women may be away on migrant labour, but more relevant is the possibility of marriage, when children set up their own homes, and, therefore, move out of the parental home.

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(1) The Chopi institution of naming a child after a person, living or dead, is dealt with in Chapter 7. A young namesake (nyadine), may be called to live with his older namesake.

Having accounted for those who move away from a homestead, let us turn our attention to those outsiders who join it. There are two broad categories of incomer: those who are being provided with succour and assistance, such as widowed mothers, divorced sisters, etc., and those who are there because some institutionalized relationship has been activated, such as grandchildren living with their grandparents.

In keeping with the wide degree of choice open to individuals in the formation of alliances in Chopi society, the 'other kin' and 'non-kin' categories tend to be idiosyncratically recruited. One man has a special friend living in his homestead; another is looking after his sister's children; yet another hsi his brother's sons's wife in the homestead while her husband is on an extended migrant labour trip.

A majority of homesteads (63%) have had at least one namesake of a member residing for some length of time. Caution must be exercised regarding the exact relationship between the nuclear family of a homestead and its resident 'outsiders'. It is possible that some of those listed under non-nuclear kin may in fact be namesakes, and vice versa. The reason for thi is that namesakes are frequently related by kinship or affinity, and some informants may have chosen to express their relationship to the person in the idiom of kinship rather than as namesakes, or the reverse may also be true.

A generalized picture of the changing composition of homesteads would be of the following sort: a homestead, whose family numbers about five, loses two of its younger children, one being 'called' to live with its namesake, the other to its grandparents. Incoming residents include kinsmen who have no homestead of their own, such as a divorced sister or young unmarried brother. Later on, children of the homestead marry and move away, and when numbers start to dwindle many people at this stage 'call' their namesakes to come and live with them. In other words, at a time when the family is becoming residual, it is rejuvenated by the recruitment of a new, young member, or members.

The picture that emerges is that, as families lose their members there are mechanisms by which they can replenish their stock, by activating institutionalized relationships. This is especially true of families in the middle and later stages of their developmental cycle, which are shrinking due to the attainment of adulthood and therefore marriagability of their offspring.

The phenomenon of the atrophy and rejuvenation of family can be seen as a dialectical process: every family has within itself the seeds of its own disintegration in that society demands the propagation of new families. Young adults contribute to the atrophy of their families of origin by forming these new marriages; yet it is families in the early stages of their developmental cycle which provide the young children (as namesakes or grandchildren) which replenish and rejuvenate the atrophied family.

The bare statistics presented thus far tend to impose an imperfect impression on the reader; they present an idealisation that can never be real, perhaps because of the impossibility of finding a 'typical' homestead. The presentation of actual case material, when used to complement statistical analysis, is a reasonably satisfactory means of overcoming this problem. The following cases are actual examples and, hopefully, will illuminate some of the more obscure points made.

Case 1: Nyangalume's homestead

Nyangalume is a man of about 32, who has been married four times. One wife is presently separated from him, and another has divorced him. He has a son by the divorced wife, the ten year-old boy living with his father, and two sons and a daughter by his two resident wives. One son and one daughter, aged about six and eight respectively, do not live at home. The daughter was named after Nyangalume's father's sister and is living with this woman, who is a widow. The son is living nearby, in the homestead of his grandmother who, as a widow, has

remarried to an elderly man.

Nyangalume's homestead was founded some 12 years ago when, as a young man he married his first wife and set up home about 300 metres away from his father's homestead. He acquired lan partly from his father and partly from the district headman.

The numbers of residents in the homestead have beeen swollen by the arrival four years ago of Nyangalume's younger sister's children - two boys and a girl. His sister, who was widowed five years ago when her husband died in a South African mining accident, came with her children to live with her brother. Shortly afterwards she left for Lourenzo Marques, and has not been heard of since. Nyangalume is reasonably well-to-do, and is quite happy to care for the children, the oldest of which is now 13 years old.

To summarize, this is a polygynous household, with two out of four wives remaining. Of the four children which are his own progeny, two are resident elsewhere, and there are three young children belonging to his sister also resident here. He has thus lost (temporarily at least) two children, but their place has been taken by three others.

Case 2: Matumbwane's homestead

Matumbwane is a man in his late fifties, married to his fourth wife. The previous three are all divorced from him, and he has always been a monogamist. His first three marriages ended in divorce before he was thirty-five; his present wife has been with him for about twenty years. His first wife produced two children, both girls, who stayed with their father after the divorce and who some ten years ago married and moved away The second wife was barren, and the third wife had three children, the oldest, a boy, stayed with his father, his siblings went with their mother at the time of divorce, and were never claimed by Matumbwane. The son has married and established his own homestead next to his father's.

The remaining wife bore Matumbwane four children, two of whom died. The remaining two, both girls, were recently married, the first three years ago, and the second a year later. In other words, all the children of the homestead are now dispersed, leaving the man and his wife to fend for themselves. However, Matumbwane and his wife are not alone, because there are a young boy and girl in the homestead. The boy, aged nine, is Matumbwane's namesake, and also his grandson. The girl, aged six, is Matumbwane's wife's namesake, the daughter of her brother.

The Vicinage

The vicinage is introduced here in order to place it in its correct position in the hierarchy of increasingly inclusive categories. This sketch is necessarily brief, as the following chapter is devoted entirely to this group, since it is the focal point of the social action which I seek to examine.

The vicinage is essentially a neighbourhood grouping, consisting of a cluster of homesteads in a loosely organized territorial area. A headman's district, which is the lowest unit recognized by the Portuguese administration may have within it several vicinages.

The term vicinage has been used in the central African anthropological literature to denote a number of villages in a roughly circumscribed area, and is therefore of wider scope than my usage here. The term 'hamlet' was rejected because of its connotation of a discrete group of homesteads, or of a small village, which is contradictory to the scattered homestead settlement pattern of the Chopi. Gulliver (1971: 44) appears to use 'hamlet' to describe the homestead itself amongst the Ndendeuli of sounthern Tanzania, who are similar to the Chopi in social organisation. Gulliver uses 'local grouping' to describe an area which approximates to my use of the vicinage.

The 'vicinage', despite its various interpretations, conveys a number of facets of meaning which meet the requirements of Chopi ethno-

graphy. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines vicinage as: 'Neighbourhood, surrounding district; relation of neighbours'. I intend, therefore, to use the term to denote a neighbourhood grouping comprising a number of homesteads which are (usually) contiguous. Membership of the vicinage depends upon allegiance to other members or the leader. A district.

This level of social life is of the kind that A.C. Mayer (1966) has described as a quasi-group. On the ground, its members occupy contiguous homesteads, and they are socially co-operative. There is usually a core of agnatic kinsmen, around which may be gathered others related matrilaterally, affinally, or perhaps not related at all. The group is leader-oriented, especially in its embryonic stages, where leadership is strong, but no matter the strength of the leader, the group has the leader as its focal point, which leads to interesting problems when more than one potential leader or 'big man' (wahombe) enters the arena.

Sub-headman's sub-district

When a leader and his vicinage become powerful, (calculated on numerical strength) it is possible that this group may receive more formal recognition. The headman of the district and the sub-chief above him may decide that the wahombe or 'big man' of the vicinage should become a nyadibanzi, the closest English equivalent of which being 'the man of the meeting'. It really means that he is officially recognised as the head of his area, his somewhat informal status is given some formal recognition. He is held responsible to the higher authorities for his area, is expected to settle disputes on behalf of his sub-district.

The banza, or meeting, from which his title is derived, refers mainly to the dispute settling aspect of his position. A banza actually can refer to any meeting of people for the purpose of some social action. The nyadibanzi has no formal sanctions at his disposal, and his court proceedings take the form of a moot rather than a court case.

The sub-headman's district has no name of reference in itself. It is known by a geographical name or by the name of the nyadibanzi, past or present. It is a territorially circumscribed unit, yet this is not a rigid criterion - some members may have moved their homesteads into a neighbouring district, yet they can still be considered as part of the original sub-headman's district. If, on the other hand, their move was motivated by antagonism to the nyadibanzi or members of his district, then it is likely that the emigrants will have cut their ties and align themselves with a different 'big man' or sub-headman.

As the ensuing chapter demonstrates, there are loose associations of individuals who form themselves into factions and coalitions within the sub-headman's district, and, of course, also the headman's district. The composition of a faction at any moment in time depends upon the situation that gave rise to the formation of the faction; each individual, and sometimes group, taking a stand on the side of the issue that they conceive to be the most beneficial at that time.

The sub-district has a broad territorial base in that it does have a fixed boundary, but the sub-headman's political authority can stretch beyond the territorial circumscription of his area. His hegemony is over individuals, in a type of dyadic contract that can on occasion stretch beyond the borders of his district.

The map of Nyatsiku clearly shows the territorial boundary between the sub-headman's district of Guveni and the rest of Nyatsiku. The sub-headman of Guveni is Zalambe Ntsambe, while the other half falls directly under the headman of Nyatsiku, to whom the sub-headman of Guveni is responsible.

The name Guveni is taken from an area in Wutonga, who are a people to the north east of Chopiland. Tradition has it that a man of the clan name Ntsambe (a Tonga name) came south from Guveni to settle in this area many years ago. After he had settle, some clansmen followed, and settled around him. Certain affines and some non-kin also followed, until the original immigrant had built up a sizeable community around

MAP 3: HEADMAN'S DISTRICT OF NYATSIKU, WITH GUVENI SUB-DISTRICT AND VICINAGE BOUNDARIES

himself. Most of the immigrants had come from Guveni, and the name was applied to these settlers as well. Eventually, in about 1920, the Guveni sphere of influence had spread sufficiently for the area to be recognised as a sub-headmanship.

The homesteads on the left of map 3 are those which belong to Guveni, those on the right are of Nyatsiku. A scrutiny of the map shows that some homesteads from both sides are located in the territory of the neighbour, yet they still regard themselves and are regarded as belonging to their district of origin.

The fact of their residence in a district other than that of their origin may signal the fact that the head of the homestead is preparing to change his allegiance from the one district head to the other. In fact, the head of the homestead marked with an asterisk on the map has recently changed his allegiance from Guveni to Nyatsiku after a difference of opinion with the leader of his vicinage. He now sees himself as allied to a different 'big man'.

The sub-headman has the task of maintaining social control in his district, and there are certain ritual powers vested in him. If some localized calamity strikes his district, such as a plague of rodents, he propitiates his ancestors on behalf of his people, and he will call in a medicine specialist who deals with these situations. Another duty of the nyadibanzi is to collect from his people the tribute that must be annually paid to the chief. He is allowed to keep a small portion of this, usually a five litre bottle of sope.

The Headman's district

The headman's district of Nyatsiku is smaller than many in Chopïland, consisting of 48 homesteads. Its neighbouring headmen's district, those of Mangane and Seven Jack have 52 and 60 homesteads respectively. These three districts together comprise the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha.

Like the sub-headman's sub-district, the headman's district has clearly circumscribed boundaries separating it from its neighbours

(although at present there is no pressure on land, there being large areas of virgin forest which could still be exploited). Again, like its smaller replica, it is possible for an individual to reside in a neighbouring district and yet still retain political allegiance to his place of origin. Two individuals, in the experience of the ethnographer, have taken advantage of this possibility and they profess to a sort of dual citizenship, but with a definite conception of where their political allegiance lies.

Despite the fact that its membership is not completely determined along territorial lines, territoriality plays an important part: many informants claim that it is preferable to seek wives from outside the district, almost what could be called a preferential territorial exogamy, with the headman's district as the area of reference. Marriages within the area are by no means forbidden; indeed, the idealized version of the exogamic injunction must be balanced against pragmatic considerations: most of the clan groups found in the area can trace some kind of affinal relationship to most of the others. This means that the exogamy rules, which forbid marriage into the clan of either one's father or mother, would tend to rule out marriage with most clans within the district in any event[1].

The vernacular term which refers to the headman's district is inthanda. It is also identified by the name of the headman himself, or by some name traditionally associated with the district, often being derived from a founding myth.

The office of headmanship is the lowest of the hierarchy that is recognised by the Portuguese administration, being acknowledged to the extent that the headman, called nganakana is summoned reregularly to the banza or meeting that the administration calls in order to disseminate government policy to the population at large. He is given certain

(1) The problem of exogamy rules and the encouragement to marry away from ones district is handled in greater detail in Chapter 6.

administrative duties and is expected to act as the government's agent at the local level. Recognition of the official status accorded the headman is the government-issue khaki jacket and a small stipend.

A new headman is installed in office by his sub-chief who conducts rituals and attends a celebration sanctifying the appointment. Succession to the position is ideally determined by the Chopi variation of the adelphic type which, as will be demonstrated, leaves much room for manoeuvre and always precipitates competition amongst the claimants, who frequently have equally strong arguments to support their claims. The various claimants mobilise kin and other support over a period of months until a confrontation occurs between the rivals, either in a courtcase or in a more informal meeting. Only when the competition is resolved is the sub-chief called upon to ritually recognise the new headman.

The consequences of the adelphic succession rules are that, within the broad limits of kinship, there is competition between various senior clan members, usually cousins, often lineage leaders, for the position. The mechanisms of recruitment of support are similar to those employed in any political contest for office in Chopiland - the mobilization of as many agnatic kin as possible (especially close ones, e.g., brothers), as well as matrilateral, affinal, and even non-kin, who are qualified to lend support because of their residence in the area which forms the arena for the contest. These supporters in turn may activate ties with yet other individuals, providing an extended network of individuals which constitute the pool of support for any particular candidate.

The candidate has certain powers and privileges attached, one of which, the small stipend, has already been noted. Other privileges include a small portion (five litres of sope, the cashew alcohol) of the tribute he gathers for the chief and passes on to the sub-chief; every fifth 'pound' (100 escudos) collected from returning migrants (known as wugayesa, a reference to returning wealth) he is allowed to keep, and there are certain intangibles, such as prestige, which counter-

balance the more unpopular aspects of the position.

The headman is responsible for the maintenance of law and order, and to this end appoints an induna, who performs the functions of a sort of tribal policeman. Much of the unpopular work of a headman is thus delegated to his induna. The headman convenes the court of his district and acts as arbitrator in disputes, but here too, it is not unusual to find that the headman appoints a person who 'speaks' for him at disputes. This man is chosen for his skill in debate and his ability to 'cut through an argument' as one informant put it. This 'speaker' cross-examines the litigants on the headman's behalf, with whom he consults, and an arbitration is attempted.

The headman of Nyatsiku has appointed one such speaker, an elderly man who is his friend and confidant. The position of Induna is filled by another man who is a non-kinsman, but who is a friend possessing talents of organization. Headman Sangatelo of Nyatisku has, like many other headmen, delegated many of his duties to his half-son (the son of a classificatory brother - FFBss - who was the previous headman, and whose wife Sangatelo took by leviritic right).

There is a clear tendency among headmen to delegate the more distasteful duties, either to kinsman or to individuals who are frequently not related to him at all. Headmen frequently send their sons or some other relative to the administrator's meetings, while non-kin are often delegated to act as 'policemen' and 'speakers', two of the tasks which could potentially erode the popularity of the headman. It seems a deliberate policy to distance the individual and his private popularity from the official personage which carries duties that inevitably must bring conflict with other individuals and thus alienate members of his district.

It is evident that another reason for the dispersal of his various duties is the strengthening of alliances with influential individuals who are not kinsmen. In the case of Nyatsiku, where the half-son

often represented the headman in his dealings with the administration, this was an opportunity for the young man to use the influence of the position to accumulate a fund of goodwill that might be turned into political capital years later, when he is finally a contender for the headmanship himself. The Administrator might also remember the young man and call for his appointment as the next headman if he is sufficiently impressed by him.

Within the headman's district, the people are grouped into vicinages, and sometimes larger, loosely organized coalitions, comprising two or more vicinages. These coalitions are situationally defined; they only emerge on occasions in which an issue arises which crystallizes the lines of allegiance. Most coalitions are also leader-oriented; support in terms of groups, such as the vicinage, cannot be relied upon per se, although vested interests often precipitate these groups into one camp or another. This situation permits individual manipulation of issues of concern, the formation of factional support that is often transitory, and there sometimes emerges latent structures that persist through time. In Nyatsiku the Nkome and Ntshambe vicinages, for example, are usually to be found on the same side in a dispute.

The population of a headman's district does possess a sense of identity and unity. In the first instance there is land ownership, residence and spatial contiguity in a bounded area, with the daily interaction that this implies; then too, the headman himself is the focus of identity for the people of his area; and in the most positive sense, the district orchestra and dancers provide a visible, audible and emotive symbolization, which creates an awareness of district identity. Most headman's districts possess their own orchestra, with composers who incorporate verses of praise for their own district and insults for neighbouring ones in their lyrics. The orchestras perform at local celebrations and competitions between orchestras are occasionally arranged (this used to be a regular and frequent occurrence). On such occasions,

the competition is keen, and it heightens the awareness of one's area of residence and loyalty to it.

It is in the music and lyrics that one's allegiance is crystallized; the songs provide a unity of purpose, a focus of identity. The format of the song frequently includes references to prominent people of one's own or rival areas, and it is the headman, more often than not, and important vicinage leaders, who are singled out either for praise (if he represents one's own area) or ridicule (if he is from the rival district).

Despite the fact that there is often disagreement and factionalism amongst the population of a headman's district, there are occasions and situations where, on at least one level, there is a feeling of unity. This unity is given focus by firstly, the personage of the headman himself; secondly, by the fact that it is a territorial grouping; and thirdly, by the headman's district orchestra.

Sub-Chiefdoms.

In the chiefdom of Nkumbi, there are 17 sub-chiefdoms. Formerly, there were many more, as many as 47, but the Portuguese administration cut down on the number for administrative purposes, many of the smaller sub-chiefdoms being relegated to the status of a headman's district.

The cabo (sub-chief) is a man of some importance. His court, for example, is a court of appeal above that of the headman; he is entitled to charge higher fees for litigation that is brought before his court. Under him, one finds much the same kind of structure that prevails in headmen's districts. He normally has one or more (very often two or three) tinduna, who carry out some of the more odious tasks that are his duty. Thus, if anyone has to be summoned to a court case, if someone is tardy in paying taxes, or has not paid his wugayesa fee (which is the 100 escudo levy that every returning migrant has to pay to his chief), then it is usually the induna who is sent out to bring

in the culprit and arraign him before the court.

The sub-chief is paid a certain amount in cash and in kind each year. It is not a large amount, being composed mainly of a portion of the tribute which is destined for the chief (Regulo) each year. He is allowed to keep 20 litres of sope, and a goat and some poultry. The tribute is collected by the various headman's districts under the cabo's control. These tribute gifts are centralized by bringing them to the sub-chief. The chief requires a set amount, and the surplus is kept by the sub-chief although it usually is of the order of the items listed above. Every fifth wygayesa fee is kept by the cabo, the rest being forwarded to the chief.

The place of the sub-chiefdom in the wider politics of a chiefdom is that the 17 sub-chiefs are sometimes called upon to sit in council with the chief himself on matters of import that concern the entire chiefdom. This council, which includes trusted elders drawn from the population at large, is today seldom called.

As mentioned above, the sub-chief's court is of higher status and power than the headman's court, and very often the standard of justice expected is believed to be less parochial and, consequently, higher.

The cabo's rights and privileges are mainly monetary and his duties are manifold: like the headman, he is expected to attend the monthly administration banza to put across government policy to the population at large. He is expected to hold report-back meetings on these banzas with his own people, and it falls to the sub-chief and sometimes the headman, to set in motion the procedures for disciplining an individual who has become ostentatiously wealthy without spreading his largess (even symbolically) by making a tribute donation to either the headman or sub-chief (cf. Foster's concept of the image of limited good (1967)).

This task can be very difficult on the interpersonal level, but, on the other hand, it can be financially quite rewarding. For example,

a case arose where a young man who owned a boat on the navigable Inharrime river, became disproportionately wealthy in comparison with the status of the people around him, and both the headman and sub-chief instituted proceedings against him, invoking a custom to the effect that if any man were to come into what seemed to be undue riches, he whould donate a proportion of these to his immediate superiors. This donation, or tribute is ultimatley destined for the chief himself, although it is doubtful whether on these occasions the tribute always reaches the chief.

The cabo, like the headman, generally delegates many of his tasks to younger men. He is usually, by the time he succeeds to the position, an elderly man. Cabo Ntumbetumbe of Nyakwaha, a man of about 70 years, has two indunas who are, in fact, his own sons. It appears that his strategy is to place them in the public eye and thus promote their chances of succeeding him. An equally important motive would seem to be the fact that the two men were accessible and willing to take on the work.

The internal political organization of a sub-chiefdom is interesting. It is difficult to generalize on this subject, having only studied one such area in depth, but superficial knowledge was gained of a number of others, which did not appear very different to the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha, and it is to this district that I now turn for my case material.

Nyakwaha is made up of three headmen's districts, named Mangane, Nyatsiku, and Seven Jack (see map no 2). Interestingly, there appears to be a loose alliance between Mangane and Nyatsiku against Seven Jack. There seem to be a number of reasons for the emergence of this situation, not least of which being the fact that the present sub-chief is resident in Seven Jack, while the other two headmen's districts have in the past also been seats of power and, indeed, amongst their population there are men of the Nyakwaha clan who have hopes of succeeding the present sub-chief.

Despite the fact that both Mangane and Nyatsiku people claim that the next sub-chief will come from their particular area, the fact of the present residence of the sub-chief in Seven Jack is strong enough cause for the other two district to submerge their rivalry in favour of facing the more immediate object of jealousy.

Furthermore, the headman's district of Seven Jack is the most recently established of the three districts, and is a latecomer on the political scene. Nyatsiku is believed to be the area where the first cabo of Nyakwaha was resident. After some time, the population became too large, so he divided his sphere of influence in two, keeping one to himself, and delegating authority over the other district to a younger brother, which later became known as Mangane. When the old cabo died, the sub-chieftainship fell to the younger man, the headman of Mangane.

The traditions relating to how the three headmen's districts acquired their names are revealing of their historical relationship. Nyatsiku means 'the sick man'. This refers to the sub-chief, who when old and sick, had help and support withdrawn by his younger brother, who allegedly hoped to hasten the old man's death. This younger brother claimed that he had been sent away to a remote area because nobody liked him. The name Mangane means 'the unloved one'. These names are still used for the two headman's districts today, and are of early Chopi origin. The name Seven Jack, however, is of far more recent origin. It is a corruption of the name of the now-defunct South African gold mine Simmer and Jack, where many Chopi have worked as migrant labourers since the earliest gold mining days.

The fact that a headman's district has the name of a South African gold mine points to a fairly recent origin of the district, certainly not dating to before about 1890. Oral tradition claims that population pressure forced the sub-chief of the time to divide his territory into a third portion. When the area was to be named, the menfolk

decided that, as many of them had worked at the mine and had had enjoyable experiences there, it was as good a name as any.

All this points to the fact that Seven Jack is a more recently-constituted district, and the original two, perhaps because of resentment against the newcomer, have other factors influencing the state of affairs, and it is certain that on various occasions this alliance has been split. If the sub-chieftainship were to move to Nyatsiku, then this would be sufficient cause for the other two disticts to form a loose alliance.

If one turns again to the music, the orchestras of the Chopi, the alliance within Nyakwaha between Nyatsiku and Mangane against Seven Jack is reflected by the composition of their orchestras. Nyatsiku and Seven Jack have their own orchestras, Mangane does not. The people of Mangane have enough musicians and dancers to form their own orchestra, but do not deem it necessary. What happens is that two out of five of the xylophone players of the Nyatsiku orchestra come from Mangane, as are three of the fifteen Nyatsiku dancers.

This combined orchestra competes against that of Seven Jack, with a repertoire of songs that define the sphere of influence of Nyatsiku as including the people of Mangane. In other words, when songs of self praise are sung, they include Mangane (largely, one suspects, because of the orchestra's composers come from Mangane and the insults are directed almost exclusively at Seven Jack). Seven Jack, on the other hand, indiscriminately throws insults at both Nyatsiku and Mangane.

There are cross-cutting ties that extend beyond the boundaries of mere headman's districts, sub-chiefdoms, and even chiefdoms. These ties are reckoned in terms of kinship: patrilateral, matrilateral, and affinal, and in terms of friendship and namesakes. Indeed, one finds that vicinages found in the headman's district of Nyatsiku, have their counterparts in the neighbouring headmen's districts and broader areas. For example, there is an Ntsambe vicinage in all three headman's dist-

ricts of the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha, and also in districts beyond. These are not all parts of the same vicinage. They are all autonomous vicinages founded by different individuals with the same clan name, who may, or may not, be able to trace a relationship. Generally, however, they regard each other as kinsmen (mashaka, sing. dishaka), with ties that could be activated. This is particularly true of vicinages with the same clan name in contiguous districts, where the actual kinship linkage is usually established.

These vicinages, therefore, are often based, and are closely related to their counterparts in other districts. One also finds that recruitment of people to such groups as work parties involves kin, friends, etc., and these too, while being recruited in the main from one headman's district, also include people from throughout the sub-chiefdom.

The sub-chiefdom itself is, like its component districts, represented by an orchestra, which is drawn from these lesser areas, so it is a truly representative orchestra of the area. The songs, while containing much of the material used by headman's districts, tend to be representative of the sub-chiefdom, in that verses are incorporated which praise the sub-chief and his people, and which jokingly insult the rival sub-chiefdoms.

The sub-chiefdom is, then, more than just a territorial grouping, it is also a moral community, a feature which the people themselves acknowledge.

Chiefdoms

Map no 1. shows, in the inset, the position of Chopiland in Mozambique, and a rough map of Chopiland, showing the number of Chiefdoms and their relative size. The fieldwork for this study was carried out in the chiefdom of Nkumbi, which is the largest north of the Inharrime river, and one of the larger chiefdoms in all Chopiland. It has within it an estimated population of 22 000 people and Nkumbi has under his juris-

diction 17 sub-chiefs.

Chiefdoms have reasonably well-defined boundaries between each other and there have in recent years been a number of boundary disputes as pressure on land has grown in certain areas. These are resolved by a meeting of the two chiefs on the spot, where argument is led for both sides, and the chiefs seek, and generally arrive at, a compromise. If no agreement could be reached, the Administrator would be called upon to arbitrate. Each chiefdom has a capital, where the chief and his wives are resident. Nearby are many homesteads occupied by his retinue of tinduna and hangers-on.

Within a chiefdom there is a large degree of mobility, and even between chiefdoms there is much scope for movement. Many marriages are contracted beyond the chiefdom, opening channels of affinity beyond those of consanguinity, which facilitate mobility. Bonds of friendship forged as young men on the mines, the presence or availability of a grandparent or a namesake in distant parts, are all factors which provide ties that extend beyond parochial boundaries and which can be activated should one wish to move from one area to another.

The chief is provided with a uniform and is paid a fairly small stipend, plus a proportion of the taxes of his people, by the Portuguese administration. The greater amount of funds accruing to a chief are derived from the annual tribute gathered from his sub-chiefs, the wugayesa funds, and court cases heard at his court. The chief himself seldom presides at a court case, except those which are particularly difficult or important. The chief's tinduna generally handle the court cases, and convey their decision and judgement to the chief, who ratifies the decision and fixes the amounts to be paid to him by the litigants.

The chief is known to the entire population of his chiefdom. He holds an annual celebration at which most of the tribute goods are consumed. Any member of his chiefdom is entitled to attend. He travels in the company of the Administrator throughout the chiefdom,

and with his retinue settles boundary disputes, or attends important funerals. The chieftainship is therefore a position which has large financial advantages when viewed in the context of the general poverty of Mozambique. Chief Nkumbi, dispite the awkwardness of his intercalary position, appears to have the respect of his people. Some of the other chiefs of Chopiland do not command the same amount of respect, being young men who have been appointed by the administration against the wishes of the people and above others whose claims to succession were stronger. (1)

Succession to office is based on the adelphic pattern (as was mentioned above). This means that inheritance of office is passed through a line of brothers according to primogeniture. Thereafter the children of the first brother, then children of the second brother etc. all qualify in turn.

Quite clearly, this pattern of succession becomes confused after two or three generations, and gives rise to a large degree of potential competition, opportunities for manipulation being so great. (2) The problem is exacerbated where the prize is of value, such as is the case in the chieftainship.

Genealogical memory is very short, and while rules of succession ideally should be followed, a number of contestants invariably can put forward equally plausible claims. The matter is complicated by

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(1) It is now well documented that the position of the chief in a colonial (or in any event subordinate) situation is extremely difficult, since he has to attempt to reconcile the conflicting demands of those imposed upon him by the Administration with those of his people. In many cases, the two sets of demands appear irreconcilable, and the delicate balance of power between chief and subject tends to be lost, being replaced by a one-way chain of command from administration to people, with the chief becoming a bureaucrat in a rigid system. (cf. Weinrich 1971, Garbett 1966). Nevertheless, as Kuper (1970:355) has recently pointed out, a person in such an intercalary position is able to manipulate it to a degree, by playing the administration off against the people, and vice versa.

(2) Examples of this type of manipulation are to be found in chapters six and ten.

administrative policy. The administration would prefer a young, educated, sober, and Portuguese-speaking man to be the Chief. This tends to rule out some of the men who, in normal circumstances, would succeed to the chieftainship.

Under the traditional system, the tendency was that there was a high turnover of elderly men who succeeded to the chieftainship, their tenure being short. Indeed, if one looks at a list of the chiefs of Nkumbi, one finds that there are seven chiefs between the present chief and his father. Thus, in his own lifetime, Samusson Nkumbi has known seven or eight different chiefs, in a matter of 75 years. This is an average tenure of only ten years.

The effect of the administration's upsetting of the traditional pattern is that a young man of the royal clan leapfrogs a number of stronger claimants, but the situation seems to reassert itself in future generations, where the contestants for the position realise that if they wish to enter the political arena, the requirements of the altered environment are such that qualities of sober habits, a knowledge of Portuguese and a Portuguese education are important.

There was always competition for the cheiftainship, and this has to a certain extent been reduced by the request of the administration that all important lines of succession be recorded. This has infused a rigidity into the situation which was previously lacking. Another difficulty arising from the situation is that some chiefs have taken the opportunity to groom their sons to follow them, thus attempting to upset the traditional adelphic succession.

Like the incumbents of the lower political strata, chiefs and chiefdoms earn the loyalty of their inhabitants. The foci of allegiance also follow the previous patterns, i.e., the facts of territorial contiguity, the popularity of the chief, and identification with the orchestra of the area concerned; the main occasions of performance are on important Portuguese national days the chiefs are encouraged to send

their orchestra to perform in the town which forms the administrative centre, where they compete with one another for the attention of the crowds who attend such festivals.

The Chopi People

In chapter one, it was argued that the Chopi should not be seen as a tribe, but as a people. This is because they lack a unifying, overarching political structure, such as one would expect for a 'tribe'; they have 15 or 16 autonomous chiefdoms. They do, however, possess a common culture which, with some regional variations, such as in dialect, is in many aspects unique to themselves. This is specially true of their music and also the (now dying) skill of bark cloth manufacture. The language, of course, is the most distinctive feature of differentiation from their neighbours. This, and their pride in their ethnic identity, serve, in their own minds, to distinguish them from the surrounding population with whom they share an overall cultural similarity in the main institutions of religion, politics and economics.

The relationship with neighbouring peoples tends to vary from the experiences of one individual informant to the next. In general, the relationships are very good. Indeed, one would expect this to be so, since many of the Chopi can trace some ancestry to the neighbouring peoples. The clan of Ntsambe, has a vaThonga origin, while that of Nkome has a Shangaan or Zulu origin.

The Chopi image of self is given focus most effectively on the mines in the Republic of South Africa, where one finds that under the migratory labour situation, large numbers of Chopi and other southern Mozambique peoples come into contact with many other ethnically diverse, and even hostile, peoples. The South African race laws, and the mining company policies, also tend to emphasis ethnic identity.

Migratory labour is of great importance to the Chopi, not only for the obvious monetary gain involved, but, equally importantly, as a kind of initiation for young men. When youths reach the age of about

nineteen, they are encouraged to go to the mines and, indeed, if they wish to get married, the mines provide an opportunity to earn the lowolo, or bridewealth money.

The importance of migratory labour to the economy of the Chopi, indeed, to the whole of southern Mozambique, cannot be overstressed. The burden of taxes on adult males (imposed by the administration) and the demand for consumer products makes it essential for ablebodied men to seek employment. There are very few positions available in Mozambique itself, and the only alternative is the South African gold mines.

A migrant labour trip to the mines has come to be regarded almost as a secondary initiation for men. Women informants stressed that it was important for potential husbands to have had migrant experience. It apparently proved their manhood (for it is a rigorous and physically strengthening experience) and ensured that there would be money to spend. Amongst the men themselves, I have often heard stories of difficult experiences on the mines, and men like to exchange reminiscences and compare notes as to what positions were held at various mines, with some jobs being more highly esteemed than others. In real terms, of course, the underdeveloped periphery that is Mozambique gives men no choice but to migrate to the developed centres of South Africa.

Mine administration policy has tended to have a consciously encapsulation effect on the various ethnic groups, which are housed in separated barracks. This policy is rather naively implemented, so that all peoples of Mozambique tend to be thrown together under the generic name of Shangaan, so the Chopi are often identified as Shangaan vis-a-vis South African peoples.

There are, nevertheless, various incentives and opportunities for the Chopi to assert themselves as an ethnic group, the most tangible of which being language and music. Indeed, their music is a diacritical

feature. On Sundays the mines encourage the various peoples to enjoy their traditional dances; it is here that the Chopi come into their own, having more musical ability than any of the other peoples in southern Africa. On the mines, a Chopi orchestra is composed of able musicians and dancers drawn from throughout Chopiland, who, by chance or design, have ended up on the mine. The orchestra on a mine, is, for its miners, representative of their identity as Chopi people, transcending all lower political or territorial barriers.

The songs that are sung at the mine dances tend to deal with diverse subject matter, but two main themes emerge: firstly, the songs are often nostalgic, bringing back memories of Chopiland; and secondly, they often poke fun at other ethnic groups and the European miners, who come in for special lampooning. The songs are sung in Chopi, and for the enjoyment of the Chopi (unlike the Kalela dance (Mitchell 1957) where the songs are sung in the township lingua franca). This, according to informants, is because they fear violent reprisals in the form of a 'faction fight', if they were to insult (through jokes) such ethnic groups as the Xhosa and Sotho, whom the Chopi tend to believe are particularly violent and easily provoked.

Conclusion

This chapter presents what is, in the main, a formal description of the Chopi social system, with emphasis on the political structure. This formal approach is necessary in that it provides a background, a frame of reference, for the analysis which follows in later chapters. It is the social and political 'environment', in Bailey's (1970:9-11) sense of the word. I have already indicated in small part some of the structure, especially in relation to mobility and competition for status.

Status is attainable not only in the formal hierarchy described above, but also in such areas as the spirit mediumship cult and in the orchestras. It is here particularly that processes of support

recruitment through individual effort and achievement become apparent. Individual skill and ability are recognised, and support is gained on a sub-structural or informal level in contests for, say, orchestra leadership. The leader of the dancers, or an important spirit medium, are positions of prestige. These same processes are important; but to a lesser degree, in the achievement of rank and status in the more formal hierarchy.

In the following chapter the arena of micro-political action, the vicinage, is examined, and in later chapters the processes of support gathering, and the malleability of such institutions as kinship, which facilitate this, are analysed.

Chapter IV

The Vicinage

Introduction

The vicinage is introduced at an early stage of the thesis because it is within this level of social organization that many of the significant processes of social and political life become discernable. The vicinage is the lowest and simplest level of political activity in the Chopi social system; processes that here appear in microcosm are reflected in successively higher levels of abstraction, but are similar in essence. In any event, the study of local-level politics is an intriguing and valuable enterprise, as many recent monographs have shown (*vide*, e.g., Swartz 1969).

The vicinage, known as a *chitiyana*, is essentially a neighbourhood and hospitality grouping (cf. Hammond-Tooke 1963). The members of a vicinage tend to cluster together in a rough geographical proximity, although this is by no means a *sine qua non* of membership. Indeed, in some cases, vicinage members may be separated by other vicinages from their area of reference (see map no.). The recognised head of the Nkome vicinage has his homestead in the midst of Homu people. However, these are contrary to the accepted pattern, the vicinage having a loose territorial basis.

The Chopi have a cultural bias towards patri- and virilocality, especially in early marriage. As men mature, however, there is a tendency towards neolocality, as they embark on their occasional moves from one district to another. (The average number of moves for the adult male population of Nyatsiku was 1,6 per capita per lifetime.)

Figure 6: Nyatsiku residence patterns

	No. of homesteads	Percentage of total
Patri-virilocal	36	72
Neolocal	12	24
Uxorlocal	2	4
	50	100

The majority of vicinage members, therefore, are living in terms of the patri-virilocal principle. This does not necessarily mean that they have not moved from the area. Some have made a move away and returned; others have followed their father after he has moved, etc. Nevertheless, the majority of the male population of a vicinage have been born and brought up there.

Turning our attention to the map of Nyatsiku, it is apparent that there are seven vicinages, varying in size from the large Masakula (11 homesteads) to the small Mbiye (three homesteads). The map illustrates the contiguity of most homesteads comprising the vicinage, although one cannot distinguish by sight any boundary, or even any spatial separation between neighbouring homesteads which belong to different vicinages. Allegiance may still be recognised even if some homesteads are separated from the remainder, as is the case of the Ntsambe vicinage, whose members live in Guveni, the sub-headman's district to the west of the map. In the north-east corner, one finds two homesteads professing allegiance to the Ntsambe wahombe despite a relatively large physical separation.

The reason for the separation appears in this case to be on the grounds of a personal dislike for the sub-headman of Guveni, which led to the move, but the allegiance to the vicinage has not been broken yet, probably because the recalcitrants do not owe direct allegiance to the sub-headman, but were recruited by a relatively junior member of the vicinage. While withdrawing physical support from the vicinage head, they retain their moral allegiance to their sponsor.

Composition and recruitment

Vicinages, with few exceptions, are built around a core of agnatic kinsmen, supplemented by other individuals drawn from the ranks of matrilateral or affinal kin, quasi-kin such as namesakes, special friends, and even mere acquaintances (although there is usually an attempt to trace some kind of kinship linkage, however tentative, in these cases).

Idioms of recruitment

The Chopi tend, in their verbalizations on the subject, to favour a patrilineal ideology both in the recruitment to, and continuity and solidarity of, the vicinage. Despite this cultural bias, informants display a strong streak of pragmatism in keeping with their essentially rational and practical approach to life.

The idiom of kinship is invoked whenever the question of group solidarity and continuity arises. Informants stress the desirability for patrilineal kinsmen, and more especially brothers, to keep together, since they form a tightly-knit unit. Also favoured are matrilateral and affinal kinsmen, although these are not considered to be as dependable as agnates. The institution of special friendship (the ndoni relationship) can result in a personal bond at least as strong as that of siblinghood, but is not believed to contribute to strong group solidarity as kinship does.

Recruitment to the vicinage, on the other hand, is recognised as being a more fluid process, where it may be a distinct advantage to recruit new members from as diverse a background as possible. An idiom that one informant quoted in this connection was: 'The goat grows strong by taking grass here, leaves there, eating wherever it can.'

The idioms relating to vicinages can therefore be divided into two types, each relating to different functions of the group. The desirable attributes of cohesion and continuity are couched in the ideology of kinship, with a bias towards the patrilineal side. Recruitment, on the other hand, is sanctioned by idioms reflecting the pragmatic considerations involved, and reflect the lack of rigidity in inter-group relations. Vicinages that attain size and strength do so because they have recruited a large number of non-agnates.

Recruitment to a vicinage can take place either through birth or immigration. It is the latter that is of interest here. In order for a newcomer to settle in a district, it is necessary for him to find a sponsor. He may activate any ties he feels may be useful, the 'prescriptive altruism'

of kinship being one of the most useful. A person lacking any kinsmen in an area could ask an acquaintance, or preferably, a friend, to sponsor him.

Sponsorship usually ensures a ready welcome and acceptance for the immigrant, provided he does not encroach upon any field of vicinage members, although this event is unlikely, there being much land still unoccupied. The newcomer must accept his sponsor as being responsible for his relations with the neighbours and he becomes one of his sponsor's vawuyi, meaning 'people who have come' (at the sponsor's calling). The sponsor is the newcomer's wahombe (big man).

The term wahombe can be applied to men in many contexts: the leader of a vicinage is one, yet so is a father in relation to his son. A music composer of some repute is a big man, as is a skillful hunter, who leads to hunt. In this study I shall be using the term mainly to refer to vicinage heads and potential vicinage heads. The implication here is that the defined sphere of influence is political; the men who are of interest are those who have committed themselves to competition in the political arena.

A successful big man usually combines a number of the traits listed above; a potential one strives to combine as many as possible. The wahombe's position is based mainly on influence, which can be turned into support; but the nature of the relationship between leader and follower is such that the support can be easily eroded. The big man must try to institutionalize his support, and this is complex.

Influence gained through such intangibles as being a wise dispenser of advice, or possessing musical ability are an important part of the big man's gathering a fund of support; but more important is the support he can generate through established and more permanent areas of social life.

In the seven vicinages that make up the headman's district of Nyatsiku, it was found that agnation was the most important recruiting principle, followed by affinity. The class of ono-kin refers in the main to those who are resident there because of a bond of friendship either that they have themselves made, or one of their ancestors had made with his contemporary vicinage heads.

The nature of the relationship of followers to big man is represented in Figure seven below.

Figure 7: Nature of relationship of vawuyi to vicinage head

	Percentage of total
Agnatic kinsman	48
Affinal kinsman	33
Matrilateral kinsman	7
Non-kin, i.e., friendship	12
	100

The figures provided here are, of course, not entirely accurate. I attempted to discover what relationship was activated when newcomers entered the area, but some of these were beyond living memory and others could have been obfuscated by say, the strengthening of a bond of friendship through marriage. To later generations it might appear that the original link was the affinal alliance. These percentages are, therefore, to be treated with caution.

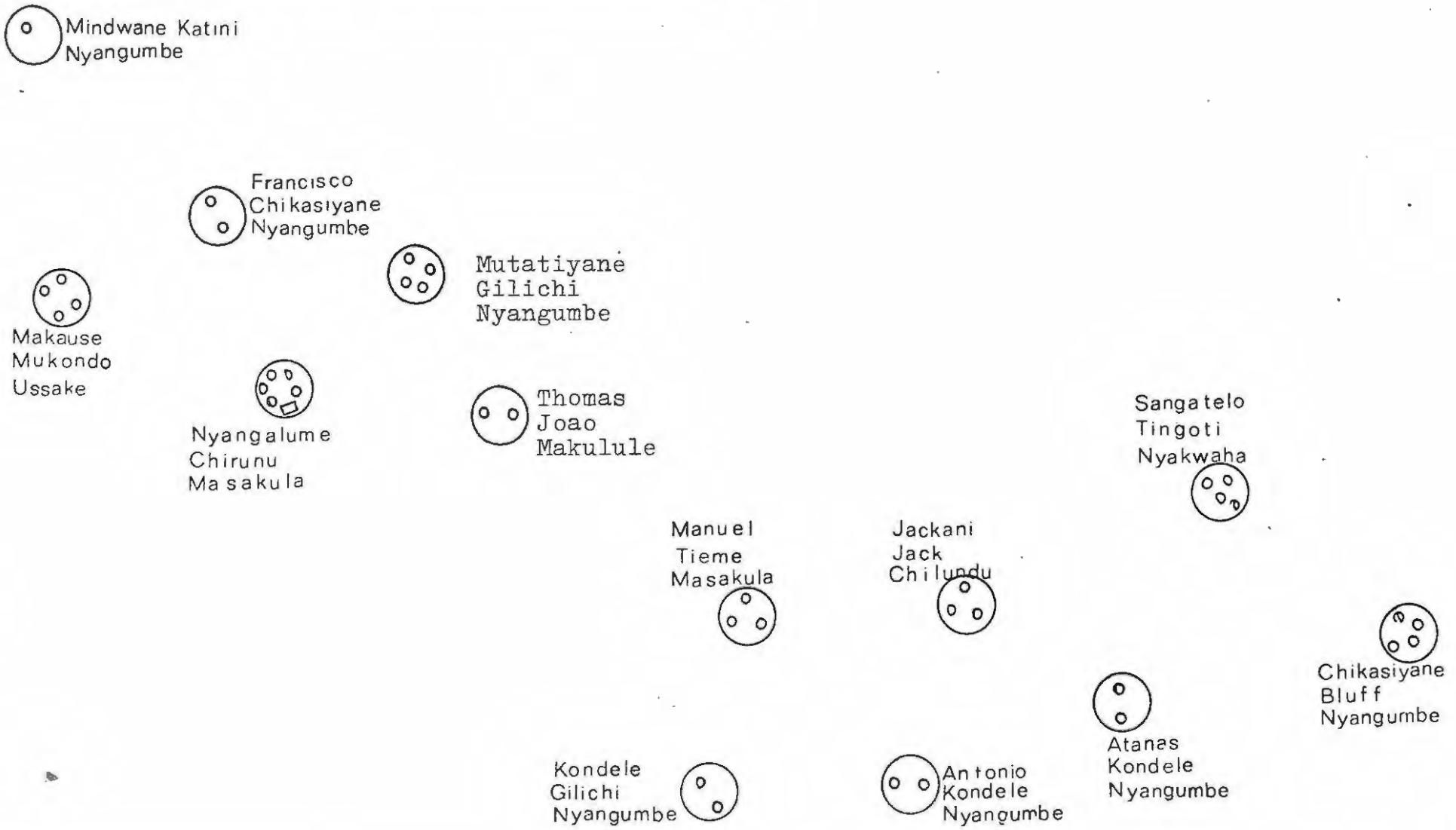
Kinship is the most fruitful means for providing a reservoir of potential support. Kinship has well-defined structures involving rules of reciprocity, privileges and obligations. Support drawn from such institutionalized avenues is usually more stable and more reliable than that relying on an individual's personal qualities, for if these were to become less appealing, so his support would decline.

More useful than generalizations and percentages, which sometimes have the unfortunate effect of obscuring the idiosyncratic and leader-oriented nature of the vicinage, is the presentation of case material. In the following cases, based partly on my own observation, and partly on depth interviews with individuals involved, I present a reconstruction of how actual vicinages were founded, followers recruited, and an assessment of the relationship between members at present.

Case 3: The Masakula vicinage

During the one-year period of my field work, the vicinage of Masakula lost one member, who moved to a neighbouring one, and gained a new homestead, when the son of a member set up his own household a short distance away from his father. There was, therefore, a net total

Figure 8. Diagram of Masakula vicinage



of twelve homesteads.

Figure eight is a diagram depicting the rough location of the various homesteads that comprise the vicinage of Masakula. A glance at the diagram shows that there are only two homesteads possessing the clan name Masakula, which is the name of its leader, Nyangalume Chirunu Masakule (I provide here three names, a personal name, father's name, and clan name. This is how the Chopi themselves identify persons specifically. They do, in fact, have many personal names, and I have selected the one which an individual most favoured, or by which he was best known to his fellows.) (1) The only other resident member of Nyangalume's clan is Manuele Tieme Masakula, who is a different house (nyumba) or lineage to the vicinage head. They cannot trace any genealogical linkage to each other.

Nyangumbe people provide the majority of the vicinage population, with seven households, while there are four homesteads whose owners possess different clan names. A later chapter describes how the kinship system is extremely shallow, and this is manifest in this vicinage, where the largest sub-lineage grouping is made up of two brothers, Mutatiane and Kondele, and two of Kondele's sons.

Informants report that the first member of the vicinage was a decendant of the original Nyakwaha who founded both the headman's district of Nyatsiku and the sub-chiefdom. There was an argument between brothers over the succession to the headmanship, resulting in the loser splitting away from the lineage and founding his own clan under the name of Masakula. In time, Masakula sponsored the application of a number of immigrants to the area, the first of which was a man of the Nyangumbe clan. He in turn recruited and sponsored three brothers, all of whom are regarded, by extension, as 'Masakula's people'.

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(1) Throughout this thesis, where three names are given for an individual, they refer to his personal name, his father's, and his clan name, respectively. Where only two names are given they refer to the individual's personal name and clan name only.

It is difficult to reconstruct the nature of the relationship between the original Masakula and Nyangumbe: some informants say it was special friendship, the ndoni relationship, that attracted Nyangumbe, others say that the relationship was one of affinity. What is certain is that the bonds that exist between the Masakula and Nyangumbe people were at one time formalized through marriage, for all the Nyangumbe people are in a son-in-law relationship to the Masakula people.

The present vicinage leader, Nyangalume, cannot trace a direct linkage with his only agnates in his area, Manuele, Tieme, and Masakula. They belong to different lineages. A matrilateral relative is also a present member of the vicinage; he is of the Ussake clan, and is Nyangalume's classificatory mother's brother. The two people unaccounted for are Thomas Makulule and Jackani Chilundu, both of whom regard themselves as friends of Nyangalume, and are immigrants to the area in the last ten years, Nyangalume being their sponsor. They are not in the formal ndoni friendship type of relationship.

The friendship with Thomas Makulule developed on the South African gold mines, where they once shared a dormitory in the barracks; and Jackani Chilundu is from the neighbouring chiefdom of Chilundu. He and Nyangalume met on one of the occasions when the Nyatsiku orchestra performed there. A friendship developed, with exchanges of visits until eventually Jackani decided to move to Nyatsiku, and asked Nyangalume to sponsor him.

The remaining individual who appears on the diagram, is Sangatelo Nyakwaha, who was, until recently, the headman of Nyatsiku. He is therefore of superior status to Nyangalume. His succession to, and removal from the headmanship is discussed in a later chapter, but suffice it to say here that the support of the Masakula vicinage was a crucial factor in his bid for the position. This was due to a large degree to his friendship with the leader of the Masakula vicinage, and his residence within it.

The old split between Nyakwaha and Masakula is no longer of relevance today, where alliances are contracted with whatever party can be of assistance. The diagram shows that Sangatelo has moved from the Masakula vicinage to a

neighbouring one of which he is the head. This is not indicative of a rift; it was expedient at the time to take the recently deceased's wife widow inheritance and to move into her homestead.

Analysis

Taking the vicinage as a whole, it will be seen that the leader, Nyangalume, has seven members who are related to him through affinity and/or friendship, two friends, one matrilateral kinsman, and one agnate, plus another agnate who has left the area.

Following Gulliver (1971) and A.C. Mayer (1966), I found it useful to isolate various spheres or categories into which the various people with whom ego interacts can be classified. This is not a mere typology; each category has with it an ideology which demands various degrees of what Maurice Bloch (1972) has called 'prescriptive altruism'. The categories include: the universe of kin, i.e., all kinsmen, traced cognatically and affinally; the kin set, which refers to all those kin with whom ego has an active relationship; the interaction set; and the action set.

The universe of kin is more inclusive than the kin set, in that it refers to all the kin of ego, whereas the latter refers to only those with whom ego interacts. Gulliver's use of these two vategories as well as the action set are useful, but are restricted to include kin only. It is for this reason that I have included my own category of 'interaction set', which I take to denote those individuals, kin, or more particularly, non-kin, with whom ego interacts. The formation of action groups and sets among the Chopi shows that kinship, while being an important principle of recruitment, is by no means the only one. An individual comes into daily contact, and frequently has reciprocal interaction, with people who are friends, acquaintances, and neighbours.

The final category, that of the action set, is described by Gulliver as being an ad hoc set of kinsmen who are mobilized by ego for specific concerted action. Having achieved its goal, it disbands (1971:18). This definition is inadequate for my purposes because of the heavy reliance on

the recruitment of kinsmen. The category at the higher level of inclusion, interaction set, broadens the pool of potential support on which an individual can draw beyond mere kin.

The definition of the action set, therefore, must be broadened to include non-kin, and could be read as : an ad hoc set of individuals, kin and others, mobilized by ego for specific concerted action.

It will be noted that the categories are throughout referred to as sets. This is to emphasize their qualitative difference from groups. The kin set, for example, is ego-oriented by definition. The individuals who make up its number do not come together for corporate action, and may not acknowledge linkages with all other members of ego's set. Portions of this kin set will, in various contexts, come together for concerted action, as part of an action set, but these contexts are also ephemeral.

The action set refers to a collection of individuals, recruited by ego for a specific purpose. The relationships of its members to ego are usually diverse, ranging from kinship to transactional linkages with acquaintances. The action set differs from a group in that it is ego-centered, while groups have organizations which may be diffuse; also, members of the set need not interact with the other members; their actions are oriented towards ego or an indermediary (Mayer 1966:98).

Mayer asserts that when these linkages between ego and the individuals forming an action set are repeated in different contexts of activity, then a quasi-group can be said to exist. It is an isolate of a number of individuals who are linked with ego in a number of similar contexts, but lacking any formal basis for membership. In time, if the same core of people are involved, then perhaps they may begin to interact with each other as well as ego, and a formal group may emerge.

These explanatory tools provide a useful insight into group formation and dynamics on the level of the vicinage. The original Masakula began by recruiting a friend and sponsoring him as a newcomer to the area. This man was a member of Masakula's interaction set, i.e., he was a person with whom Masakula interacted from time to time. The bond of friendship was

strengthened when Nyangumbe made the physical move and at the same time became part of Masakula's action sets in terms of political, economic and social activity. These bonds were further strengthened and given formal status by the marriage of one of the Nyangumbe sons to a daughter of Masakula which, incidentally, would also have further entrenched the dependants of the Nyangumbe people of Masakula.

The nature of the relationship of new members to others in a vicinage tends to be tenuous at the outset. They meet at work parties, celebrations, and other activities which are action sets in action. These are, of course, leader-oriented activities, with single-stranded ties linking members to the individual who convenes the action set. It is through meeting fellow vicinage members and others at these work parties, celebrations etc., that one becomes incorporated into what is technically a quasi-group, and which, if members are so motivated, becomes a formal group in time.

There is a strong tendency for a constellation of action sets to be recruited within the vicinage, although membership of these is seldom entirely drawn one's fellow vicinage members. Individuals also have friends and kinsmen drawn from their interaction and kin sets beyond the vicinage who are considered important members of action sets.

A questionnaire was administered which elicited information on the composition of action sets. The action sets selected for investigation were: work parties (of the homestead head and his wife), hunting groups, alcohol brewing and drinking parties, the women's ncusu oil manufacturing groups, pot making groups, and those who support at court cases. These gave a reasonable cross-section of group activity. An individual's action sets vary in composition depending on the type of activity for which it was constituted. For example, a different type of man is needed to speak for one in a court case than one who would make a good hunting partner. There are, however, some members who reappear in numerous contexts and these form the nucleus of a quasi-group. (1)

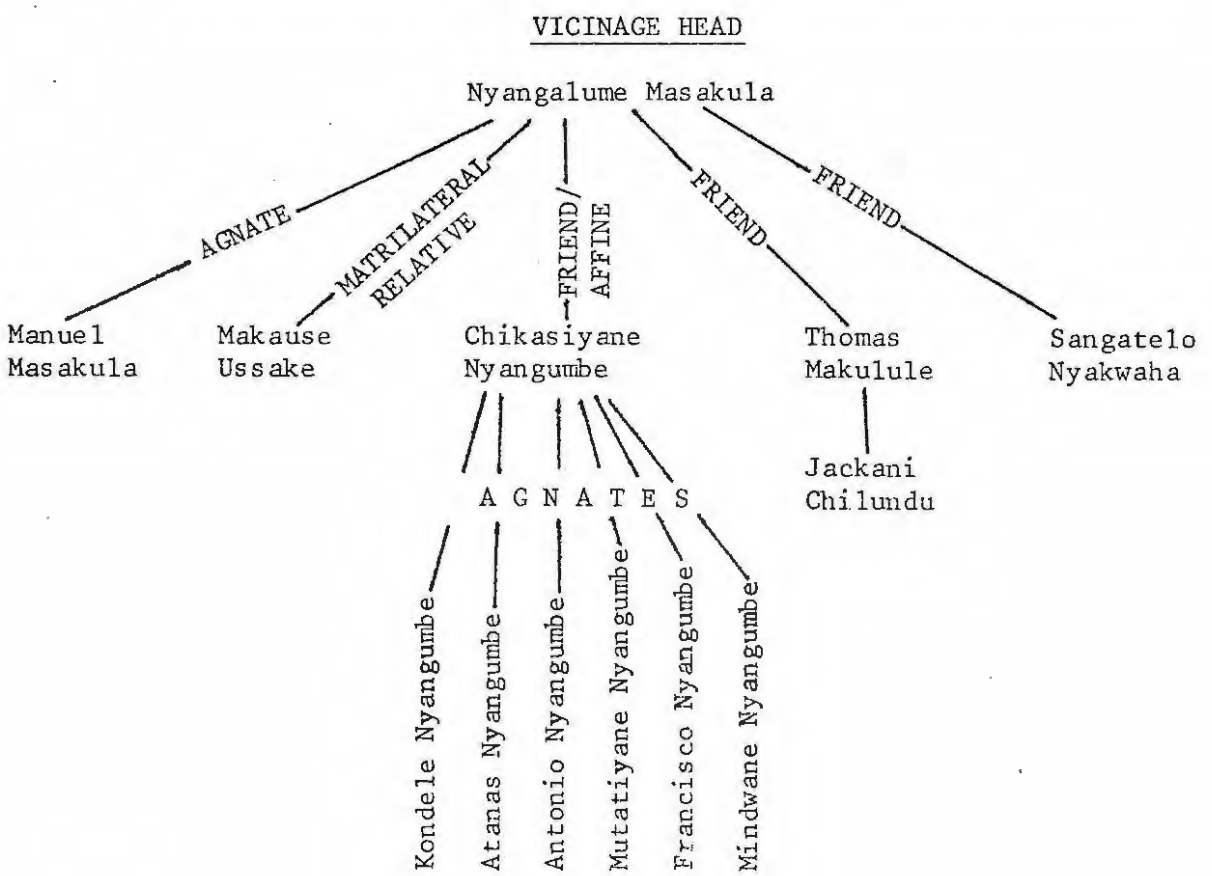
(1) A more detailed examination of action sets, their composition, and activities, is carried out in chapter nine.

Taking the action sets mentioned above, it was found that, for the vicinage of Masakula, the majority of core members were from within the vicinage, the figure being 80 per cent on average, with the remaining twenty per cent being recruited from outside the vicinage, often outside the headman's district.

There is another feature that needs expansion before moving on to the next case. The wahombe, Nyangalume, has only one agnate, Manuele, as a follower. The clan of Nyangumbe is well represented, however, with seven homesteads. The Nyangumbe people have their own wahombe, Chikasiane, (homestead two in Figure 8). Thus, while Nyangalume is the recognised head of the vicinage, there is potential for fission with the Nyangumbe people, being a powerful group who could, given a cause for dissatisfaction, split away from the present 'big man' and place their own leader at the head of their own vicinage.

Figure 9 depicts the lines of allegiance within the vicinage, each point of bifurcation pointing to an actual, or potential, wahombe. The lines of potential fission can be clearly seen, and are marked with a broken line.

Figure 9: Chains of allegiance of Masakula vicinage members



The leader-oriented nature of the vicinage is apparent from the diagram, which also shows that agnation, as an organising principle, can be of secondary importance. Nyangalume, the wahombe, is a man of strong character, who can hold a potentially centrifugal vicinage together. The Nyangumbe section is a tightly-knit agnatic core, which potentially could split off, but which Nyangalume is able to dominate, partly aided by weak leadership by Chikasiyane, the Nyangumbe wahombe.

The Masakula vicinage, mainly through the personal strength of its leader, is one of the most powerful in the entire headman's district. Indeed, in chapter ten, the role played by this vicinage in the success of Sangatelo Nyakwaha in his bid for the headmanship. is examined. His downfall is at least in part attributable to the fact that he failed to keep the allegiance of this group.

Case 4: The Ntsambe vicinage

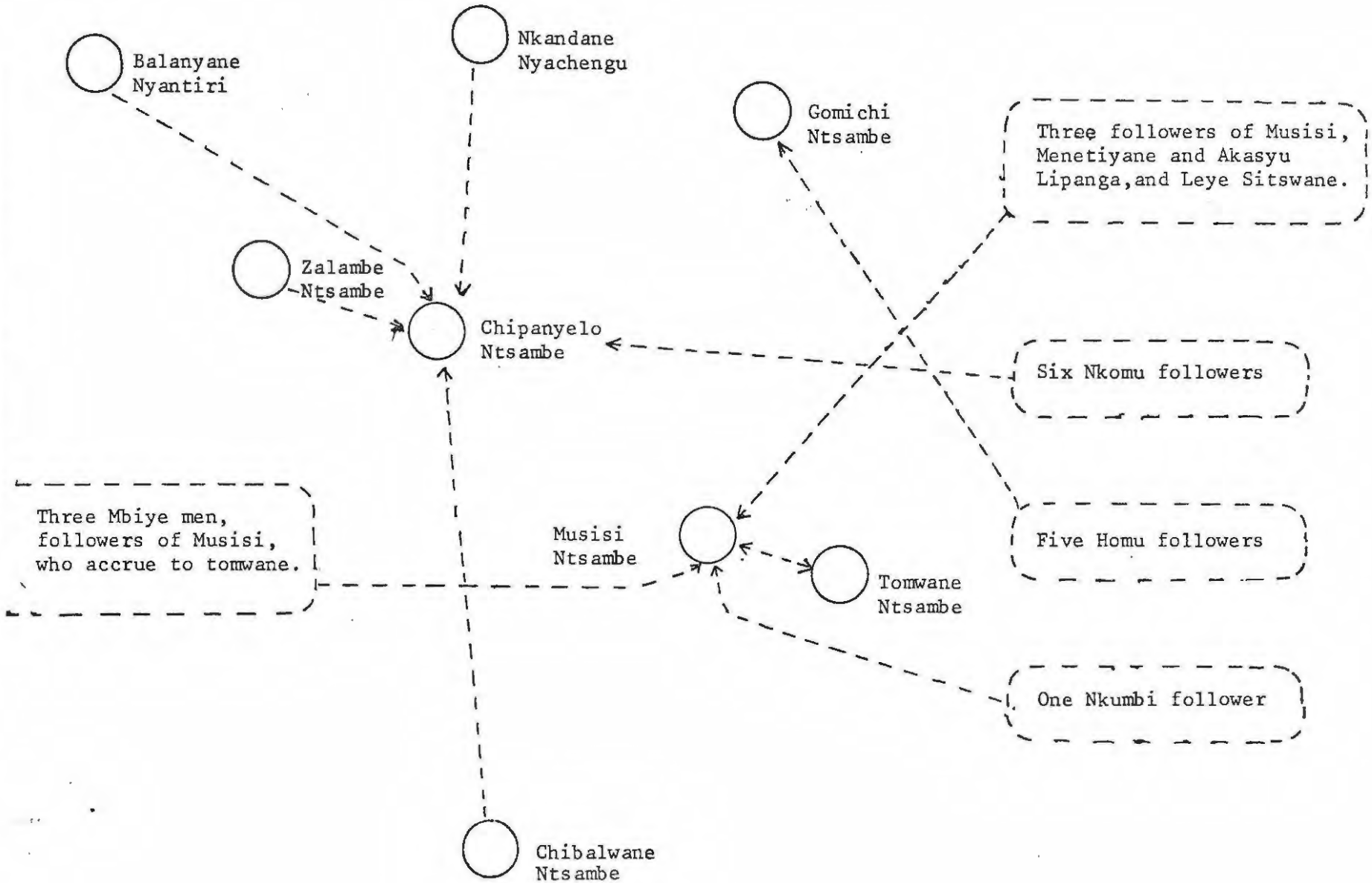
The Ntsambe vicinage presents a more complicated case for study. In the first instance, the Ntsambe group is not merely a vicinage. The sub-headmanship of Guveni is passed through their line. Other smaller vicinages of the sub-headman's sub-district are allied to certain individuals of the Ntsambe group, and have some considerable say in the balance of power between the Ntsambe factions.

It is difficult to trace the date of arrival of the first Ntsambe in this area of Chopiland. Ntsambe is a clan name originating among the vaTonga to the north, and the present clan fragment travelled south, according to tradition, some time before the Soshangane raids, which would place the date some time before 1820. The Ntsambe people came from the district of Guveni, and the sub-headman's sub-district is named after this place of origin.

The immigrant group established itself under a leader, and in time split into two lineages. Figure ten depicts the rough distribution of homesteads and indicates allegiances within the vicinage. Musisi and Tomwane (marked 3 on the diagram) are representatives of the junior

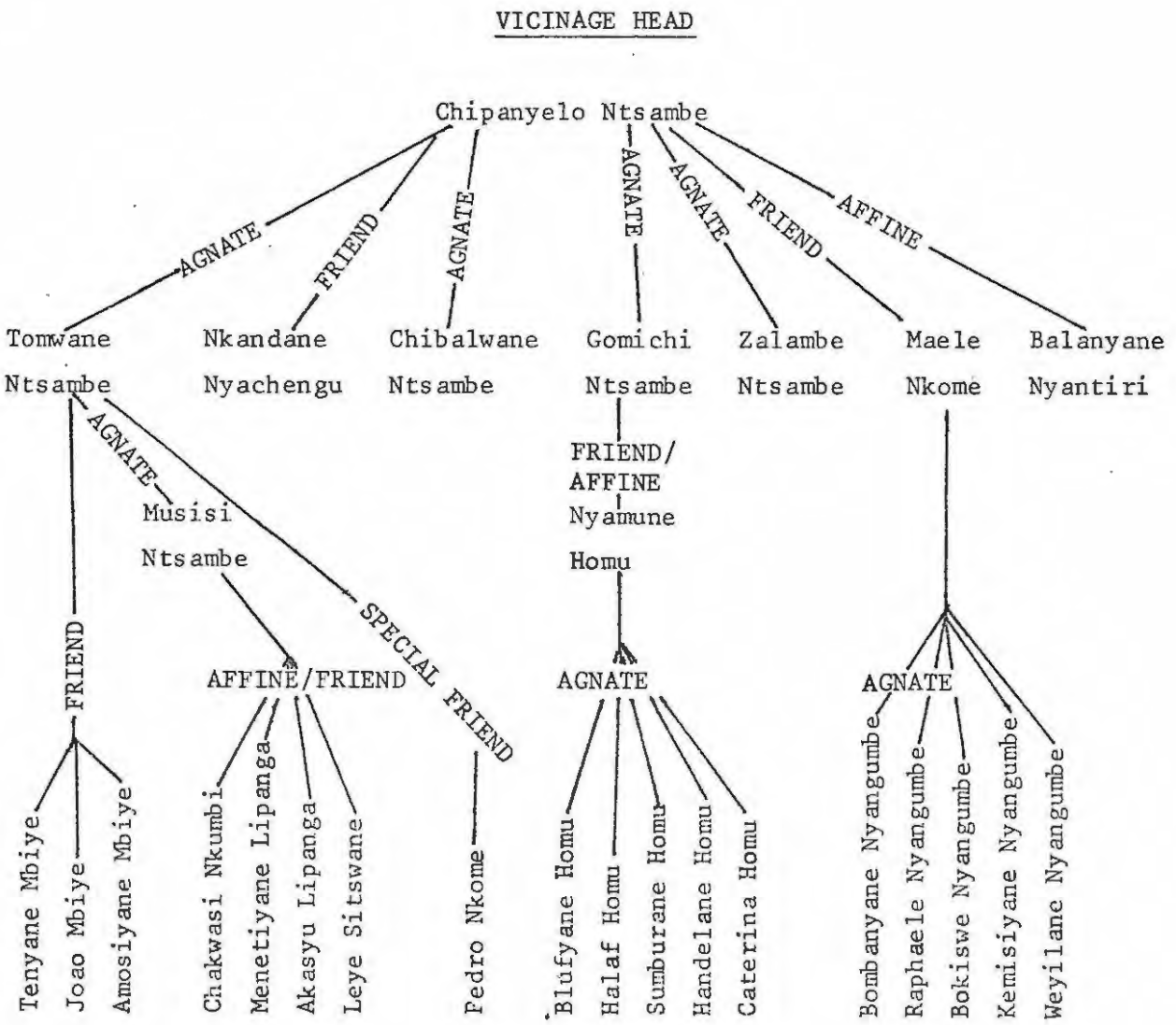
lineage, while the other members of the Ntsambe clan belong to the senior lineage.

Figure 10: Diagram of Ntsambe vicinage



The senior Ntsambe descent group in time acted as sponsor to two immigrant groups: the smaller vicinage of Nkome, and part of the Homu group. The junior descent group sponsored the Mbiye group, and, more recently, four other individuals, Chakwasi Nkumbi, her son Menetiane Lipanga, her sister's son Akasyu, and a friend, Leye Sitswane. All three were sponsored by the younger brother Musisi, their relationship to him being his wife's sister, her son and his family, and a personal friend respectively. The Mbiye vawuyi were originally sponsored by the paternal grandfather of Musisi and Tomwane, and this tie, originally of friendship only, has been further reinforced by the marriage of Musisi to a woman of that group.

Figure 10(a). Chains of allegiance of Ntsambe vicinage members



All these vawuyi or followers, accrue to Musisi's elder brother Tomwane and, through this chain, are linked ultimately to the wahombe of all Ntsambe. It is typical of the complexity of the wahombe concept, with its levels of fission and fusion, that Musisi should be called the wahombe of Chakwasi, Menetiane, Akasyu and Leye; and, through intermarriage, has some claim to the allegiance of the three Mbiye homestead heads. Yet Tomwane, as his elder brother, is his wahombe. The vawuyi of Musisi are thus also the vawuyi of Tomwane. These in turn accrue to the overall vicinage head, which, until his death, was Chipanyelo (marked 1 on the diagram, Figure ten).

It must be immediately stated that the allegiances and cleavages depicted above in Figure 11 are an idealized, even rationalized, picture. There are crosscutting ties, and some of the linkages are not immediately apparent. It is only in times of internal crisis, as in a succession dispute, that allegiances become clearly defined. Indeed, when Chipanyelo, the leader, was still alive (he subsequently died) and these were the divisions that the actors themselves were at that time aware of.

The larger descent group claims the allegiance of both the Nkome and Homu vicinages, the Nkome group being allied directly to the Ntsambe vicinage head, while the Homu group are followers of Gomichi Ntsambe, who is the intermediary to the vicinage head.

This large vicinage provides a good illustration of the dynamics of the institutionalization of a tacitly acknowledged, but previously unformalized, power. The Ntsambe vicinage grew in size from an original core of agnates, sponsoring the immigration of the Nkome, Mbiye, and then Homu people. These in turn sponsored new immigrants and propagated until the Ntsambe 'big man' became one of the most powerful (in terms of numbers) in the whole headman's district. The subsequent immigration of Musisi's wife's sister, her sons and friend, swelled the numerical strength of Tomwane's pool of support.

It was the pressure of the arrival of these more recent immigrants that finally forced the headman of Nyatsiku to formally acknowledge the size

and strength of the Ntsambe vicinage by conferring on its 'big man' the title of nyadibanzi, that is, sub-headman.

Analysis

The case material presented above reflects the situation in mid-1969. In subsequent short field trips from 1971-3., I found that the position had changed. The sub-headman and wahombe of the Ntsambe vicinage died towards the end of my original (1969) field trip. The vicinage split into three factions in a dispute over the leadership; a dispute which had not yet been settled when I undertook my most recent trip in January 1973. These events are not covered here, as this would anticipate the analysis of factions presented in the ultimate chapter of this dissertation.

The Ntsambe case clearly illustrates the problem of an ethnographer in dealing with groups which are recruited on a number of different principles. There is a distinct idiom of patrilineality: informants stress that one's first loyalty is to agnates, and they talk about the vicinage as if it were a patrilineal descent group. Yet the actuality of recruitment shows that while patrilateral kin are indeed important, real strength lies in the recruitment of other types of kin and other non-kin. There is, therefore, a gap between the idiom of kinship by which the Chopi express the patterns of recruitment, solidarity, and continuity of important socio-political groups, and the actual rules they apply to the process of recruitment of these groups. These latter rules are essentially pragmatic (cf Bailey 1970: 4). The Chopi acknowledge that it is acceptable, even desirable, to activate any kind of relationship traced through father or mother, marriage, namesakes, or friendship, in order to recruit to, or join, a vicinage.

This point is illustrated when one examines the relationship of the vicinage members of Chipanyelo, the 'big man' of the Ntsambe vicinage.

Figure 11. Relationship of vicinage members to Chipanyelo, the Ntsambe wahombe

	number	per cent
Agnates	5	22
Affines	9	33
Matrilateral kin	7	24
Friends	4	16
Namesakes	1	4
	26	99

This table illustrates the fact that the vicinage recruits new members by means of a varied number of principles, not least of which being friendship and affinity. The vicinage is fashioned around a core of agnates, and its strength lies in the fact that its members have acquired vawuyi beyond the circumscribed boundaries of agnatic kinship.

Thus we find Tomwane who, through his younger brother, has one 'friendship' and three affinal followers; from his paternal grandfather he has inherited the three Mbiye homesteads, which were originally recruited through bonds of friendship. This bond has been reinforced by the recent marriage of Tomwane's younger brother to an Mbiye woman.

Gomichi Ntsambe (number 2 on the map, Figure ten) is another who, through a paternal ancestor, has fallen heir to a group of followers: the Homu people were affines of an earlier Ntsambe; a Homu man settled and was followed by his agnates. The Nkome vicinage comprises the decendants of a man who was a matrilateral relative of an Ntsambe. He settled in the area over a century ago, and was followed by two brothers. The Nkome vicinage today is the remnant of the descendants of these siblings.

Fission and Fusion

Inherent in what has been described above are forces of fission and fusion. They do not operate on the neat, logical segmentary patterns displayed by the Nuer social structure; the divisions are more arbitrary and idiosyncratic. Every man has the potential to be a 'big man', and many men actively enter the arena of competition seeking followers. Some men are successful, gathering numerous adherents, others are less fortunate, while some, as alluded to above, have none and do not aspire to being 'big men'. It is this element of individual choice that renders impossible a neat model of segmentation like a 'Chinese box.'

Figures nine and 11 provide actual illustrations of the segments that comprise vicinages. The Masakula vicinage, for example, is a case where the wahombe has a relationship with five separate individuals, the activating linkage being based on personal transactions and alle-

giances. There are also seven other members of this vicinage, all members of the Nyangumbe clan. Their relationship to the Masakula leader is mediated by their own 'big man', Chikasiyane. It is here that potential fission lies, since there is a core of agnates, which, if they considered it advantageous, could hive off from the main vicinage.

The other individual members of the vicinage have no forseeable prospect of becoming 'big men' themselves, and their scope for action is limited to quitting their present vicinage and moving to another vicinage, or to recruit their own followers in large numbers. It is possible for an individual to improve his position by changing allegiances, moving, and then getting others to follow him.

The situation can be put in abstract form as follows. A person, A, gathers adherents B, C, D. One of his followers, B, also gathers some adherents, b1, b2, and b3. These vawuyi strictly speaking belong to B, and one day, if he gathers enough, he (B) may become the wahombe of a vicinage. In the interim, B's adherents accrue to A, through the mediation of B. A therefore, benefits for the present, but the threat of fission is latent within the structure, for most men in B's position aspire to being an autonomous 'big man'.

There is little doubt that there is a paradox in the structure of vicinages. A vicinage can only really grow in strength through the allegiance of other non-agnatic groups. Indeed, a sub-headman's district, and even a headman's district, owes its unity not merely to a territorial integrity, but rather to the allegiance of the various vicinages within it. The vicinage 'big man', the sub-headman and headman are all in a sense 'owners of the land' on different levels of abstraction, not in any autochthonous sense, but this is the main weight of their side of the transactions with their followers.

Despite the apparently fragile nature of the vicinage, with its diversely recruited members, it in fact can acquire a large degree of cohesion. An examination of action sets such as in the fields economic,

political, and legal activity, the core members are most frequently fellow vicinage members. Members also attend one another's rituals and celebrations. Perhaps most telling of all is the fact that there is a loose (i.e. non-prescriptive) territorial exogamy, with an injunction to 'marry out'. This is probably a pragmatic consideration in any event, as many vicinage 'colleagues' are related, directly or indirectly.

The 'Big Man'

When informants were asked for their opinions on why men aspire to become a wahombe, the results were, in the main, unfruitful. They tended to regard the answer as being so self-evident that it scarcely needed elaboration. The title of wahombe is not lightly given; to be so called is a sign of status, of esteem, in the eyes of others. A 'big man' is a person to be reckoned with: he settles disputes within his own group and his opinion is valued at court cases and at meetings involving the headman's district or sub-chiefdom. A 'big man's' prestige is almost directly proportional to the number of followers he can claim. The number is a measure of his charisma and qualities of leadership.

A good, if extreme, example of how a man may recruit followers by whatever means he is able to utilize is provided by Siliver Nyakwaha, who lives in the headman's district of Seven Jack. Siliver is a 'big man', with eight homestead heads as vawuyi. Five of these are 'traditionally' recruited: three agnates, one affine and one namesake. The remaining three are young musicians.

It is these latter, the musicians, who are of interest. They are part of Siliver's vicinage, and are non-kinsmen. They aver that they joined the vicinage in order that they could learn from Siliver the craftmanship of mbila (xylophone) manufacture, and the art of composition. Here is a case where principles other than the expected kinship, affinal, or friendship, are invoked.

This rather special case illustrates the transactional nature of the relationship between 'big man' and follower. Siliver's unique talent as

craftsman and composer are desired by the three aspirant musicians; Siliver is 'repaid' in the coin of loyalty, esteem and prestige. The transactional nature of the leader-follower relationship does not end there; there is the more commonly found reciprocity whereby the leader at the very least provides representation and a degree of protection, and allocates land. For this output he can anticipate at the worst, co-operation and usually a more positive sentiment and action from his vawuyi.

The wuyi, or follower

As has been pointed out previously, the Chopi have a reasonably high rate of individual mobility (my sample yielded an average of 1,6 major moves per capita per lifetime). This reflects certain features of the Chopi social system, especially individualism (an argument which is taken up in the final Chapter) and the vawuyi syndrome.

The mechanics of becoming a wuyi is perhaps best demonstrated by an actual case. The case presented has as its chief protagonist one David Masiya. The information is based on interviews with Mr Masiya and with his sponsor German Nyakwaha.

Case 5. The sponsoring of a wuyi: David Masiya

David Masiya is an industrious young man in his early thirties. He has two wives and eight childen, and is German Nyakwaha's closest neighbour, both geographically and socially. In 1965, David left his parental home some forty miles to the west in the chiefdom of Banguza. He is vague as to the reasons that prompted this move. He moved to a temporary home near to the kraal of chief Nkumbi, and daily used to commute across the Inharrime river to the village of Hellene, where he was employed as a tailor.

The journey from his home to work involved a four mile walk to the river, a boat ferry service that would often take over half an hour, and then a three mile walk to his place of employment. Wearying of the excessive travel, he decided to settle permanently nearer the river, and elected to set up home in the headman's district of Nyatsiku. He let it be known that he wished to settle, and was looking for a sponsor. He was immediately

offered sponsorship by three men with whom he had a passing acquaintance, as he passed through their fields on his daily journey to work.

The choice lay between German Nyakwaha, Manuel Masakula, and Menetiane Lipanga. After meeting each person socially and taking about a month to decide, David decided to accept the offer of German Nyakwaha. He is non-committal on the reasons for accepting this offer above the others, but certain factors suggest themselves to the observer as being significant.

Manuel Masakula, as a middle-aged man, and junior in status in his vicinage, could offer little benefit to David. Menetiane Lipanga, a man his own age, could offer friendship, assistance in the fields and general companionship, but he too lacked status. German, on the other hand, is an elderly man who had strong claims to the headmanship of the district, and who was at that time building up support prior to making a claim for that position. He needed as many 'core' supporters as possible, and presumably would have provided David with better bargaining power. It is also true that David stood to gain much from being closely allied to a man who appeared to have a strong claim to the headmanship. If the claim succeeded, the vawuyi of that man would also benefit. Once the choice of sponsor had been made, David approached German with the 10 Escudo piece demanded by custom, and formally requested that he be sponsored and given land for a homestead and fields. German then escorted the newcomer to the headman and introduced him as a friend who wished to settle. The headman has the right of veto, but in practice it is seldom, if ever, used. German was in possession of a large amount of land, and there was also much unused land, so David was allocated enough land on which to build a homestead (about three hundred metres from German's) with ample fields for his two wives to cultivate.

The case cited here gives some insight into the procedure adopted when a man wishes to settle in a new area, and the kinds of reason that help him to choose a sponsor. David's case is one where he had no kin on which to call, so that the rational nature of his decision is reasonably simple to follow. In most places the choice is narrowed down, because if an individual

has kinsmen in an area, one of these will sponsor him and, indeed, it is usually a particularly strong sentiment that encourages a man to move into a new area to join his friend or kinsman.

There arises the question of why men elect to move to join the vicinage of other men. The answers given to this question by informants vary widely, from a desire to live near a friend to a person leaving the home area because he could no longer stand the ridicule to which he was subjected in songs. At least one case was of a man who left his home after being accused of witchcraft.

Let us take the example of a witchcraft accusation. This points to a large degree of social strain, even to the point of social breakdown (cf. Marwick 1970: 280-295) between two individuals. In the dispute that ensued, which might well be settled in a trial by ordeal, the defeated contestant would feel strong pressure to leave the area. He would want to move as far away as possible, where the stigma of his witchcraft conviction would not be known. It is unlikely however, that he would go to a place completely unknown to him: he needs a sponsor urgently and will tend to choose someone on the extreme of his personal network, a distant relative, perhaps, who he can call upon for help.

There are various less extreme reasons for people electing to move; the most interesting being those engineered by ambitious men who seek to improve their position relative to their present one. Informants related the case of a junior member of the Nyangumbe vicinage who left the area to join a friend in a neighbouring district. The friend had recently moved, and had strongly encouraged the young Nyangumbe man to join him. This accomplished, the Nyangumbe man succeeded in enticing his elder brother to join him.

The effect of these moves was to elevate the Nyangumbe man from what was eighth place in his own vicinage to second place in an embryonic one. Much depends now on how many more followers this vicinage can attract. It is a gamble to be taken: if the vicinage fails to grow through recruit-

ment of outsiders and propagation, then the risk taken has failed. If recruitment succeeds, then the young man has enhanced his position by making the move. His elder brother, incidentally, will be junior to him in vicinage status, but would be third in rank in any future vicinage, as opposed to his position of seventh in the original vicinage.

To summarize, then, the kinds of reasons why a man will move from one vicinage to another could range from his enforced departure through banishment or voluntarily for alleged offences, (such as witchcraft), through motivations of friendship or kinship, where no considerations of overt personal benefit are involved, to the clearly political and personal motives of enhancing their own status relative to others.

The vicinage and its members is tied to other individuals and groups through the cross-cutting and overlapping networks of its members. There are strong external kinship ties, for even the agnatic cores of vicinages are at most clan fragments, i.e., local descent groups which do not even represent complete lineages. A vicinage member therefore, has close kinsmen living both near and far. Marriage, as will be later demonstrated, has the function of spreading ties widely throughout Chopiland, and the other institution of namesake and quasi-parenthood ensures a broadening of contacts and allies.

There are rather special rules of succession relating to the vicinage. In the first generation at least, succession is lineal (i.e. passes from father to son) rather than the general Chopi type of lateral succession (down a line of brothers). Once a vicinage is well established, the usual adelphic succession is followed. However, if a man attracts followers in his own lifetime, these pass directly to his eldest son, even if the vicinage is well established.

It is possible therefore for two different rules of succession to be applied at the same time to different vawuyi in a vicinage. When a man dies, the vawuyi he inherited from his predecessor pass on to his younger brother or whoever succeeds in the contest that inevitably results over succession.

Any followers that he personally sponsored, however, are inherited by his son. The prestige that men desire and acquire through being 'big men' is dependant upon the number of vawuyi that an individual, his father, or his local descent group have gathered.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to focus attention on what appears to be a most important social and political unit. The idioms relating to the vicinage were examined, which tended to be of two kinds: one set, couched in terms of kinship, especially agnation, related to group continuity, while the other set, couched in broader terms, stressing the pragmatic considerations connected with recruitment, related to this aspect of group propagation. Vicinage composition and processess of recruitment were examined, with the use of case material. The plasticity of the structure of the vicinage emerged from the case material. The fluid recruitment patterns, including cognatic kin, affines, friends and namesakes, give rise to heterogeneous groups, fashioned around an agnatic core. The vicinages are leader-oriented and exhibit fissiparous tendencies, which give rise to competition among individuals who are attempting to build up followings.

The leader-follower relationship tends to be transactional, especially with those who are non-kin. The 'core' (cf. Bailey 1970: 44-49) supporters need not necessarily be agnates, or even kinsmen, but kinship does provide a ready-made set of rights and obligations which can be invoked. The structure by kinship, particularly agnatic, is one of the most important resources in the political environment. It is easier to invoke, and support thus gained is less likely to erode, than those non-kin or distant kin who have a purely transactional relationship with the 'big man'.

One final point that must be made, is that it is considered essential to include non-agnates in a vicinage for it to be successful. There is no doubt that the core of agnates provide a solid base on which it can be built, but it only becomes a force to be

reckoned with when it recruits 'outsiders'. Thus, the Masakula vicinage is extremely powerful vis-a-vis other vicinages (although the fact that it only has two agnates at its base makes it potentially fissile, with the Nyangumbe group being strong enough to split off). Despite its small base the Masakula vicinage has eleven other members, comprising one matrilateral relative, one half-agnate (a product of clan fission), two friendship ties, and seven friendship/affinal ties. This plurality has considerable force and Nyangumbe the 'big man' has much influence in district affairs.

On the other hand, the Nkome vicinage (see figure ten) is composed of seven agnates only. They form a strong pressure group in the Ntsambe vicinage, but are not considered to be a threat in their own right to the larger vicinages. This is because they form too much of an exclusive in-group; for them to become a real force they must broaden their base of support by incorporating non-agnates. The irony of this is that the accretion of strength has within it the seeds of its own destruction. The centripetal forces that power generates also has the potential to reverse itself, and with the sub-groups within the vicinages realising their own potential, centrifugal fragmentation is always imminent. The social and political strivings of the Chopi are summed up in the saying, vathu vukoma: 'people are power'.

PART THREE

STRUCTURES AND SENTIMENTS

Chapter V

The Categories of Chopi Kinship

Introduction

We move now from the discussion of territorial and political groupings to an examination of the structures and categories into which socially approved sentiments are channelled: in short, kinship. The four chapters which follow analyse different aspects of kinship, marriage and quasi-kinship. Although they are here separated into different chapters for methodological convenience, they should be read as an entity. In the present chapter the various categories of kinship are discussed, in general terms.

Having devoted the last two chapters to a description and analysis of the more important social and territorial groupings, it is now time to turn our attention to the more specific problems relating to Chopi kinship and marriage. The Chopi and, indeed, the Tsonga, form an unusual counterpoint to their neighbouring peoples in southern Africa: they appear to have far more in common with certain Rhodesian and Central African peoples. Their anomalous position in southern African ethnography is particularly illuminated in the structures and sentiments that are kinship.

The kinship system of the Chopi presents the ethnographer with a number of problems: there is the discrepancy between ideology and practice (now well-documented in almost every kinship study), the difficulty arising from attaching labels such as 'patrilineality' to any people, and the thorny path that is the definition of such concepts as social structure.

It is useful to turn to work that has emerged from New Guinea to provide some of the important models for resolving these problems. With the notable exception of Gulliver's recent (1971) monograph on the Ndendeuli, the African literature has a shortage of attempts to examine non-lineal kinship, or the usefulness of such concepts as descent and patrilineality. The irony of the situation is that while ethnographers

working in New Guinea turned (somewhat in vain) to African models to make sense of their data (as Barnes (1962) has incisively demonstrated), I have found it valuable to turn to models generated by students of New Guinea Highland societies to assist me in conceptualizing the fluidity of the Chopi kinship system. (Although, in fairness, it must be stated that studies from Central Africa have helped to formulated the problems here.)

Phyllis Kaberry's article on 'The Plasticity of New Guinea kinship' (1967) has provided much of the inspiration for the chapter, as have the works of Barnes (1962, 1967, 1971), Meggitt (1965), de Lepervanche (1967), Langness (1964), and Strathern (1969, 1972). Many New Guinea Highlands societies appear to closely resemble in kinship organisation the main features pertaining to the Chopi: viz., a patrilineal ideology, modified by a strong streak of pragmatism (even at the ideological level), a tendency towards cognatic or non-lineal kinship in practice, and recruitment to groups drawn from diverse recruitment 'reservoirs' - cognatic kin, friends, affines, and namesakes. In short, one of the main features is the apparent discrepancy between ideology and practice.

Another important feature is that even within the parameters of kinship there is the possibility of manipulation. Genealogical memory is remarkably short among the majority of Chopi - two to three ascending generations being the usual depth before the advent of amnesia. Even within this comparatively small universe, there is frequently some confusion as to who are the senior and subordinate kinsmen, especially if the protagonists are from different tinyumba (sing. nyumba), meaning houses, i.e., lineages. Leach's justifiably oft-quoted remark that 'in all viable systems there must be an area where the individual is free to make choices so as to manipulate the system to his own advantage' (1962:133) is thus patently applicable to the Chopi.

Indeed, the Chopi kinship system, given the following propositions: a shallow genealogical depth, an emphasis on lateral rather than lineal kin (a claim I attempt to substantiate in this chapter); and a large number of

possibilities for individually achieved statuses, appears to offer an ambitious individual structures which permit a large degree of amnipulation. The malleability of this system has led me to draw on another concept used to describe Polynesian kinship: the 'plasticity' of kinship, a term coined by Kaberry (1967:105).

Given the difficulties of examining and reconciling the 'emic' categories that are part of the ideological system of the Chopi with the 'etic' aspects, such as the processes of recruitment to groups (cf. Harris 1969:575), I propose to deal firstly with the ideology of kinship and then to concentrate on the actual recruitment to groups. This chapter deals with effective social action through the medium of kinship. It attempts to examine how the 'emic' categories are sufficiently manipulable to result in divergent 'etic' behaviour. In part this is understandable in terms of Bailey's (1970) distinction between 'normative' and 'pragmatic' rules. The latter provide the means whereby the former can be circumvented or translated into effective action.

A perusal of the kinship terminology (chapter eight) shows that the Chopi place as much emphasis on lateral as on lineal kin. Descent groups are shallow and ephemeral, and genealogies are seldom deeper than three generations. This early genealogical amnesia is symptomatic of the shallowness of the descent system, and gives rise to the possibility of manipulation. Barnes (1967 (a):39) has pointed out the distinction between the upper and lower echelons of a genealogy. The upper echelons tend to be emic statements of who were important ancestors, while lower levels are occupied by living persons, and tend to be etic statements of who follows whom. In between these two is an 'area of ambiguity' (ibid:39) over which there is some doubt as to the real linkages and vagueness surrounding important information such as relative seniority (cf. Peters 1960).

Among the Chopi the 'area of ambiguity' begins only two or three generations above ego and the upper echelons are extremely vague, with only one or two ancestors, conspicuous through some feat such as founding

a vicinage, being remembered. This shallowness permits an individual to cut certain unwanted ties, to affirm and strengthen desirable ones, and even to falsify links either by disowning certain of them, or claiming descent from others. An illustration of this is given later in this chapter, in the section on the plasticity of Chopi kinship.

There is consensus as to the idiom of kinship: patrilineality; but an ethnographer must question the validity of providing a model of society in terms of one principle only. There is now, of course, a considerable body of literature which argues for the recognition of a number of different functions related to descent (Lewis 1965, Leach 1961, Kaberry 1967, Pouwer 1964, Needham, 1971). While recognising the importance of the kinship ideology and its significance as an organizing principle, I believe it would be wrong to say that Chopi social structure is organised solely in terms of patrilineal descent. Our model must take into account the principle of descent, relations between kin groups, other dyadic relations and the ideology of the system. Features such as the acquisition of a descent name, inheritance, residence and group membership, all of which are usually subsumed under descent, must also be examined. Once this has been done, I believe the usefulness of such portmanteau terms as 'agnation' or 'patrilineality' should be seriously challenged.

Needham, in a recent article (1971), follows up suggestions contained in Leach's Rethinking Anthropology. He distinguishes six elementary modes of descent from the basic premise of two sexes through which the transmission of rights are defined (1971:10). A society should not be given a holistic characterization (such as patrilineality), but rather it should be recognised that different rights may be transmitted by different modes.

Three, or possibly four, of Needham's six modes are relevant to an analysis of the Chopi , to which I would add one modifying factor of my own: the difference between lineality and laterality; The four modes referred to are:

1. m —— m (male to male: patrilineal).
2. f —— f (female to female: matrilineal).
3. (m —— m)+(f —— f) (male to male and female to female, i.e., bilineal).
4. m/f —— m/f (male or female to male or female: cognatic).

My modification is that (a) denotes lineality, e.g., mode 1(a) means rights are transmitted from male to male lineally, i.e., from father to son. All the above modes can also be modified into 1(b), 2(b) etc., where (b) denotes laterality. For example, mode 1(b) would mean that rights are transmitted from male to male laterally, for example, from an elder brother to a younger brother, or from one cousin to another.

The descent patterns of the Chopi can therefore be described in the following way:

Figure 12: Modes of descent

descent name	:	mode 1(a)
inheritance	:	mode 3(a)
succession	:	mode 1(b)
descent dogma	:	mode 1(a)
residence	:	modes 1(a) and (b) (in early life) and 4(a) and (b) (in later life).

This description, instead of providing a unifactoral term, provides a syndrome of dogma, rules, rights and obligations, which accurately reflects the categories that make up the ideology of descent of the Chopi. One could draw up a similar complex to cover the actual categories, such as the substantive composition of descent groups.

The ensuing section covers the ideology of kinship, at least where there is consensus among informatns on the various principles. Given these principles, I believe it will be apparent that the Chopi kinship system is multifaceted with cognatic, bilineal and unilineal aspects, and an emphasis on laterality. Yet there can be no doubt that above all, there is a bias towards patrilaterality.

The descent name (which is called chibongo, meaning 'clan name') and the dogma of descent, are both patrilineal, (or perhaps patrifilial), i.e., handed down from father to son (1(a)). Inheritance of personal belongings, such as a man's mbila (xylophone), is also passed from father to son (1(a)) and a woman's personal possessions of real value e.g.,

jewellery (other items, such as her cooking utensils are buried with her) are passed to her eldest daughter, i.e., mode 3a. Succession to office such as a headmanship is adelphic, that is, down a line of brothers, then through all their sons, so that at times it passes between parallel patrilateral cousins. Succession is, therefore, lateral. In early life, residence is patrilocal, and shortly after marriage, tends to be neolocal, so that a man has wide choice in deciding where to live.

It is arguable, therefore, that to subsume all the above components of descent under one term, viz., 'patrilineal', would distort reality not only on the etic, but also on the emic level of the people's own cognitions[1]. It is more accurate to specialize the terms and to state the various components and thereafter to argue that, while features of bilineality and non-lineal, or cognatic descent are present, there is an overall bias towards patrilineality. Even this is only partly true for, as is demonstrated in Figure 12, three of the six modes that comprise the descent patterns of the Chopi are in fact lateral in nature, not lineal.

Following the injunction of Barth (1966:1), I first present the ideological charter which underpins the Chopi kinship system, which provides some of the constraints and incentives of an ideological nature which influence the choices open to an individual in the sphere of kinship activity. I also indicate the availability of land, as I believe this to be an important parameter to be taken into account.

I do not wish to anticipate the argument that is developed in the chapter on kinship terminology, but it seems important to state briefly here what I conceive to be the relationship between the ideological and sociological planes. Berger and Luckman (1971) have provided a dialectical model of society, drawing on the works of Marx, Durkheim and G.H. Mead, which depicts a three-phase process which in totality is soc-

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(1) I am aware that Many writers prefer Rivers' simple definition of descent as denoting recruitment to a group by virtue of birth alone (1924), as is favoured by Leach (1962:130), but I prefer to follow Needham (1971) in this matter.

ial reality. The first phase is externalization, whereby society is a human product; the second is objectivation, whereby society (and culture) has a reality sui generis, the third is internalisation, by which man is a product of society through its socialisation and education processes.

To neglect any one of these phases would be to unbalance one's analysis, as would an undue emphasis on only one phase. It is important, therefore, to examine the kinship categories that the Chopi possess, their beliefs and cognitions as to what constitutes kinship. This ideational level corresponds to the 'objectivised' culture, which is a 'given' for people acting in society, and acquired through socialisation. In Barth's terms these are some of the 'constraints and incentives' that canalise choices. But man not only produces his social world, and is a product of it; he can, in the externalization phase, be a manipulator and innovator.

The traditional dichotomy between idea systems, their structures, etc., (in the minds of both the people and the anthropologist) and social organization, in terms of actual or statistical patterns encountered 'on the ground', can, I believe, be reconciled in terms of the dialectical model. Bailey (1970) makes the point that the rules that are the basis of a structure are influenced by their environment (i.e., social context) and indeed, the rules are generated, brought into focus and chrystallized, in specific social situations.

I propose, therefore, to set out the idiom of kinship of the Chopi as I recorded it. This body of data is a prerequisite to a full understanding of the kinship system, and provides insights into an area of social and cultural life that is frequently neglected by students of kinship.

The Ideology of Kinship

Much of the material I have collected on kinship dogma was related to me by two articulate informants, Musisi Ntsambe and Sangatelo Nyakwaha, although I also collected relevant information from other informants, usually in the form of proverbs and sayings which were used to explain actual situations that arose during fieldwork. I shall present the shorter

of these in the vernacular, with a translation. Longer and more prosaic accounts are presented, for the sake of brevity, in the form of an English translation only.

Chopi ideas relating to conception, pregnancy and childbirth are a useful departure point, as they reflect local belief on the roles played by genitor and genitrix, and by extension, their kinsfolk. Sexual intercourse is recognised as the sine qua non of procreation, where the child is formed by the mingling of the semen and the menstrual blood. More than one act of intercourse is needed, for while the first act is believed to bring about conception, others must take place to 'strengthen' the child.

A child is thus physically formed by the admixture of the father's semen (mbeyu) and mother's blood (noha) and, as the child is strengthened and grows in the mother's womb, it is believed to acquire its moya (spirit), which is usually bestowed upon it by its paternal ancestors. The maternal ancestors can also give moya to the child, however. It is believed that a child can acquire his 'breath' or spirit from one of his ancestors, and should preferably be named after that ancestor. A diviner is usually consulted to discover the identity, and therefore name, of the ancestor. Living people can also have this affinity with new born children and this is also recognised through the institution of naming a child after a living person.

Any ancestor, matrilateral or patrilateral, can 'ask' for the child to be named after him or her. If a young child cries constantly, it is believed that it has been given the wrong name, and the correct ancestor must be divined. The naming is them a contract with an individual ancestor or ancestress (or with a living person, depending upon whom the child is named after).

Physical likenesses between the father or mother and the child are looked for (for example, the lines on the hands, facial characteristics) as indications of the relative contribution of each side. If the child is a boy, then it is said that the father's semen was stronger than the woman's blood. If it is a girl, then it is said that the mother 'defeated' (a chulide) the

father. Effeminate boys and masculine girls are believed to be influenced by the moya of an ancestor of the opposite sex.

Informants were in agreement that, while most frequently the ancestor influencing the moya was on the paternal side, the spirit could certainly (and, indeed, not infrequently) be acquired on the maternal side. There appears to be a prime facie case thus far to claim that this points to a cognatic, or non-lineal system, with a patrilateral bias (at the cognitive level).

The Chopi word mashaka means 'kinsmen', and it is interesting to note exactly who are classified under this rubric. Informants stressed that both patrilateral and matrilateral kin are included by this term, again stressing the bilateral nature of their cognitions about filiation and kinship. There is no term which denoted patrilineal kin, for even the phrase mashaka wa tate wangu (relatives of my father) refers to the cognatic kin of one's father. On the other hand, the importance of patrilateral kin is undeniable. The response to the question, who are your most important kin? invariably drew the response, 'my father's.' This seems to be qualitatively different from the well-known distinction between 'kinship' and 'descent'.

The concept of lineage is not clearly defined. The nearest one comes to it is when people refer to a 'house' (nyumba) when talking of segments of a clan. Reference is sometimes made to the 'people of one father' (vathu va tate womweyu), but beyond this there is no distinct concept of patrilineal descent. Indeed, this rather opaque area gives rise to proverbs which are contradictory and which express the plastic or even topological nature of the lineage group.

The first proverb, a mwanana wa nkoma in hinganu ta tembwe (literally, the son of one's brother is the boundary of the fields), uses the metaphor of agriculture: while the neighbouring fields appear to have one owner, in fact they are owned by two different men. The moral here is that even though one's brother's son is called mwanana (child) and is treated as a son, one cannot always expect him to remain close. There is the further hint that two brothers and their descendants, while being part of one descent

group today, will one day be the point of fission, from which two new descent groups will emerge.

The second proverb, e minhonga ya ni in hinganwene ka va na nhane (the tree that is on the boundary has no owner), is a reference to the fact that a man is related to all his kinsfolk. Informants explained it another way: 'a child belongs to all who are his relatives'. Thus, although an individual may be born into one descent group, the reciprocal rights and obligations are nevertheless extended between him and all his kinsmen. The mobility amongst kinsmen, and the ready acceptance of a kinsman into the group or vicinage, are echoed in this proverb. Although only two proverbs are cited here, many others reflect the same themes.

In terms of social action, contradictory idioms such as these are significant. The second proverb covers all kinsmen, thus indicating a cognatic idiom, while the first proverb is an indication of an agnatic, and perhaps even a lineage, principle. It is through idioms such as these that the plasticity of the Chopi kinship system can be recognised, for they enable the Chopi to claim both that their groups are agnatic (on occasions when it is considered advantageous), and yet on other occasions to give the impression of non-lineality.

This contradiction in ideology has the advantage of allowing a group to believe in the solidarity that an agnatic group can achieve, and yet it allows non-agnates to be recruited to the group, which means that other groups are losing agnates. Again the pragmatism with which the Chopi view this inevitable process is encapsulated in a proverb: Kuvelekiwa sotselele e ku longolaka, meaning, 'to be born together (in a family) is (just) to follow each other'. This idiom tends to understress the unity of the basic kin group, the family. The interests and allegiances of various members of a family may ultimately lie elsewhere; the girls marry out, and the boys may move away.[1] Themes of mobility and per-

(1) The explanations of these proverbs are not my own, but were provided by informants.

sonally forged allegiances which can stretch beyond the local agnatic group emerge here.

Like many of the New Guinea Highlands societies, as reported by Barnes (1962) therefore, it may be too hasty an assessment to place a simplistic 'patrilineal' tag on the Chopi. Barnes (ibid: 6) urges caution, and puts forward eight characteristics of a society that are not strictly patrilineal. If we take the vicinage as a community comparable to the hamlet to which he refers, we find that six of his characteristics match, but two fail to do so.

The six matching features are (in paraphrase):

(a) In many instances non-agnates are numerous in the local community and some are powerful;
(b) It is often hard to detect any difference in status between agnates and non-agnates;
(c) A young man has some choice in deciding whether to adhere to the local group of his father or to some other group to which he can trace a non-agnatic connection;
(d) Many individuals claiming an agnatic tie are both unable and uninterested in doing so.
(e) Names of remoter patrilineal ancestors are forgotten, or there is a gap between putative remote founding ancestors and informants' father's father's;
(f) The agnatic core of the community seldom, if ever, acts as a unity vis-a-vis the non-agnatic members.

All the above features can be applied to the Chopi without adaption, but not the remaining two:

(g) That a married woman neither remains fully affiliated to her natal group nor is completely transferred to her husband's group, and
(h) an agnatic ancestor cult is absent or does not provide contexts where non-resident agnates are brought together.

Among the Chopi, a married woman remains strongly affiiated to her natal group, and there does exist an ancestor cult, which has an agnatic bias, although many matrilateral ancestors feature as named, important personal ancestors.

Recruitment

The problem of the difference between agnation and patrifiliation becomes an issue here. The dogmas of descent, which, after Peters (1960) and Barnes (1971:9) must be viewed as emic statements, are by their very nature static 'folk' models of society. It is on this level that one may report

that the Chopi have an agnatic bias, viz., that they possess, in the main, an agnatic dogma of descent (albeit with some contradictory dogmas).

On the other hand, the ongoing processes of group survival and recruitment need analysis in terms of a dynamic model. It is here that Barth's generative model, which depicts and individual making choices, influenced by constraints and incentives, appears most useful in describing the situation. There are certain demands of the situation which impinge on an individual so that choices must be made as to whether it is more advantageous to attach more importance to one relationship than to another. These decisions, influenced by demography, land pressure, kinship ideology, the number and type of kinsmen implicated and a host of other factors may often lead to an individual being recruited on considerations other than agnatic ties.

The extreme importance of ecology must be stressed here. It has already been mentioned that land is in abundant supply. This, together with the land tenure patterns, which allow any man access to a virgin tract, or to unused lands of others (for the payment of a nominal sum), permits a high geographical mobility. This also has the effect of diminishing the power that fathers, elders and headmen could hold over young men. In other southern African peoples, for example, it is control over access to land that is one of the last remaining sources of power in the hands of traditional authorities, and it reinforces their authority and conservatism. In Chopiland, this power resource is of little importance, so that men are freed from its constraints and are able to look beyond the narrow limitations of their own local descent group. They are able to move out and to activate whatever relationships are appropriate when settling in a new area. This clearly must have the effect of weakening agnatic groupings.

The model adduced here then, is one that depicts an individual, faced with certain constraints, deciding between alternative courses of action, each of which would involve the mobilisation of some structural relationship, whether it be kinship (agnatic or matrilateral), affinity, quasi-kinship

or friendship. I hope to demonstrate through ethnographic data that, in the process of recruitment to the vicinage, the Chopi do in fact frequently mobilise structures other than that of agnation. Indeed, when one considers the reasonably high mobility, and the tendency towards neolocality (due to mobility) after some years of marriage, one is tempted to categorise group recruitment as being a process of cumulative patrifiliation (cf. Barnes 1962: 6) rather than agnation.

A man wishing to join a group seeks out a relative or friend within it and asks him to be his sponsor. As the data below will show, in every generation a large majority of men affiliate themselves to their father's group. This provides the group with an agnatic continuity over a number of generations. It must be stressed that, while the charter or ideology of descent tends to be agnatic, actual descent patterns emerge from individual choices and transactions, the majority of which tend to be patrifiliation, but many of which utilize other structures.

The model used here concentrates upon the individual: each particular tie he forges can be seen as a transaction, for example between a man and his helper in his field or, more pertinently, between a man and his sponsor. The exchange relationship hereby implied can be terminated if he so desires, or strengthened and maintained. In the penultimate chapter I shall be dealing with action sets, where the transactional nature of the ties become apparent, as well as the flexibility of the principles of recruitment to such sets.

To return more specifically to the problem of recruitment, there appears to be two aspects which require examination: firstly, recruitment to the kinship group itself, and secondly, the extent to which kinship is used as a principle recruitment to other groups. The basic kin group is, of course, the nuclear family, to which recruitment is possible only through birth. The extended family is a problem of a different order, for while recruitment to this is again predominantly by birth, there are complicating factors such as the fosterage of namesakes and the permission occasionally

granted to old women without kin support to become part of the household. Both these types enter into a quasi-kin relationship with the members of the nuclear family.

Above the extended family, the next largest grouping is an embryonic vicinage; usually a small group of brothers (and their father, if he is still alive) who live in adjacent homesteads. This represents the start of a new vicinage, which, as the previous chapter has shown, is often composed of many individuals who are non-agnates or even non-kin around a core of agnatic kinsmen. Recruitment to the agnatic core is, by definition, agnatic (or, to be more accurate, through patrifiliation), but a successful vicinage invariably has some non-agnates.

The vicinage is the largest grouping which has a kinship base - its core of agnates (if it possesses them) can at best be called a clan fragment (it is frequently composed of members of more than one lineage, so 'lineage segment' would be inappropriate). The non-agnates in a vicinage are referred to by the 'big man' as his vanana (sing: mwanana) meaning children, thus investing them with quasi-kinship status (no doubt as a means of imposing the moral imperatives of kinship upon them - the 'prescriptive altruism' demanded by kinship, and the inferior status and reciprocity encapsulated in the father/son relationship). Thus, when viewing the composition of a vicinage, it is quite clear that patrilateral kinship plays a major, but not all-important part. The previous chapter has demonstrated that other kin types, affines, and non-kin are all important members of the vicinage. Recruitment in this sense can be seen to be 'plastic', i.e., susceptible to manipulation, and resulting in many combinations and permutations of kin and non-kin types.

As to the use of kinship as a principle of recruitment to other types of group, particularly action groups or sets, the situation, naturally enough, appears more fluid than recruitment to purely kinship groups. Again, one finds that there is a preference for utilising the structures of patrilateral kinship, but that non-agnates feature frequently in the composition of

such sets. It would anticipate the evidence to be advanced in the penultimate chapter to go into detail on set formation here, so it must suffice for the present to note that an indivdual's friends, affines and matrilateral kin can play a large part in action sets such as communal work parties.

Case 6. Action set: Antonio Nyangumbe's work party

As an illustration of the type of recruitment that takes place in action sets, which are recruited on various bases, I here give the case of a work party (didimwa) called by Antonio Nyangumbe. Antonio has a core of people whom he calls on for help every year, and with whom he reciprocates. They are:

agnates:	his father and brother and classificatory brother with their wives.
matrilateral kin:	Makause Ussake (classificatory mother's brother).
affinal kin:	his wife's sister and her husband.

The remainder of his core members are his friends, who have no special kinship ties with him. Their diversity is shown in their clan names (the second of the two mentioned): Handelane Homu, Satanyane Homu, Sangatelo Nyakwaha, Musisi Ntsambe, Tomwane Ntsambe and Pedro Nkome. Many more 'casuals' attended the work party, and I was unable to record them all, but the abovementioned were claimed as core members, and, as was expected, they all attended the didimwa. The work party has a core which comprised six friends, two affines, one matrilateral kinsman, and three agnates. Clearly agnatic kinship plays a relatively small role here.

An action set is ego-oriented, where each member attends because of his individual relationship with ego. The most accurate way of representing this model of social action patterns is therefore that of an individual making choices as to which of alternative structures to activate in order to form a group of people to get a job of work done. The individual has a transactional bond with the other individuals he recruits. It happens that agnates, because an individual has many of these living nearby, and because of the strong moral obligations of reciprocity involved, are the easiest people to recruit, but there are many factors, such as one's place of residence, which determine who comprise one's reservoir of support.

To summarise then, kinship (agnatic or other) is used as a principle of recruitment to ad hoc groups only insofar as an individual chooses to do so, and the expediency of the situation is determined by the social and cultural environment, which supplies the actual pool of support, as well as the moral and transactional bases by means of which the support can be activated and maintained.

Agnatic kin

I use the term 'agnatic' to refer to those kin to whom ego can trace a relationship through his father and his patrilineal ancestors for at least two generations. This last specification is added because I wish to communicate the difference between agnation and patrifiliation, which refers only to the linkage between a son and his father; and only two generations are specified because beyond this genealogical depth one finds a change from accurate accounts of lineage composition to emic statements of charters which need not reflect reality and which are a means of identifying oneself with an eponymous ancestor.

There has been some argument to suggest that the pressure of land shortage can have the effect of strengthening a tendency towards agnation. At the risk of oversimplification, it appears that Meggitt (1965) argues that where there is an abundance of land, mobility is comparatively easy, and an individual may make use of a multiplicity of ties to gain membership to a group. On the other hand, when land becomes scarce, the emphasis shifts from the 'open door' policy of group membership to a tendency to make the group exclusive. One way of doing this is to apply stringent rules of recruitment, such as to demand that all newcomers be agnates. Barnes has contested this line of reasoning, saying that, when men are short of land in their own group, they will tend to borrow land from groups other than their own (1962, 1971:10).

The Chopi data tend to bear out Meggitt's thesis. During my fieldwork in the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha, it was apparent that land was plentiful, and that there was both a high degree of mobility (compared with most

South African peoples) and accompanying this, a considerable degree of optation in the decision of where to live, and by what relationship to claim rights to membership. A 'strong' agnatic system tends to minimize a person's options, and status within the agnatic group tends to be more frequently ascribed rather than achieved. A 'weak' agnatic principle on the other hand, provides the possibility of multiple affiliation, and status, attained through leadership, will tend to be more frequently achieved; indeed, group leadership and the status accompanying it is judged, in the Chopi case, by the amount of followers a 'big man' is able to acquire. I would suggest that the 'gap' between the agnatic ideology and the actual situation, which can vary from being strongly patrilineal to almost non-lineal, may well be a function of the interaction of population pressure and available land. It seems that the dogma of descent can be used tactically either to close up, or to open up recruitment to groups, by either demanding the presence of agnatic links or ignoring them (thus the gap is narrow or wide, as in the cases of the Xhosa and Chopi, respectively). In other words, there are certain physical constraints which predispose certain courses of action which can very markedly; the ideology, or charter, is elastic enough, or can be manipulated sufficiently, to accommodate any contingency.

This argument was foreshadowed by Barnes, who claimed that, 'it is the proliferation of ties at the individual rather than at group level that seems to distinguish New Guinea from Africa' (1962:7). The result of this is that in a strongly agnatic African society an individual becomes influential because he is a member of the dominant group, whereas in a more fluid system, where agnation plays less of a role, a local group becomes dominant because of the influence of its 'big man'. Barnes' African models were based upon the Nuer, Tiv and Tallensi, and he recognises that this is an unrepresentative sample. He suggests (ibid:9) that 'it might be worthwhile looking for other societies in Africa that could provide closer parallels.' I believe the Chopi are one such society.

Chopi kin groupings

The basic form of kinship grouping, is the monogamous family, consisting of a husband, a wife and their unmarried child or children. The monogamous family, when it coincides with the homestead, is the simplest form of the domestic group. In the headman's district of Nyatsiku, there are 21 such families, which are 48% of the sample. The vernacular term inti refers to the kinship group that lives together in one homestead. The same word is commonly used for the homestead itself.

Many elementary families have in their midst residents who are non-agnates, and at the same time, not all children of the homestead who would normally still be resident with their parents are present. This is due to the institution of appointing namesakes, i.e., naming one's child after either an ancestor or a living person with whom one wishes to have a special affiliation. The custom is that persons should 'call' their namesake to live with them in what is a type of foster-parentage. The effect of this is to scatter some of one's children so that of, say, five children, two may be away, but two others may well replace them, being vaniadine of the husband or wife of the homestead. (Vide chapter seven.)

The remaining family types include: polygamous, which constitute 26% of the total; joint families, 12%; and broken families, 14%. The joint families are often extended families or the remnants of extended families, for example the typical extended family would consist of a father, mother, their married and unmarried children and grandchildren. When the father dies, the brothers and their wives and children and unmarried siblings may still stay together in a joint homestead, with smaller subdivisions into domestic groups. The joint family is an unstable and transient grouping, for it is rare for siblings to remain on such good terms that they live all their lives with each other. Divorced women who return (sometimes with their children) to stay with a brother, thus creating a joint family, will usually remarry and move away.

A developmental cycle of the family will be represented as follows:

phase 1: a husband and wife;
phase 2: a husband, wife and children incorporating any foster-children (the elementary family);
phase 3: the residual family, where the children have left to get married and set up their own homestead, leaving the wife beyond childbearing age (divorce and death also leave residual families);
phase 4: rejuvenated families, when the husband, polygynously, or after the death of his first wife, remarries a younger woman who can bear children (the recruitment of young kinsmen, such as a namesake or a grandchild, has a similar effect.(1)

I have earlier suggested that the extent to which the Chopi are prepared to tolerate and even encourage non-agnates and sometimes non-kin as immigrants to vicinages reflects a plasticity of social organisation. A perusal of family and homestead composition in Nyatsiku provides an even more convincing index of the plasticity of kinship, for there is a qualitative difference between allowing outsiders into one's neighbourhood and allowing them into one's home. Figure five in chapter three shows that in an average family of five, at least one person resident (in fact 23% of the total sample) is not a member of the elementary family.

The non-nuclear members of the homesteads related to household members in a variety of ways. The majority are namesakes; 53% of homesteads have at least one namesake residing in it, while 47% of homesteads had a non-nuclear kinsman or friend resident. This latter category is diverse, including such individuals as a man's mother's brother's children, an unrelated widow, the two acolytes of a spirit medium, a special friend and his wife, to name but a few. Some homesteads have both namesakes and other outsiders.

The lineage

The concept of the lineage is foreign to the Chopi. The term that most closely approximates to the meaning that is attached to lineage is nyumba, which in everyday use means hut or house. But this term does not refer to a group of kinsmen to whom ego can trace direct linkage; it is more an aspect of some ancient segmentation, which was no doubt a 'lineage' split, but

(1) I have used the family types suggested by Wilson et. al. (1952: 56).

which has passed beyond living memory. It is a charter to describe an existing cleavage within a clan or segment of a clan. The nearest one approaches the lineage concept is a descriptive phrase: vanana va tate womweyu (children of one father), but even this set of people do not interact in any corporate fashion, such as attendance en bloc at court cases, work parties, etc.

During fieldwork I collected 70 'genealogies', of which the vast majority had a depth of three generations, usually encompassing an informant and the two generations above him (I exclude the descendants of the informant).

Figure 13: Table of Generation Depth of Pedigrees

Generation depth	number	percentage
5	2	3
4	9	12
3	45	65
2	14	20
1	-	-
	70	100

I have designated the above as pedigrees rather than genealogies (after Barnes, 1967(b)) because these represent the unverified versions of linkages as given to me by informants. My attempts to construct master-genealogies met with frustration, as most pedigrees were ideosyncratic accounts, and their shallowness made cross-checking difficult.
Even where full brothers both gave their accounts, they often differed as to what positions were filled by whom in the levels above their grandparents. This early genealogical amnesia appeared to be widespread, but was useful to competitive men who could benefit from pedigree manipulation (and indeed, I recorded one case of a headman who was able to strengthen his claims to the post through such manipulation).[1]

The table shows that 65% of the pedigrees collected encompassed only three generations (cf. the 'two-generation cut-off' to which I draw attention in chapter eight). The next most numerous category is that of grandparents: 20% of informants could remember no lineage kin further back than two generations. The reasons for this shallow social memory, where over 85% of

(1) This case is taken up in the final chapter. It will be noted that informants disagreed as to the seniority of living men, even though they had one father (but different mothers). The real 'area of ambiguity', however, appears to be three generations above ego.

informants could recall the names of kin only three generations above him, can only be a matter of conjecture. Two possible hypotheses spring to mind: the first is an historical one. In the 19th century south-eastern Mozambique was ravaged by Nguni raiders, who split chiefdoms and scattered families. It could be argued that the present phenomenon is a result of this, as the truncated lineages tend to show. The second is that the Chopi social system is relatively shallow, and always has been so, and the marriage system, rules of succession etc., reflect this. Indeed, the social system appears to be reasonably consistent and coherent throughout.

The shallow social system is complemented by the lack of functioning or formal lineages. The lineage does not have any corporate or political function, as opposed to the classical case of the Nuer. The lineage is not a land-holding unit; a segment of one may be. But even so, land is not scarce, so this privilege is devalued. Succession is lateral, and can cross the divisions of lineages. One's genealogical position is theoretically the key to succession, but in fact many other factors impinge.

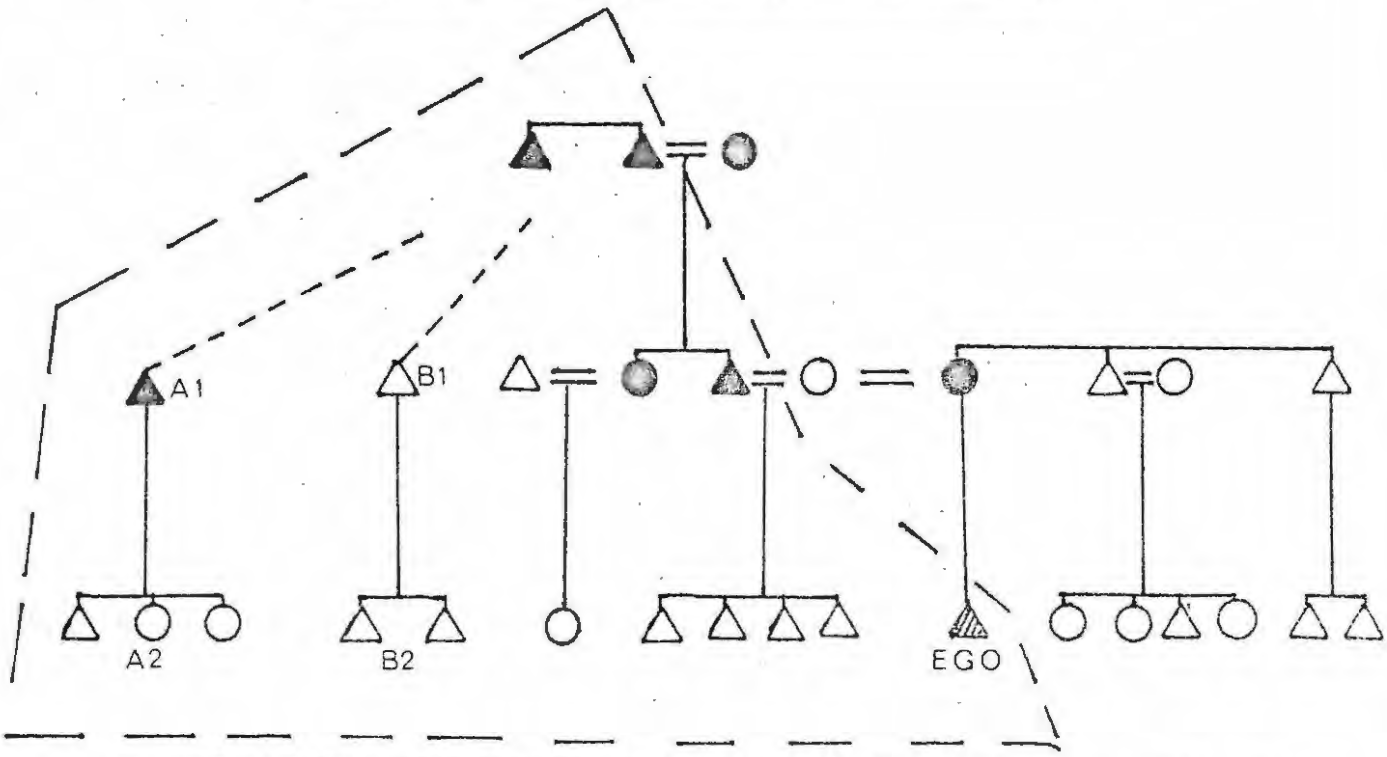
Hammond-Tooke (1968: 34) draws the distinction between geometrical and contingent fission of the lineage. The former refers to a chronic fission which inheres in the structure of the group, whereas the latter refers to the movement away of portions of the lineage. In the Chopi case, it would appear that the vast majority of cases of lineage fission are of the contingent type, with the high mobility of members which prevents the growth of the lineage. If one were to seek the line of geometrical fission, it would appear, from genealogies and a census of who are considered relevant ancestors in ritual, to be three generations above ego.

For the Nuer and Mpondomise, geometrical fission gives rise to a triangular or pyramid-shaped paradigm of a group of people, extending back in the latter case for six generations (ibid: 35). Hammond-Tooke suggests that this six-generation depth results from the (pragmatic) consequence of a man having personal knowledge of three generations: his own, his father's and grandfather's. The grandfather can be expected to have personally known his

own grandfather, thus giving rise to the time depth of five to six generations. The Chopi, on the other hand, have a depth of only three generations.

Adapting Hammond-Tooke's hypothesis, one may postulate that a man has knowledge of his own grandfather, but such is the spatial mobility of individuals, he may not have much contact with him personally. He would however, be able to hear from his father about the latter's grandfather (i.e., his own great-grandfather), who is three generations above him. If one were to project the Chopi paradigm onto a diagram, the pyramid would appear short, but with a very wide base. This does not accord with the Mpondomise or Nuer cases, where Evans-Pritchard, quoted by Hammond-Tooke asserts that 'the depth of a lineage .... is always in proportion to its width' (ibid: 35). The fact that the Chopi do not fit this model is explained by the fact that the Chopi recognise kin up to third cousins, even though they probably cannot trace the actual linkages. The relationship is worked out through common relatives, not necessarily the apical ancestor.

Figure 14: Genealogy of Tenyane Amos Mbiye (1)



(1) It must be stressed that this is a genealogy, not a lineage. After eliciting Tenyane's relatives to whom he is directly linked, I posed the question, 'Do you have any other relatives with whom you interact, but which you have not yet told me about?' - giving rise to the kin recorded on the left of Figure 14. This was a standard enquiry in my questionnaire.

The triangle marks the extent of patrilateral kin which the informant, Tenyane, could remember. The four individuals marked 'A' represent agnates to whom Tenyane cannot trace a direct linkage, but with whom he interacts and regards as part of his kin set. It is possible, using the transformation rules for Omaha kinship systems created by Lounsbury (1964), to tentatively reconstruct the kin chain that links Tenyane to these kinsmen. (Cf. chapter eight.) He calls a_1 tate (father) and a_2 nkoma (elder brother) for the male, and ndiye (sister) for the females. He calls b_1 ntukulu (grandson) and b_2 mwane (great-grandson).

By reversing Lounsbury's reduction rules, thus making them 'expansion' rules, one may speculate that the minimal kin chains linking Tenyane to these relatives are

a_2: term: nkoma/ndiye, i.e., sibling

♂B becomes	Fs	(½ sibling rule reversed)
———	FBs	(merging rule reversed)
———	FFss	(½ sibling rule reversed)
———	FFBss	(merging rule reversed)

It seems likely, therefore, that the kinsmen marked a_2, are Tenyane's FFBs' son and daughters, i.e., patrilateral parallel cousins, once removed (second cousins). They could also be third cousins: I only calculated the minimal set of linkages.

It appears likely that the set of B kinsmen are descended from a female agnate, as the Omaha 'skewing' of generations appears to be present, which means that siblings of opposite sex are involved. Let us assume then, that the 'great-grandsons' in question are ego's daughter's son's son.

b_2: term: mwane, i.e., 'great-grandson'

♂dss becomes	Zss	(skewing rule reversed)
———	Fdss	(½ sibling rule reversed)
———	FZss	(skewing rule reversed)
———	FFdss	(½ sibling rule reversed)
———	FFZss	(skewing rule reversed)

It seems likely in this case, then, that through the minimal kin chain, Tenyane's vamwane are his FFZ's sons, viz., his patrilateral cross cousins once removed. (For a full exposition of the transformation rules see chapter eight.)

From the example of this genealogy (which was chosen because it is fairly typical), it can be seen that it is shallow with a relatively broad base, incorporating lateral agnatic kin to whom ego cannot trace linkage, yet who are included because he interacts frequently with them and can allocate kin terms to them. The matrilateral kin are also shallow in terms of generation, with an emphasis on lateral, living kin. The genealogy, like the majority of others, is thus characterised by lateral spread rather than lineal depth.

Hammond-Tooke points out that for the Mpondomise the lineage has two main functions: it is a property-holding group with dispute-settlement mechanisms, and it forms a ritual unit (1968:40). The Chopi equivalent of the former appears to be the vicinage, which is the land-holding unit, and which appears to be similar to Cape Nguni hospitality groups (Hammond-Tooke, 1969). There is little else of value which could be inherited. As to the ritual aspect, most homesteads possess their own personal ancestor shrine for family rituals (vide chapter nine). On a larger scale, an important ancestor (usually a man's father who was a 'big man') is on occasion (ideally every year) propitiated. This occasion is known as a chidilo, and relatives come from near and far for the event. This is the nearest that one encounters to a lineage engaged in cohesive action. However, many non-kin participate in the ritual, especially those who were neighbours or fellow-vicinage members. Strictly speaking, therefore, this congregation includes members who do not belong to the lineage.

One is forced to the conclusion that the lineage is of little importance. It is not, strictly speaking, a land-holding unit, is not decision making (although sometimes lineage segments are). In disputes many lineage members lend support, but so do others who are not of the lineage. It is also weak because of the geographical spread of its members. Even at the chidilo, where all those present call upon their ancestors, the invocation is of a mass of ancestors going back two or three generations, all linked to specific individuals by personal links. Again the emphasis is on a broad lateral

base rather than a triangle with a deep lineal apex. The lack of depth of the lineage facilitates manipulation of relationships and for manoeuvreability of fictive kin ties (vide infra, in section on 'plasticity'). The overall impression is one of laterality rather than lineality, importance being placed on effective, living kin.

The Clan

The clan is of virtually no importance; it is dispersed, has no recognised head, (except, of course, for the ruling clan), it is not localised and is not property holding. Having established all the negative aspects, one can ennumerate some of the more positive ones. The clan does not exist in any corporate sense, but it does have a name known as chibongo (it is a praise name, like the Nguni isibongo), handed down in the patrilineal line. It is, in Firth's (1963) terms, a patrinominal system. As a name, it is a 'badge' which gives outsiders certain a priori information, such as the area of origin (two individuals meeting for the first time would give clan name and area, for example, 'I am Musisi Ntsambe of Guveni') and even tribe of origin. (Ntsambe, though common in Chopiland, is actually an Inhambane Tonga name. It indicates an historical origin, therefore.)

The other important positive aspect of the clan name is that it provides knowledge of who are or are not potential marriage partners. The Chopi exogamy rules are that a person may not marry into the clan of his mother or father; it is therefore an exogamous group. As is explained in the following chapter, these rules of exogamy have the effect of spreading alliances widely throughout the society and does not have the ideal restriction of marriage choices a preferential system possesses.

Matrilateral kin

This category of kin provides one of the 'alternative structures' (to agnatic kin) to which the title of this dissertation refers. It is an important category when one assesses the people and kin with whom ego interacts, and the potential use that can be made of the kinship amity that is prescriptive with one's maternal relatives, who are subsumed under the term mashaka

(relative) together with the patrilateral kin.

The importance that a culture attaches to a category of kin is intimated in various areas of social action: in the recruitment to vicinages or action sets; and perhaps more importantly, the extent to which they feature in the ancestor cult. In Nyatsiku, while admittedly matrilateral kinship played a small part, recruitment to a vicinage was effected through this type in 7% of the cases.

Since residence tends towards neolocality as an individual reached middle age, there is the possibility of a man settling among his matrilateral kin. This possibility is strengthened if, as often occurs, his mother leaves, or is divorced by her husband and returns to her parental home with her young children (the divorce rate in my sample was 51,7%). The child in these circumstances biulds up a strong relationship with its maternal grandparents and kin such as his mother's brother. Young children in any event frequently go to live with their grandparents for a period of their lives. These factors may encourage one to settle in their midst once he is able to set up his own household.

Contingent factors, such as the availability and proximity of matrilateral kin, will affect the numbers in which they are recruited to action sets. Thus, if an individual calls a work party, he will expect kin resident nearby to attend. If his mother's kin are resident nearby, then they will attend, but if they live some distance away, this would be an inhibiting factor

It is interesting to note that the mother's brother is not as important a kinsman to the Chopi as he is among the neighbouring Tsonga, amongst whom Junod (1924) has recorded the existence of joking relations (an institution which the Chopi lack). This is reflected in the kin term designating him, koko, which is also the term of 'grandfather'. The relationship is treated as being the same as the grandparent-grandchild kind, typified by familiarity and indulgence, with mild sexual jokes between those of the opposite sex. The reasons for the 'raising' of the mother's brother to the grandparent generation is discussed in the chapter on kin terminology.

Ritual is a useful indicator of who are important kin on the level of ideology as well as empirically. In a survey of which ancestors were considered relevant, it emerged that over one quarter of named personal ancestors to whom sacrifices were offered, were members of ego's matrilineage. The survey also showed that on average, each informant had at least one matrilateral ancestor to whom he sacrificed.

Affinal kin

The relations between a man and his affines is discussed more fully in the following chapter, but it is important to establish here the kind of ties that exist between them. In comparison with their Tsonga neighbours, the Chopi have a far more relaxed relationship with affines, which is marked by a developmental cycle in the use of kin terms by the husband.

The husband, soon after marriage, treats his in-laws almost as undifferentiated categories, all senior females nkokati, and his classificatory preferential wives lamu. As time passes, there is a tendency to dispense with formality, until a man and his wife almost become merged as social identities, with the man calling his affines by the same terms as does his wife.

The alliance formed by the marriage is an ongoing process of exchange. There is a Chopi proverb to the effect that 'the bridewealth never ceases'. The son-in-law is expected to assist his wife's father when the latter requests it, and when he returns from the mines as a wugayesa, the husband must have a gift, usually clothing, for his father-in-law.

Affines feature prominantly in the composition of vicinages and action sets. In Nyatsiku, I recorded that 33% of all cases were individuals who were sponsored as immigrants by an affine. Contingent factors such as contiguity again influence the actual number of affines to be found in action sets, but there is no doubt that in principle they are welcome members of the action set.

There is an extremely strong bond between siblings, as is indicated

by the fact that brothers are circumcised together, rather than in age sets. Brother and sister regard each other fondly, and it is the younger brother (who stands to benefit from bridewealth payments from his sister's marriage) who takes a vital interest in the wellbeing of his sister. It is with this brother that all dealings in the long term affecting a marriage, such as divorce, paying off the bridewealth debt, etc. must be negotiated.

For her part, the wife retains her clan name, and her interest in her descent group. Indeed, marriage being as unstable as it is among the Chopi, it is quite likely that she will return to her kin at sporadic intervals. The ancestors of the woman retain an active interest in her, and when she is ill, it is to her ancestors that she, through a male agnate, must turn for help. Her ancestors also take an interest in her offspring, generally believed to be benevolent.

Quasi-kin

I introduce this category here despite the fact that I devote a following chapter to it. This refers to the institution of fosterage which tends to arise out of the custom of naming a child after a friend, kinsman, patron, or ancestor. This is really the strengthening of an existing bond between the parents and the person possessing the original name, but one of the potential ramifications is that the latter may, after the child is weaned, request that he or she leave his or her parents and come to live with the senior namesake. This the child may do until he or she leaves the homestead to marry.

Thus a symbolic alliance forged between two adults can result in a more permanent and concrete bond being formed between an adult and a child, which approximates to fosterage. Clearly a child who spends many of his formative years with his namesake (who may live some distance from his parents) will have a wider range of options when it comes to deciding where to set up a homestead, and thereafter, who would be potential action set members.

Conclusion: The Plasticity of Chopi Kinship

It is perhaps time to turn our attention to the flexible nature of Chopi kinship. Not that I am attempting to claim that this is unique to the Chopi, for various other studies have demonstrated pliable kinship systems in societies elsewhere in Africa. One thinks especially of van Velsen's work on the Lakeside Tonga (1964), and Peter's on the Bedouin (1960). However, while any kinship system is open to manipulation, it appears that Chopi kinship is particularly vulnerable, and the political environment is such that the bending of norms is an important avenue of action for an ambitious man. The kinship system derives its flexibility from a number of factors. One which has already been discussed is the fact that there is a lack of strong dogma of descent. There are Chopi proverbs which can be used to rationalize action in terms of an agnatic descent principle, and an equal number which support action in terms of non-agnatic principles. Access by non-kin to kinship-based groups can also be engineered, and one frequently finds that bonds of friendship are cemented through marriage, or through the use of kin terms, where friends are given a term such as nfowetu (meaning 'brother'). Although the kinship implied is clearly a fiction, this tends to be forgotten over a period of time.

However, the area of kinship that is most open to manipulation is in the vagueness that surrounds the average individual's genealogical knowledge. The shallowness of the kinship system means that even men who are closely related are uncertain as to the exact linkages which tie them together, especially if the links have to be traced two or three generations above themselves. How much more vulnerable therefore, must genealogies be to an individual who can perceive some advantage in their falsification? Kinship thus becomes a political resource to the Chopi, in much the same way as can Velsen noted for the Tonga:

> 'there is little point in considering it (Tonga kinship) in the abstract, for genealogical relationships acquire significance and are manipulated in relation to particular interests or situations' (1964:163).

Among the Chopi, the manipulation of genealogies takes two distinct forms: the first is where a 'telescoping' takes place, and an individual claims direct or close descent from an important ancestor; the second, and more common, is to omit people from the genealogy, especially rivals who appear to have an advantageous position ahead of the protagonist. The case below illuminates some of the points made here.

Case 7. The flexibility of kinship: Genealogy manipulation

The case revolves around three protagonists, who were all contenders for the headmanship of Nyatsiku. The headman's district of Nyatsiku was founded 150 to 200 years ago by a man of the Nyakwaha clan who, because of his age and frail health, was called Nyatsiku. It is very difficult to obtain information on the line of succession that followed him, due to the adelphic pattern that is followed, and also the deliberate obfuscation perpetrated by individuals who have vested interests to protect or advance. The most recent past headman was Kalichani, whose death in about 1960 sparked the inevitable bitter and prolonged dispute over the succession.

Three candidates emerged: Sangatelo, Germani, and Chimele (all, of course, of the Nyakwaha clan). Of the three, Sangatelo appeared to have the weakest claim in the eyes of most people, who tended to believe that his genealogical credentials were not as strong as the other two. It was Germani who was believed to be the strongest claimant on genealogical grounds, and Chimele, the third contestant, next. Unfortunately for the latter, he is German's younger half-brother (of the same father, but from a second, junior wife). A complicating factor was that, at the time of Kalichani's death, German was away on an extended migrant labour trip, so could not actively press his claims on his own behalf. The main political disputes were, therefore, conducted between Chimele and Sangatelo, while a faction which supported German put forward his claims and tried to prolong proceedings while they recalled him from Lourenzo Marques. Sangatelo, meanwhile, took advantage of the time lag by taking the widow of Kalichani by the custom of widow-inheritance. This effectively made him look like

a close relative (he was a classificatory 'brother') of the dead headman, and strengthened the legitimacy of his claims to the post.

This is not the occasion to discuss the mechanics of the succession dispute in any detail, but it is necessary to sketch briefly the outcome. Germani returned from Lourenzo Marques to contest the succession, but he had been away too long, and his social network was not widespread or strong enough to sustain his challenge. Chimele, his younger sibling, pressed his own claims, but a combination of his unpopular personality and the stronger claims of Germani, effectively negated his attempt. Sangatelo, therefore, emerged as the successful candidate. He had gained the allegiance of the most powerful vicinages in the headman's district, and this, plus the tactically advantageous widow-inheritance and his apparent ability as a leader, clinched the matter.

This lengthy introduction now brings us to the main point at stake: what was occurring was a political dispute, and was mainly about how many followers each man could claim. Each contestant put forward arguments as to the legitimacy of his claim, and these took the form of publicising one's own pedigree, and denigrating those of one's opponents. Ostensibly, therefore, the disputes were about the credibility of genealogies or pedigrees, while in reality, it was a matter of gathering support, which meant calling in political, economic and kinship obligations. The man who could muster the most supporters would get his claims to the accuracy of his pedigree accepted. Figure 15 shows the pedigrees of the three contestants.

Notice that all three claimants establish their links to the founding ancestor (Nyatsiku Nyakwaha, no 1 on the master genealogy), but that after this, there is very little consensus as to who follows whom. Sangatelo's pedigree carefully establishes his claims to follow the dead Kalichani (no 17 on figure 16) who, if Sangatelo's pedigree is believed, was is fact inferior to Sangatelo himself, and studiously emits even the existence of his two rivals. In fact, Sangatelo claims that Tihinguvani

Figure 15. Pedigrees of the contestants for the headmanship of Nyatsiku

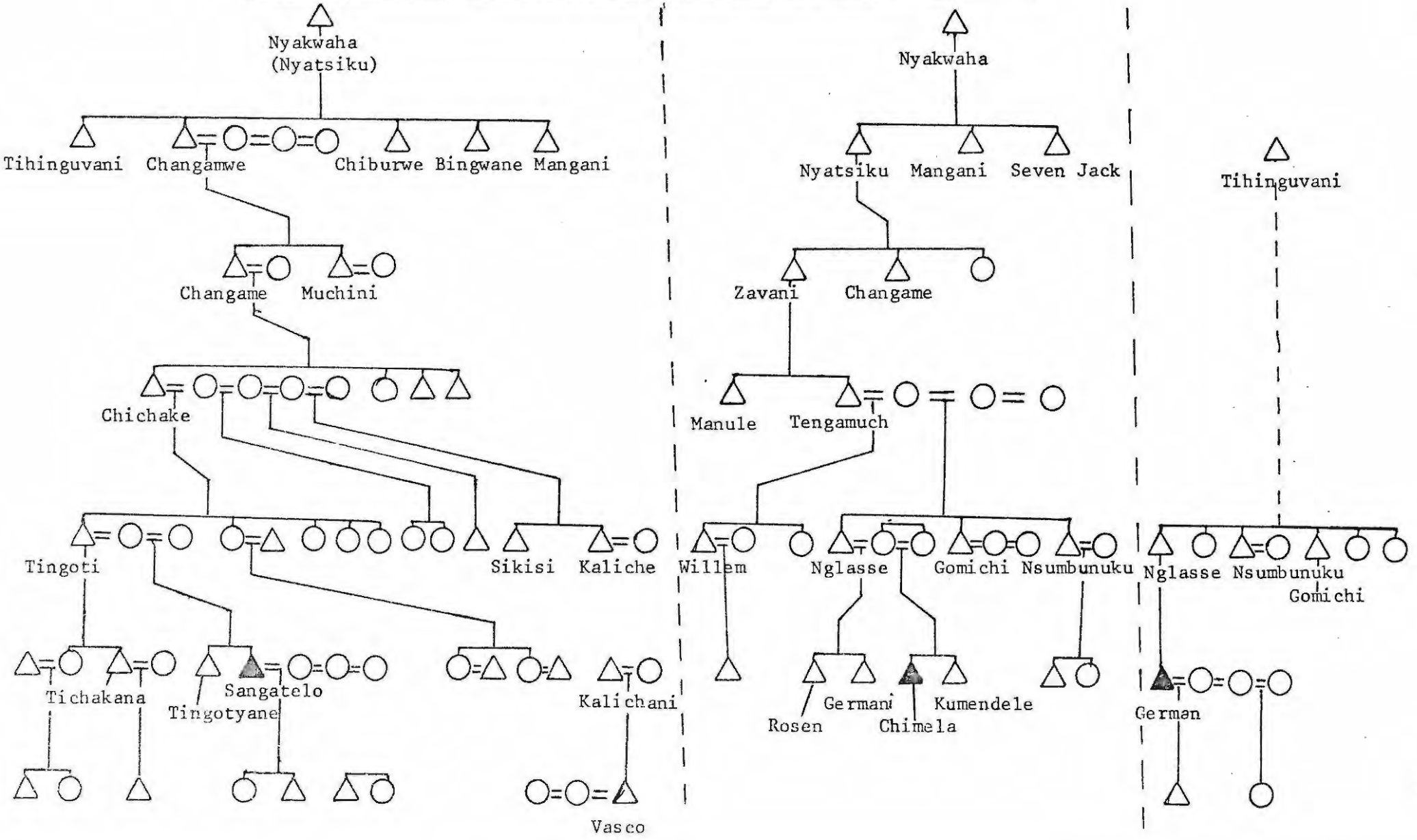
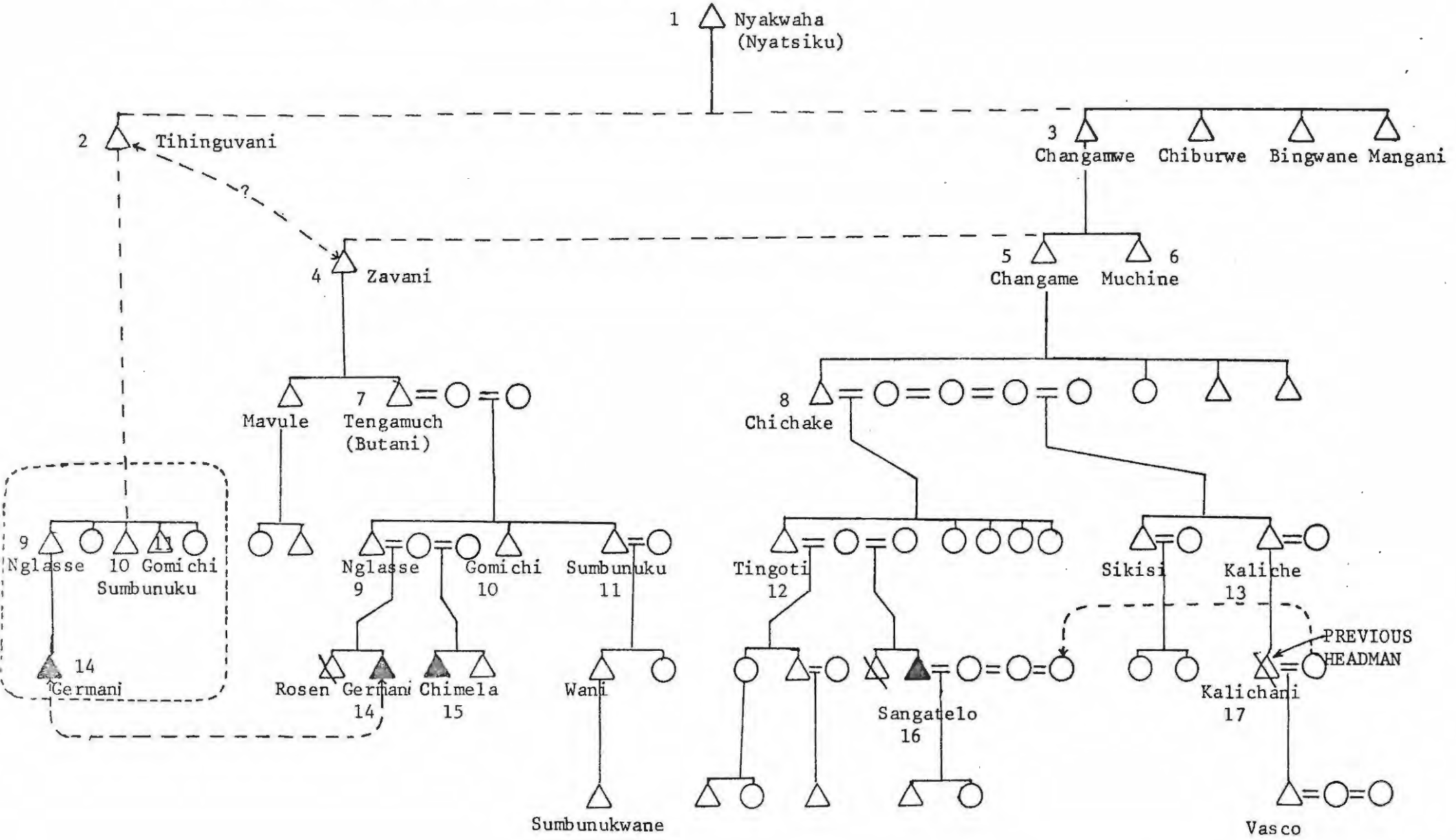


Figure 16. Abbreviated master genealogy of Nyatsiku rivals



(no 2 on Figure 16, his classificatory great-great-grandfather) had no children, while Germani claims to be his grandson.

Germani himself claims a very brief pedigree, in which he does not even acknowledge the existence of Chimele, his younger half-brother. He also has clearly telescoped the generations between himself and the founding ancestor, perhaps in the hope of strengthening his claims. It is interesting that even the two brothers cannot (or do not wish to) agree on their pedigrees. They manage to agree on their father, but little else. Neither of them acknowledge the existence of Sangatelo, nor are they able to demonstrate any relationship to the previous headman.

In some ways, the above pedigrees are unrepresentative; they belong to men who are of a clan in which the headmanship passes, and consequently they tend to remember linkages in greater depth and detail than the average Chopi. There is also greater incentive to manipulate the pedigrees. However, the shallowness and vagueness of genealogies is a feature of Chopi society, and this can be used negatively or positively. The negative sense is demonstrated above, where one omits individuals from one's pedigree; but the same vagueness can be used positively as well, by bonding in individuals who were perhaps distantly related, or perhaps not related at all.

Ultimately, however, the kinship links that make up a pedigree or genealogy are a mixture of: actual linkages, mythological charter, and finally, a reflection, rationalisation, and manipulation of relationships. It is the politics of kinship in a very real sense that we have examined here. The three protagonists each put forward their pedigrees as justification of their claims to the headmanship. It was Sangatelo's which was accepted by a majority of the people of the district. Not that they believed it to be more honest or accurate than those of his rivals; his acceptance was political, and the rationalisation and legitimation followed. Some years later Sangatelo was quietly deposed and replaced by Germani. The reason given by all informants was that Germani was the 'right' man;

that his genealogical credentials were better than Sangatelo's, and that he should have been appointed headman in the first place. Of course, the decision was political; Sangatelo proved to be an unsatisfactory headman, and was replaced. But he was deposed by using the same legitimation by which he came to power: that one genealogical claim was stronger than another.

Despite the agnatic ideology of the Chopi, I have attempted to demonstrate that, strictly speaking, this is not a purely patrilineal society. Indeed, I have argued for the dismissal of such 'portmanteau' terms, which tend to obscure more than they reveal. The problem arises from concepts such as 'descent', which, until fairly recently has tended to be accounted for by unifactoral explanations. However, as soon as one begins to 'unpack' the various functions usually subsumed under such rubrics, the matter becomes complex. A possible means of circumventing the problem is to dispense with the 'hold-all' term and tackle each function separately under such headings as the ideology of the system (descent dogmas) and the recruitment to groups. One should also specify the different modes of descent, and, as I have attempted to do, remark on whether a mode is lineal or lateral.

I have attempted to show that there is a cultural bias towards agnatic kin (as the ideology illustrated), yet even within this there is room for manoeuvre, for lineages are non-existent and genealogical memories are short. To compensate for the lack of the large numbers of agnatic kin that would be available to an individual in a society such as the Nuer, the Chopi place emphasis on lateral kin, which necessitates the incoporation of matrilateral and affinal kin in areas of social life which the less fluid peoples of southern Africa would tend to exclude, or keep to a minimum.

In any event the Chopi also make use of alternative structural types to agnatic kin when recruiting members of groups and action sets. Apart from the alternative kin types of affines and matrilateral kin, there is also the quasi-kinship structure of the namesake institution, and the institution

of special friendship, or even friendship of an everyday sort. All these are structural types which entail reciprocal rights and obligations which can be used either in complementarity or competition with the culturally favoured structure.

One of the consequences of this situation is that a social system has developed which generates a need in an individual to generate many allegiances, many of which are of short duration. The tempo of sociation is high (a useful concept used by B. Sansom, 1972:210 ff.) An ambitious individual, as will be shown in the concluding chapter is able to manipulate the plasticity of his kinship system in order to achieve a maximisation of his benefits.

It is left, then, to try to account for the difference between the patrilineal descent dogmas of the Chopi and the cavalier fashion in which they frequently appear to disregard them. Perhaps, with de Lepervanche, it must be concluded that for the Chopi descent is an ideal construct which 'is a way of talking about groups' (1968:181). It is a means of formulating, ordering, and classifying a universe of important people, it is also a means of expressing group solidarity vis-a-vis other groups. Recruitment to groups does not require long pedigrees as a sine qua non of entry: groups are only too pleased to welcome immigrants. Transmission of property and wealth do not require a carefully ordered system, as neither are held in large quantities. These appear to be some of the factors which lead to a disparity between ideology and action.

The plasticity of kinship and social organisation is perhaps nowhere thrown into better relief than when we examine the origins and method of recruitment of immigrants. It is fact that among the Chopi there are many people who originated, or whose ancestors originated, from other neighbouring peoples. This tendency was noted as far back as 1927, when H.P. Junod expressed frustration in his attempt to find clans which could lay claim to being the original inhabitants of Chopiland (1927). My own fieldwork supports Junod's findings that a majority of clans claim that

they are immigrants to Chopiland, some of them quite recent.

This process is made possible by the ease with which the Chopi social system is able to incorporate newcomers. Kinship plays a large part in this, an immigrant with absolutely no kin to sponsor him can still settle in an area as a 'friend' of his sponsor. After some time, however, kinship may be brought into play through the bonds of affinity; I remarked when discussing the vicinage that it was often difficult to tell what the original nature of the binding tie between some members was because it appeared that 'friendship' ties were often strengthened by a marriage between the two participant groups. A vicinage head, it was also noted, is referred to as the 'father' of his followers and in relation to outside groups the immigrant is treated as if he were indeed the child of the wahombe, and the norms of kinship are applied to him with the 'big man' as his 'parental' point of reference.

The situation is reminiscent of that which pertains among the Nuer. As the recent debate over the composition of Nuer agnatic groups has shown, if a person lives in, and interacts in terms of, the norms of a society, then to all intents they can be considered to belong to that society (cf. Glickman 1972 (a):590). In the Nuer case, one of the main mechanisms by which flexibility is achieved is by treating female ancestors as if they are male, (1972(b)). Various mechanisms are employed by the Chopi. I have already mentioned the importance of affinity; another practice is to translate one's clan name into Chopi, thus keeping its meaning, which is often the name of an animal, utensil, or state of being (for example, Nkumbi refers to 'old one', Ntsambe means 'nice', etc.). The translation allows one to identify with the Chopi clan of the same name, if it exists.

Ultimately, however, these processes are not essential, for group formation is so fluid that recruitment is a simple matter. The most important aspect of kinship flexibility is not the recruitment of outsiders so much as the possibilities of manipulation within the clan and descent groups themselves, which arise out of the shallow lineages and early genelogical amnesia.

The shallowness and flexibility of the Chopi kinship system has, I have argued, arisen out of the complex interaction of a number of factors, including the ecology, land tenure patterns and political environment. We must now in the following chapter turn our attention to other features of the syndrome: the marriage rules, their patterns, the instability of Chopi marriage, and the inheritance patterns. It is only in an unravelling of the complicated interweaving of all these factors that we will gain an understanding of Chopi society.

Chapter VI

Marriage, Alliance, Instability and Succession

In this, the second of the four chapters which deal with different aspects of kinship, attention is focussed upon Chopi patterns of marriage, the chronic instability of the institution, and patterns of succession and inheritance. One of the most remarkable features of the system is the lateral spread of alliances[1] across society, which results from the interaction of the exogamy rules (which prohibit marriage to women of the clan of one's father or mother) and an injunction to 'marry out' of one's local area. The strains that such a system places upon a marriage is emphasised by the high divorce rate. Another institution that appears to play a part in the socio-cultural matrix that gives rise to what might be called a principle of laterality is the system of succession and inheritance. The lateral devolution of political office, especially, opens up political competition to encompass a number of potential heirs, and contributes towards the emergence of individualism. Indeed, Chopi society is characterised by an egocentric rather than sociocentric emphasis which is unusual in southern Africa.

This chapter, then, is divided into three main sections, covering marriage and affinity, divorce and modes of succession. Once again, the themes that are apparent throughout this dissertation are advanced by an examination of these three aspects of social life, viz., the themes of the horizontality of the social system as opposed to its vertical features, the high tempo of sociation (incorporating the idea that social relationships and alliances are made and broken with some regularity) and, of course, the opportunity this system provides for manipulation by ambitious individuals.

Marriage, affinity and alliance

I propose to handle this section in two broad segments: the first relates

(1) I use the term 'alliance' here in the sense of Radcliffe-Brown, but later in the chapter, it is used in the same manner as Levi-Strauss in his Huxley Memorial Lecture of 1965 (Levi-Strauss, 1966).

to the demography of marriage, marriage payments and negotiations (i.e., marriage as a rite de passage, with some analysis of the symbolic aspects). The second, and, I believe, the more important, deals with marriage as alliance, with the structural implications of exogamy rules and marriage patterns being examined.

During my fieldwork trips, I was able to attend only four marriage ceremonies, but I believe this was enough for me to observe the emergence of several patterns. I supplemented these observed cases with numerous interviews with informants in which we discussed idealized versions of courting procedure and marriage customs. While the actual cases sometimes omitted some of the 'ideal' procedures and occasionally included others, I am satisfied that what I observed was sufficiently representative of the general Chopi marriage customs.

There are two principal ways of acquiring a wife: the first is through a love match, and the second is for the marriage to be arranged with little or no previous contact between the prospective bride and groom. The arrangement may be done by the parents of the couple, or by a prospective husband who asks a friend or relative to find him a suitable bride. This latter kind of arrangement appears more common than that contracted by parents. In my questionnaire I neglected to ask informants as to the type of their marriage, so I have no statistical evidence on the matter. Of the four marriage ceremonies I attended, two were love matches, and two were 'arranged' at the husband's request. Oral evidence collected tended to stress a mutual attraction and courting procedure.

The method of choosing a wife is of little importance, since our interest lies in the discovery of marriage patterns and their structural significance. In any event, the method of choice of partner is subject to the constraints of the exogamy rules, giving rise to certain marriage possibilities and impossibilities. In general, it appears that the alliances made through marriage tend to be haphazard, by which I mean, have no obvious tactical intent; rather it is considered enough just to have married, and so to have widen-

ed one's network of allies. There are, however, one or two cases which were quite clearly motivated by some strategy, one of which I shall elaborate shortly.

The Chopi ideal of marriage is polygyny (although it appears to be becoming less widely practiced than in the past). Following Clignet (1970:18) I present below a table depicting the frequency of occurrence and the intensity of polygyny. The former is measured by projecting the number of married women per 100 married men, and the latter is arrived at by showing the number of married women per 100 polygynous men. My statistics are based on a total sample of two headman's districts: Nyatsiku and Mangane, in which there were 98 unbroken families (i.e., married men). I propose to treat the 98 cases as a round figure of 100, as the distortion will not be so large as to be significant.

Figure 17: Frequency and intensity of polygyny in two headman's districts

married women per 100 married men	married women per 100 polygynous men
138	233

It would be dangerous to project these figures onto the relief of the entire Chopi people; I have no means of knowing how representative the figures are. Even the figure given for the intensity of polygyny is somewhat presumptious, as I only had 18 polygynysts in my sample. It would be more accurate to state that the polygynysts in my sample averaged 2,33 wives. The polygyny rate would appear higher if I chose to include all polygynous marriages that took place during informants' lifetimes, but which, through death or divorce of spouses are no longer multiple. Thirty six per cent of adult informants had at one time been married polygynously, whereas only 21% of all extant marriages (during my field trips) were polygynous.

The Chopi also practice widow inheritance and sororate, although these are today more an ideal than actuality; I encountered only two cases of sororate and three of widow inheritance. The existence of such institutions can be explained in terms of three interwoven aspects: firstly, it would place

an intolerable economic burden on the wife's group if her bridewealth had to be repaid; secondly, there are ritualistic problems, such as ceremonies to mark the break up of the marriage and alliance; and thirdly, a marriage is an alliance between two groups rather than between two individuals, and the death of one spouse could mean the discontinuance of the alliance.

Connected with the above customs is the institution of preferential secondary marriage, whereby a man has the preferential right to marry his wife's younger sisters and brother's daughters. This rule has important structural implications and has an impact on the kin terminology system. However, this form of marriage, which, incidentally, allows a man to pay less bridewealth for the second bride, is not frequently practiced: I encountered only two such cases.

The consensus is that the normal bridewealth payment should be 25 tipondo (pondo being the old South African pound, but which today refers to the Mozambique 100 escudo note, which is roughly equivalent to three rands). The actual amount to be paid varies slightly on either side of the stipulated 25 'pounds' according to the woman's attractiveness and the status of her father. No great store is set on virginity, and divorcees command as high a bridewealth as any other woman. Indeed, a man who was about to marry a divorcee with three young children said that he did not consider this a drawback as, he said: 'kadi ya kukangulwa', which means, 'the pot (has been tried and) does not leak.' In other words, he knew she was fertile.

In South African terms, therefore, the cost of bridewealth is about R75, an extremely large sum of money in such a poverty stricken country. A migrant worker returning from a season in the South African gold mines (11 to 16 months), has usually been able to save little more than R100, much of which is immediately whittled away in tax, kinship obligations, etc. These figures applied during my fieldwork. There has, in recent years, been an improvement in wage scales.

Marriage negotiations and ceremonies

I do not propose to linger upon the minutiae of the marriage ceremonies, but there are certain aspects of these which are relevant to my thesis. These themes, which are perhaps best illustrated in two parts: the marriage negotiations, and the actual ceremonies that form part of the rites de passage, are shown through the medium of two cases. The cases are drawn from different marriages, because in each case I was able to observe in greater depth the opposite aspect.

Case 8: The marriage negotiations of Marinyela Kwambe

Marinyela is a man who lives in the sub-chiefdom of Ussake, some 10 miles north-east of Nyatsiku. He had recently returned from a migrant labour trip, and saved enough money to be able to afford a wife. Tomwane, who is himself married to an Nkome woman, approached his friend and neighbour, Bokiswe Nkome as to the availability of his daughter, Clementine. Bokiswe was agreeable in principle, and a meeting was arranged for the two parties to be introduced. Marinyela liked the look of Clementine, who also found him attractive, and Bokiswe approved of the match. A date was set for the marriage negotiations.

On the appointed day, the two sides met, with Tomwane as the prospective son-in-law's nyankwame (lit.: 'man of the purse', i.e., 'holder of the purse strings'. An nkwame is a small antelope from whose skin the money bag is made. An alternative name is nyansave, having the same etymology.) The nyankwame, or negotiator, of Bokiswe's side was Senderiyane, the former's brother's son, a man with a reputation as an uncompro-bargainer.

Marinyela brought with him as support seven people: Tomwane (his MB), another MB, his mother's second husband, his FZss, his mother, MZd and a friend. These were his closest kith and kin. Bokiswe's group of supporters was slightly larger (since the negotiations were taking place at his home) and represented his close friends and relatives, comprising most of his vicinage. His group comprised: Senderiyane (his Bs), and

another Bs, a B, his ZH, his ZHB, his wife, Bd, two Bs' wives and three friends.

Marinyela's group approached the homestead where negotiations were to begin, and were met at its entrance by Bokiswe's brother's wife (in lieu of the prospective bride's grandmother), who demanded an entrance fee of 10 escudos from the party. This having been paid, the group advanced to a sun shelter, where once again, the entrance was blocked, this time by Clementine's mother, who was also paid 10 escudos to gain admittance to the shelter. Normally the negotiations are conducted in a hut, which is in darkness, and the husband-to-be must pay yet another 10 escudos for a light to be lit. A further 10 escudos was paid 'to open the talk', whereupon a chicken was handed over to the husband's party as a sign that the woman's father agreed to begin the negotiations.

All these transactions were carried out by the husband's nyankwame, and the chicken was given to him by the wife's father's nyankwame. Throughout the negotiations, these two men did all the haggling and discussing, while the prospective husband and wife sat at opposite ends of the room with downcast eyes, flanked by friends or close kin. The girl's father was an interested observer, but also could not speak, save to call his nyankwame over for a discussion of tactics.

The two negotiators proceeded to discuss the amount of money that would be appropriate for the bride. Tomwane took some folded money from a pocket and placed 22 'pondo' on the ground under a walking stick. He suggested that this was an ample payment. Senderiyane replied with anger that he was insulted that such a low sum could be contemplated for such an attractive girl. The two men, acting the parts of the father and son-in-law, argued and Tomwane compromised until the sum of 25 'pounds' was reached. Insults were bandied about in the bargaining, at one point Tomwane likened his 'father-in-law' to a 'rubbish pit, which swallows everything'.

However, once the sum of 2500 escudos had been agreed upon, the antagonism ceased, and arrangements were made for the two celebrations: one at the father's home, and one at the husband's which would complete the mariage. Clementine, on her knees, collected the money from under the stick and gave it to Bokiswe, saying, 'take your money, father'. The chicken that had been given to the son-in-law's party to 'open' negotiations was then slaughtered by the two nyankwames, and distributed equally between the two parties. Special portions were given to the son-in-law, who received the nati (the chicken's gullet and crop), and the father-in-law, who received the head. During the meal, the two nyankwames drew up the contract that had been agreed agreed upon, writing it on a piece of paper and noting witnesses (fakazi) present.

At this stage, the bride, her sisters and classificatory sisters (her FBsd's) sat next to the husband, the girls being his valamu, i.e., preferential secondary brides. Tomwane, as if to show Marinyela how to handle the situation, called out to an eight-year-old lamu: 'waranda kani?', which means, 'will you be my lover?' (The husband and his valamu participate in a rather lewd joking relationship.) During the meal, Bokiswe took his son-in-law to all his (Bokiswe's) relatives, introducing them and giving their kin terms. Marinyela then introduced his group. After the meal had ended, the husband's party took their leave.

Analysis

Marinyela was a man who could pay in cash the bridewealth required for a wife. His reason for asking Tomwane to arrange a bride for him some ten miles from his home is not clear, except that the Chopi do have an injunction that one should marry away from one's own place of residence. This sentiment is summed up in the proverb, loko u nga tsuli, u na teka ndiyako: 'if you do not travel, you will marry your sister'. Having decided to marry, and to take someone from a distant area, Marinyela decided to approach Tomwane who is his classificatory mother's brother. In other words, he decided to call into action a rather distant member of his kin set, who, in this

case, was a mother's brother, a relationship characterised by a relaxed and warm understanding.

The roles played by the nyankwame are interesting (and here the term 'role' is particularly apt) for the two men act as proxies; they play out the antagonism between the two sides, each driving as hard a bargain as he dare, very often saying exactly the words and insults that each party must be thinking. Their performance is allegorical, acting out and making explicit the hostility that exists between affines, but because they are doing it by proxy, and under the understanding that it is, after all, mayembana, 'a joke', the rift that would be created if the 'real' personages were contesting does not appear. The centrifugal forces of the affinal ties are given recognition, but the vital centripetal tendencies are not threatened.

Throughout the 'performance' of the two nyankwame, the persons that they represent sit silently with eyes averted or downcast. They surrender their social 'being' temporarily to their proxy, who commands the stage. When the performance has ended, with the close of the negotiations, the husband, wife, and father-in-law emerge as social entities once again, and are permitted to eat, speak, and take part in the social events.

The charade that characterises the early part of the negotiations, when the groom's party has to 'buy' entrance into the homestead, into the house, and light etc., is significant. As Sahlins (1963) has pointed out, an examination of the type of reciprocity (or transactions) that take place between individuals or groups does much to reveal the quality of the relationship between them. The demands for payment for such trivial affairs amounts to a symbolic statement that the group arrives as extreme, even hostile, outsiders, who cannot be trusted, and who, in turn, must buy whatever privileges they hope to acquire. When the negotiations are completed however, the husband and his group are treated as friends, with no further 'negative' transactions incurred.

In this charade, it is ideally the girl's maternal grandmother who

bars the entrance to the homestead, and the girl's mother who guards the doorway to the house. The positions of these two women in the social structure are interesting. The grandmother (who usually is given 200 escudos of the bridewealth payment) guards the homestead entrance because, informants say, the girl is 'of her blood'. This is a recognition of three things: first, the womanly aspects of the marriage, for she is of the bride's group and has had much to do with her upbringing; second, the matrilateral content of kinship, for she is the bride's maternal matrilateral kinswoman; and third, she is the embodiment of the truism that marriage is the concern of groups, not merely individuals, for she represents the wider network of kin beyond the elementary family. The grandmother is to the homestead as the mother is to the house. The non-lineal features of Chopi kinship are apparent here.

The mother, who bars the doorway of the house, is making a symbolic statement of her reluctance to part with her daughter; she is the guardian and birth-giver to the important occupants of the house - the children. This must also, of course, be seen as part of the rites de passage, with the girl's group expressing reluctance to let her go. It is her mother, who will feel her loss most, who represents her group. The mother, too, stands outside the physical house as a symbolic representation of the 'house' (i.e. lineage) she has borne.

Finally, the eating of the chicken together has obvious symbolic connotations: it is, first and foremost, a communion, for nothing is so symbolic of unity as one family sitting down to a meal together; it epitomizes peace and harmony. The fowl is divided into equal portions, stressing the equality of the groups in their undertaking. Then too, the son-in-law is given, for the first time, the portion of meat that is allocated to the son-in-law: the nati, which is the gizzard and crop (which is the toughest and most inedible part of the fowl, which is an ominous symbolic statement; the corresponding nati portion of a goat is its second stomach, complete with decomposing contents, which is equally unappetising). The father-in-

law, by contrast, is given the head, which is traditionally given to old men, who demand, and get, respectful treatment. The fowl, incidentally, is an animal that is frequently used to propitiate the ancestors, although it is not used in this context here.

It is also interesting to note the symbolism of the portions given to the son-in-law: the gizzard and crop of a fowl, or the second stomach of a goat. Both these items serve the function of taking foreign materials in their raw form (i.e. food) and rendering them acceptable to the animal by making the food digestible. This symbolism surely articulates with social life, for the descent group needs outsiders in order to propagate and grow, and the sons- and daughters-in-law are the foreigners, without whom, the group would die out. The unpalatable nature of the gizzard and second stomach point to the ambivalence which is reserved for in-law relationships.

Case 9: The marriage celebrations of Vasco Nyakwaha

Vasco and his group of supporters (comprising kin and friends) arrived at his bride's brother's homestead for the first celebration of his marriage to Zulumeri Masita (the negotiations had been concluded a week before) at midday. Vasco, flanked by two friends, averted his eyes and was silent. The men and women of the group were separated, the women being ushered to mats under a shady tree, while the menfolk were given a hut in which to sit. The bride's relatives were likewise divided according to sex and sat a little distance apart. There were, therefore, four groups, differentiated according to both sex and affiliation.

The fakazi (witnesses) who accompanied Vasco to the celebration were approximately the same ones who witnessed his marriage negotiations. They comprised Wilson Nyangumbe, his FZs; Nyangalume Masakula (his good friend, and half-agnate), (1) who was his nyankwame; German Nyakwaha, his FB; Sangatelo, his FB and MH (he took Vasco's father's wife as levir when that

(1) Half-agnate because their clans, which were once the same, had split some generations before.

man died); Chipanyelo Ntsambe, his classificatory MB; Raphaele Nkome, a friend; Hembiani Ntsambe, his FMBd; Ameli Nkumbi, his FFZd; and finally, his mother, Chamabnyane Mbonati and his first wife, Clara Ndevene; Vasco's bride's fakazi included: her brother (her father is dead), her FB (who acted as her nyankwame), her mother, her sisters, the husband of one of these, her Bs, Bd, BWB, FMss, FMsd, and three FMss sons.

The two negotiators then killed a male goat which had been provided by the groom's party, cutting it up into portions to be cooked by the women. Other food, such as cassava, mealie meal, rice, sugar, tea was evenly divided between the four groups. The groom's nyankwame was constantly consulted as to the proper division of the food, and was shown much deference. Indeed, the entire party of the groom was treated with great respect.

The goat meat, when it was ready, was divided into four portions, one for each group, and the special portions were set aside for the various categories of kin and others. The front portion of the chest, called chitila, was given to the herdboys; the second stomach, nati, was given to Vasco, as the son-in-law (parts of which were given to male members of his party); the top of the rump, called dikondo, was given to the vatukulu, classificatory grandsons and sister's sons. The blood of the goat, which was collected when its throat was cut, was cooked with the stomach wall to make a dish called choso ni madota, which was given to the old men of both the bride and groom's parties.

When the food was served, the husband and wife with her classificatory sisters, whom the husband calls lamu, were secluded. Their food was shared, with husband and wife cutting their portions in half and helping to feed each other. When tea was brought, for example, the wife held the cup while her husband drank half and vice versa. Vasco's first wife shared a cup of tea with the new bride.

Towards the end of the celebration, while the tea was being consumed, the wife's brother (as senior representative of his group) joined the

husband's menfolk 'in order to establish a friendly relationship'. At the same time, the groom's mother crossed over to the party of women who represented the bride - also to become acquainted. Shortly after this, a contract was drawn up, stating that a celebration had been held to mark the marriage of Vasco and Zulumeri.

This marked the end of proceedings, and the groom's party left for home, a distance of some four miles. Vasco had to remain behind with his new wife, secluded in a hut with her, constantly attended by his nyankwame during the daytime. After three days, Vasco emerged from the hut during the daytime to work in the homestead: he built a granary and did other odd jobs. It appears that he might have been called upon to build a new hut, but this did not happen.

After ten days, the date set for the celebration to be held at Vasco's home, the womenfolk of the bride's home began preparations for the transfer of their 'daughter' to the home of her husband (hoheleketa mwanana wukati). A group of women sang and danced around a ditudi (a hollowed log in which grain is pounded with a long pole) while two women were pounding out a rhythm with the threshing poles (called ntsi). The women took it in turns to pound, while the others sang songs about marriage, copulation, and gave layu (law) to the couple.

The mealies that were being ground in this way were to be used as the base of a food that symbolizes fertility and which is for newly-married couples only. It is made up of finely powdered mealiemeal, honey and water, which is roasted, then fixed into little cakes, known as chigwama with sugar and water. Later, in the celebration at the husband's home, Vasco and Zulumeri ate these cakes after they had been cut in half, eating a half-portion each.

The bride's party took a female goat, and quantities of rice, sugar, condensed milk, tea and a female chicken as their contribution to the celebration at the husband's home. On arrival at his father's homestead the wife's party was reluctant to enter, and had to be enticed in by pay-

ment of 10 escudos. The gifts were handed over and the two nyankwames supervised the slaughter and cooking of the goat. On this occasion, there was again separation of the sexes, but all the menfolk of both parties mixed freely and the womenfolk did likewise.

The next morning, a mixed group (men and women, from both husband and wife's parties) set out to clear and dig the fields that were to be the wife's. The remainder of the womenfolk divided their attention between fetching water and applying daub to the walls of the brides's new hut. Most of the menfolk went out on a hunting trip, and returned later with three small buck that they had killed. The group that had been digging the fields were called back to the homestead, but refused to come until the bride's mother was paid 10 escudos to stop work. The bride's people then set about collecting firewood, and quite soon a large pile had been built. Once again, the workers had to be paid 10 escudos before they would consent to stop work.

The goats and the animals that had been killed were cooked, and feasting took place, with intermittent dancing and singing. Indeed, throughout the work, the women sang songs giving 'law' to the couple and at this point the songs were sung mainly by the bride's group. The songs were decidedly risqué and had elements of joking relationship in them: one song asserted that Vasco would now be taught to wash properly for the first time by his new wife; another was a mocking reminder that he had not paid his lowola (bridewealth) in full, and a third involved the repetition of the word duma, which has two meanings: the first connotation is that of sweat (perhaps from the sweat of the marital bed), and the second is that of an uncastrated (i.e., potent) animal. Throughout all this the couple were secluded in a hut. They only emerged when a sacrifice was made to Vasco's ancestors.

Shortly before the celebration ended, Vasco's stepfather (with whom he shares a homestead) took a chicken and, with all the revellers present acting as a congregation, he ritually slaughtered the fowl, calling on

his ancestors to witness the marriage and to accept the stranger into the homestead. This marked the end of the celebration and the celebrants began to diperse, with individuals from the two groups calling each other ndoni (a term denoting a special friendship), which was verbal confirmation of the newly-formed alliance.

Analysis

The first and most obvious feature of these marriage ceremonies is their significance as a rite de passage. I intend to devote some space to the elaboration of this aspect.

The separation that exists between the two groups which are involved in the alliance that is the marriage is stressed immediately on the arrival of Vasco and his people: they were seated some distance away from the bride's people. The sexes were also separated, so that four groups eventuated, appearing to give expression to the sexual differences of Vasco and his bride.

Vasco entered the homestead with averted eyes and was flanked by friends. The negotiations about the slaughter of the goat and food preparations were carried out on his behalf by his nyankwame. At the same time, his bride Zulumeri, was flanked by her womenfolk and sat unsmiling with averted eyes. This behaviour was undoubtedly to signify what van Gennep called rites of separation: the couple were symbolically removing themselves from social interaction, though lack of communication between the two parties is necessary, so one finds that the two nyankwames act as the go-betweens of the two parties.

Once the food has been prepared, the husband and bride are for the first time put into each other's company, where they share a hut with his valamu (preferential secondary wives, i.e., the bride's classificatory sisters) and vafowetu, who are the husbands of any married sister of the bride. This physical separation from the remainder of the celebrants marks part of the transition phase of the rites of passage. Here Vasco was given the opportunity of getting to know not only his bride a little

better, but also the young girls and women who potentially could also become his wives. Of those who were already married he was given the opportunity of meeting them (for they may one day be divorced) and also their husbands, who all share with Vasco the status of mwane, son-in-law, to the homestead.

At all three phases of the marriage negotiations and celebrations, an animal was killed: a chicken after negotiations were complete, a male goat at the celebration at the bride's home, and a female goat at the celebration at the groom's home. On each occasion the ritual portions of nati for the son-in-law, the head for the old men (and particulatly the father-in-law) and the portion of the vatukulu, sister's sons and grandchildren were distributed.

The celebrations are clearly not just the coming together of two groups in a marriage. All the old men eat the head, and all the vatukulu and vamwane of the host (the bride's father or brother in the first instance, and the groom's father in the second) participate in the ritual acknowledgement of status. A marriage celebration can be seen, therefore, as a dramatization of the respective statuses of all significant participants and of the alliances that the head of the homestead has contracted through time.

The bonds of the alliance between the two groups at a marriage are at first tentative, and attempts are made to intensify them as the proceedings continue. At first there is the rigid separation, but towards the end of the first celebration the wife's father and the groom's mother join the opposite groups with the express intention of getting to know each other. Then too, the wife's group makes a great play on the fact that they are reluctant to relinquish any hold on her. They have to be 'enticed' (by payment of a small sum) into the husband's homestead, and work on her behalf until paid to stop. This appears to symbolise the economic loss they will feel as she will no longer tend their fields, fetch water and firewood.

The conjunction is never complete, however, as is shown by the tension

apparent in the second celebration, where insulting (but joking) songs are sung at each other. However, the two groups embark on more and more joint tasks (the women digging the fields while the men hunt together), until, at the end, the two groups part, calling each other ndoni, a term reserved only for two people involved in a very special friendship.

Throughout the proceedings one is impressed by the emphasis on the aspect of marriage as alliance. The songs that are sung frequently include allusions to the bonds that have been formed and the ongoing exchanges that are expected; the fact that a marriage also commemorates all other extant alliances is shown by the fact that the sons-in-law of the homestead head are expected to attend, and are given their ritual portions. Likewise the vatukulu are incorporated in the ritual, and this category as sister's sons, are the living progeny that have resulted from the alliances that have been previously contracted.

After the first celebration, a period of about ten days passes before the bride leaves her home and goes to her husband's home. During this period, they live together, and he is expected to prove his worth as a son-in-law (also acknowledge his inferior status) by performing tasks around the homestead of his father-in-law. He is expected to show extreme respect to his mother-in-law and his wife's younger brother (who stands to benefit from the lowola (bridewealth) payment form his sister.) Both husband and wife behave towards others in restrained fashion and are left alone as much as possible, stressing the segregative aspect that is usually combined with the rites of transition. The husban's servility makes him aware of his inferior status and indebtedness throughout his married life.

The nexus between husband and wife is dramatized in the preparation of the chigwama 'special' food, which can only be eaten by the newlyweds and which, it is hoped will provide fertility. The songs that are sung are frank and instructive, relating especially to the sex act. Their segregation also ensures that they are aware of their change in status. The

sharing of a cup of tea between Vasco's first wife and the new one, an act initiated by the former, has the obvious symbolic meaning of acceptance as co-wife.

The rites of passage are brought to a close when the groom's father sacrifices a chicken to his ancestors, asking them to accept a new daughter-in-law (nkatamwane) into the homestead. It is significant that he asks them to accept her as an affine, and into the homestead, not the lineage, for the wife does not relinquish her ties with her group. She retains her clan name and when ill, it is her father's ancestors whose aid must be sought.

These are the rites of incorporation, whereby the couple emerge in society as man and wife, with the sanction of the ancestors. Indeed, the rites of incorporation can be seen throughout the marriage process: early on, the husband meets and gets to know the wife's group; after the negotiations, a meal is eaten together; at other periods, meals and tea or an alcoholic beverage are consumed in communion; and perhaps most importantly, there begins a series of exhanges of gifts between the individuals and the groups. This starts with the husband's group providing a male goat for the bride's father's celebration (the symbolism involved need not be elaborated) and is continued (mostly from son-in-law to his wife's father) until the marriage ends, through death or divorce.

Finally, the composition of the groups of fakazi, or witnesses, is revealing. The fakazi are individuals who are considered to be in a close relationship with the marrying couple and their parents. They do not include those people who casually attend the celebrations. The witnesses are either formally invited to attend the negotiations and the celebration 'away' from home, or their relationship to one of the main participants is so close that there is no question of their not participating. One might expect, therefore, that if the Chopi do possess meaningful descent groups, that a marriage would be a social situation in which the loyalties of participants are illuminated and descent group boundaries clearly drawn. Let us

therefore, now examine the composition of the groups of supporters in the case of Vasco's marriage and the other three marriages that I was able to attend and collect information relating to the composition of fakazi groups.

A glance at the fakazi of Vasco shows that they comprise anything but 'pure' agnatic kin, let alone the narrower confines of unilineal kin. Vasco's supporters included only two agnates, the remainder being two friends, three affines and three matrilateral kin (I have taken such kin as FMB daughter to be matrilateral, even though it is reckoned through ego's father; likewise, I have included FZs as an affine, as he belongs to the clan of FZ husband). Vasco's wife's witnesses included seven agnates, six matrilateral kin, and two affines. To give a slightly broader perspective (although I realise that my sample is inadequate), I present the number and types of kin who were fakazi at the four marriages I attended in tabular form below.

Figure 18: Table showing number and type of core support at four marriage celebrations

Relationship to husband or wife	number	percentage
agnates	31	39
matrilateral kin	20	25
affines	18	23
friends	11	13
	80	100

The table, representing three marriages in the headman's district of Nyatsiku and one in Seven Jack in 1969, shows clearly the plurality that made up the core witnesses who attended. These were the individuals who had a specially close relationship with the marriage partners; I was unable to record the names and relationship, if any, of the many people who were casual celebrants at the marriage festivities, there were too many, and in any case, I do not believe they are as significant as the fakazi.

The breakdown of types shows that agnates form the largest category, with 39% of all fakazi, but this is considerably less than an overall majority. Affines and matrilateral kin are more or less equally represented, and the only non-kin category, 'friends', is 13% of the total. One is

entitled to assume that these people were the individuals with whom ego had the closest of ties. If the Chopi were a strongly patrilineal society one would expect a far higher proportion of agnates to be represented, whereas the data show that 61% of the core support are drawn from non-agnates. This indicates a rather weak agnatic principle, with alternative principles being active in the social field, giving rise to a flexibility of kinship and social organisation.

The conclusion to be drawn from the cases presented here is that unilineal descent amongst the Chopi, if it exists at all, is relatively unimportant, for there are no lineages, and local grouping have diverse recruitment principles. Even in seminal action sets[1] such as the abovementioned, where alliances are being contracted, and where one would anticipate the participation of two descent groups, the fact emerges that the groups involved are a plurality, not an exclusive kin group. The alliances contracted, therefore, while phrased in broad terms of kinship (viz., the rule of clan exogamy), are in reality contracted between two groups which are more like coalitions of individuals drawn from various categories than descent groups. Indeed, the groups were referred to during the ceremony of Vasco's marriage in terms of their locality rather than their clan name.

Marriage as alliance: some structural features

The Chopi rules of exogamy and kin terminolgy system combine to provide a structural syndrome which contributes to the general features of social organisation elaborated thus far, viz., the lateral spread of relationships across the society, which, I propose to argue shortly, is a contributory factor to the transience of many alliances. The horizontal spread of linkages (as opposed to a system where, say, asymmetrical alliance is practiced through preferential matrilateral cross cousin marriage, where three groups are in a vertical relationship to each other) means that

(1) See chapter nine for a more detailed analysis of action sets.

wives must frequently be sought from some distance away from one's home area, and as Ackerman (1963) has shown, the lack of a match between the spouses' social networks greatly increases the probability of divorce.

Marriage involves a restructuring of roles, a realignment of the social structure. Nowhere can this truism be more apt than among the Chopi, for as I shall demonstrate, each marriage that is contracted must, of necessity, be a radical change from the ones that preceded it (in the descent group) and places limitations on those that follow it. This is the logical outflow of the Chopi rules of exogamy, which preclude marriage into the clans of either one's father or mother. Connected with the rules of exogamy, I encountered an injunction that one should 'marry out' of one's own area. There is a Chopi saying, ku teka ha fuhi a nga lunga: to marry (close by) is not good, which expresses these sentiments, and various other proverbs stress the need for both mobility and the acquisition of widespread alliances.

In the previous chapter I have argued that a man has no great depth of kin through lineages to rely upon; Chopi genealogies, and therefore kin sets (the components of which provide the 'reservoir' of potential kin support) are shallow. An individual is able to overcome this liability in three ways: by making full use of the flexibility of the kinship system; by incorporating non-kin, such as namesakes and friends; and through the alliances produced by marriage. In this fluid field, a man must make a number of allegiances; to be socially successful, he should attempt to create as wide a network of potential supporters as possible by mobilizing as many of the structural principles as he is able, forming a coalition of support.

The Chopi kin terminology system is of the Omaha type (approximating to Lounsbury's (1964) formulation of Type III) and while in chapter eight I shall analyse the kin terms in some detail, it is appropriate at this time to examine some of the structural implications that are concomitants of the system. In this regard, the Chopi social system does not appear to bear out Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) contention that the features that are unique

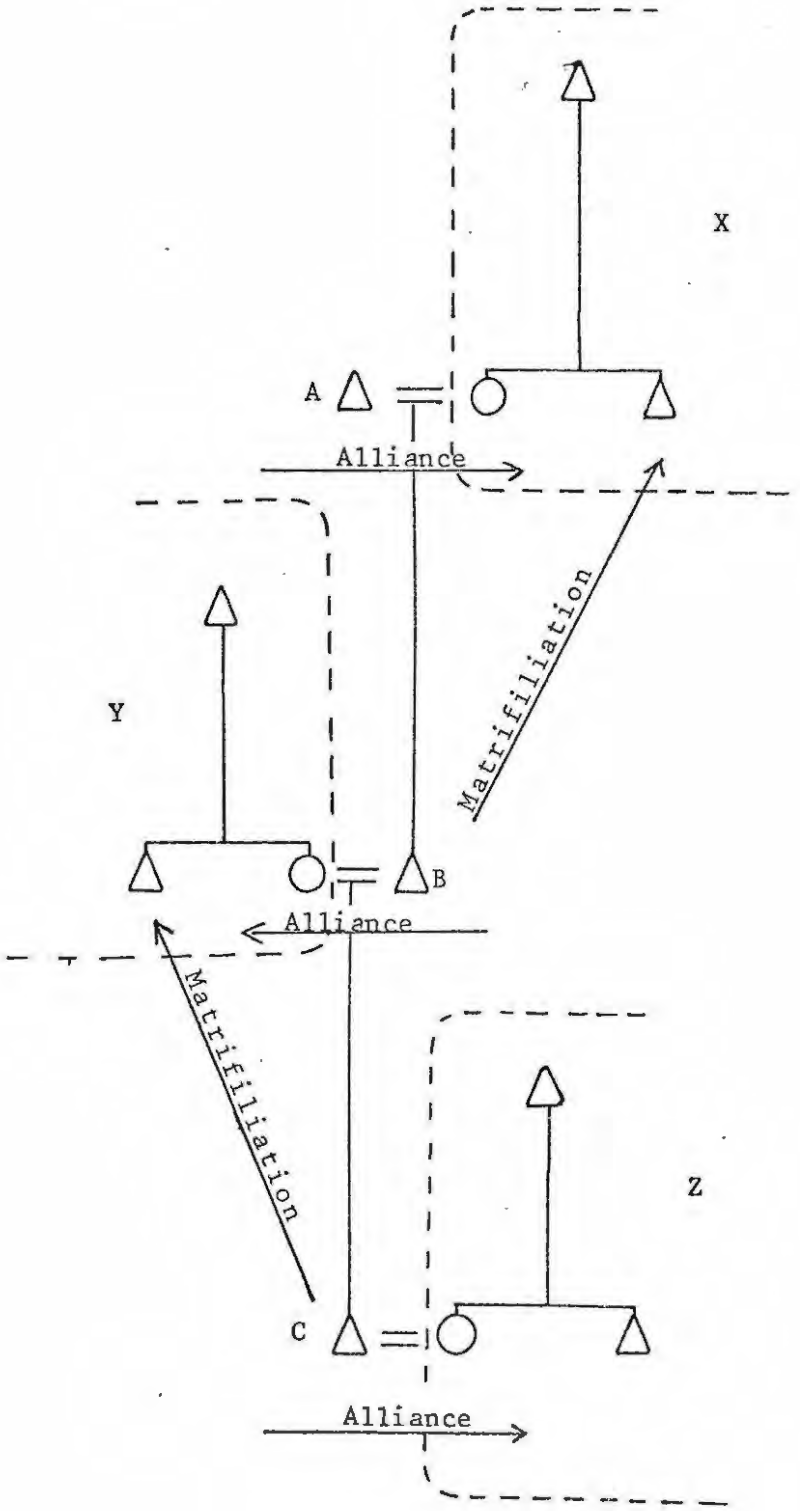
to the Crow/Omaha systems can be accounted for by lineage principle overriding the genealogical principle. As I have already argued, the Chopi do not possess lineages, although it is conceivable that in the past they may have. The contention that the Omaha kinship system tends to be found with societies with a strong lineage principle therefore does not hold, and I would argue for a modification of the above hypothesis.

The Chopi kin term system, like all Omaha-type systems, is characterized by the fact that ego calls his MBs and MBd by the terms for MB and M respectively (koko and mame; in this particular variation of the system, MB is called by the same term as MF). Furthermore, all male descendants of ego's MB are called by the same term, and all their daughters are called mame. It is this fact that has led Radcliffe-Brown and Eggan (1950) to postulate the lineage solidarity hypothesis.

I intend to argue in the chapter on terminology that the fact that ego calls all the male descendants of his MB by the same term allows him the opportunity to maintain the alliance created by his father. This is despite the fact that ego is not permitted to marry into his mother's clan and is therefore prohibited in this way of renewing the alliance created by his father's marriage. The kin terms therefore have the positive effect of allowing ego to continue his relationship with the lineal descendants of the group with which his father contracted an alliance through marriage. On the face of it, this does point to the existence of lineages, but it is significant that ego's own son does not inherit from his father this alliance. In other words, in terms of ego's own descent group, marriage alliances are retained for only one generation after they have been contracted, and are therefore somewhat transitory. The model of this situation would be: A creates an alliance with clan X through marriage; B, his son, inherits the alliance through kin term identification and matrifiliation, but must create a new marriage alliance himself with clan Y; his son, C, does not inherit A's alliances with clan X, but does inherit B's bond with clan Y through matrifiliation and the kin term system, and

creates his own alliance, through his own marriage to clan Z, as is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Patterns of alliance inheritance over three generations



When one seeks a pattern of alliances that emerges from this system, one is forced to recognise that few, if any, recurring patterns emerge. The most useful model appears to be one such as Keesing's 'action model' (1970), which permits an existential approach; an individual is free (within the constraints of the exogamy rules) to marry and create alliances with any other group; his choice may well depend on strategic or tactical considerations, but need not necessarily be so. He inherits the alliances of his father, but not his grandfather, which again suggests that the Chopi social system is characterised by laterality rather than lineality.

Iona Mayer (1965) and Hammond-Tooke (1968) have suggested that kinship tends to have a depth of six generations; the Chopi case is considerably shallower. The kin terms reflect this: there is a cut-off point two generations above ego, above which all kin are called koko,, a term often used to address ancestors. A contributory cause of this shallowness appears to be the fact that alliances beyond the links of one's grandfather are of no relevance to ego. Marriage, then, is regarded by the Chopi as a means of establishing new and important kinship links. Marriage enlarges one's kin-set and the more influential these people are the better. The injunction to 'marry out' of one's area spreads one's ties widely and gives an individual an entré to other districts. An informant elaborated this point by using the analogy of a marsh (swampy land is a feature of much of Chopiland). He said, 'You find yourself sinking in the mud. If you stand upright, you sink quickly, but if you lie down and spread yourself out, you will not sink. So it is with marriage; the further your family members marry, the safer you will be in bad times.'

Levi-Strauss has dealt in some detail with the structural implications of the Crow/Omaha terminologies in his paper on 'The Future of Kinship Studies' (1966). An intriguing point that he raises is the structural similarity (and contrast) that exists between the exogamy rules associated with Omaha-type systems and an asymmetrical marriage system. There are many historical links and social similarities between the Chopi and the

Lovedu and Venda of the north-eastern Transvaal (cf. Junod, H-P (1927), Krige and Krige (1965) and Stayt (1931)); both these peoples practise asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage, whereas the Chopi expressly cannot.

The similarity lies in the injunctions and prohibitions of each system deal with the same two descent groups: ego's father's mother's. In the Lovedu case, the choice of a marriage partner is ideally governed by the positive injunction to marry one's mother's brother's daughter. In other words, as Levi-Strauss asserts, a man should, 'Marry a woman belonging to a clan into which men of his own clan have already married within living memory.' (1966:19). The Chopi, on the other hand, are a mirror-image of the above: they have a negative injunction (i.e., prohibition) regarding exactly the same structural identities (i.e., descent group). The prescription is that a man should not marry a woman who belongs to a clan into which a man of his own clan has married within living memory.

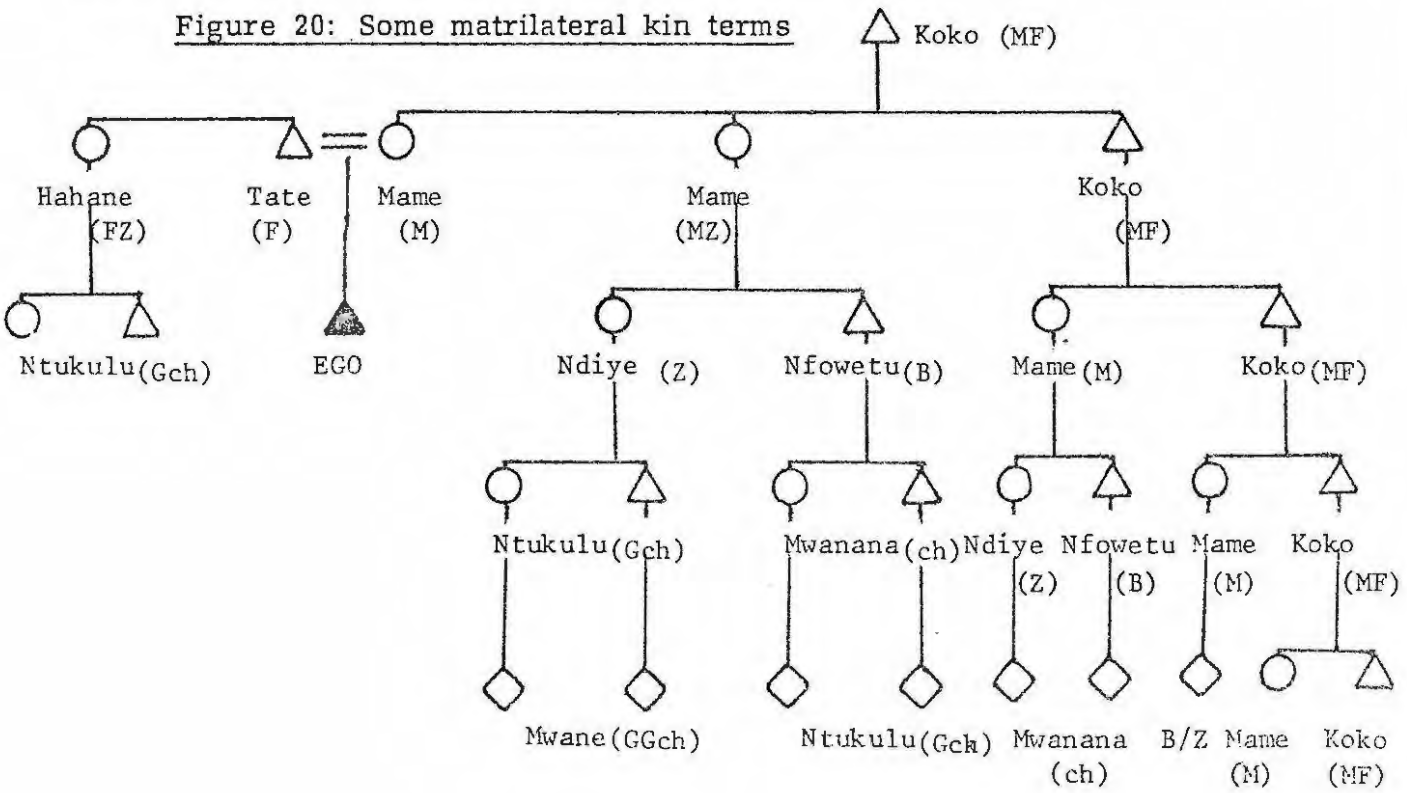
While the same structural units are involved in the two types of kinship system, the differences that emerge from the injunctions and prohibitions are radical. To quote Levi-Strauss, the Omaha (and Chopi) case is such that, 'Wherever a descent line is picked up to provide a mate, all individuals belonging to that line are excluded from the range of potential mates for the first lineage' (1966:19). Levi-Strauss argues that such a structure is 'immersed in a flow of probabilistic events' (ibid:19); the 'existential' nature of the system to which I alluded above. He goes on to assert that this system is 'quite the reverse of that regularity of functioning and periodicity of returns which conforms with the ideal mode of an asymmetric marriage system (ibid:19).

The effect of the Lovedu system is to attempt to ensure that marriage alliances (to the MBd) are kept within the universe of kin, whereas the Chopi system forbids this possibility. Levi-Strauss makes the proposition explicit: 'Thus, an asymmetrical system endeavours to turn kinsmen into affines, whereas the Crow/Omaha system takes the opposite stand by turning affines into kinsmen.' (ibid:19)

The Chopi marriage rules give rise to a system where there is a large degree of choice in marriage partners and a lack of continuity in alliances from one generation to another. One is presented with a model of society which has similar implications to the case of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, viz., that instead of a stable set of relationships between groups, the very point of the system seems to be to throw the relationships out of balance in such a way that those groups which provide 'big-men' in this generation may have their chances reduced in the next generation, giving rise to circulating and ephemeral big-man status, with, in the Chopi instance, a high degree of individual manipulation and achievement.

Once again, the kinship terms indicate the nature of the system. The kin terms in figure 20 show the kin positions on ego's mother's side, so that ego calls his MB and that man's sons koko (meaning roughly, 'grandfather') and his father's sister's children ntukulu (meaning, roughly, 'grandchild'). These two groups of people belong to different descent groups to ego and his father. The side that is skewed 'upwards' is a wife-giving group to ego's father, just as those skewed 'downwards' are a wife-receiving group in relation to ego's father. I suggest that this 'skewing' in part reflects the imbalance of the exchange that comprises marriage, where, in the Chopi case, the son-in-law is in a position of inferiority.

Figure 20: Some matrilateral kin terms



It is significant that the terms involved in this imbalance are those of 'grandfather' and 'grandchild'. These kin terms are characterised by familiar and indulgent behaviour between the incumbents, with a gently joking relationship also being possible. This is in contrast with how ego's father stands in relation to the two groups. As son-in-law to the one, he practices respect, even extreme respect. This discrepancy between the roles of father and son is, in part, due to the transitory nature of the marriage alliance. The alliance was created by ego's father; ego cannot renew it himself. If matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was prescribed, then ego would also be in a position of inferiority, demanding respect in interpersonal relations. This is, however, not the case, so a kin term involving a more relaxed relationship is appropriate.

The vast amount of optation possible in the Omaha-type kinship system has been examined, at Levi-Strauss' instigation, by computer. The findings that Levi-Strauss reports are that in a system where a man is prohibited marrying into two clans, i.e., those of his father and mother, and where there are thirty clans in the society, there are 297 423 855 possible marriage types. This appears to be calculated on the combinations and permutations arising from hypothetical marriages of ego's father with clan B, C, D, etc., with in each case 28 other possibilities remaining open to ego. In the Chopi case the possibilities are much more numerous, for there are many more than thirty clans in Chopiland. The spread of alliances is no mere hypothesis, however. Indeed, in the headman's district of Nyatsiku, in which there are 11 clans represented by males, I discovered that the men of these clans (I included divorced spouses in the data) had married women of no less than 62 different clans, only three of whom had come from Nyatsiku itself.

Those Chopi marriages then, which are not love-matches (and reporting impressionistically, I believe that most are not) can be likened to a game of strategy. Perhaps the most apt analogy is to that of a game of chess, for in such a game, the movement of only one piece totally alters

the state of the game and all other pieces must be structurally redefined in terms of it. A game of chess is, then, existential, with every move both opening up and yet limiting all other possible moves that follow it. Chopi marriage rules have the same effect: each marriage both limits, yet opens up, alternative choices for members of one descent group.

The point must be made that while the exogamy rules refer to whole clans, the groups affected tend to be local descent groups. Effectively, a man from one lineage fragment marries a woman from a similar grouping, yet for their son, both their clans, i.e., any woman bearing the name of his father's or mother's group is excluded from marriage possibilies. With clans being dispersed throughout the nation, its quite clear that in different parts of the country the exogamy rules are transgressed by clan members who cannot be aware of the marriages contracted by all other members. This discrepancy can be explained by use of the emic/etic dichotomy. The local descent group is an 'etic' representation of the 'emic' clan, which is a dispersed, non-corporate entity, so that to a son, his father's marriage was an alliance to a rather small representation of the larger emic concept of his mother's clan. The rules of exogamy are also on the plane of emic ideals, so they are binding on him in relation to the clan.

Despite the fact that alliances are spread broadly and, as I shall shortly demonstrate, are of an ephemeral nature, there is one aspect of the marriage process which tends to mitigate these circumstances: this is the fact that the full sum of the bridewealth is seldom paid at the marriage negotiations. In only one of the four marriages that I attended was the full amount paid, and even in this case the groom had had to borrow some of the money from kin. In the other cases a certain sum of money was paid, with an agreement to pay the remainder over a longer period, when the son-in-law would be able to raise the money and pay his debts by becoming a migrant labourer. In one case, the son-in-law had acquired his wife by eloping with her as she deserted her husband. He paid the father-in-law 100 escudos as a sign of his honourable intentions, and

the negotiations were conducted, using berries instead of 100 escudo notes, until the bridewealth sum was agreed upon and a contract drawn up.

The effect of these long-term payments is that the son-in-law remains indebted to the father-in-law not only for the services of the wife, but also for the debt arising from the lack of payment. Also, when a man has to borrow money from his kinsfolk in order to pay a portion of the bridewealth, it also intensifies his kinship links, putting a greater stress on the obligations he owes them for the financial aid they had rendered.

On a migrant labour trip, it was noted above, a man saves about thirty pondo (about R100). On his return, much of this money is immediately dispersed among kinsfolk to whom debts are owed and to those who need help, such as with the payment of taxes. It is impossible then, to pay off the full bridewealth payment from the fruits of one migrant labour trip. In any event, the impresssion gained was that people were not interested in immediate payment in full, and father-in-law did not press hard for the outstanding amount.

In the overall system where alliances, even those of marriage, are transitory, therefore, this laxity of debt collection has the function of lending solidarity to the husband's agnatic group, amongst whom the debt is spread; intensifies the inferiority of the son-in-law's status by increasing his debt and thus also making the alliance stronger; and from the point of view of the father-in-law, is an advantageous arrangement because if the marriage does not last (and its chances are poor), then he has not so much money to refund the husband after divorce. Divorce after the full amount has been paid can have the effect of reversing the trend of the debt, making the former father-in-law indebted to the ex-husband, who demands repayment of bridewealth. This money is seldom, if ever, on hand in ready cash.

The manipulative possibilities that exist in marriage alliances are recognised by the Chopi. In a non-love match , there are frequently econo-

mic and political factors which could influence the choice of wife. I encountered one case which was the subject of speculation in the district. In this case, the headman of Nyatsiku died, and Sangatelo, who was the dead man's father's brother's son (vide Case 5 in chapter five) claimed the widow through widow inheritance. While it may have been a love-match, informants were quick to point out that this had the consequence of considerably strengthening his claims to the vacant headmanship, which he succeeded in claiming despite stronger claims of two other contenders. It seems certain that one of the factors in his decision to claim the widow as his right by widow-inheritance (which is now rarely practiced) was to enhance his claims to the headmanship, and in part therefore, it was a means to an end.

In summary, then, I have argued that the Chopi kin terms and exogamy rules combine to provide a system which has the effect of spreading ties horizontally throughout society. Alliances are impermanent and do not follow recognisable patterns because, to quote Levi-Strauss, 'for each generation, marriage choices are a function of those that have taken place in the previous generation' (1966:20). This has the effect of producing a largely egalitarian society, where most status positions can be achieved, allowing an ambitious individual to take advantage of this flexibility by maximizing his alliance. Insofar as marriage alliances are ephemeral, the lack of continuity from one generation to the next ensures that no one group monopolises power and status; the system makes possible a high turnover of 'big-men', ensuring a fluctuating balance of power.

Divorce and the Instability of Marriage

The Chopi tend to take a rather gloomy view of the prognosis of any marriage, and very few men believe that they will go through life with only one wife. There is a Chopi proverb: wa khatalaku tekana, chi lekano a hehuko, 'marriage is slow, divorce is quick'. A man probably has two or three marriages in his lifetime, and is divorced nearly the same number of times. The causes of the instability of marriage must, I believe,

be sought in the kinship structure (as Gluckman 1953, 1971, has argued) and also in its context of the overall social system. This latter point seems important when one takes into account the fact that the social system is characterised by shallowness and has an emphasis on individual-oriented allegiance. An individual is faced with a wide range of potential and existing alliances and to survive or succeed in achieving socially-approved goals, he is forced to create (and sometimes break) a large number of these. Like Esther Goody (1962:14), I would argue that divorce for the Chopi is not necessarily a 'social evil', and that marriage is just a transitory phase in the lives of some people and not an 'indissoluble bond'.

At marriage, a woman leaves her parental or fraternal home and joins her husband in what is virilocal, but sometimes viri-patrilocal residence. This usually means that she is separated from her own kin by some distance, because of the tendency to 'marry away' from one's own area. This appears to be a significant factor as a cause of instability; this is a point I shall take up later.

Rights in genetricem are vested in the husband. If he has paid bridewealth, then any child born to this wife, even in adultery, is legally his, although he may resent this child. In the event of a divorce or separation, the young children go with their mother until such time as they are considered old enough to be independent, whereupon the father has the right to claim them. If no bridewealth has been paid, then the children belong to the wife's group. In divorce, the existence of children tend to minimise the debt that the father-in-law now owes: he need not repay the entire sum of the bridewealth.

Rights in uxorem, on the other hand, cover the economic, sexual and domestic services that are entailed in the marriage. A man is entitled to demand exclusive control over these three domains and a wife's withdrawal of any of these is considered sufficient cause for divorce. It must be pointed out, though, that any transgression, such as, say, adultery

is seldom the sole cause of divorce, unless it is too open and flagrant to be ignored.

In marriage, the husband has the rights in uxorem mentioned above, but he does not change his wife's allegiance to her group of origin. Her ancestors retain their influence over her, to such an extent that her father may perform a rite whereby a goat is 'blessed' and becomes a kind of mobile shrine that accompanies the bride to her hew home. On no account may the goat be killed.

A married woman also retains her own clan name in marriage, which signals her autonomy. A husband, when referring to past wives, refers to them by their clan name, not their personal names. There is a proverb which epitomises the Chopi attitude to marriage: Wateka imidi, nga insungu. Insungu ya va yatu, which means, 'you marry the body, not the head. The head is ours.' In other words, the bride's people are saying that she is physically the husband's but her allegiance is still to her own group.

Marriage may end in a number of ways: through the death of a spouse, divorce, separation, or elopement with a lover. Divorce is the final legal recognition of the breakup of a marriage, which is usually preceded by a period of separation, either through elopement of the wife, or her return to her kin (usually her father or brother). A man also demands that his wife leave his homestead. Separation from one's spouse, if it becomes protracted, becomes de facto divorce, even if the bridewealth payment is not returned. The return of the bridewealth, or a portion of it if children have been born of the union, marks the end of a marriage. This cannot be refused by the husband.

I attended six court cases relating to divorce, from which it emerged that the accepted behaviour to precipitate a divorce was for the wife to leave the husband; after a period of time, he would demand either her return or the return of the bridewealth from his in-laws. In one of the six cases, however, a wife left her husband, then sued for divorce, (through her brother) but this was perhaps exceptional, as she wanted

a church wedding with her new lover. An interesting phenomenon that appears to be increasing in frequency is that women are able to purchase their own divorce. This is done by the woman raising the amount of her bridewealth (usually through migrant labour in a cashew factory or in Lourenzo Marques) and giving it to her senior male agnatic representative, who then pays her husband the money, thus securing her freedom. I encountered five such cases, which constituted 11% of all divorces in the headman's district of Nyatsiku.

I was unable to collect information as to the duration of marriage (or its life expectancy), due to the lack of literacy or concern for the passing of time manifested by informants. I was able in infrequent cases to obtain dates through the occasional coincidence of a marriage or divorce with some major event to which I could ascribe a date, but these were not enough for a pattern to emerge. To report impressionistically, however, it appeared to me that marriages were particularly vulnerable in their very early years, especially before children were born. Children tended to prolong a marriage, which appeared to last perhaps 10-15 years in this event. The difficulaty of calculating divorce statistics was exacerbated by the tendency for informants to undervalue and even sometimes forget (or at least omit) those marriages which did not produce progeny.

Young and middle-aged women who divorce usually remarry, and thus continue in their status and roles with only a brief interregnum. If they are fertile, they will bear a few children to each husband, with the result that when they divorce and move away a small group of siblings remain with their father. This process has the effect of bringing into existence dispersed groups of maternal half-siblings. This means that an individual probably has a number of half- and step-siblings related to him through a common mother, but belonging to a different clan. These relatives, to whom he would refer by kin terms denoting brother or sister (no distinction is made between full or half-siblings) would clearly be close and potentially useful kin.

Old women who are divorced seldom remarry, and consequently relin-

quish their roles connected with wifehood, especially sexual and economic ones. The woman will tend to return to her kinsfolk, where, if she is sufficiently independent, she may set up her own homestead. It is more usual, however, for the woman to attach herself to the homestead of a brother or son, which, in the former case effectively means that in old age sibling groups that were dispersed at marriage, are reunited.

The status of women changes as they age. There is, of course, the respect that is accorded all ageing people in small-scale societies, but more is entailed here. A woman in old age ceases most activities that are associated with womanhood, especially sexual ones. Indeed, after menopause, it appears that women progressively but slowly assume the status of 'elders' whose opinion is valued in dispute settlement and ritual matters. A father's sister (hahane) is an important person in the constellation of kinship, but it is only when she too is aged, widowed or divorced, and living with her agnatic kin, that she achieves her full potential in terms of status. The hahane, if she is the last of a line of siblings becomes the ritual head of the localized kinship group, sacrificing to the ancestors and leading the rituals of the life crises. She attains a masculine status and in this situation is often called tate ('father'). It is significant that old women lose their 'social' sexuality as well, for the kin term for grandmother is koko, the same term as is used for grandfather and socially relevant ancestors are drawn from both women and men.

The divorce rate amongst the Chopi is high, as is shown by the statistics provided below. I derived my figures from data gathered in the collection of genealogies, and while I am reasonably certain that the figures are correct, it is clear that if there is error, it is on the side of conservatism, because it became apparent that some marriages that ended in divorce after only a short period were not always remembered. I have included only living male informants because of the obvious problems of getting accurate figures for antecedents (especially in view of the shallow genealogical memory of the Chopi) and have used the case histories

of men only in order to eliminate the problem of men and women who had been married to each other, duplicating each other's testimony.

Barnes (1967(b):61) has provided a standardised method of arriving at simple divorce ratios. He gives three possible methods of calculation:

> 'A. The number of marriages ended in divorce expressed as a percentage of all the marriages in the sample.
> 'B. The number of marriages ended in divorce expressed as a percentage of all marriages in the sample that have been completed by death or divorce.
> 'C. The number of marriages ended in divorce expressed as a percentage of all marriages except those that have ended by death.' (ibid: 61)

These figures are based on cumulative marital experience, and Barnes suggests that,

> 'Ratio C is less strongly affected by mortality than A and it seems likely that C is the most satisfactory of these indices for comparisons of divorce frequency among simple societies.' (ibid: 62).

Barnes goes on to suggest that if comparisons are to be made, then perhaps 'it may be desirable to calculate B as well as C and publish both' (ibid: 62).

Figure 20(A) Three types of divorce ratio calculated for the Chopi of Nyatsiku

	how calculated	percentage
A:	$\frac{\text{divorces}}{\text{all marriages}} \times 100$	45,4
B:	$\frac{\text{divorces}}{\text{death + divorce}} \times 100$	78,9
C:	$\frac{\text{divorces}}{\text{all marriages - death}} \times 100$	51,7

That the above ratios express a very high divorce rate cannot be denied, especially for a people who are nominally 'patrilineal'. Comparable rates for the Ngoni and Lamba of Zambia (using ratio C) are 36,9% and 41,8% respectively (Barnes 1967(b):63), while the Ndembu rate is 61,4% (Turner 1957:62). I do not wish to become embroiled in the controversy over marriage stability (vide Gluckman: 1953, Leach: 1957, Fallers: 1957), but some elaboration appears to be necessary.

I am attracted to certain features of Gluckman's reformulation of his original hypothesis, with his emphasis on the need to seek the reasons

for stability or instability of marriage within the system of kinship relationship (1971:242). An examination or informant's accounts of the reasons for divorce reveals no pattern; adultery and beatings are cited with some frequency, but appear to be 'final' causes rather than 'efficient' ones. The statistical evidence suggests a more fundamental, perhaps structural, cause.

The main feature which seems to play a part in the syndrome of the fragility of Chopi marriage is that the wife does not become incorporated into her husband's group. She retains her own clan name; her own descent group ancestors retain their interest in her; and on her husband's death she usually rejoins her own kin unless she is claimed through widow inheritance, by one of her husband's group. The wife, therefore, never relinquishes her interest in her own descent group. Gluckman, citing Ackerman, suggests that where 'true levirate' and sororate occur, then a low divorce rate can be anticipated. The Chopi hold up both institutions as ideal, although the practice is of widow inheritance rather than levirate (because the children born of such a union belong to the 'new' husband and not the deceased man).

Gluckman argues that there tends to be a higher divorce rate in systems which practice adelphic succession than in those which practice filial succession. Certainly the Chopi adelphic pattern fits the hypothesis, for the inheritance of important office and property is not vested in the mother/son dyad, but rather in the brother/brother or even cousin linkage.

Another factor which appears to exacerbate the instability of Chopi marriage is to be found in the disparity in the backgrounds of most spouses. As I have mentioned earlier, marriage with a kinsman is not permitted and one is urged to select a spouse from an area some distance away. Fallers suggests that, 'common corporate group memberships tend to reinforce the marriage bond, (while) different corporate group memberships work against it' (1957:121). This assertion is supported by Ackerman, who broadens the criteria beyond corporate groups. Broadly, Ackerman argues that the more

homogeneous the background and especially social network, the greater the chances of stability, and where each spouse retains 'membership of different collectivities' (i.e., kin affiliations) then this can be 'disjunctive', with a resulting fragile marriage bond.

To summarise some of the main features that appear to affect the stability of marriage among the Chopi, therefore: the wife's retention of her original kinship ties after marriage; the lack of network 'mesh' or overlap; and adelphic succession, which means that a wife does not become the focus of inheritance for her sons, all act to make for centrifugal tendencies in the marriage bond. The situation is aggravated by two somewhat extraneous factors: the migrant labour system, where men are away for long periods, encourages infidelity and therefore potential break-up; and in the political sphere, it is common for an aspirant 'big-man' to try to attract as many followers as possible and this may include his sisters, whom he may try to entice away from their husbands.

There remains to be explained the anomaly of what is, by local standards, a high amount demanded for bridewealth, coupled with a high divorce rate. The apparent 'anomaly' is diminished when one poses the problem in terms of a paradox, which is made more explicit in the analysis of kin terms, which follows shortly. Briefly stated, the paradox lies in the fact that the Chopi place high value on the creation and maintenance of alliances of various kinds, yet the entire social system is characterised by the ephemeral nature of these ties. The problem is magnified by various ideals and social rules, such as individual competition for prestige, the exogamy rules, shallow genealogies and dispersed lineages, etc.

Emerging from this milieu, the high bridewealth payment has the effect of forcing the son-in-law into debt; very few men are able to raise the full sum of the bridewealth and most have to rely on relatives and friends to lend them enough to pay even a portion of the full amount, and the debt in many cases continues throughout a man's life, without being finally settled. In the event of the sum being fully paid,

and where a divorce takes place, the father-in-law must return all or some (depending on progeny) of the bridewealth. In both these types, it is clear that while the marriage itself may have ended, the obligations created and continued by debt continue, thus perpetuating an ephemeral tie. The quality of the content of the linkage may have changed from being affinal plus debt to one of debt only, but it is a tie nevertheless, and it can be used as a lever to mobilise support if need be.

Inheritance and Succession

One must distinguish between inheritance and succession; the former being reserved for the transmission of property, the latter of office. The Chopi practice different modes for each type and there is also variation according to the type of property to be inherited. Overall, however, the usual means of transferring important property and office is laterally.

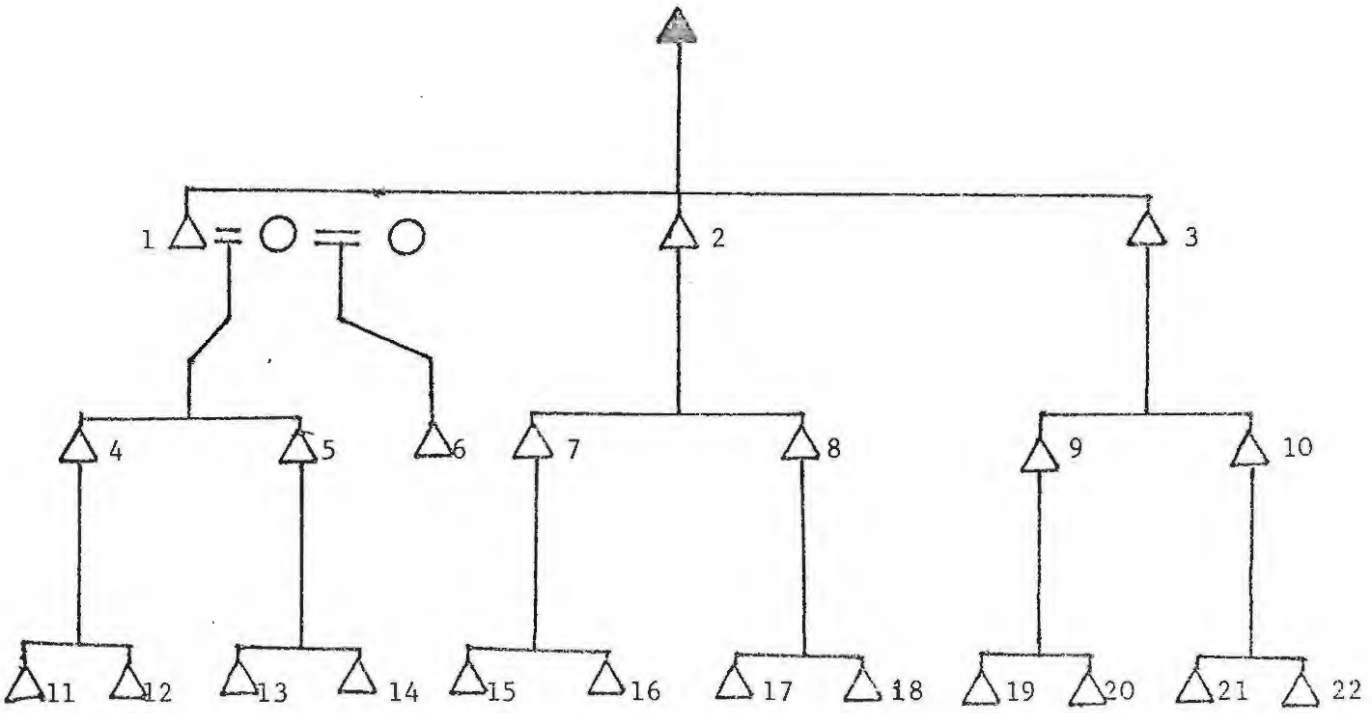
Inheritance of property can take two forms: lineally, from parent to child; or laterally, along a line of brothers and/or cousins. The form taken depends upon the property to be transmitted. When a person dies, his or her personal property which was in daily use (e.g., blanket, pot, spoons, etc.) is destroyed and put into the grave with the corpse. Other items of greater value, such as a man's gun (if he had one) or mbila, are handed on to his eldest son by his first wife. Valuable items of a woman are inherited by her eldest daughter. In other words, inheritance of property which was obtained through the individual efforts of a person tends to be lineal and to remain within the family through a process of what J. Goody has called homogeneous lineal devolution (1970), where males inherit from males and females from females.

On the other hand, property which belongs ultimately to a group, but which is held by an individual member, for example, land, is transmitted laterally. This collateral inheritance depends on primogeniture in a line of brothers, and follows the same pattern as succession to office. This is related to the way that the property has been acquired, and in whom its rights are vested. Land tends to be controlled by a vicinage or local

descent group, with rights to portions of it being delegated to individual members and their families, and while a father may give portions to his sons, if for some reason there are none remaining after his death, the land will be passed on to his nearest collateral male relative.

Succession to office, from the leadership of an established vicinage, through the higher echelons of the hierarchy of headmanship, sub-chieftainship to the chieftainship itself, is adelphic. The Chopi variation of this collateral type of succession is that ideally, succession depends on primogeniture within a group of brothers. When this line has been exhausted, the eldest son of the eldest of the original brothers succeeds, followed by his brothers, in order of birth. When this line is exhausted, the succession passes to the sons of the second eldest of the original brothers, then the sons of the third eldest, etc. This somewhat complicated means of succession is represented diagrammatically in the following figure.

Figure 21: The Chopi mode of succession



While succession and inheritance have frequently been viewed as an inter-generational (vertical) phenomenon, it is clear from the above that the Chopi place more emphasis on the lateral shift of office rather than the vertical. In the case of a polygynous marriage, the wives are ranked

in chronological order of marriage, the implications of this being that within one homestead the sons of the first wife succeed each other, then the sons of the second wife, etc.

It appears that while adelphic succession is common in Africa (vide J. Goody 1970(b)), the Chopi rules place an even greater emphasis on laterality than in most recorded cases. In the diagram above, it becomes apparent that not only does succession pass down a line of brothers, but also through the parallel patrilateral cousins; by the time the third generation has been reached, succession theoretically can pass between second cousins. This gives rise to extreme difficulty in calculating who has the strongest claim in a dispute over succession, for an individual who claims that his father's father was older than his rival's is making claims which are difficult to either verify of falsify; the person about whom he speaks falls in the 'area of ambiguity' on the verge of the category of kin who shortly merge into undifferentiated ancestors, i.e., where genealogical amnesia sets in. (It should be remembered that the claimants would be of advanced years themselves, so there would be few people with accurate knowledge who could pass judgement on their claims, and those that do exist would encourage them to support one of the claimants.)

This form of collateral succession is such that after a few generations the claims of potential incumbents appeal to a past that is sufficiently vague as to make for a high degree of competition. This, of course, takes place within the limits imposed by kinship, viz., that all those who compete for a post must belong to the same clan. The high degree of mobility of the Chopi also means that the contest will usually be between only those members of the clan who live within reasonable proximity of the headman's district. Given these constraints, however, the competition for office is almost egalitarian, with several individuals having strong claims to the position. In these cases, the contest can be decided by a number of factors: the charisma of a claimant, the amount of influence he can muster, and the quality of the genealogical credentials that he is

able to arrogate. His influence depends upon the number of people who will support his claim: his vawuyi (followers), his close kinsmen, friends, and those others who are obligated to him in some way, whose obligation can be turned into political capital, and also those who have a preference for his candidacy for other, less obvious, reasons.

If one belongs to the right clan, therefore, succession to office can be achieved, and is by no means ascribed. The case of Sangatelo, mentioned earlier in connection with widow inheritance, is relevant here. The fact that he claimed his classificatory brother's wife through widow inheritance certainly strengthened his claim to the headmanship, because in the minds of the people he appeared to be a closer relative than he really was, which gave his claim a stronger air of legitimacy.

When an office such as a headmanship must be filled, a number of potential successors tend to emerge and, unless the issue is clear cut, a protracted period ensues where the individuals jockey for power. During this period, it becomes clear to some who obviously have insufficient support that they should drop out and they generally ally themselves with the survivor who best represents their vested interests. This process takes place until only two or three remain to contest the office. Legitimacy is conferred by the political position higher in the hierarchy than the one being contested, for example, by the chief upon the sub-chief, and is based upon a kind of consensus. The higher authority argues that the people themselves know best who should succeed, so it is left to them to put forward their man. The higher authority sounds out the consensus, and acts accordingly. If the decision is contested, it may be taken to court where the lines of division will be clearly drawn.

When an incumbent's position is challenged by an individual who feels he has a stronger claim, two courses of action are open to him: he may deny the claim and face his opponent in a court case, or if he feels his own case is weak, he may step down with grace rather than lose more face in the litigation that would follow. If the challenger's case is a strong

one, perhaps through irrefutable genealogical evidence, but the incumbent is popular, then it is generally agreed that the incumbent should continue and that the legal successor should follow him after his death.

The protracted nature of such affairs is illustrated by the contest for the position of Nyadibanzi (sub-headman) of Guveni, where the incumbent died in June, 1969. By January 1973 the problem of his successor had not yet been finalised, although the headman was leaning towards the claims of one of the three claimants. The tentative nature of the types of evidence that can be regarded as significant is shown by the fact when I visited one of the factions to record their side of the story, the men were excited, claiming the fact of my writing down their argument had the effect of legitimizing their claim. (This was no doubt influenced by the fact that newly-appointed headmen, sub-chiefs and chiefs have their names written down in a register at the Administrator's office.)

Succession to the chieftainship traditionally was also adelphic, and theoretically remains so. However, the appointment of a chief has been at the discretion of the Administrator, who tried not to upset the proper line of succession (i.e., the wishes of the people), but who prefered men of sober habits who are educated and preferably Christian. There is a tendency for young, well-educated men to be appointed, which means that the traditional pattern of a high turnover of old men, who ruled for a comparatively short time has been disrupted. The chieftainship therefore, tends to change hands much less frequently than in the past and incumbents do not generally have the same degree of trust of the people. The high turnover of chiefs is shown by the case of Chief Samusson Nkumbi, who, as was mentioned earlier, is the seventh incumbent after the death of his father. That means that in his lifetime, which is about 70 years, there have been at least eight chiefs of the Chiefdom of Nkumbi, if not more.

The lateral movement of succession has interesting implications in the field of social tension, especially amongst kin. In a system of vertical devolution, where a son inherits from his father, the tension is inter-

generational. In the Chopi the tension is intra-generational. As J. Goody remarks, 'Horizontal or lateral transfer (of property or office) place the weight of conflict on the members of the same generation, usually upon brothers' (1970:628). This argument is supported by the fact that while Chopi witchcraft beliefs are strong, they seldom accuse any individual; however, of those few cases which I recorded where a person was accused, the majority of cases were between brothers (in two of the three cases, and cousins in the third).

The horizontal emphasis of the systems of inheritance and succession has the effect of complementing the general laterality of the social system. From an individual's point of view, it is necessary to know as much as possible about his collaterals, who are not only his potential friends and allies, but also his potential rivals. It is also to his advantage to have a vague pedigree, for even if a demonstrable line is advantageous presently, when someone from another line succeeds, the very demonstrability of one's own line may become a liability.

J. Goody (1973) has suggested that as societies develop a class-conciousness, there will be a tendedncy for lateral succession and inheritance to be replaced by a lineal mode. This is because a man who has prospered by his own efforts will be reluctant to pass on the benefits to a brother, or worse still, a cousin, when he has sons to whom he has an obligation. This tendency is discernable among the Chopi, where important personal belongings are indeed passed from father to son and mother to daughter. One chief of my acquaintance was adamant that his son would succeed him, rather than his full brother who traditionally is the rightful successor.

In summary then, the plasticity and laterality evident in the kinship system of the Chopi is complemented and supported by the horizontal mode of transmission of office and corporate property. This has the effect of focussing attention on an individual's collaterals and in this very important context lateral kin are of greater relevance that lineal kin. In the

light of this evidence, Leach (1961(b)) may indeed be correct when he assigns major importance to the political and economic factors (in this case property and office) as independent variables, while arguing that kinship is the dependent variable. The lateral mode has the paradoxical effect of lending the sibling group and its intragenerational collaterals a kind of corporate solidarity at the expense of lineal solidarity, but because of the value of the office and property, the holder-heir and incumbent-successor tensions are devolved horizontally and not between the generations.

Thus far in part III of the dissertation, we have examined the systems and categories of kinship and marriage and, latterly, the instability of alliances and the patterns of succession, all of which give rise to a laterality of the social system of the Chopi. The lack of depth of the kinship system accentuates a number of problems, especially where individuals attempt to recruit groups of people for various purposes, such as work parties. This kind of problem is ameliorated by the presence of two institutions which, at least in part, fill the gaps left by the kinship system. These institutions take the form of, first, a custom of naming one's children after other adults creating, in the process, a kind of alliance. The second is a form of 'special' friendship, which is institutionalised, and which is invested with as much affect as almost any kinship relationship. The individuality which is manifested in Chopi society, with its emphasis of egocentric coalitions of people, rather than groups, is aided by these institutions, which I have termed quasi-kinship, and to which we turn our attention in the next chapter.

Chapter VII

Quasi-Kinship: Namesakes, Fosterage and Friendship

Introduction

Fortes has stressed that the essence of kinship is to be found in the 'amity' and morality which demands of the participants that they share, without 'reckoning' (1969:238). In two recent seminal articles, in a collection of essays dedicated to Fortes (J. Goody, 1973 (b)), Bloch and Pitt-Rivers have picked up, and elaborated upon, the concepts of kinship morality and amity, respectively. Bloch argues that because of the morality underlying kinship relationships, such ties are adaptable, 'non-specific, and long term' (1973:86). Pitt-Rivers points out that the term is derived from the French word for friendship (1973:89). It is partly due to the existence of such viewpoints that I am encouraged to include the namesake and special friendship institutions in this part three of the dissertation, which deals, in the broadest sense, with the problem of kinship. The namesake institution, eapecially, has aspects which resemble, and complement, the alliances formed by marriage, and it therefore seems logical that this should follow the chapter which dealt with marriage and alliance.

My intention here is to examine two institutions which are the important components of the 'alternative structures' (to agnatic kinship) available as social resources in the Chopi 'environment'. The institutions of naming a child after another person, living or dead, and of special friendship between two individuals, give rise to a set of social relationships which in some ways approximate kin ties, and which are consequently phrased in the idiom of kinship.

The institutions complement the kinship structure in that they resemble it in important ways: they form bonds that have the permanence (such as it is in the Chopi context) and the moral underpinning characteristic of kinship; like affinity, and the exogamy rules that are invoked, which created dispersed alliances, these customs are a

means of creating new alliances. Yet the two institutions differ from kinship significantly, for while kinship bonds are (usually) inherited (even if, in the Chopi case, there is option and manipulation in the utilization of such ascribed kin), the bonds of quasi-kinship are achieved. They derive not from birth, but rather from the voluntary arrangement of the participants.

The institutions of 'namesakes' (where persons who share the same name call each other nyadine) and special friendship (where the participants call each other ndoni), can both be used as stratagems in the social 'game', where the decision as to who will be the namesake of one's child, for example, may be a tactical consideration based on a person's assessment of the state of his social network at the time, and in particular, where it appears to need strengthening. (1)

On the other hand, tactics may play little or no part in such decisions, for the protagonist may be politically 'off-stage' and the choice of friend or namesake may be made in terms of pure emotion or affection. In this instance there is no political intent, and even though an alliance does in any event occur, it is seen as being a happy coincidence. Thus, I do not claim that these institutions automatically give rise to carefully selected alliances motivated by an underlying strategy. I merely present these data, pointing out that they do form alliances, that they can be managed and manipulated, and that an ambitious individual would tend to be aware of this and would therefore use them as a political resource.

This chapter is divided into two main parts: the first, and larger, portion is devoted to the namesake institution, while the second deals with friendship. The institution of 'naming' incorporates a form of co-parenthood and fosterage of the child, which is examined in some

(1) The structural implications of alliance formation are dealt with in the corpus of this chapter, where the concept of 'strength' will be clarified.

detail, as are the effects such fostering has on the socialization of the child. The structural implications of the namesake custom, especially as a supplementary form of alliance is also discussed. The practice of special friendship is in some ways quite similar to the namesake institution, in that it can be used as a device for the creation of an alliance.

Namesakes

The naming of a child takes place at a ceremony two to three weeks after birth. Up until this time the mother and child are secluded, and even the husband should avoid them until this stage. At the celebration, which is attended by kin and vicinage members, food and drink are provided, and the mother and child emerge from their seclusion house. The father takes the child and announces its name, which he has previously decided upon in consultation with a diviner (nyatishlolo).

The naming ceremony takes place in order to introduce the child to society. It is a rite of passage, where, for the first time, the child attains its social personality and humanity. Prior to this stage, it is merely a 'thing' with no status, whereas once it has been named, it becomes part of the family, descent group, and vicinage. The celebration incorporates a libation and sacrifice of a fowl to the father's ancestors at his homestead shrine, during which the child is presented to the ancestors and their protection requested[1]. All those present participate in the ritual, clapping their hands in respect, each calling out the names of his or her personal ancestors, drawing their attention to the new member of society.

Foremost among the celebrants is the person after whom the child has been named (if the diviner has indicated that a living person, rather than a deceased ancestor, is the one that pleases the child's ancestors). The senior partner in the namesake dyad from this moment

(1) On the first subsequent visit to her father's home the wife will take the child and it is also introduced to its maternal ancestors in a simple ceremony involving a libation.

on acts as a supplementary parent to the child. The name-giver is expected to lavish indulgence upon the recipient, especially to take an interest in the development of the child, giving gifts of clothing at his or her initiation rituals and assisting at the other life crises in the developmental cycle. The former is a kind of sponsor and ideally should become the foster parent of the latter by calling him to live in his homestead.

During fieldwork, my attention was first drawn to the importance of particular types of names while I was collecting genealogies. I was struck by the fact that, when an informant was listing his or her children, the children who had died were almost invariably referred to by their namesake name, while surviving children were generally referred to by another personal name from the three or four that each individual posesses. It became clear that this name was consciously selected by the informant. The reasons for doing this were, firstly, that it was the name that the ancestors had apparently approved, and secondly, it indicated the child's place in the social system, and their part in a network of alliances, in this case involving the child's parents and the namesake[1].

A Chopi individual has a number of names (at least six), of which four are 'personal', the remaining two being a personal name of one's father, and one's clan name (chibongo), which, when giving one's full set of names, are quoted as the penultimate and ultimate names, respectively. One's father's name is quoted because it is a means of indicating one's place in the kin group. The chibongo, inherited from one's father, is sometimes qualified by giving the area of residence. This is done because clans are dispersed, and it is sometimes necessary (depending on the situation)

(1) Such an alliance (by namesake) which ends by the death of the child, is not usually renewed by naming another child after the same person; it is believed that the death occurred because for some reason the ancestors disapproved of the choice of namesake, and, therefore, the alliance. (Not all namesakes are first sanctioned by a diviner.)
In this connection, men also tend to refer to ex-wives (either dead or divorced) by clan name only, which is also a reminder of the alliance formed by marriage.

to locate oneself, for example, 'Nkome ka Nyatsiku' (Nkome of Nyatsiku).

Typically, of the four personal names, two are given by the parents and two are chosen by the individual himself. Of the given names, one is the dina da tishlolo (name of the (divining) bones), which almost invariably is also the namesake name. This name is generally decided upon by the parents, more often the father, who then consults his nyatishlolo (diviner) as to whether the name is acceptable to the ancestors(1). If the bones indicate that the child should be named after, say, its father's sister, then the procedure is to take one of her personal names and add to it the suffix -yane or -wane; the former is usually used if the child is male, the latter if it is female. This is not always the case, for the effect must be euphonious(2).

Another personal name is also given to the child by the parents, usually the mother, and relates to some event or impression which occurs at, or near, the time of birth. Thus, one woman is called Rolwe (from ku rolwa, to find) because her mother found some money in a pathway on the day she was born; an illegitimate child was named Imani (from imani, who?) because the identity of her father was not known; and a boy was called Kauwe (kau, monkey) because his face reminded his mother of a monkey when he was born. This is a kind of pet name by which the child is called in its younger days (in preference to the nyadine name) and which is a frequently used name of reference when people are speaking of an absent third party. It is this personal name which is frequently given to the young namesake, and to which the relevant suffix is added (thus, from the above examples, the namesake of Rolwe is called Rolwane; Imani's namesake is Imanyan, and Kauyan is the namesake derived from Kauwe). It is very rare to find that a namesake is given one's own nyadine

(1) There are certain stratagems employed in this regard which I examine in the section later in this chapter on 'alliance'.

(2) It is not always possible to produce a name that matches one's sex; e.g., a young girl named after a woman called Hembi, is called Hembiyane, because the suffix -wane would not be in phonetic agreement with the stem.

(namesake) name; it is a personal, dyadic relationship that ends with the death of one of the holder's of the name and is not passed on to other generations through the same institution.

Of the two names which are chosen by the individual himself, the first is the dina da kwere (circumcision name). This is the name that a boy chooses while in the seclusion of the initiation lodge[1] and by which he is called after he emerges from the puberty rites with a new status as a young adult. It is significant that he chooses the name himself, for it marks his independance and responsibility as an adult. This 'circumcision name' is also frequently chosen as the name to be given to a namesake.

The second of the names selected by individuals themselves is the dina da mulungu (white man's name) or dina da chikolo (school name). If a child goes to school and/or comes under the influence of a mission, then it is usual for him or her to take on a European name, which is usually Portuguese, or which is a baptismal name from the church. Most men who work on the South African mines also take on a 'white man's' name which is gained from experiences on the mines. Names such as Kalichi ('carriage or 'courage'), Handele ('handle'), Chipechelo ('special') and Menete ('minute') are common and are sometimes used as the namesake-giving name. These names are generally taken as a sign that a man has proved himself by working on the mines.

To give an example of the system of naming, I give below the case of Chipechelo Nyakwaha, whose full names are the following:

(1) Circumcision lodges are becoming increasingly rare, but most men still prefer to be circumcised, and still take on a 'circumcision name'. Women's initiation is now very rare, but they too, still take on a new name at the age of puberty.

Figure 22: The names and name types of Chipechelo Nyakwaha

Name type:	Tishlolo (Divined name; namesake)	Name given at birth	Circumcision name
Actual name:	Holoryane	Chindumane	Ntumbetumbe
Name type:	Mulungu ('White man's name)	Father's name	Clan name
Actual name:	Chipechelo	Saute	Nyakwaha

It will be appreciated from the above that the collection of genealogies was at times difficult, for when an informant is naming a relative, he may choose but one of the four personal names (he may only be aware of the one, if the relative is distant or deceased). Other informants may select another of the personal names to refer to the same person, giving rise to confusion when one attempts to match genealogies(1). The choice of one name over the others when addressing, or referring to, an individual or oneself is situationally defined; a person selects the name that he considers appropriate for the occasion at hand(2). For the purposes of this chapter, I must limit my discussion to the namesake name only.

When a man wishes to name his child after someone, he is expected to obtain the concurrence of his ancestors. This is done by a diviner, who is able to tell the father whether or not the ancestors are pleased. Their permission is sought because the child is not infrequently named after a dead relative, and is believed to acquire certain personality traits of that person. (In this connection, it was mentioned earlier that a child who cries constantly is thought to have been given the wrong name.)

If a parent especially wishes to give a particular name to an infant, and the diviner rules that the name is unacceptable, it

(1) This is no doubt a contributory cause of the early onset of genealogical amnesia, and, consequently, makes the system more flexible, with fewer cross-checks on accuracy being possible on genealogical claims.

(2) When I was collecting genealogies, almost every informant first volunteered their 'white man's' name, which was the name they thought appropriate in dealing with a 'white'.

is not uncommon for the parent to try to obtain the desired result from another diviner. It is also becoming increasingly frequent for the parents merely to name the child after someone, without consulting a nyatishlolo. It is not necessary to request the permission of the person after whom one's child is to be named, but it is considered etiquette to inform him or her of one's intention, since in any event the namesake is expected to attend the naming ceremony. It is unheard of to refuse a namesake; it is considered to be an honour, it has the sanction of the ancestors, and it also has certain advantages for the senior partner.

Fosterage.

What lifts the namesake institution from being merely a particular means of acquiring a name (which is the case among some other southern African peoples[1]) is the fact that, if an infant is named after a living person, the latter has the right to claim the former as a foster child from the age of about four or five. If this takes place, then the child goes to live with his namesake until the time when he would ordinarily leave home to get married. The name giver does not always request the namesake to become a foster child, and in this circumstance the child would remain with its 'real' parents, but would make frequent, and oftern extended, visits to his namesakes.

During the period of my fieldwork, 63% of the homesteads of my sample had at least one namesake (who had been named after either the homestead head or his wife or wives) living with the family group. This was, of course, a period of only one year, so to gain greater perspective, I questioned all adult informants as to whether they had, as children, gone to live with their namesakes (they all did have namesakes). The results, as depicted below in Figure 23, show that more

(1) For example, the Pedi (Mrs K;E;M; Moloantoa, personal communication.)

than half the sample had done so[1].

Figure 23, Table representing residence with namesakes

	number	percentage
did reside with namesake	51	57
did not reside with namesake	39	43
	90	100

If, in a hypothetical situation, every child went to live with his namesake, then the nuclear family would be denuded of its own biological children, who would be replaced by the namesakes of the father and mother, who become foster children. Of course, this situation never occurs, for two reasons: firstly, some children are named after deceased relatives, and secondly, some children are given the name of their own father or mother, which means, in both cases, that the children stay in their natal home[2].

Figure 24. Child named after living or dead persons

	number	percentage
namesake living	78	87
namesake deceased	12	13
	90	100

Figure 24 shows that in 13% of actual cases, the child had been named after an ancestor, so with the result that there was no possibilty of their being fostered. In 14 other instances[3], (16% of the sample) the children had been named after parents, which also effectively prevents them from moving away from their parents. Adding together the figures of those who were named after parents or ancestors, we arrive at the figure of 26, which is 29% of the sample. This means that 71% of the sample were in a position where they potentially might have been fostered. Looking back to Figure 22, we see that 57% of the sample did indeed live with their namesakes for a period of time. Of

(1) When I asked the same informants whether they had already, or intended to, foster their own (junior) namesakes, (48%) replied in the affirmative, and (52%) responded negatively. No particular trend can be drawn from this, as for some, it was a hypothetica, projection into the future.

(2) I have already mentioned that the donor might in any event elect not to foster his namesake.

(3) A full breakdown of structural types in namesake relationships is to be found in Figure 26.

the 64 informants who could potentially have been fostered, therefore, 51 (79,7%), were in fact fostered (or spent lengthy periods with their namesakes).

Before proceeding, the use of the term 'fosterage' must be clarified, for there is a tendency to confuse it with adoption. The difference between these two concepts lies in the content of the change that the child's relationship to its parents undergoes. In adoption, the child relinquishes its rights from its natural parents and acquires the rights of a 'natural' child in relation to its adoptive parents. In fosterage, the child retains its identity, rights and obligations vis-a-vis its natural parents, while it (temporarily) comes under the jurisdiction of the foster parents. A minimal definition of fosterage is provided by R.M. Keesing, who asserts that, 'Fosterage .... occurs when a dependant child resides in a household other than that of the mother or father.' (1970:1005)

Keesing goes on to specify some of the rights entailed by fosterage(1):

> 'A fostered child retains his or her natal relationships and rights to property, ancestors and kinsmen. The foster parents acquire certain of the rights over, and duties and obligations to, the child that natal parents exercised.' (1970:1012).

Against this description of the jural implications of fosterage, one must contrast the rights and obligations that characterize adoption. Once again, I draw on Keesing's exposition:

> 'The jural status created by "adoption" is markedly different (to fosterage). Natal relationships and rights to property, ancestors, and kinsmen are terminated. Adoptive parents acquire the rights duties and obligations toward the child that natal parents had. (1970:1013)

Taking the above descriptions as our criteria, it is clear that the jural obligations that are entailed in the namesake institution are those of fosterage. Adoption among the Chopi, as far as I am aware, does not exist, which supports Jack Goody's contention that:

(1) Although Keesing is referring specifically to the Kwaio, his definitions have general applicability, and are certainly relevant to Chopi material.

> 'In Africa, adoption is rare, fostering (which involves no permanent change of identity) common. When rights to specific resources are being exchanged for a birthright, then it is a permanent, not a temporary, change that has to be effected. Africa does not provide the occasion for such changes, and hence fosterage combined with polygyny and 'corporate' inheritance can do most of the jobs done elsewhere by adoption; in particular it can take care of crisis situations by providing proxy or foster parents. (1969:75)

It has been pointed out (J. Goody 1969:57) that adoption in Western Europe has three main functions: to provide homes for disadvantaged children; to provide childless couples with 'social' progeny; and to provide a childless couple with an heir. Chopi society has a kinship system which takes care of the first of these functions, and a system of lateral inheritance which obviates the third. The second, the problem of childless couples, is ameliorated, but not solved, by fosterage; for the fostered child is never their accepted 'social' progeny, but he or she fulfils all the other functions of children: physical presence in the homestead, useful help in economic activity, and companionship. Some of these points emerge from the examination of Case 10, described below.

Case 10. The case of a barren woman and fosterage

The subject in this case is Hembiyani Ntsambe, a woman in her fifties, who was born in the headman's district of Mangane, and who married Balanyane Nyantiri, of Nyatsiku[1]. After some time it became apparent that one of the couple was infertile and, since in these circumstances it is thought to be the woman's fault, Hembiyani's parents were under obligation to supply a younger sister or close female relative. Unfortunately, this was not possible; Hembiyani had no sisters and her father's brothers refused to part with their daughters. Faced with this impasse, Balanyane let the matter drop and continued living with his wife.

Hembiyani, however, deeply shamed be her infertility, set about earning money by netting fish, trapping crocodiles and snakes for their skins, and by making sope, which she sold at a profit. With the money from her enterprises, she proceeded, over a period of time, to

(1) His homestead is marked no 2 , on map 3 .

acquire four more wives for her husband, on each occasion paying the lowolo herself. Three of the four women proved to be fertile, having three three, and four children respectively. One child from each of these wives was named after Hembiyani; two, both girls, were called Rolwane, after Rolwe, (her second name), and the third, a boy, Ntsambiyane, after her clan name. Two of these children are presently living with Hembiyani, while the third is still with her mother, who was separated from her husband, Balanyane, (who has since died); she lives some distance away, and has not been heard from for some time.

Balanyane died in 1968, but this homestead did not immediately break up. None of the wives were claimed through widow inheritance, and Hembiyan became the head of the homestead (indeed, the children of her co-wives all call her tate - father). The women appeared to accept this situation for two reasons: firstly, their bridewealth had been paid by Hembiyani, and although, as a woman, she had no legal hold over them, they felt a moral obligation; secondly, for the two wives whose son and daughter respectively were namesakes of Hembiyani, to go back to their natal home, would have meant leaving the abovementioned children behind. Of the other two wives, one had already left her husband, and the second (who had no children) left the homestead eight months after Balanyane's death. Eventually, after three years, all the wives had left the homestead, leaving only Hembiyani with her two namesakes.

Analysis.

This is a somewhat exceptional case, because I did not encounter any other instance of a barren woman who provided the lowolo money to obtain another wife (indeed, the subject of the case, Hembiyani, is a remarkable personality)[1]. Nevertheless, according to informants, it is a widespread

(1) Despite the unique nature of the circumstances of this case, and the forceful character of its main actor, I believe that the principles that are thrown into relief here are general ones (the fact that sanctions were not brought to bear on Hembiyani seems to attest to their acceptability). The dramatic and unusual nature of the case serves, I believe, to highlight some of the points which might otherwise remain obscure.

practice for an infertile woman to have a child named after her, so that she is not totally denied the enjoyment of motherhood. In the case before us, Hembiyani was provided with two children (and potentially, a third), who to all intents and purposes, were her own (at least until the age when they would marry). They sleep with her in her hut, they help with the cooking, fetching of water, and in the fields. Hembiyani treats them firmly yet indulgently and entertains them with tales and songs in the evenings. The children appear contented and do not seem to be disadvantaged.

One point that clearly emerges from the data is that fosterage can be a mechanism for injecting life into a barren relationship. Hembiyani is able to obtain all of the physical, psychological and economic benefits that children provide, and in spite of the fact that the children can never be hers in a full legal sense, the relationship obtains a degree of permanence, and therefore security, by the fact that it is an institutionalized form of fosterage.

Elderly people also have to contend with problems of loneliness and have an increasing need for physical help. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that a significant number (30 out of my total sample of 158 namesakes, i.e., 19%), of children were named after their grandparents or classificatory grandparents. Frequently too, I found that grandchildren had been sent to live with their grandparents even if there was no institutionalization through being made namesakes. This infusion of youth into a homestead that is past, or incapable of childbearing, has a rejuvenating effect. Viewed from the point of view of the senior generation, there can be no doubt as to the advantages of such an arrangement.

Another point that emerges is that, even in this case, where social welfare was obviously a consideration, the namesake institution is far more than just an altruistic exercise. It could be argued that Hembiyani 'earned' the right to have namesakes by virtue of the fact that

she provided the bridewealth. The institution involves reciprocity; her husband was indebted to her for the wives, and he attempted to 'balance' the obligations by naming a child from each of his wives after her. Even after Balanyane's death, the four remaining wives stayed on in the homestead for some time. The youngest wife, who had no children, stayed on eight months (because, she said, Hembiyani had paid her bridewealth) but she was the first to leave. The other two wives, also indebted for the bridewealth payment, remained for three years. The content of these relationships (between Hembiyani and the two women) was significantly different. The tie was considerably closer; it was not merely a transactional bond, but the fact that she 'shared' a child with each of them added a more durable link to their relationship (although, to be sure, it is in the nature of a dyadic contract[1]). It is also true to say that such a relationship is an ambivalent one, for the 'natural' mother must feel some resentment at the (temporary) loss of a child to another woman.

Another issue which arises that is incidental to the abovementioned ones is the flexibility of the Chopi social system which permits a woman to have so much freedom in the pursuit of economic ends (the profits Hembiyani made belonged to her, not to the joint household, or even her husband). The potential influence and status which is available to women is also evident, for one of the criteria for measuring the 'importance' of people is the number of namesakes one acquires. The accumulation of economic wealth, although the occasion of much jealousy, gives rise to a grudging respect, and Hembiyani is no exception[2].

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(1) cf. G.M. Foster 1961.

(2) Chopi society appears to possess a model (statistical rather than mechanical) which approximates Foster's Image of Limited Good (1967). Hembiyani is regarded by the community with a mixture of awe, envy, and respect. Many believe her either to be a witch, or to have the potential for it. This is a restraining mechanism that acts as a sanction on individuals who become too wealthy in relation to their social milieu.

It is necessary to examine the functions of parenthood in order to fully understand the functional aspects of the fosterage that may result from the namesake institutions. As E.N. Goody has remarked, 'there are several kinds of cement which together bind parent and child in this uniquely durable relationship (i.e., parenthood)' (1971:332). The types of 'cement' to which she refers are the various roles that each person plays in the parent-child dyad. These are multiplex, for the parent-child relationship, performs four or five major functions. To quote E.N. Goody again:

> 'The parent-child relationship is multi-bonded because of the many functions it fulfils. Where the child grows to maturity with his biological parents, they fulfil all of the following role elements: genitor/genetrix; source of status identity (pater/mater); nurse tutor in moral and technical skills; and sponsor in the assumption of adult status.' (1971:332).

Goody points out that all these roles and functions go to make up the normal parent-child relationship. Fosterage normally entails the handing over of some of these roles to a person other than the biological parents. The biological bond between parent and offspring (genitor/genetrix) is the only one that is not transferrable, and therefore only the biological parents are able to comply with all the above roles.

When a namesake is fostered among the Chopi, the division of roles is such that, ideally, the 'real' parents are the child's genitor/genetrix the source of status identity (he belongs to his father's kin group); and nurse (the child is nurtured until the age of four or five, after which he joins his namesake). The foster parents take over the roles of providing sustenance, and acting as tutors in moral and technical skills (as part of the socialization and education process). The final role to be mentioned, that of sponsor in the assumption of adult status, is shared by both the 'natural' and foster parents. 'Sponsorhip' here refers to giving the namesake the social (and economic) resources (such as access to potential alliance relationships, for example, friendship or marriage) he needs to take his place as an adult in

society.

It is due to the fact that the parent-child relationship is not just one role, but is in fact a 'cluster' of roles that an institution of fosterage can exist at all. To quote E.N. Goody on this point,

> ' ...one or more elements of the total set (of roles) can be split off and used to create a fictive parent-child tie without dissolving the remaining links between true parent and child.' (1971: 334-5).

This, surely, is what gives fosterage or fictive parenthood its unique character. The overlapping of so many roles in the 'true' parent-child relationship means that one, or some, of these roles can be delegated, without finally cutting the original bond. In sharing the ties to the child, the parents and pro-parents gain an intimate relationship between themselves that strengthens immeasurably the bond that previously existed between them.

E. Goody found two kinds of fosterage among the Gonja, which she distinguished as being 'voluntary' and 'crisis' types (1970: 58). The crisis type is characterized by the fact that it is precipitated by some crisis such as the death or divorce of the parents. Voluntary fosterage takes place in the normal course of events (i.e., is not a result of a crisis situation). The Chopi case is somewhat different, in that the naming institution that has the potential to result in fosterage is set in motion very early in the child's life, and before any crisis occurs. It is, therefore, almost entirely of the voluntary type.

Having said this, however, it must be noted that the rights and obligations of fosterage become very useful in the event of a crisis, such as divorce. For example, if a man divorces a wife, and his children by her are young, they would be difficult for him to look after (the children always belong to the husband in the event of divorce). In this circumstance, he may request the children's namesakes to foster them. Also, if he has other polygynous wives, they would be inclined to treat a former co-wife's children less well than their own. In view of the fact that the Chopi have a high divorce rate, the fostering of

namesakes may be seen as, in part (and perhaps it is an unintended consequence), a potential means of coping with the difficult effects of family crises.

In some respects the namesake institution closely resembles the ritual co-parenthood (compadrazgo) institution characteristic of many of the Mediterranean and Latin American peasantries[1]. The similarities include: a bond between the co-parents, as well as between the parent-child and co-parent and child; the bond is a form of alliance, and may be forged laterally (between people of equal status); while the raison d'etre of the institution is given as being for the wellbeing of the child, the effective ties appear to be on the level of the senior generation. Finally, ritual co-parenthood and fosterage appear to have similar funcions on a structural, or sub-structural level. To quote E. Goody, they seem,

> '... designed for working in the gaps between the formal elements of the system. Neither institution affects jurally defined status identity, yet both make use of elements of the parental role to create reciprocities which form the basis of links between individuals and groups.' (1971:339)

It is a truism that socialization is a process which continues throughout an individual's life, but there are two periods which are particularly crucial in this process: the first is from birth to the age of about five, when a child is (physically and psychologically) dependant on his parents; the second is from the age of about five through adolescence to adulthood. This period is important, for it is here that a young person realizes his social identity, and learns the rules of the social 'game'. In short, he discovers his place in society, its strengths and weaknesses, its possibilites and constraints.

Fosterage among the Chopi covers, almost exactly, the second of the phases mentioned above, and it is therefore clearly relevant to examine the consequences of this institution for the socialization process of

(1) Despite the fact that the Portuguese, who administer Mozambique are one such people, the namesake institution appears to be indigenous and has no connection with Catholic godparenthood.

children who are brought up under the system. As represented in Figure 23, 57% of adult informants in Nyatsiku had themselves been fostered, and it was earlier established that 53% of Nyatsiku homesteads in 1969 had a namesake residing within it. It can be deduced from the above figures therefore, that, while not every informant was fostered, just over half had been, and if not, then the likelihood of a sibling leaving home to live with his or her namesake was extremely high. The outcome of this is that almost every informant had first-hand experience of fosterage, either through personal involvement or by close acquaintance with someone else who had; the institution, and its consequences (in terms of socialization and alliance), therefore, left virtually no one uninvolved.

The socialization process from the age of about five years onward becomes important because the child, no longer physically dependant on his mother, begins to take his place in society as an individual. It is at the age of about eight or nine that he forms friendships that will last for most of his lifetime. It is at this time, too, that he will come to have closer relationships with some kin rather than others, which preferences may well continue into adult life. The education process, which includes one's own experiences, the shared experiences of peers, and lessons learnt from adults, also has its greatest impact during this period.

Case 11. The fostering experience of Chikasiyane Nyangumbe

Chikasiyane Nyangumbe was born in Nyatsiku at about the end of the first World War. His parents named him after his mother's brother, Chikasi, who lived in Siboni, a sub-chiefdom some ten miles to the west of Nyatsiku. At the age of eight Chikasiyane was called to live with his namesake, and he remained with this man until his first experience on the South African gold mines at the age of 19. While living with his foster parents, Chikasiyane made frequent return visits to his real father and mother, and from time to time they would also

visit him, especially his mother. His younger brother, who stayed with his real parents, paid him numerous visits, sometimes staying with him for a week at a time.

During the period of fosterage Chikasiyane was instructed by his foster parents in matters of etiquette, custom, and technical skills (he is a useful amateur carpenter, a trade he learnt from his namesake). He entered the circumcision school of Siboni, and his real parents sponsored him in this, buying a new set of clothes and attending his coming-out ceremony. While living in Siboni, Chikasiyane became friendly with a boy of his own age. This friendship has blossomed and today is regarded as an ndoni ('best' or 'special' friend) relationship.

On his return from his first contract on the mines, Chikasiyane could afford to pay a large proportion of the bridewealth for a wife and, with additional funds from his father, he paid the lowolo and married a woman he had met in Siboni. On his marriage, he returned to Nyatsiku, where his father provided him with land for a homestead and fields. During his married life he once left Nyatsiku, and went to live in Siboni, near his namesake (and also his wife's kin) but after five years he and his family returned to Nyatsiku. Today, he is a man of some influence, being the leader of the Nyangumbe people in Nyatsiku (see map on page 64), an induna of Chief Nkumbi (a position of importance in the affairs of the Chiefdom), and for the last 23 years he has been employed as a 'boss boy' (the highest status job, involving leadership, on the mines) whenever he has gone on migrant labour trips to South Africa.

Analysis

It should be noted here that Chikasiyane, in the first 25 years of his life, was faced with three radical changes in his social life. He was born, and spent the crucial first years, with his real parents. At eight he was taken from them and was confronted with an entirely new set of people and relationships: his foster parents and

their network of kin and neighbours (admittedly, they were not complete strangers, being his matrilateral kin, but the change was nevertheless a drastic one). At 19 Chikasiyane went to the mines, where he encountered a totally new physical and social environment for a period of about two years (contracts were more flexible then than is the case today). Finally, when he returned from the mines he married and took up residence in Nyatsiku, from which, although it was his birthplace, he had been absent for 13 years. He had to build up his social network there almost from scratch.

What this cumulative experience amounts to is a number of changes in the persons who are one's socializing agents: parents and peers. More than this, from ego's point of view, one is forced to learn to adapt quickly to new situations, physical and social; and from an early and formative age one is confronted by a microcosm of most of the structural principles, and the difficulties, of Chopi social life. Each time one's environment is changed, one is forced back onto one's own devices; a whole new (or if not new, then unused) social network has to be built up by one's own efforts, using the human material provided by the environment: such kin (agnatic or matrilateral) as may be available, and where lacking, then friendship, which usually complements ties of kinship in any event.

Chikasiyane and his brother, despite the distance separating them, exchanged frequent visits, which had the effect of opening up a new area of potential social network for the younger man, while it meant that Chikasiyane did not lose touch with his area fo origin. Fosterage is therefore frequently a shared experience between siblings which has the effect of opening up personal networks. In this connection, E. Goody argues that,

> '... if the adolescent gains his view of himself in relation to the society through his participation in primary groups, and his primary groups are different to those of his siblings, but of course, overlap with theirs, then for both fostered and home-reared siblings experience is widened.' (1970:56).

The relationships that Chikasiyane built up during his stay in Siboni with his foster parents appear, over the years, to have dwindled in strength and in number. Admittedly, he is still married to his first wife, whose kin live there, and he still has a close relationship with his ndoni from that area, but, for the most part, the ties have been abrogated by disuse. Chikasiyane tried to mobilize them when he went to live in Siboni and, while he stayed for five years, he does not regard his sojourn as a success. Many of the ties forged in this mobile and fluid situation, therefore, tend to be transitory.

Significantly, Chikasiyane is today and influential man: in Nyatsiku, he is a 'big man' (the leader of a potentially powerful group); in the chiefdom, he is one of only eight indunas chosen by Chief Samusson Nkumbi; and in the European environment, he has been found to have leadership qualities in the mining work situation. It is clear that fosterage has not hindered Chikasiyane as an achiever in Chopi society; indeed, it may well have aided him by ensuring his adaptability in social situations. I did not systematically collect data on the relationship between 'successful' Chopi and whether or not they had been fostered, but my field notes reveal that four out of the six 'big men' of Nyatisku were in fact fostered.

Sometimes a child is named after a person who possesses some skill, such as a wood craftsman, a diviner, or perhaps a musician and mbila maker. If he is then fostered, the child will, in all probability, learn the skills of his sponsor. It did not appear to me, however, that the potential of this situation was consciously manipulated. If a child was named after a prominent musician, for example, it appeared that this was done because of a personal relationship or alliance on the level of the parental generation, rather than with the possible future benefit of the child in mind.

The namesake institution and its concomitant of fosterage, therefore, when viewed from the point of view the socialization process, is ideally

suited to, and dovetails with, the general features of the Chopi social organization. Lineages, if they can be said to exist at all, are lacking in depth, successsion patterns are lateral and alliances tend to be ephemeral.

The socialization process that results from fosterage provides an early experience, in microcosm, of the kinds of situation that will be encountered later in (adult) life. An individual has to learn to adapt to changes in his physical and social environment, and as a consequence, to activate available kinship ties and to create new ties through friendship; the lesson that many relationships are transitory is also learnt in this context. Finally, given the social environment with its premium on individual networks of relationships comprising other individuals recruited by the activation of diverse principles, fosterage provides one with a set of potentially strong ties which can be mobilized and which are valuable resources in one's 'reservoir' of social relationships.

The structural dimension of the namesake institution

The naming of a child after another living person gives rise to a complex set of reciprocal rights and obligations between the parents and the namesake, apart from those between the child and his namesake. The relationship between the members of the senior generations is in the nature of an alliance, for it either strengthens existing kin relationships, or formalizes non-kin ties[1]. This institution is therefore a well-used social resource which can be tactically employed by individuals. Once again, I must caution that I do not claim that every individual calculates his social 'balance sheet' and systematically sets out to maximize his benefits, political or otherwise; this would be a gross oversimplification. It is asserted, rather, an important

(1) In this context, and for the remainder of the chapter, I use the term 'alliance' to mean a relationship which is entered into, and gives rise to, bonds of trust and reciprocal obligation. It is not, obviously, meant in the Levi-Straussian sense of referring to prescriptive or preferential marriage renewable over a number of generations.

aspect of the institution is that it does create alliances, calculated or not, and that it is, therefore, a social resource available to individuals who wish to utilize it.

This section deals specifically with the institution as an alliance, and its structural implications. As stated above, there are some children who are named after deceased relatives (i.e. ancestors), or after one of the parents themselves. In both these cases, (which represent 29% of the cases recorded, vide supra) there is no question of the naming having been done with the possibility of an alliance in mind. In the following discussion, therefore, I shall be dealing with the remaining 71% of the cases, where children are named after living adults, from which, whether intentionally or not, an alliance results. This alliance may be left to lie latent, or it may be activated; this depends on how it suits a particular individual and his own social network at any given time.

The act of giving a child a name, which ideally relies upon the sanction of a diviner who inquires of the ancestors as to whether the suggested name is acceptable, is in fact more manipulable than the process suggests. It appears that once a father had decided upon a name for his child he would approach a nyatishlolo to gain the ancestors' approval. I observed four cases of divination involving this, in three of which the diviner appeared to try to please the supplicant by indirectly eliciting the desired information. In the one contrary case, the diviner attempted to impose his (or rather the ancestors') will upon the supplicant, who promptly sought out another diviner who this time told him the answer that he wanted to hear. Informants tended to stress the mystical sanction of the naming process, but the naming of a child was obviously carefully placed event, with diviners seldom giving interpretations that were contrary to the desired one.

Having established that parents have an almost free hand as to whom they name their child after, and that it is sometimes tactically used,

it is necessary to examine the data relating to this institution, for the structural relationships between the participants is likely to reveal much about the Chopi social system; it has reverberations beyond the confines of the single institution itself. The institution is a form of alliance and, as such, provides an alternative (and supplementary) relationship that has a model base that can be activated between individuals with the aim of recruitment to an action set. Writers such as Gudeman (1972), Foster (1969), Hammel (1968) and E. Goody (1971), have all argued that the institution of pro-parenthood or godparenthood (especially in various peasant societies) have the effect of alliance formation.

Even with the flexibility of the Chopi kinship system, there are certain immutable relationships that are ascribed. An individual is born with a set of consanguineal relatives, and society prescribes expected patterns of behaviour towards them. This network of relatives grows with natural increase, and the only area of choice for a person lies in the selection of a spouse. On the other hand, as Foster (1961: 1181) has pointed out, ego's network of kin ties is likely to be so large that he cannot possibly honour all the rights and obligations that each kinsman might exert on him.

> 'Ego's only real choice is in the degree to which he will in fact honour the obligations inherent in his several roles (and expect a corresponding return), and in the selection of the individuals with whom he will honour them. Thus, through selecting relatively few kinsmen from his total family .... ego in fact establishes dyadic contracts which determine his actual behaviour.' (ibid: 1181).

Taking Foster's argument further, I would argue that not only does ego choose to only interact with a selection of his total spectrum of kin, but that, even among these, there are one or two whom he may single out and with whom he has, or desires, an especially strong relationship. It is this type of relative that ego would tend to choose as nyadine for his child, thus giving the existing bond extra strength.

I would suggest that it is especially because of the flexibility

of the Chopi kinship system, and social system in general, that the aspect of the namesake institution as alliance becomes important. Where there is a high degree of selection of ties which an ego wishes to employ, then the reverse is also true: that a person with whom ego wishes to emphasise his relationship, may at that time choose to de-emphasise, or even cease the relationship. Ego's personal network is thus always in a state of flux; there is always a core of ongoing support, but there is also a regular change of personnel on the periphery. The namesake institution provides a means of institutionalizing a potentially transient bond, thereby making it more permanent.

The namesake syndrome is composed of a trio of dyadic relationships: those between parent and child, between child and namesake and between parent and child's namesake. The last mentioned of the three is, at the outset, the most important of the dyads. It is here that the alliance is cemented; the child, after all, is a helpless nonentity at the naming ceremony. The real purpose of the institution at this stage is the strengthening of an existing bond, or the creation of a new one, which takes place on the level of the senior generations and can be seen as a dyadic contract.

The exchange that takes place includes the fact that it is an honour to have a child named after oneself (indicating esteem); there are economic benefits resulting from fosterage; and the child becomes a close ally for the future. Viewed from the other side, the gift of 'naming' is repaid in the form of closer ties, i.e., alliance, to a person with whom ego may feel the need to become more closely tied (this person could have access to resources, or be of higher status than ego, who may hope that some of the former's prestige may rub off). Such transactions, which resemble a patron-client relationship, are in fact less frequent that the type which is between equals and which results in the reinforcement of an existing bond.

Later in the lives of the participants, it is possible for the relationship between parent and namesake to be of less significance than that between the two namesakes. Thus, if the child leaves the parental home to live with his namesake, this becomes an intense, ongoing relationship of quasi-parenthood. The relationship carries over into the child's adult life, for he has grown up with, and become close to, his foster parents; many of the relationships that he will use in later life were formed at this time, and he is particularly indebted to his sponsor.

Returning for the moment to the actual creation of the namesake bond (created by the parent in relation to the nominator), at the beginning of this section I hinted at the Janus-headed nature of the alliance: that it could either be used as a means of strengthening existing bonds (in which case it is inward-looking, keeping ego's network closed), or it could look outward, opening up the network to include new members.

From the structural aspect, the inward looking type is interesting. If both marriage and the namesake institution are kinds of alliance, then their differences must be of interest. Exogamy rules demand that an individual should not marry into the clan of either his father or mother; the alliances are thus spread widely, and a man may marry a woman he scarcely knows, or has never met. The introspective 'naming' (i.e., within ego's existing kin and social network), however, operates in the opposite way: if the exogamy rules make their resulting alliances centrifugal, then this type of naming has a centripetal effect on the pattern of alliances. The namesake institution then, can, and usually does, take place within the very kin groups proscribed for marriage; it performs the functions of bonding inside the two clans that marriage performs outside[1].

(1) The 'outward-looking' namesake type, of course, has much the same effect (structurally) as a marriage alliance.

Figure 25. Type of relationship between parent and namesake

	number	percentage
agnatic	67	42
matrilateral	15	9
affinal	40	25
friendship	30	19
n'anga	8	5
	160	100

Figure 25 depicts the relationship, that exists between the parent and the person after whom the child is named. It is noted that by far the largest number of namesake bonds were contracted with agnates, but it is significant that over half (58%) are with non-agnates. 'Friend' as a category refers to people with whom ego has no kin relationship and who are considered friends of both the strong ndoni type and, more frequently, the more informal nyaha type. A surprising number of spirit mediums (n'anga) also appear as namesakes, a phenomenon I try to explain shortly.

Figure 26. Type of relationship between vanyadine (namesakes)

	number	percentage
agnatic	67	42
matrilateral	45	28
affinal	10	6
friends of parents	30	19
n'anga	8	5
	160	100

A comparison of Figures 25 and 26 shows that they are in fact identical except in regard to the categories of matrilateral kin and affines. The discrepancy is in the larger part accounted for by the fact that a man's affines on one generation are matrilateral kin to his son. Let us now turn our attention to the various categories of people involved in the namesake relationships. We find that agnates predominate, providing 42% of the total; this must be explained, for if, as I claim, the institution gives rise to alliances, it would appear an unnecessary duplication of bonds.

As I have argued earlier, the burden of the preceding chapters was to demonstrate the plastic nature of Chopi kinship. The fluidity of the system is compounded by mobility of individuals, the lack of genealogical

knowledge of any great depth, and the lack of corporately owned property, or even corporate kin groups, Encountering broadly similar conditions in Gonja, E. Goody maintains that, '.... there is a constant centrifugal tendency amongst kin.' (1970:63). Given these conditions, then, it is not surprising to find that bonds of kinship, even agnatic kinship, can easily be threatened. In such circumstances an individual may decide to cement a bond that may be potentially fissile, or to recognise the worth of a relationship by reinforcing it in this way.

Much the same line of reasoning can be applied to the categories of affines and matrilateral kin which form 34% of the sample. All kin are potentially useful members of a person's social network, but I have already demonstrated the extremely brittle nature of alliances formed by marriage. It is clear that affines to one generation are matrilateral kin to the following one; given the de facto transience of the alliance, a man may try to hold on to important ties with his wife's kin, or his father's wife's kin, by formalizing dyadic bonds through the namesake relationship. These dyadic contracts will continue even in the eventuality of divorce, after which a strong normative bond will still exist between the three individuals involved.

The category of 'friends' is somewhat ambiguous, for it is used here to cover anyone who is non-kin, and who is not an n'anga. The ambiguity lies in the fact that such individuals may or may not have been a recognised friend of the parent before the child was named after him. In two cases that I am aware of, such individuals were no more than acquaintances of the father (one was a vicinage big-man, and the other was a wealthy entrepreneur), but, after the naming, the relationship in each case became much closer. Apart from these two cases (and there may well be more), the same line of reasoning as before can apply here: a relationship that is valued can be made secure by formalizing it, which is done by one individual honouring the other by naming a child after the other.

Figures 25 and 26 reflect that 5% of all cases involved the naming of a child after a spirit medium. The reasons given by the people ranged from gratitude for treatment during the pregnancy, to a rather inane claim of affection. An n'anga of reputation is held in awe, and can wield considerable power. The n'anga is usually a person of wealth and possesses strange powers; in short, the medium is a useful ally.

When viewing the namesake syndrome, it becomes clear that it is for the most part existential in nature; it is concerned with the here and now. As Figure 27 demonstrates below, the total span of relationships between the parent and namesake only covers four generations, which are egocentric (i.e., they cover two generations above ego, ego's own generation, and one below). In other words, it is most likely that ego will have known personally the person after whom his child is named, even if it is a dead ancestor.

Figure 27. Relative generation level between parent and person after whom child is named

	number	percentage
2 generations above parent	5	3
1 generation above parent	40	25
parent's own generation	105	66
1 generation below parent	10	6
	160	100

Two-thirds of the above sample are individuals of the same generation as the parent who names the child, which shows the emphasis placed upon the present. An individual, after all, has to live his life in the here and now, and consequently, the ties that the naming institution generates reflect this preoccupation. In Figure 28 below, which was based on a sample of 90 informants, the concern with active, ongoing ties is reflected in the number of cases where the child was named after a living person.

Figure 28. Child named after living or dead person

Child named after:	number	percentage
living persons	78	87
dead persons	12	13
	90	100

The next step in the argument should logically be to specify precisely whom all the people in the sample are named after, the relationship between them and between parent and namesake. However, this exercise proves futile since there are 24 categories of relationship that must be listed, ranging from naming the child after oneself, one's parents, siblings or more distant kin and affines, to friends and spirit mediums. No single category stands out as being especially favoured, the largest number of cases recorded being that of 'friends', of which there are 30, followed by the naming of the child after its father (19 cases), mother (15), FB (12), FZ (13), MB (11), MF (8), and sundry other relationships of smaller numbers.

No clear pattern emerges, therefore, from the examination of the numbers of the actual kin and other relationships represented. Broken down to this level, 'friends' emerge as the largest category, followed by the closer circle of kin represented by the extended family and the kin of a man's wife. If one were to attempt a generalization based on the figures presented in Figures 25 - 28, it would seem that they reflect and support the evidence adduced in previous chapters. I would argue that individuals tend to name their children after persons with whom they have a relationship that is highly valued, or to whom they feel an obligation; the ephemeral nature of most relationships can be partly ameliorated by adding a more formal set of rights and obligations through the namesake institution. Viewing the statistics presented here, therefore, the picture again emerges of a situation in which all kin types, cognatic and affinal, as well as individuals classed as friends are rated as being important to the Chopi, although there tends to be a bias in favour of agnatic kin (42%).

The lack of a distinctive pattern in the naming institution leads me to revert to the model centred on the individual, in which our focus must be an ego-centred social network (cf. Boissevain 1968). Each time a child is born to a family, the parents make an ad hoc

decision as to whom they should choose as the namesake. It is a perspective that sees the parents as weighing up their social balance sheet, deciding who, in their present situation, would be the most appropriate sponsor. Their decision is situationally defined, and they must make their decision in terms of their perception of the existing state of affairs and its needs. It is this which accounts for the almost random pattern that emerges from the statistics presented above.

The nyadine relationship, because of the attendant set of reciprocal rights and obligations, has a broad moral base which can be used as a social and political resource. Again, the model must be individual-oriented, and it is necessary to examine what strategies may be employed in the naming of a child. It was mentioned earlier that the direction of the namesake alliance (in terms of being directed inwards or outwards with reference to ego's network of kin) could be of significance. Figure 29 below shows the proportion of namesake ties which were directed either inwards or outwards in relation to already existing kinship bonds.

Figure 29. Direction of namesake alliance: inter- or extra-kin networks

	number	percentage
Inter-kin	122	76
Extra-kin	38	24
	160	100

The table presented above shows that in almost a quarter of the cases the namesake nexus was contracted with a person who was outside the kinship circle. These 38 cases can therefore be seen as attempts by individuals to 'open up' their social network to include non-kin and to invest the relationship with some kind of permanence. A relationship of friendship can, after all, be easily dropped, and is potentially more fragile than that of kinship, as there is no normative set of rights and obligations binding the dyad; the nyadine bond provides the missing social 'cement',

The 122 cases in which the nyadine bond was inner-directed fall into

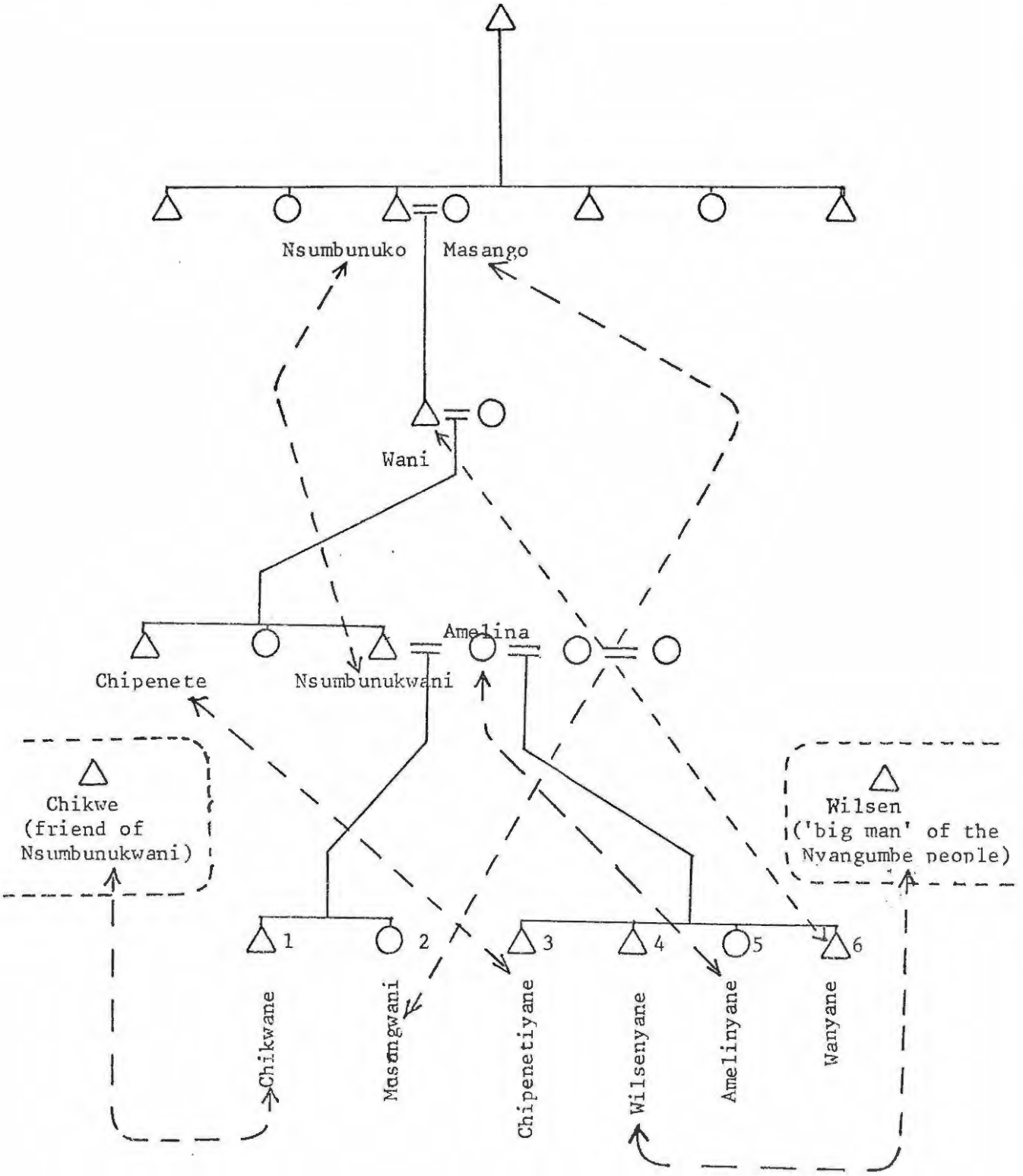
three main types. The first of these is where the parents are merely acknowledging some debt, or perhaps merely giving social recognition to a strong bond of affection; there need be no tactical implications here. The second type is where tactical considerations are important, as in the hypothetical case of an individual who may wish to strengthen his relationship with a kinsman who may be of some use to him, or who may be slipping away and with whom ego does not want to lose contact. Strategy plays no less a part in the third type, but in a negative sense: here ego does not want to commit himself to further alliances and their attendant obligations, so he double-loads certain relationships in the naming process; for instance, he may name the child after himself or his wife, or after a dead ancestor (20% of all children in the sample were named after their parents, and as Figure 28 showed, 13% were named after persons who were dead). Case 12 below gives some perspective on the actual workings of the institution.

Case 12. The naming pattern of the children of Nsumbunukwani Wani Nyatsiku

I have selected this case because Nsumbunukwani has six children, the pattern of naming being clear-cut, and because it appears that his case is fairly typical. Among the six children, one finds an example of each of the structural types resulting from naming mentioned above: the extra-kin, inter-kin and, within the latter type, the case of strengthening weak bonds, and the neutral case of naming a child after oneself or a dead ancestor.

Taking each of Nsumbunukwani's children in turn, we find that his first child by his first wife, a boy, Chikwani, is named after Chikwe Homu, a man from a neighbouring headman's district; his relationship to Nsumbunukwani is that of friendship only, for the two men met on their first trip to the mines. The relationship between the two men has persisted through the years, perhaps (in part at least) on the strength of the bond of co-parenthood, which brings them together on regular, but

Figure 30. Nsumbunukwani's children and their namesakes



infrequent, occasions.

Nsumbunukwani (henceforward referred to as N) named his second child, Masangwane, after his paternal grandmother, Masango, who had died before the birth of the child. In contrast to the case of Chikwani, which was directed outwards, this is a case of structural introversion, for not only is the child named after a kinswoman, but she is named after one with which there is no possibility of alliance, or of fosterage. With regard to his first wife, therefore, one child was fostered, the other not; and, structurally, one gave rise to alliance (outward-looking), while the other (inward-looking and neutral) did not.

The first child of Nsumbunukwani's second wife is named after Chipenete, his elder brother. This is a clear case of naming within the kin set, choosing a close member. However, a factor that is not obvious from the diagram is that Chipenete lives in a different chiefdom. He had been fostered by his namesake who lived in the chiefdom of Banguza, some 20 kilometres distant and, after getting married, he settled near his sponsor. In other words, there was a possibility that the sibling bond between N and his brother would be weakened by lack of interaction; N obviously valued the relationship, and took the opportunity of calling his third child Chipenetyane in honour of his brother (who, incidentally, accepted the gesture by fostering his namesake).

N's fourth child was also a boy, who was named Wilsenyane after Wilsen (Chikasiyane) Nyangumbe, who is the wahombe of the powerful Nyangumbe faction within the Masakula vicinage. N belongs to the Nyatsiku clan and is in line, albeit remotely, for the headmanship one day. If the day should come when N competes for the headmanship, the allegiance of the Nyangumbe faction would be a great advantage. There is, of course, no guarantee that Wilsen would swing the support of his people behind N, in such an event, for Wilsen has another namesake who is the child of German Nyatsiku, who would be a competitor of N's. It is anyway not certain that N had these considerations in mind when naming the child,

but the tactical possibilities are nevertheless there to be exploited if he so desires. Structurally, this namesake contract was outward-directed, opening up N's social network.

The fifth child (the third by his second wife), a daughter named Amelinyane, is named after Amelina, N's first wife. This is an introspective example, where the child of one wife is named after a co-wife. The relationship between co-wives in any polygynous society tends to be tense and even fragile; here the sharing of roles in co-parenthood may well be a means of mitigating the potential hostility between them.

Finally, N's sixth child, Wanyane, is named after N's father, Wani. Again, this is an introspective alliance, in which Wanyane was fostered by his paternal grandfather and namesake. There seem to be few, if any, tactical considerations involved here, for N and his father live as neighbours and are very close socially and emotionally. At the time of the birth of Wanyane, Wani and his wife were living alone, their children having matured and left home. The young namesake, once old enough to be fostered, became like a new son to the old household, rejuvenating it, the boy being able to perform many of the tasks that the ageing couple were unable to do themselves.

Let us now look at the various exmples together with regard to the case before us. The six children provide us with an interesting spread of structural types: two (the first and fourth) were outward-directed, the remaining four (the second, third, fifth and sixth) were inward-directed. Of the inward-looking ones, one child (the second) was named after a matrilateral kinswoman, another (the fifth) was named after an affine, and two (the third and sixth) were named after agnates. In at least two cases (the second and fifth) the potential for fosterage was either absent or unnecessary; in three others (the first, second, third and sixth) the children were fostered at different times, for varying lengths of time. In the remaining case (the fourth) there was potential

for adoption, which has not been taken up by the nominator.

The order in which the children were named is also revealing. The first born was named after a person outside N's universe of kin. Embarking on their married life, N and his wife were presumably eager to open up their social network, thus expanding it. The fact that they set up household very near that of N's father means that there was little need for them to emphasise the close ties that already existed and that were implied by such contiguity. The second child was named after N's dead grandmother, and was a 'neutral' case. This is a little more difficult to explain, but is perhaps understandable in that one does not want all one's children to be fostered, leaving one without any of one's own natural children; a balance of sorts must be struck whereby some children are unlikely or unable to be fostered. In this case there was every likelihood that the first born would be fostered, and the second thus counterbalances this.

The third child born was named after his father's brother and, while this was a case of naming within the kin group, it was in a sense outward-directed because N's brother lived some distance away, and contact with him was somewhat sporadic and tenuous. The fourth born was a straightforward outward-directed case, which appears to have clear political implications (although since Wilsen did not foster the child, it appears that he has not wholeheartedly accepted the alliance). The fifth is a case of introspective naming, but with the positive effect of cementing the potentially brittle relationship between two co-wives; also to be considered here is the fact that such a naming involves no change of residence for the child. The last case is also introspective, with no active alliance apparently intended, Wanyani was able to fulfil a need in his grandfather's homestead, and although he was fostered, he was living literally 200 metres from his natal home.

The overall pattern that emerges from the above must be seen in the perspective of the developmental cycle of Nsumbunukwani's family and

household. Early in his married life, there was a tendency to spread his ties widely (thus two of the first four were outward-directed, and the third, while being introspective in regard to kin ties, was geographically far flung); later, as he approached maturity and had carved a niche for himself in society, and when his family group became increasingly independant, the anming pattern became introspective.

In general then, it would seem that the naming pattern of any particular family depends upon the ad hoc evaluation by the parents, as each child is born, of the state of their social network and its needs. The case of Nsumbunukwani illustrates a trend that appears to be manifest in most cases: that is the need, early in married life, to open up and expand networks of alliance, while later in the developmental cycle, when special networks are well established, there is a tendency to employ introspective alliances, which take place within the kin network. These can be active in reinforcing weak bonds, or can be 'neutral' in terms of alliance by not only double-loading an existing kin tie, but more specifically by naming the child after a parent or a deceased ancestor.

Before moving on to an examination of some structural features, I must briefly take up a point which is hinted at in the case above. I mentioned that N's fourth child, Wilsenyane, was named after Wilsen (Chikasiyane) Nyangumbe, the big man of the powerful Nyangumbe faction. There is no doubt that there are political and often economic advantages in contracting an alliance with men of influence. Such men may be traditional big men, or may be of the 'new men' (cf. Kuper 1970), who are generally young entrepreneurs who build up wealth and influence by operating as 'bro' ers' in the interstitial area between the traditional and modern Portuguese politico-economic structures. One such man, Pedro Nkome, has no fewer than six namesakes named after him. This is a useful index of the regard in which an individual is held, and is a point that I take up in a later chapter. Drawing once again on the literature relating to ritual godparenthood, the institution can

be used to bind together people of equal status, i.e., horizontally, or to link people of unequal status, i.e., vertically (Mintz and Wolf 1950). Where one has an instance of one man possessing many namesakes it is usually an indication of his high status or influence, and is therefore of the vertical type.

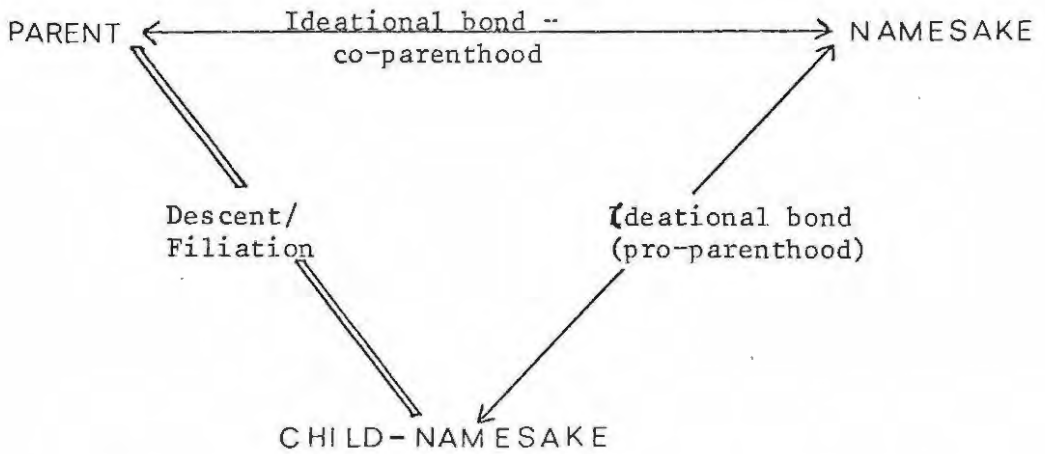
The tactical uses to which the namesake alliance can be put are well illustrated by the case of David Masiya, a man who settled in Nyatsiku in the recent past. He has five children, the last two of which were born after his arrival in the district. Both children have been named after non-kin neighbours. The first is named Germanyane after German, who was David's sponsor, introducing him to the district, and the second is named after the wife of a fellow vicinage member. Here we have a case where strategy was situationally defined: David was new in the area with no social network to rely on; he consequently opted for the outward-directed alliance, expanding his social and alliance network, thus consolidating his position in the area.

In a recent paper (1972), S. Gudeman drew attention to certain structural properties of the institution of ritual godparenthood, some of which can be seen to exist in the namesake institution of the Chopi. In his article, Gudeman represented the structural relationships of parents and child, and godparents and child (among others) in diagrammatic form, and found that the structures were transformational, i.e., the geometry, or rather topology (Leach 1961 (a):7) of the structures remained constant, while the content of the definitive positions changed. In the figures which follow, I adapt Gudeman's diagrams in order to accomodate the particular Chopi variations. The set of relationships which is our main focus of interest is that between natural parents, child, and namesake, which I shall designate the 'namesake set'.

The triad in Figure 31 combines the three components of the namesake institution, but there are two other triads whichi involve these persons and others in different combinations. For example, there is the birth

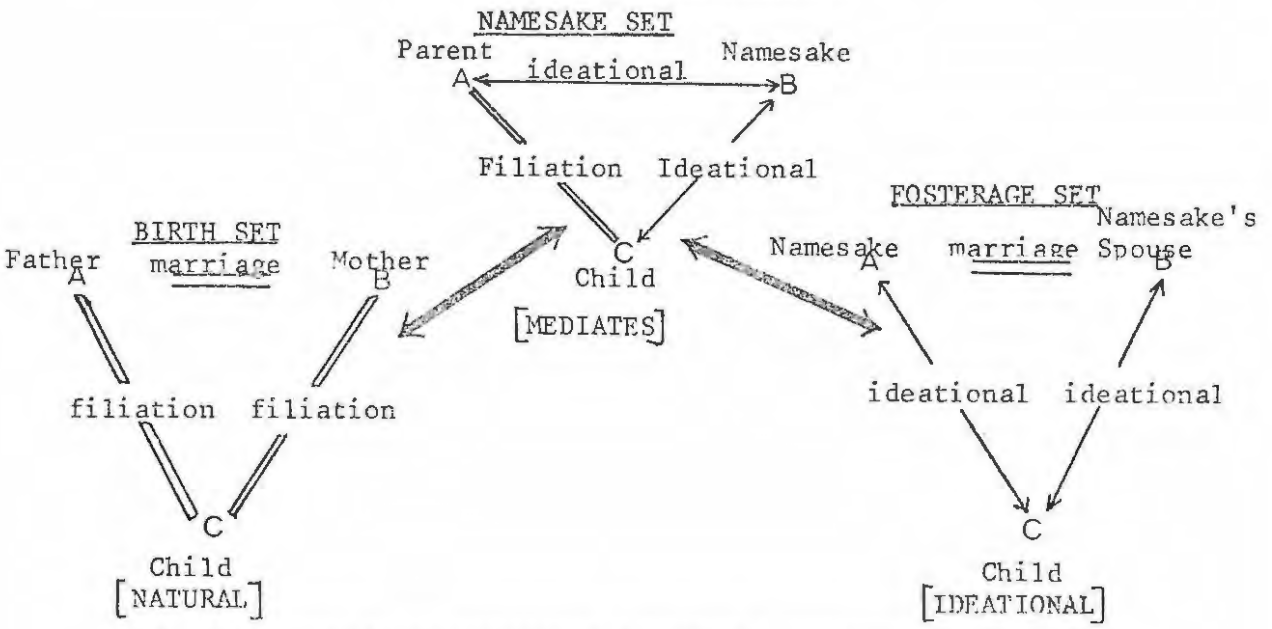
set, which incorporates the socially recognised father, mother and child; this is the basic triad which provides the model on which the other two are based. The third triad I designate as the child, its namesake, nd and nameanemsake's spouse. The 'birth set' and 'fosterage set' represent the dichotomy of natural vs ideational, the former representing natural parentage, the latter arising out of the ideational level as pro-parentage.

Figure 31. The structure and content of the namesake set



(In this diagram and the following ones, the bold double line represents bonds of filiation or descent, while a single line with two-directional arrows represents a voluntary bond which is on the abstract level of ideology. An equivalence sign = represents the marriage bond.)

Figure 32. The birth, fosterage and namesake sets as structural transformations



(In this figure ⟷ represents structural equivalence and, therefore, transformation.)

On the left of Figure 32 we have the 'natural' triad comprising father, mother and child, which is radically opposed on the right extreme of the diagram by the purely metaphysical triad of namesake, namesake's spouse and the namesake/child. These two extremes are mediated by the namesake set (in the centre of the diagram) which contains elements of each of the other two. In each of the three sets, the relation A:B is determined by choice: choice of spouse in the birth and fosterage sets, and choice of namesake by the parent in the namesake set. In all three sets, the relation of A:B is constrasted to C because of a generation gap; for in the vast majority of cases A and B are of the same generation, while C by definition is in the filial generation. It is C that permits the transformation to work, for the three sets are united by the common denominator of the child.

The birth set of father, mother and child is the genesis of kinship; at its mostly basic level it is the natural origin of the group, consisting of 'blood' bonds between F and Ch, M and Ch and an optative bond between F and M. The namesake set comes into being at the naming ceremony for the child, i.e., the triad consists of a 'blood' bond (between parent and child) and two ideational/optative bonds (between parent and namesake and namesake and child).[1] The fosterage set, on the other hand, is entirely on the ideational and optative level, for the namesake relationship is ideational, as is that between namesale's spouse and the child, while namesake and spouse are also united through choice. Gudeman's assertion that the structural similarity exists and has wider (alliance) implications because 'the family is used as a model for the household group, while the compadrazgo is formed between these units' (1972:59), appears also to be true of the Chopi namesake institution.

To conclude this section on namesakes, and particularly its aspect of alliance, I should like to draw attention to the way in which this

(1) This latter is characterized as optative because although the bond is to a degree 'imposed' on both, there is choice as to whether it will be activated through fosterage

institution complements that of kinship. While the Chopi kinship system is flexible, there are two problems that emerge from it: firstly, there are the constraints of consanguinity and affinity, i.e., one's universe of kin is finite, and secondly, the very flexibility of the system means that kin bonds are easily neglected or even discarded. The namesake institution has tactical uses which can help overcome these problems: in the first instance, it can be used to create kinship-type bonds beyond the circumscribed universe of kin; and secondly, it can be used within the kinship network to reinforce potentially fragile ties, to lend a degree of permanence to a valuable relationship.

An example of this is the case of a man who was disenchanted with his position in the Ntsambe vicinage and was considering moving away. At about the same time, Chipanyelo, who was then head of the vicinage, named his newborn daughter after the dissident, who subsequently changed his mind about leaving. When asked about why he named his daughter after the man, Chipanyelo replied, 'Balanyane seemed sad, and I like him; I tried to make him happy by naming my daughter Peniselwane' (after Penisali, Balanyane's 'school' name). It seems a clear case of a man in authority realizing the danger of his support being eroded by the possible departure of a man who was obviously unhappy, using the namesake institution as a tactic to redefine and strengthen his relationship with the dissident, with, in this case, successful results.

Intriguingly, the allinnce arising from the namesake institution resembles, in a structural sense, the various other kinds of alliance in Chopi society. In the first instance, it is lateral in nature, usually being contracted between peers; then too, it is individually achieved and ephemeral. A man who names his son after, say, a friend, creates an alliance between himself (the parent) and that friend; yet this alliance in turn creates one between the namesake and the child. This latter bond, however, cannot be passed on to the following generation, and lapses on the death of one member of the dyad. All this is

similar to the alliance created by marriage, where a man chooses a wife (an achieved bond, lateral in nature); their son, of course, has ties to his father and mother (and to her kin) but exogamy rules forbid the renewal of the alliance with his mother's group. In both cases, therefore, the alliances are achieved on the level of the senior generation, and are not renewable in the subsequent generation; they have only a two-generation life-span.

As an alliance, the namesake institution acts in a way that is quite different to the other, better known, institutions that give rise to alliances, for example, marriage. While marriage alliance is contracted between structurally well-defined groups, the namesake alliance operates on a sub-structural level, being individually-oriented. Thus, while one finds that a group of siblings share an identical set of parents and universe of kin, they each have unique individual alliances with their own namesakes. Like most alliances in Chopi society, the namesake bond is also ephemeral; it lasts only as long as the participants are living, and cannot be inherited.

The Ndoni (special friend)

In a social system dominated by kinship relationships, which in the greatest part are ascribed, there is always an interstitial area which can be exploited by achieved relationships, such as the namesake complex. Another such voluntary bond that operates in the 'gaps' between structures is that of friendship. In fact, the flexibility of Chopi kinship means that the system can be adapted to meet varied situations, and in a sense, many kinship ties are not merely ascribed: they must be mobilized and activated. Nevertheless, the high mobility of most Chopi individuals and the emphasis on individual-centred coalitions as action sets, means that a flexible kinship system is not enough to cope with all contingencies, and it is here that less formal institutions such as namesakes, friendship, and even neighbourship become important.

The Chopi recognise various kinds of friendship, the most frequen-

tly found and useful being the nyaha and ndoni types. The nyaha friendship tends to be based on a generalized feeling of goodwill and friendliness, and the term can be applied to anyone to whom ego feels a bond of friendship. The greeting, 'dichide nyaha'.' (the sun has risen, friend!) is often used between individuals who are not related by kinship or affinity but who nevertheless wish to express some relationship, however tenuous. The same greeting can also be used between strangers who are of roughly the same age; in short, the term communicates a feeling of compatibility, in the absence of a more formal tie.

Ndoni friendship, while it is also an achieved relationship, is a more formal tie of amity. While a person may have many nyaha friends, it is usual for him or her to have only one, or perhaps two, of the ndoni type. Exceptional individuals, who are influential in some way, may have as many as six vandoni (indeed, this may be used as an index of their prestige in the eyes of their fellows). The ndoni is a special kind of friend, the nearest equivalent in English being the 'best friend'. The ndoni relationship is a type of dyadic contract in that it is a close relationship between two individuals, characterized by an ongoing series of exchanges of gifts, goods and services throughout the lives of the participants, or for the duration of the relationship between them. Unlike the namesake bond, where the namesake need not be consulted before the child is named after him, the 'special friend' relatiosnhip can only officially come about where one individual approaches another and requests him to be his Ndoni. Vandoni must be of the same set (again, as opposed to the namesake tie, where children can potentially be named after a person of the opposite sex). I did not encounter any cases of a man/woman ndoni relationship, and informants asserted that such a relationship would open the couple to suspicions of adultery.

Case 13. The friendship of Tomwane and Menetyane

From informants' accounts, it appears that many, but by no means all, of the ndoni friendships arise out of the casual nyaha relationship.

Tomwane Ntsambe explained to me that as a child he was fostered by his nameake, Tom, who lived in the neighbouring headman's district of Mangane. While living in this district, some distance from his home, Tomwane became friendly with a lad of his own age, Menetyane Nyakwaha. Over the years, the friendship grew until it reached the stage where Menetyane asked Tomwane to be his ndoni, and the latter accepted. No special rituals were conducted, but there was an exchange of small gifts (a pocket knife and a pair of shoes), and ever since then, the two men have kept close contact, even though they live some three miles apart. They still exchange small gifts and share meals prepared for them by their wives when they go on journeys together. Whenever one of them calls a work party (didimwa), performs a ritual, attends a court case, or has a celebration, the other attends; when Tomwane's wife died suddenly, the first person that was sent for was Menetyane, to help his friend in his grief. Menetyane, who is from the headman's district of Mangane, plays an mbila in the orchestra of the Nyatsiku headman's district. His presence is accepted because of his close association with Tomwane, who is the leader (wahombe) of the orchestra.

Although this case is both brief and idiosyncratic, it demonstrates some of the features of the ideal (in the people's eyes) of ndoni friendship: the fact that it grew from familiarity into a strong, almost formal, bond; the ongoing exchange of gifts; the attendance of their respective ceremonial occasions and life crises; and their appearance as regular members of each other's various action sets. All these are part of the expected pattern of interaction between such friends (providing that distance does not become an inhibiting factor). The ndoni is potentially a staunch ally who will provide strong support when required to do so.

The obligations that arise out of friendship vary widely according to the strength of the relationship, which depends to a large degree on how the individuals involved in the various dyads value the tie at any

given time, and also such other factors as contiguity. In general though, it can be stated that friendship obligations are less specific, with fewer sanctions to maintain them, than those which arise out of kinship. Some insight into the quality of the relationship can be gained by observing the kinds of reciprocity that exists between friends in terms of the framework provided by Sahlins (1965).

In his article, 'On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange', Sahlins argues that one can distinguish three kinds of reciprocity: balanced, generalized, and negative; I am here interested only in the first two. Briefly, balanced reciprocity means that two individuals make an exchange of goods and services, which, while they might be quite different in content, are of roughly equal value. The balancing off of the exchange, rather like a ledger, is an indication of the quality of the relationship between the participants.

The rather informal nyaha type of friendship is characterized by reciprocity of this kind; the fact that the two individuals do exchange goods and services on something other than a business level is a symbolic statement of equality and a certain amount of trust. The fact, however, that the items exchanged are roughly of equal value and that the cycle of reciprocity must be completed within a relatively short time, indicates a lack of total commitment to the relationship, a certain lack of confidence and trust. The relationship can be terminated by 'balancing out' an exchange, and by not reopening the cycle. Indeed, the nyaha type of friendship tends to be casual and transient, easily made and easily broken; in a person's lifetime, he or she may have a large number of such casual friendships.

The ndoni relationship, on the other hand, is ideally characterized by Sahlins' model of generalized reciprocity (1965:147). Between individuals sharing this relationship, one finds a series of exchanges, some large, some small, and many of the intangible sort, such as lending support at a court case, or loyalty in an argument. The sharing of meals,

praising one another in song, hunting together, and generally keeping each other's company are all signs to the rest of the community that this is no ordinary friendship. Gifts of varying value are regularly exchanged; Tomwane, for example, who is a skillful xylophone maker, repaired Menetyane's mbila and would not think of asking for, or accepting payment, which would normally be expensive. Because the two men are vandoni, it would have been quite inappropriate for Tomwane to ask for, or Menetyane to offer, payment for the service. In special friendship, one does not count the cost, nor is there any haste in reciprocating; this may take weeks, months, or even years, and the repayment may be in coin of an entirely different kind to the original item. As Sahlins (1965:145ff.) points out, generalized reciprocity permits a long period to elapse, which indicates the closeness of the relationship between the participants, for it involves a high degree of trust. Because of the nature of the reciprocity it is much more difficult to 'balance off' the exchanges and thus end the relationship, although theoretically it is possible.

There is a rough correspondence to the two kinds of friendship I distinguish here and certain aspects of a dichotomy that Wolf elaborates:

> 'We must, I believe, distinguish two kinds of friendship; I shall call the first expressive or emotional friendship, the second instrumental friendship ..... emotional friendship involves a relation between an ego and an alter in which each satisfies some emotional need in his opposite number.' (1966:10).

Wolf goes on to distinguish emotional friendship from the instrumental type, which has certain tactical implications, and which need not be based purely on affect. In this latter type, the friendship is used as a means of making contact with a person outside one's existing social network and is used as a means of thus broadening one's network. Wolf (ibid: 12) therefore, views this type as being instrumental as a network expanding device and, by implication, eschewing the emotional aspect of the relationship.

While I find Wolf's distinctions useful, I disagree that these two aspects (the emotional and instrumental) form two distinct types of

friendship; the Chopi material suggests that both aspects can be found in any kind of friendship, in greater or smaller proportions. Even the nyaha friendship, which is characterized by its loose affective emphasis, may contain an element of instrumentality if, for example, the friendship may be of more use to one partner than the other. Then too, the ndoni relationship need not necessarily have any pretence of affect at the outset[1], although it is expected to develop in this direction once two persons become vandoni.

Taking the general view, however, there is undoubtedly a predominance of the instrumental aspects of friendship in the ndoni complex, if only because of its more formal nature, which is more amenable (because of its greater degree of permanence) to manipulation as an alliance. Nyaha friendship on the other hand, has mainly emotional features, although it can be built up into the stronger bond; in any event, there may be some tactical considerations in the choice of any type of friend.

Wolf also discerns a tendency for certain types of friendship to be found in specific types of social systems, viz., that we should,

> ' ... expect to find emotional freindships primarily in social situations where the individual is strongly embedded in solidarity groupings like communities and lineages, and where the set of social structure inhibits social and geographical mobility.' (1966: 11)

In such situations, argues Wolf, the individual's place in society is ascribed, and friendship acts as an 'emotional release and catharsis from the strains and pressures of role playing.' (ibid: 11). In view of the data I present thoughout this thesis, I must disagree with Wolf's interpretations; while his claims may be true for strongly ordered societies, it appears that in fluid social systems such as the Chopi possess, the

(1) Illustrative of this perhaps is the fact that my wife was inundated with requests to become the ndoni of various women who were total strangers soon after our arrival in the field. There could scarcely be any emotional commitment here, and she was apparently judged to be a wealthy and potentially influential person, who would ply such friends with 'European' goods such as soap and cloth in exchange for maize and cassava at periodic intervals.

very flexibility and relative individuality of the system creates a need for relationships, even of an informal sort, with other individuals who are not kin. In a highly ordered and strong kinship system, most of one's neighbours are close kin; among the Chopi this is not so; friendship and neighbourship in part compensate for this.

Wolf makes the point that emotional friendship restricts the relationship to the dyad involved, whereas instrumental friendship opens up links to other people beyond the immediate dyad (ibid: 12), each member acting as a potential connecting link.

> 'In contrast to emotional friendship, which is associated with closure of the social circle, instrumental friendship reaches beyond the boundaries of existing sets, and seeks to establish new beach-heads in new sets' (1966:12).

Again, one must be cautious of accepting this argument as a whole; I would agree, however, that many of the ndoni-type freindships are indeed instrumental in opening up and expanding an individual's social network. There are many occasions when a formal bond, entailing rights and obligations can act as a substitute for, or, complementary to, kinship ties. The ndoni relationship, when used tactically, performs the functions tions of alliance-formation which marriage or the namesake syndrome can do in other situations.

Thus the ndoni 'special' friendship can be an alliance, dyadic by nature, but with the effect of opening avenues to other social resources. To revert to the case of Tomwane and Menetyane: the latter is a member of the Nyatsiku orchestra, even though he lives in Mangane. As will be seen in a later chapter, the lyrics of the songs sung by the Nyatsiku people to the tunes of the orchestra are directed mainly at Seven Jack, the third of the headman's districts under sub-chief Nyakwaha. The loose alliance between Nyatsiku and Mangane districts, despite certain historical and political reasons, is due at least in part to the close friendship of Tomwane and Menetyane. I therefore view special friendship as an alternative structural principle to the others so far elucidated (agnatic, matrilateral and affinal kinship, and the namesake relationship)

the rights and obligations of which can be activated as a priciple of recruitment to action sets.

Friendship, especially the ndoni type, is most useful in situations where other structures may be absent, for it is the most flexible and adaptable of all the ties. Thus, where geographical mobility is high and where kin may be scarce or absent, friendship amy be invoked as a substitute for the missing ascribed ties. Perhaps the most telling argument in favour of viewing the ndoni relationship as quasi-kinship is evident in the behaviour patterns of women, especially married women, in Chopi society.

It is a tradition that women have far more vandoni than do men; indeed, dos Santos, in his Portuguese-English Dictionary, describes ndoni as being a friend, companion, especially between women of equal age (1950:180).

Why, then, do women have more special friendships than men? The answer lies, I believe, in the Chopi marriage patterns, whereby men:

(a) select wives from some distance away;

(b) are forbidden to marry women of the same clan as either his father or mother (i.e., the woman must definitely be non-kin);

(c) marriage (especially early on) tends to be viri-patrilocal. The effect of this is that a newlywed bride arrives in an area which is probably foreign to her, where she probably has no kin, and where she falls under the authority of a hostile mother-in-law. In short, she may be totally alone, and in desperate need of allies. The only means at her disposal to counteract this lack of personal network is to establish numerous friendship ties, especially ones which will be of some duration.

Many of the ndoni relationships are formed by young men who have been fostered and are living away from their natal home; another situation which frequently gives rise to special friendship is the mine compound in South Africa. Both these situations are similar to that in which a married woman finds herself: it is where an individual is removed and

isolated from his normal social network of kin, affines, neighbours, namesakes and friends. Faced with such a heterogeneous situation, the individual must contract a social network de novo, usually by utilizing friendship and neighbourship. The means by which this network is given some permanence is by formalizing some of the ties, introducing the firmer duties and reciprocal expectancies that are part of the ndoni complex. In this context, therefore, special friendship is a sort of quasi-kinship acting in its place and fulfilling its functions in situations where kinship itself is absent or is not sufficient to cover all contingencies.

Friendship is an immensely valuable social resource to the Chopi: it is undoubtedly the most flexible of the institutions because the rights and obligations involved are unspecific and depend upon situations and individuals. It is an achieved relationship that can be adapted to meet the demands of almost any social environment, and especially relevant to nyaha relationship is Foster's assertion that,

> 'Friendship differs from the other systems (such as kinship) in that a long-enduring gap between ideal and real behaviour can hardly exist: when friends cease to be friendly, the institution dissolves.' (1961:1184).

The extreme flexibility that exists here also means that as easily as such bonds are made, so too are they broken; thus the need for the ndoni type of friendship, which makes the relationship a little more reliable.

In a social system which places emphasis on the individual, and in which even the more formal structures are lacking in strength and depth, friendship is able to 'fill the gaps left by the imperfections of the others.' (Foster 1961:1184). Chopi mobility, as well as the radically different social conditions in the mine compounds create the need for an institution such as friendship, which Foster calls 'the most versatile of (all) the institutions' . (1961:1184).

Conclusion: Namesakes, friends as quasi-kin

In this chapter I use the term quasi-kinship to refer to those institutions which, while not being kinship in actuality, nevertheless perform many of the functions that various categories of kin could perhaps

fulfil. I refer particularly to the functions of bonding and alliance-formation which are vital in the relatively fluid Chopi social system, where an individual is free to mobilize all the structural relationships open to him in order to create an effective social network.

It would be in order to recall that there is an abundance of land in Chopiland, which is one of the main environmental factors which permits a high mobility because, as I have argued in a previous chapter (following Meggitt 1965), pressure on land tends to make groups become exclusivist, only recruiting patrilineal kin (in a society with an agnatic ideology). The Chopi, therefore, while professing an agnatic system, in fact pay scarce attention to it, resulting in what effectively resembles a non-lineal organization with a patrilateral bias. Chopi kin groups, insofar as they exist at all, are very shallow, which means that an individual has fewer kin to call upon than, say, in Zulu society, where kin groups are traced further back lineally, and therefore have a broader effective base.

Faced with a social system which is characteristically lateral, and where prestige can be attained through personal achievement, an individual should attempt to gather many dispersed allegiances, which results in the formation of individual-centred coalitions. Wolf has described this situation in general terms:

> 'Increasing mobility ... brings an increase in the number of possible combinations of resources, including varying combinations of knowledge and influence with access to goods or personnel.' (1966:5).

Thus we find that these individual-centred coalitions comprise people drawn from many different relationships; but as the term 'coalition' suggests, it is a temporary allegiance, for while a core of individuals may be constant, there is a regular turnover of the more peripheral members.

The namesake and friendship relationships are therefore social resources in this process of coalition formation, but their functioning is more subtle than it at first appears. For a full understanding of their role in the social system, one must rely on the model of the indi-

vidual, making choices, which are to a degree determined by a particular social situation, and the individual's reading of that situation. It is due to the idiosyncratic nature of most of these situations that no distinct pattern emerges from an analysis of the nameske alliances.

Both the namesake and friendship institutions can be used strategically either to 'open up' an individual's social network, or to circumscribe it. The namesake link, it will be recalled, can extend beyond the existing network to include non-kin, or it can stabilize and strengthen intra-kin bonds. Wolf's distinction between emotional and instrumental friendship pointed to a similar dichotomy in this institution: the emotional type being between two individuals satisfying a particular need in each and with no further ramifications; the instrumental type, however, was not only dyadic, but could be used tactically, as a link, establishing 'beachheads' in other groups, thus opening and expanding the individual's social network.

Finally, it will have been noted that the friendship and namesake institutions are indispensible social resources, providing alternative structures which can be activated in the most difficult conditions, especially in situations of rapid social change or where, for some reason, the more formal institutions of kinshp are lacking. Their versatility undoubtedly rests on their less formal nature (which, in the case of freindship at least) may also mean that they are instrinsically less stable. Nevertheless, the value of investigating these less formal institutions cannot be in doubt; to quote Wolf:

> 'The anthropologist has a professional licence to study such interstitial, supplementary, and parallel structures .... and to expose their relation to the major strategic, overarching institutions.' (1966:2).

The less formal institutions as the quasi-kinship described above undoubtedly have manipulative possibilities but, it is contended, even what appear to be the most rigid of structures are open to manipulation if individuals so desire. One such 'structure' is the system of kinship terminology, which is described in the following chapter, the last of the chapters

chapters which is examined from a number of viewpoints, and finally, the analysis is brought full circle, to show how individuals 'bend' and use the system to meet their own needs.

Chapter VIII

Classificatory kin terms: Structural Features and Social Relevance

Let us now turn our attention to the system of kinship terminology and examine the degree of 'fit' between it and other features of Chopi society. I shall be continuing the pattern of the preceding chapters; in so doing, I describe the formal structure of the kin term system, attempting to account for the main features, and pointing out the areas of the system that permit flexibility. Thus far the thesis has been put forward that Chopi kinship is pliable, places emphasis on lateral kin, gives rise to a broad spread of alliances and, in social action, use is made of all categories of kin. These themes also emerge from the analysis which follows; indeed, the kin term system is an important social resource, for, as I hope to show, it is tractable while it simultaneously mirrors important social features and acts as a reference grid. The flexibility to which I refer is to be found at the level of social action. Kin terms can be applied to individuals who are not kin, and certain kin categories encompass individuals linked to ego by various pathways (which can be falsified for tactical reasons).

For my framework I draw on diverse, and at times apparently contradictory, orientations; the result is a synthesis of such diverse approaches as Lounsbury's formal analysis and Levi-Strauss' alliance theory (among others). This uneasy association, it will soon be demonstrated, is rendered possible by use of the dialectical model provided by Berger and Luckman's (1971) particular approach to the sociology of knowledge. Thus, despite the injunctions of cognitive anthropologists to conduct an analysis of kin terms divorced from any social context, on the one hand, and the bias, on the other, of most sociologically-inclined analysts who treat such kin systems as passive images of important social features, I attempt to steer a middle course, which allows one

to utilize the best features of both approaches[1].

Like many other areas of this thesis, I am in this chapter interested (from the methodological point of view) not only in the ideal, but the actual; i.e., not only the idealized structural referents of kin terms, but also the practical application of the principles involved in empirical situations. There is, for example, the well-documented difference between terms of reference and terms of address, where the former are regarded as providing a generally accepted reference grid, and the latter as the practical application (or manipulation) of the former in actual situations. Any discrepancy which may exist here arises from the situation and can in part be accounted for in terms of the emic-etic dichotomy referred to in earlier chapter, although Bloch (vide infra) argues that this is an incomplete view of the problem.

As McKinley (1971 (a)) has incisively shown, most studies of kinship terminologies have in the past (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown 1952:49ff.) relied heavily on what he calls a 'reflectionist assumption' (1971(b):408) whereby the kin terms are 'passive and imperfect mirrors of the social system' (ibid:408). In more recent times, writers such as Lounsbury (1964), Scheffler (1972), Glick (1967), Bloch (1971) and McKinley (1971) have persuasively argued that systems of kin terminology have an existence as 'social facts' (Scheffler and Lounsbury 1971:156) and kin terms can be seen as 'cultural objects' (Glick 1967:371) which can be used by individuals as can any other cultural object; Bloch, like Glick, points to the manipulative possibilities, seeing 'kin' terms as having tactical uses deriving from a moral base. McKinley, while also stressing the ideological aspect of kin terms, changes the focus slightly when he argues that terminology systems have ideological properties which are used to reconcile basic contradictions in certain social systems.

In this chapter, I attempt to provide a model which is comprehensive

(1) My debt to the work of McKinley (1971 (a) and (b)) and the particular approach to the sociology of knowledge provided by P.L. Berger and T. Luckman in The Social Construction of Reality, will be apparent throughout this chapter.

enough to adequately demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between the kin terms and their sociological context. My concern with this interrelationship is reflected in the structure of the chapter, which is divided into three main sections, which are aimed at: justifying my synthetic approach and introducing some of the theoretical issues involved; an analysis of the logic of the composition of the categories of kin; and the sociological implications that influence, and arise out of, the system. The second section, in which I present a transformational analysis and formal account, deals with the system of kin terms as terms of reference and, while the main thrust of the third section is to examine aspects such as the impact of the terms and their use on the alliance system,

Theoretical orientation: A synthesis

Apart from demonstrating the internal logic of the kinship system, one of the aims of this chapter is to provide an account of the social relevance of that system. There are two aspects of social relevance which are of interest here: firstly, one should examine what effect the terminology system has on the conduct of social relations (both in an ideal sense and in the strategic uses to which a term can be put), and secondly, the importance of the social context in which the system of terminology is embedded. In this direction, I follow McKinley (1971 (a), 1971 (b)) in maintaining that, while both the social context and the terminology are to a large extent interrelated, they are not identical. There does appear to be heuristic merit, however, in dealing with the idea systems and sociological and human contexts, first of all separately, as if they were closed systems, then to recognise that reality lies in a synthesis of these (in much the same manner as Leach has interpreted Kachin social systems, (1954)).

What, then, is the nature of the relationship between kin terms and social context? A possible solution is provided by Berger and Luckman who argue that,

> 'a "sociology of knowledge" will have to deal not only with the empirical variety of "knowledge" in human societies, but also with the processes by which any body of knowledge comes to be socially established as "reality"' (1971:4).

They draw on the works of Marx, Durkheim, and G.H. Mead, their synthesis being a combination of Marx's distinction between substructures and superstructures in social life (Berger and Luckman 1971:18); Durkheim's definition of social reality; and Mead's notion of a dialogue between the individual and society, whereby the individual is constrained and influenced by his culture and society. The value of Meade's viewpoint is that the course of the dialogue is not predetermined and new patterns of activity can emerge, through the choices and manipulations of individuals.

Berger and Luckman argue that social reality is a result of a dialectical process comprising three phases:

> 'it is important to emphasise that the relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one. That is, man (not, of course, in isolation but in his collectivities) and his social world interact with each other. The product acts back on its producer. Externalization and objectivation are moments in a continuing dialectical process. The third moment in this process is internalization (by which the objectivated social world is retrojected into consciousness in the course of socialization) ... Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product ... an analysis that leaves out any one of these three moments will be distortive.' (Berger and Luckman 1971:78-9).

This is a dynamic interpretation of social reality, which, in summary, depicts three phases of an ongoing process: externalization, whereby society is a human product; objectivation, whereby society attains a reality sui generis and confronts the humanity that produced it; and internalization, by which man is a product of society through its socialization and education processes.

The value of this approach to the study of the nature of the relationship between man and the normative systems that in part make up society is that it does not assign any priority to behaviour, society, or the normative systems. At any given moment in time, all three processes of the dialectic are in action, and all three play an active

part in the ongoing development of a society. I stress this point because kinship terminologies have traditionally been depicted as reflecting certain important social principles. While not denying that there is some truth in this, I would agree with McKinley (1971) that this 'passive' role attributed to kinship terminologies is misleading[1] and that there are positive roles that these terminologies perform.

I would like to put aside McKinley's argument (which deals with kin terminologies as a force for retaining transient alliances) for the moment and look at the function of kin terms on a more simple level: a classificatory kinship terminology brings within a person's mental grasp a far greater number of people than would otherwise be possible. In a small-scale society, such as that of the Chopi, kinship is an extremely important organizing principle. Its importance is enhanced by the fact that most of the people are largely territorially bound, despite the occasional migration by a Chopi individual. This has the effect of bringing a person into frequent contact with a large group of kinsmen, who expect to be addressed in the idiom of kinship. Clearly, it would be extremely difficult if every kinsman had an individual kin term, especially when it is remembered that a kin term has a 'bundle' of rights and duties attached to it[2].

A kinship terminology, then, consists of a highly structured set of terms of reference, which serve as a means of ordering the social field - they are a kind of 'cognitive map' of a person's kinship universe. The cognitive anthropologists have provided us with techniques that help us make sense of these cognitive maps, in the form of componential, formal

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(1) The positive role that a kinship terminology plays, which is the main thrust of McKinley's argument, is discussed in the third section of this chapter.

(2) But caution must be exercised here, for as Fortes argues in his article on Ashanti kinship and marriage (1956), the rights and obligations inferred by a kin term differ qualitatively between the 'primary referent' and those persons to whom the term is also 'extended' (see, e.g., Fortes 1956:271).

and transformational analyses[1]. I shall outline the general orientation of the cognitive anthropologists, and focus particular attention on kin term systems.

Cognitive anthropology (or the 'New Ethnography'), focuses on discovering how a people[2] organizes and uses its culture - it is an attempt to understand the organizing principles that underly behaviour. Each people is assumed to have a unique system of perceiving and ordering the phenomena that makes up its social and physical environment. The congruence of this approach with the sociology of knowledge is here apparent, where both argue that society and its culture influence what is regarded as 'knowledge' or reality.

The intention here is to describe the ideational system of the Chopi (in this case their kinship terminology) and to seek the patterns and rules that emerge from the system. These rules are on the level of Berger and Luckman's second and third phases of the dialectical process, i.e., internalization, where man, as a product of his society, has a socially and culturally defined set of rules within which to work. (This does not mean to say that he cannot manipulate those rules, and even perhaps change them through manipulation, which is an aspect of the externalization phase of the dialectic.)

The use of a linguistic analogy may clarify the issue. The structures, or set of rules, that underly the kinship system can be thought of as a 'grammar'. The grammar of the kinship system is achieved by the description of a set of rules; indeed, the grammar is the set of rules. These patterns differ from one society to another and each

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(1) These three approaches are in fact different aspects of the same approach. Componential analysis refers to the analysis of the components or features of meaning of kin terms, such as age, sex, degree of lineality in relation to ego, etc. Formal analysis, while using the componential approach, analyses the form, i.e., the structure of the realtionships between kin. Transformational analysis seeks a set of rules that generate the entire kinship system and which derives from the formal account. Lounsbury's work (e.g., 1964) encompasses all three approaches, while Goodenough (1956) and Coult (1967) reflect the first and third types of approach, respectively.

(2) A 'people' is a group of persons who share a common culture.

system has its own internal logic which makes it comprehensible. The kinship grammar is of two levels of abstraction: there is the set of rules which take the form of 'ought' propositions, which constitute an ideal prescription for the allocation of a term and its relevant behaviour. Actual behaviour is the reflection 'on the ground' of how people have interpreted, and perhaps manipulated, whose rules. There is also a deeper-lying structure, with rules of a different order. It is this deep-lying structure that is of interest.

Looking at the ideological aspects of the system of terminology from the sociological point of view, on the other hand, a number of useful insights emerge. Scheffler and Lounsbury (1971) point the way, arguing that a sociological interpretation of how a system uses the rules of extension it does, provides only half an explanation; it is equally important to examine the social consequences of using such rules:

> 'That is to say, even though we may assume that in general the institutionalization of such a rule is socially motivated, the rule, once established as a conventional procedure, becomes a 'social fact' in its own right and may be regarded as having certain consequences for social action.' (1971: 156).

This argument is echoed to a degree by Glick, Bloch and McKinley, but before noting their various viewpoints, the thorny problem of whether kin terms are category terms or extensions must be raised. I realise that there are monolithic philosophical divisions involved in the alliance-descent debate in kinship theory and in their respective views of kin terms as categories or extensions, but it seems to me not impossible to postulate that, within one system of kin classification, certain kin terms are better understood as variations of the extensionist mode, while others lend themselves to analysis as category terms[1].

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(1) Selby, in a recent review, takes a similar stance to this when he says, 'The problem has been partially resolved by our admission that kinship terms are polysemic and therefore both genealogical and categorical' (1972: 305). Despite the uncompromising stands taken by Leach and Lounsbury on the nature of the problem, I agree with Selby's evaluation that the two approaches do not contradict, rather that they are 'complementary and relate to different questions' (ibid: 306). The difference lies in focus of interest.

Scheffler and Lounsbury make an eloquent defence of the extensionist argument (1971:17-18) against the social category proponents (e.g., Leach 1958), but I find both Leach and Lounsbury persuasive in different ways (despite their debate: Leach 1958, Lounsbury 1965). For example, certain terms seem best understood as having a primary referent from which the others are derived, especially those generated in the nuclear family: both F and FFBs are called tate by the Chopi, but only the former is one's tate ditsuri ('real father'), and one does not behave towards the two men in exactly the same way. But with terms which do not have a primary referent within the nuclear family, it is more difficult to assign primary and secondary status. The term koko, e.g., can refer to MB, MF, MM, FF and FM (among others), and it is impossible to single out any one of the 'grandparents' as being the focal point of the category.

Another approach to the study of kin terms which takes up where the abovementioned leaves off is that of Bloch, who attacks both Leach and Lounsbury for ignoring the strategic uses of kin terms (1971:80). Bloch himself uses an extensionist argument, though in an entirely different way to Lounsbury, whom he applauds for stressing the polysemic nature of kinship terms and their multiplicity of meanings (a point for which Leach fails to account). Bloch dislikes the kind of impersonal, automatic extensions that arise out of Lounsbury's structural account, preferring an individual-centred, decision-making model. Again, the two types of extension appear to me to be complementry rather than contradictory, and in this chapter I use both the structural extensions of Lounsbury and Bloch's unstructured extensions in different contexts.

It is in the work of McKinley that the most convincing link is made between the kin terms as an ideological system and social relevance, for, using an argument somewhat reminiscent of of Lévi-Strauss' explanation of the function of myth as being (in part) to reconcile contradictions in the social system, McKinley argues that the Omaha-type system has

ideological properties which reconcile certain basic contradictions inherent in this system (vide infra). Certainly this is a more satisfying argument, incorporating as it does important data regarding alliances in Omaha systems, than approaches which incorporate only the culturological or sociological viewpoints.

A formal account and transformational analysis of some Chopi kin terms[1]

Following the methods of the cognitive anthropologists, I isolate an area of social or cultural reality (which is termed a 'semantic domain'), which is a circumscribed class of 'things' all of which share at least one feature which distinguishes them from all other domains. In our case, that feature is kinship. Ego must be able to say of everyone in this context, that he is dishaka dangu, 'my kinsman'. This is the root, or basic component, of meaning.

Having isolated the domain, the next step is to discover how it is organized. In the case of kinship, there are the components of meaning of sex, age (or generation), and degree of distance from ego in terms of a lineality/laterlity scale. These distinguishing components, or combinations of them, give each individual his 'place' in the kinship system. It is the relationship between these structural positions that we are seeking. In other words, we seek the structural reality of the system, and will not here concern ourselves with the actual components of sex, age, etc., although they are clearly relevant to the positions of individuals in the structure.

Lounsbury has developed a technique for 'cracking the code' of certain kinship systems; he has developed a set of rules that will generate a particular system. The meaning of any kin term, as mentioned above, is found in its various components, but more importantly, is also determined by its relationship to all the other terms. It is here that the

(1) In this section I draw heavily on the work of Lounsbury (1964, 1965) and to a lesser extent, Goodenough (1956, 1964), Coult (1967) and Scheffler (1971, 1972 (a) and (b)).

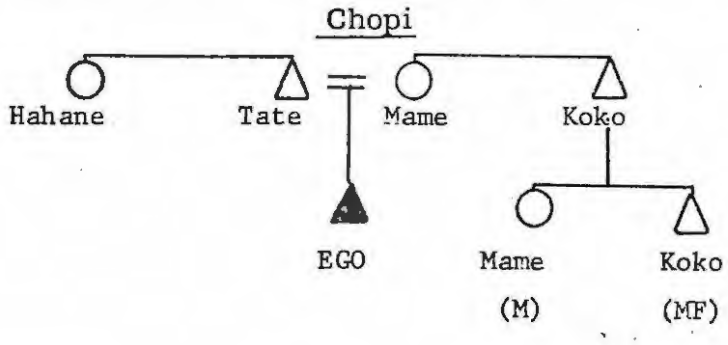
techniques of formal and transformational analysis help us find the rules that are the basis of the kinship grammar.

Let us now examine the classificatory kinship terminology of the Chopi, applying the methods of formal analysis to the material. I shall employ the terms for a male ego, as there is little difference between the male and female systems, and what slight differences do occur, are governed by the same transformational rules for either sex.

The Chopi possess a variation of the Omaha-type system of kinship terminology, which is distinguished by such features as the facts that: cross cousins have different terms to parallel cousins (whose terms are the same as those of ego's siblings); patrilateral cross cousins are different to matrilateral cross cousins (indeed, the children of one's FZ are called ntukulu, which approximates the English 'grandchild', while the children of one's MB are called mame and koko for MBd and MBs respectively. The former is roughly equivalent to 'mother' and the latter, 'grandfather'.) In other words, ego's patrilateral cross cousins are classed with relatives of a descending generation, and the matrilateral cross cousins with an ascending generation (McKinley 1971(a):229). Other general features of the system are that ego distinguishes between elder and younger siblings of the same sex as himself or herself (nkoma and landa respectively), while siblings of the opposite sex are always referred to as ndiye. The siblings of ego's parents (FB and MZ) are merged with F and M terminologically, as are ego's F's parallel cousins (e.g., FFBs becomes F). All persons two or more generations above ego, regardless of sex, are referred to as koko.

To be more specific, however, the Chopi approximate to what Lounsbury has called 'Omaha-type III' (1969:236-9), which is characterized by the fact that ego's MB and all his male descendants are called by the term assigned to MF (which for the Chopi is koko), while female members of the 'lineage' are called mame (M). In other words, as is shown in Figure 33 below, ego's matrilateral cross cousins are called M and MF respectively (cf. Coult 1967:36).

Figure 33: The terms assigned to matrilateral cross cousins among the



On kinship charts such as those I have constructed for the Chopi (Figs 34 and 35), it will be observed that kin terms, especially classificatory terms, are no respecters of objective generational lines, as the dotted lines on the charts show. In reality, for example, ego's MBsss (in the bottom right hand corner of the charts) is two generations below ego, but his kin term is koko - i.e., roughly equivalent to 'grandfather', two generations above ego.

Examination of Figures 34 and 35 reveals that there is a kind of 'balance' in the skewing of the generations - the generations are skewed upwards on the right and downwards on the left of the diagram, taking ego as the focal point. Lounsbury provides a set of rules, which, suitably modified, makes the 'skewing' of the generations comprehensible, and when these are successively applied to any classificatory term on the chart, can demonstrate quite logically why that person possesses that kin term.

Ideally, of course, one should examine the entire spectrum of kin relevant to ego. This is, however, both tedious and unnecessary; for if our model, which takes the form of a set of rules of reduction, is valid, it must successfully predict all the classificatory kin terms of the system. The kinship charts provided here are by no means exhaustive, but it does have more members than the bare minimum necessary to illustrate the set of rules that generate the entire kinship system. The rules must, and in fact do, predict any member's structural position in the system.

I shall often present kin terms in a notational system comprising

a set of primitives, such as F, M, B, Z, s and d, (the Z is used to denote sister, to avoid confusion with the notation s, which means son), and compounds of primitives, such as FM, MB, Zs, dd, etc. This is done for two reasons: firstly, this translation into a symbol or chain of symbols gives a minimal chain of kin through which ego can trace his relationship with any other kinsman; secondly, it provides a means, however unsatisfactory, of avoiding the translation of a vernacular kin term into an ethnocentric, value-laden 'equivalent'.

Let us now define some key concepts[1]:

Kin-class: A set of kin-types, all of which are assigned the same kin terms, e.g., F, FB, FFBs all share the term tate.

Kin-chain: A genealogical chain through which ego traces his relationship to another relative, for example, mother's brother's son's son (MBss).

Core kin-type: A member of a kin-class to which other members can be reduced, but which cannot be reduced itself, e.g., M.

Transformational analysis: The discovery of rules that are able to perform a transformation so that, through successive application of the rules, all members of a kin-class are reduced to the core member of that kin-class, or are generated from that core member.

Lounsbury makes the assumption that there are certain kin positions that are primary, and that for every class of kin in the terminology there is a primary referent from which all others are derived. These primary referents are those kin genealogically closest to ego, especially in the nuclear family, and also such kin as grandfather and mother and grandchild.

The rules:

In any given class of kin terms then, there is a primary referent and other members, for example, the kin term tate in Chopi means 'father' and has the primary referent of F and other members FB, FFBs, FFFBss, etc. These latter compounds or kin chains can be shown to be derived quite logically from the primary term, by the successive application of three rules (with two limiting factors) that appear to be the basis of the system.

(1) These four definitions, with the exception of 'kin chain', which is my own formulation, are after Coult (1967:26).

These rules can be said to generate the system, and Lounsbury appears to have discovered them by taking the system and noting the 'skewing' of the generations upwards on the right of the chart, and downwards on the left. The three rules to which I am referring are called: (i) the merging rule, (ii) the half-sibling rule, and (iii) the skewing rule. These are transformation rules that can be successively applied to kin chains and so 'reduce' them to the genealogically closer kin types to which they are terminologically equivalent.

There are two special adaptations in the form of limiting factors, that must be made in the case of the Chopi material. The first is what I have termed the Two generation (ascending) cut-off (Webster 1973: 303). Scheffler (1972: 361) and Scheffler and Lounsbury (1971: 125) isolate a rule of reduction which they term the 'Ancestor Rule' which performs much the same function as the two-generation (ascending) cut-off, except that it operates not only with regard to ascending generations, but also descending ones, which my rule specifically excludes. The second special adaption is a limitation of the skewing rule when dealing with one particular kin term (FZ), which I discuss later.

The two generation cut-off refers to the fact that ego calls all kin who are two or more generations above him by the term koko. In other words, the transformation rules appear to cease to function if the 'target' falls above the cut-off line two generations above ego[1] (see Figs 34 and 35). On the other hand, if the target relative is traced through a kin chain that goes above the two generation cut-off, but re-emerges beneath it again, then the transformation rules continue to apply. For example, the relative FFB above the cut-off chain FFBs goes above the two generation line, but re-emerges, and the rules therefore apply, this relative being called tate (F).

(1) The 'target' relative is the one to which we are trying to trace the relationship from ego.

The three transformation rules are derived as follows:

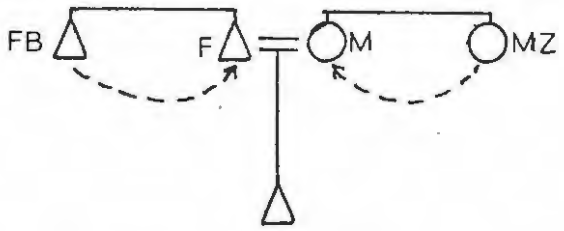
The Merging Rule:

The Chopi call both father (F) and father's brother (FB) by the same term, tate. Likewise, mother (M) and mother's sister (MZ) are both called mame. Thus we can substitute the symbol M for MZ, or F for FB whenever MZ or FB occur in a chain. In the chain FBd, therefore, the FB can be reduced to F and the chain would now read Fd.

What we are observing is the formal equivalence, in certain contexts, of siblings of the same sex. This is called the Merging Rule, and it can be formalized to read: Let any person's same-sex sibling, be regarded as structurally equivalent to that person.

$$♂FB \rightarrow ♂F, \quad ♂MZ \rightarrow ♂M.$$

If this rule is logically coherent, the corollary must also apply, that any person should be considered structurally equivalent to their same-sex sibling.



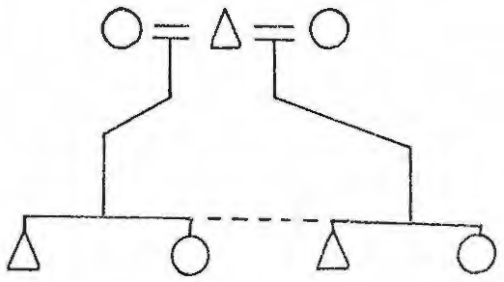
The merging rule must not, however, allow the merging of ego's brother in the person of ego himself.

The Half-Sibling Rule:

The second equivalence rule is the half-sibling rule, which appears to be univeral in kinship systems (the merging rule, while widely found, is not universal). This rule refers to the formal equivalence between half siblings. This means that, for example, father's son can always be written as brother, mother's daughter as sister, etc. ($♂Fs \longrightarrow ♂B$, $♂Md \longrightarrow ♂Z$).

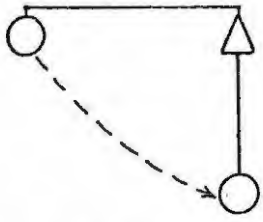
Lounsbury has formalized the rule to read: Let one's parent's child be considered to be one's sibling.

$$♂Fs \rightarrow ♂B, \; ♂Ms \rightarrow ♂B, \; ♂Fd \rightarrow ♂Z, \; ♂Md \rightarrow ♂Z.$$



The Skewing Rule:

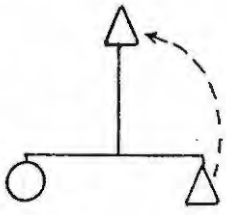
The third, and perhaps most crucial equivalence rule for the Omaha kinship system is that known as the skewing rule. It has been formalized to read: Let a man's sister be regarded as structurally equivalent to his daughter for the purpose of tracing descent.



♂Z.→♂d.,

eg,♂FZs →♂Fds

Again, for the rule to have validity, the corollary must also be true, which in this case will read: Let a woman's brother be regarded as structurally equivalent to her father for the purpose of tracing descent.



♀B→♀F,

eg, ♀MB→♀MF

It must be noted that the skewing rule can only apply when (a) the protagonists are linking relatives, and (b) for the purpose of tracing descent. For example, a man would not call his sister 'daughter', but a sister's child would be called 'grandchild'.

The Two-Generation (ascending) Cut-Off Rule:

This fourth rule is more by way of a limiting case that an actual equivalence rule. Stated formally, it would read: Let any person's parent's parent and any other kinsman, who, through the application of the otherequivalence rules, is regarded as structurally equivalent to a relative two generations above ego, be regarded as structurally equivalent to that person's grandparent.

e.g., ♂ FFM — ♂ PP (where P = parent)

♂ MB — ♂ MF (skewing rule)

— ♂ PP (two generation cut-off)

For the remainder of this section, I refer to the two kinship charts. Figure 34 depicts some of the Chopi kin terms and their positions. I have given an abbreviated notation for the English equivalent for example, mwane, GGs (which means, great grandson). Figure 35 depicts the same kin positions, denoted here by a kin chain, for example, MBs (mother's brother's son), followed in brackets by the

Figure 74. Chopi classificatory kin terms, their English approximations, and lines of generational skewing.

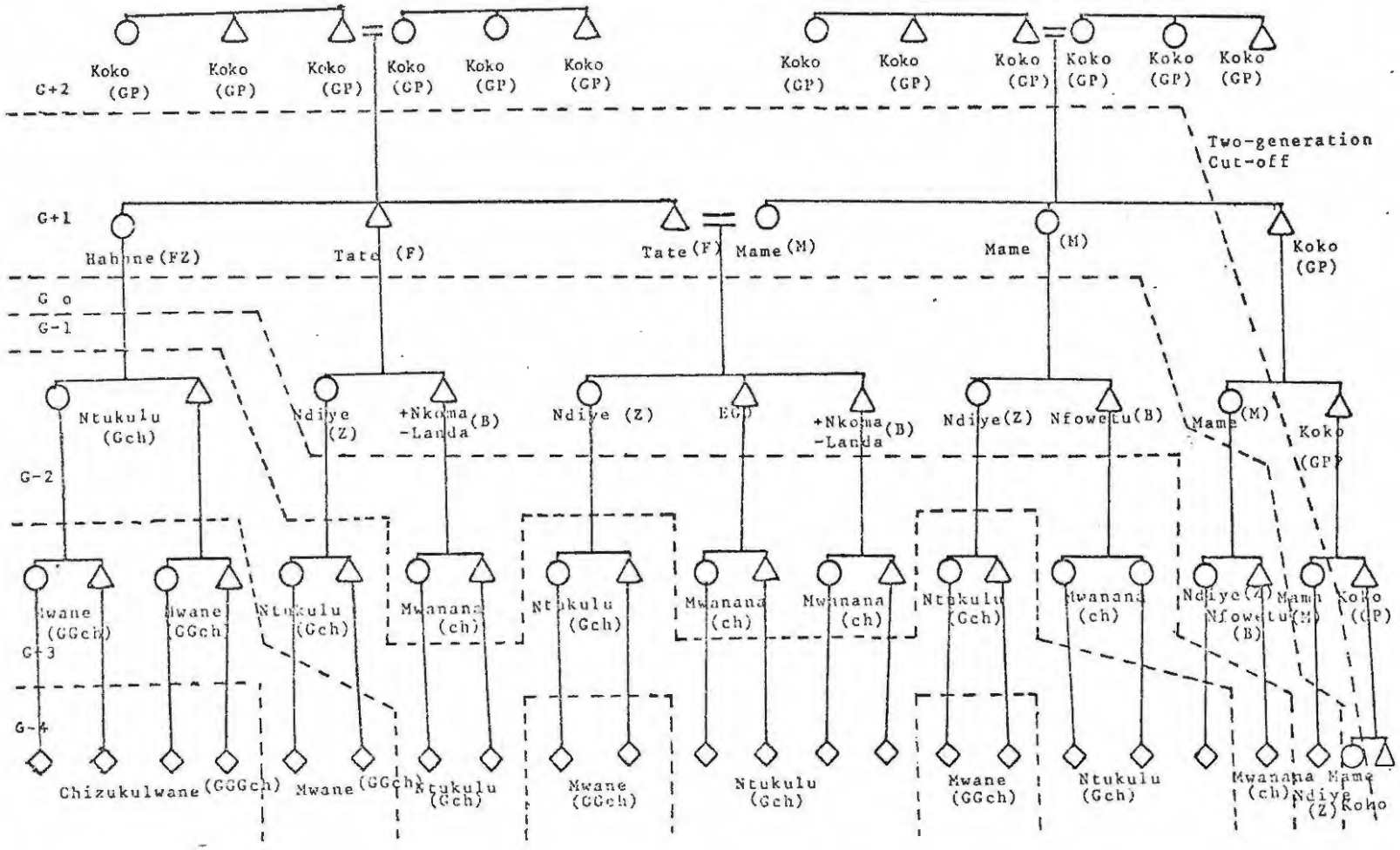
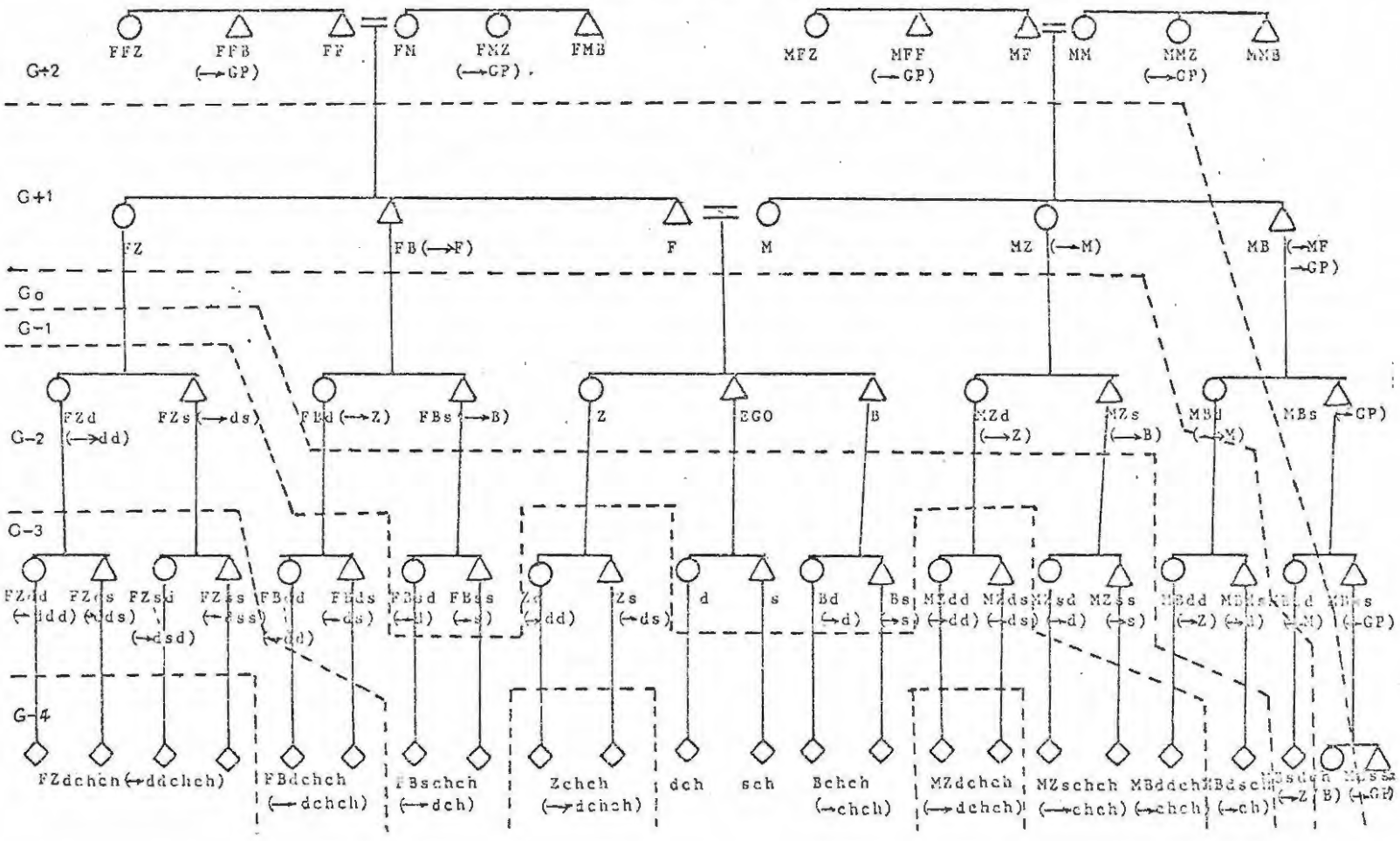


Figure 33. Chopi kin positions, shown as kin chains, with 'reductions' to core kin types.



notation for the term to which the kin chain is reduced. In both diagrams I have drawn dotted lines which show how the generations are 'skewed' (in relation to the 'objective' generations, which run horizontally straight across the diagram).

It is at this point that I must introduce the second limitation on the rules that I mentioned earlier. In the Chopi case the kin term hahane (FZ) is a 'core kin-type', i.e., it is irreducible, even though it is potentially possible to apply the skewing rule to it. It is of interest to note that the structural equivalent of FZ on ego's mother's side, viz., MB, is not a core kin-type - the skewing rule does apply to it, and that person is called koko (MF). There is nothing inherent in the logic of the system that can account for the fact that one of this structurally equivalent pair should be a core kin-type while the other is not. One is forced to turn to a sociological explanation, which I provide later in this chapter.

Application of the rules:

Having established the rules necessary to generate the system, let us now test these against the Chopi material. I refer to the kinship chart, from which I shall be selecting a few individuals, showing their kin chains, and by use of the four rules, demonstrating the logic of the classificatory kin term ascribed to it.

MBs, who is called koko ('grandfather', GF),

♂ (MB)s	becomes	—	♂MFs...	(by the skewing rule corollary, whereby MB can be replaced by MF).
♂ M(FS)	becomes	—	♂MB ...	(by the half-sibling rule, whereby Fs can be replaced by B);
♂ M(B)	becomes	—	♂MF ...	(by the skewing rule corollary, whereby Mb can be replaced by MF).
♂ MF	becomes	—	♂MP ...	(by the two generation cut-off)
	which is	—	koko, or grandparent, which is now irreducible and is a core kin-type.	

It must be remembered that implicit in a kin chain is ♂...., meaning, a man's ..... So that, for example, Zd means ♂ Zd, and the skewing rule can therefore apply.

♂ FZd, who is called ntukulu, 'grandchild'

♂F(Z)d becomes	—	♂ Fdd	... (by the skewing rule, whereby FZ can be replaced by Fd).
♂(Fd)d becomes	—	♂ Zd	... (by the half-sibling rule, whereby Fd can be replaced by Z),
(♂ Z)d becomes	—	♂ dd	... (by the skewing rule, whereby Zd can be replaced by dd).
which is	—	ntukulu, or 'grandchild'.	

The system can also be used to predict. Let us take the kin chain FFFBss (which does not appear on my chart).

♂ FF(FB)ss	—	♂ FFFss	..... by the merging rule
♂ FF(Fs)s	—	♂ FFBs	..... by the half-sibling rule
♂ F(FB)s	—	♂ FFS	..... by the merging rule
♂ F(Fs)	—	♂ FB	..... by the half-sibling rule
♂ (FB)	—	♂ F	..... by the merging rule
	—	tate ('father').	

We have therefore a basis for prediction that a Chopi man's FFFBss will be called tate, i.e., father. (Note also that this is a case where the kin chain is traced through the two generation cut-off, but emerges beneath it again.) As our final case, let us take the person who is ego's mother's brother's son's daughter's son (MBsds). This person is objectively two generations beneath ego, yet is allocated the kin term nfowetu, which, roughly translated, means 'brother'.

♂ (MB)sds	—	♂ MFsds	..... by the skewing rule corollary
♂ M(Fs)ds	—	♂ MBds	..... by the half-sibling rule
♂(MB)ds	—	♂ MFds	..... by the skewing rule corollary
♂ M(Fd)s	—	♂ MZs	..... by the half-sibling rule
♂ (MZ)s	—	♂ Ms	..... by the merging rule
♂ Ms	—	♂ B	..... by the half-sibling rule
	—	nfowetu, or 'brother'.	

I should like to draw attention to the term nfowetu, which I have loosely translated as 'brother'. This term does not appear to be indigenous to the Chopi, who have two terms for male sibling, with a male ego speaking (or female siblings, with a woman speaking) nkoma and landa ıor elder and younger siblings respectively. The Lounsbury-type rule cannot account for the use of a different term here, even if the meaning of the words, nfowetu, nkoma and landa do approximate to 'brother'. Lounsbury's rules can guide us to the incomplete solution that the person occupying that kin position should be termed 'B' (or 'brother'); but, while nkoma and landa are easily

distinguished by relative seniority vis-a-vis ego, nfowetu signifies neither seniority nor inferiority and is usually applied in a non-lineal context.

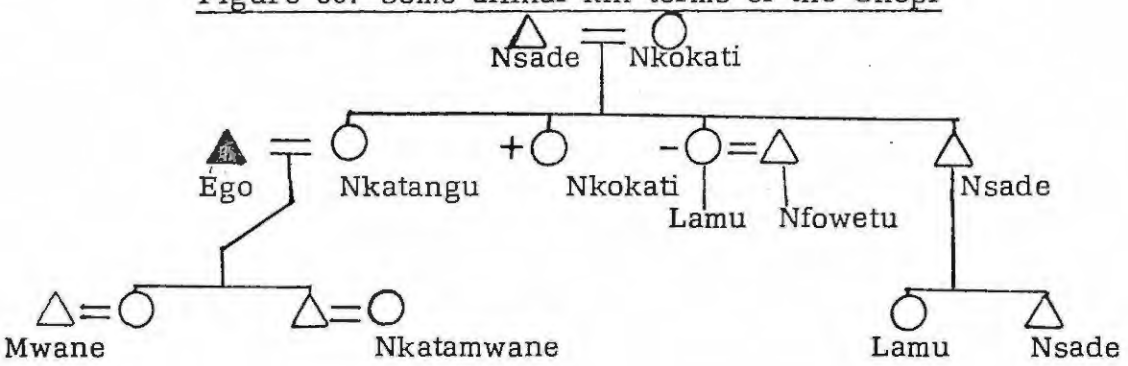
The term nfowetu is interesting because its meaning can also be wider than just 'brother'. One finds, for example, that Chopi working on the South African gold mines greet each other, 'Dichite, nfowetu'' meaning 'The sun has risen, brother', even though they may not actually be related at all. The etymology of the term must include reference to its apparent Nguni (and more particularly Zulu, in view of the contact through successive Zulu incursions) origins. In the Zulu, umfowethu is usually assigned to 'younger brother' and 'brother-in-law' (van Warmelo 1931: 29 and 33, resp.). What I wish to emphasise here is the flexible usage of the term nfowetu[1], which a formal account cannot cover. Even within the scope of the formal system, to be able to account for the difference between the three different terms for the same structural position would require extensive and complicated modfications which act as qualifiers to the three basic rules, in order to arrive at the correct term for a particular position. It can be done, but only at the expense of that virtue of formal analyses: a parsimonious model. In the third section of this chapter, I attempt to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the multi-faceted term nfowetu.

A potentially important aspect of the system of terms that I have not yet mentioned is the set of relationships between affines and the kin terms assigned to them. This poses some difficulties for formal analysis because the use of terms is to a large extent determined by the developmental cycle of the lives of individuals. As an illustration of what I mean, it should be pointed out that at marriage, and for some years after it, the married couple call their respective

(1) I use the orthography nfowetu for the Chopi for two reasons: firstly, to distinguish it from the Nguni, and secondly, because it approximates to the Portuguese version of dos Santos (1950).

in-laws by the in-law terms, which for a male ego, are relatively simple: all males of his wife's clan are called nsade (he is their mwane); all senior females (WM, wife's elder sister) are called nkokati; and all junior females are called lamu (a term meaning 'potential wife'). The affinal kin terms are diagrammatically represented below.

Figure 36: Some affinal kin terms of the Chopi



After some years, however (usually corresponding to the birth of children), the husband and wife tend to be 'merged' as social personalities. The husband, for example, will begin to call his wife's relatives by the same kin terms as she herself would use for them. In this process, the somewhat tense relationship between affines, especially early in married life, is progressively eased. I at first obtained this information by observing the use of kin terms in actual situations. In eliciting the idealized version of kin terms and their use, my informants gave me only the terms shown in Figure 36 for affinal relationships. When confronted with evidnce of the apparent merging of husband and wife with regard to kin terms in the developmental process, informants agreed that this indeed did take place as the respective parents-in-law came to know their son- or daughter-in-law better. Both usages are potentially possible throughout married life, and the individuals who use the systems can, and do, make use of the differences to convey information to one another on the state of their relationship; i.e., it is used as a tactical resource.

An example of affinal kin term usage will illustrate the point

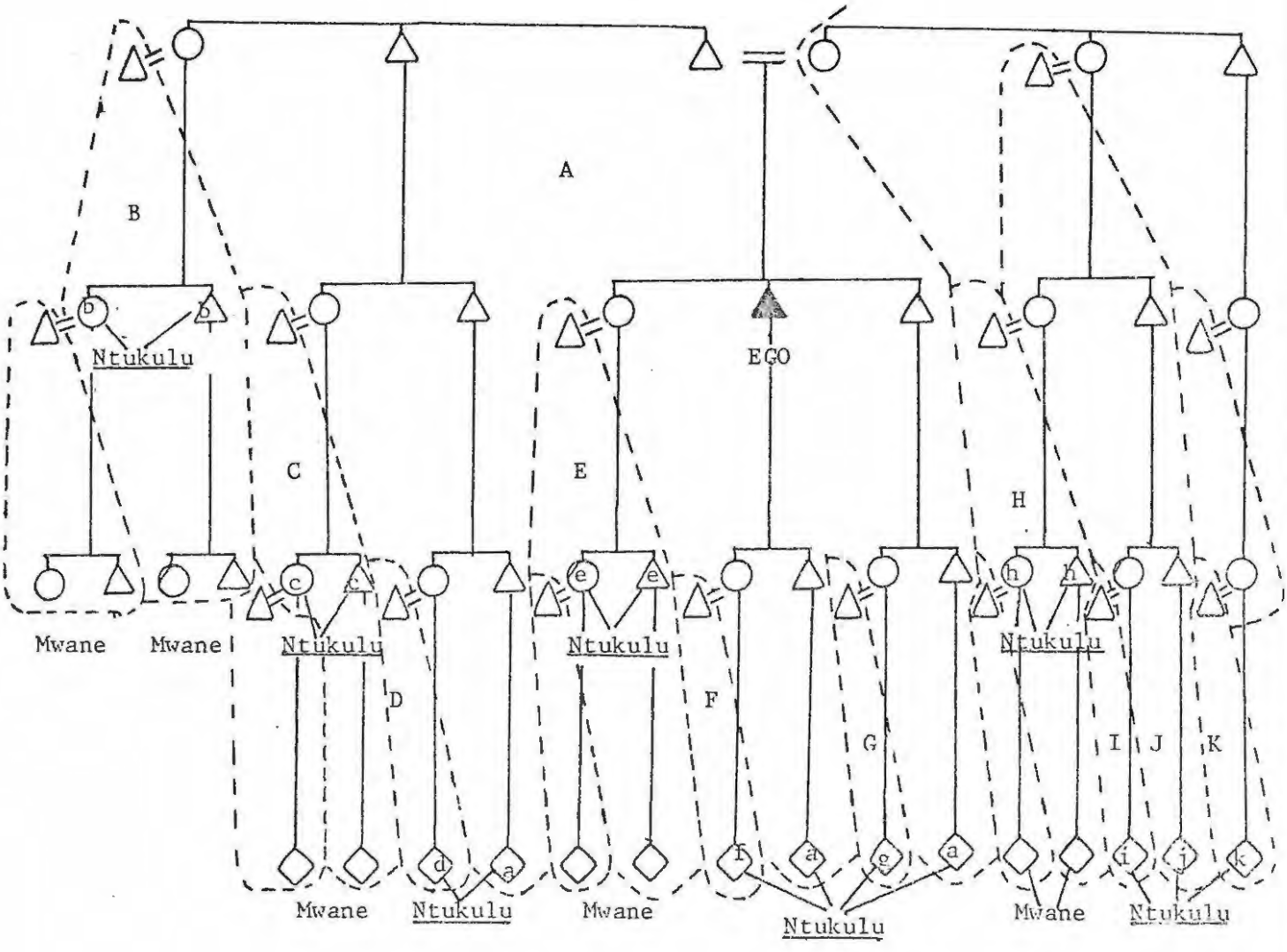
being made here. Balanyane Nyantiri, who was originally from the headman's district of Mangani, married a woman of the Ntsambe clan, and subsequently settled in Nyatsiku (see map on page). Balanyane chose to become a wuyi of Chipanyelo Ntsambe, head of the Ntsambe vicinage, and did so by approaching him as a son-in-law. The Ntsambe vicinage is split into a number of factions (see chapter ten), and Balanyane allied himself with the Chipanyelo/Gomichi clique, as opposed to the Tomwane group. This allegiance was shown by Balanyane's use of kin terms. Although both Tomwane and Chipanyelo were his classificatory fathers-in-law (neither were closely linked to Balanyane's wife), Balanyane called the former nsade, and the latter tate. The term nsade ('father-in-law') implies restraint and respect and in this case, while acknowledging the affinal link, it indicates that Balanyane was keeping Tomwane at arm's length. On the other hand, when Balanyane called Chipanyelo tate ('father'), he was being more familiar. This term implies a greater amount of affect, a stronger bond of allegiance. In other words, Balanyane, by using alternative terms available for the same type of kinsman, communicated that he was closely allied to the one, while maintaining a polite distance from the other.

It is a truism to state that one of the effects of a classificatory kinship terminology is to take kinsmen who are in a lateral relationship to ego and to assign them terms which put them in a lineal relationship to him. To take this argument further, I postulate that not only are lateral kin depicted as being lineal through the agency of the kin terms, but that the system of terminology of the Chopi serves to submerge the difference between agnatic, matrilateral, and often affinal kin in the eyes of ego.

The cumulative effect of the convergence of lateral and lineal kin in the classificatory kinship system and also of the developmental aspect of in-law terms is made explicit in a formal account such as I have provided in this section. It is this convergence which permits

an individual to mobilise kin from all categories - agnatic, matrilateral and affinal, for many kin terms are represented in all three. By way of illustration, let us examine two examples: first, the term mwane, which refers to a number of individuals, including dH (son-in-law, i.e., and affine), sss (great-grandchild, i.e., agnatic lineal descendant of ego), MZdsd (matrilateral affine), and FZsd (patrilateral affine). The kin types represented here are extremely diverse and yet are brought together under one term. The second example is that of ntukulu, which includes such individuals as: ss/d (grandchild), Zdd (affine of affine), FBss (agnate), MZsss (matrilateral affine), and FZd (patrilateral affine).

Figure 37: Some positions of the kin terms ntukulu and mwane, showing clan membership



The diagrams above show how a kin term, such as ntukulu, bridges the gap between patrilateral, matrilateral and affinal kin. It goes further than this, for in the case of, say, MZsd (who is an affine of an affine, because the children of MZ are affines, and the children of MZd are affines of MZH), it is apparent that this person is not related to ego consanguineally (G.D. Mitchell 1968:40), but can be nevertheless regarded as a cognatic kinsman (ibid:31); (Scheffler, 1972:113: 'a kinsman is an individual to whom one (Ego) is related by genealogical connection'). But it is the system of inter-clan relationships that is of interest here. In Figure 37, one finds that apart form the vatukulu who belong to ego's own clan (A), the other vatukulu represented belong to as many as ten other clans (B - K). The same is true for the kin term mwane.

In other words, individuals belonging to a number of different clans are conjoined to ego (and, therefore, his clan) by possession of the same kin terms. This effect of the kin term system is uncommon in southern Africa, where most southern Bantu have Iroquois-type systems of kinship terminology (with the exception of the Tsonga-speaking groups, who also have the Omaha-type). The predominant pattern in this southern part of Africa is, therefore, the bifurcate merging system, which does not give rise to the same pattern of widespread inter-clan bonding described above (cf. Buchler and Selby 1968:219ff. for a formal analysis of Iroquois systems).

What emerges from these examples is that kinsmen recruited from all kinds of linkage to ego, ranging from agnates, through affines, to affines of patrilateral and matrilateral kin, are all conjoined (in ego's eyes) by their common possession of one kin term. Yet is is more than the sharing of a name; for most social purposes the holders of a particular term appear to be treated as an undifferentiated group. For example, at any celebration for the ancestors, both the vamwane and the vatukulu are given ritual portions from the sacrificial ani-

mal; on such occasions, all individuals called mwane or ntukulu by ego receive their respective portions, regardless of the genealogical closeness or distance from ego. Rituals are occasions on which important symbolic statements about the social system are made[1], and the importance placed on these two categories appears to reflect the importance of affinal alliances (according to informants, who emphasised the primary meanings of the terms as son-in-law and grandchild, respectively). However, the fact that all members of such categories take part in the rituals would seem to stress their status as an undifferentiated group. Certain 'category' terms, which do not have a primary referent within the nuclear family, therefore, such as koko ('grandparent'), mwane, and ntukulu, 'bridge the gap' between agnates matrilateral kin and affines.

In chapter six, it was pointed out that Chopi exigamy rules have the effect of spreading alliances widely thoughout the society. It appears that certain kin terms are capable of performing a similar function (as was demonstrated in the examples of ntukulu and mwane). This is brought about by the fact that a given term may be appled to individuals linked to ego by different kin chains, and drawn from as many as six clans. This provides an impressive spread of links and alliances which, in the hands of an individual, can be manipulated for strategic uses.

Special cases and the Chopi modifications of the rules

Before moving on to the section which deals specifically with the sociological perspective, I wish to attempt an explanation of the two specific problems that are thrown up by the formal analysis. My analysis depends on sociological phenomena in the one case and a combination of pragmatic and cognitive considerations in the other; this subsection therefore acts as a kind of link between the formal and sociological analyses. To be specific, I deal with the case of hahane (FZ)

(1) Cf. Leach: 'ritual action and belief are alike to be understood as forms of symbolic statement about the social order' (1954:14).

and the two-generation cut-off, respectively. A third case, that of the term nfowetu (B) should logically form part of this subsection, but I reserve analysis of its problems for the end of this chapter, where I discuss the usefulness of Bloch's techniques, which are particularly apposite in this connection.

(i) The case of hahane

I mentioned above that hahane (FZ) was something of a special case because it constituted a core kin-type, i.e., it was irreducible. Yet its mirror-image, MB, is not a core kin-type, and the transformation rules are applicable, MB becoming MF. On the other hand, FZ, if the transformation rules were to apply, would be reduced to Z:

♂ FZ — ♂ Fd ... (by the skewing rule)
♂ Fd — ♂ Z ... (by the half-sibling rule)

The injunction that the skewing rule can only apply when there is a linking relative means that one could not in any event reduce ♂ Z to ♂ d.

One must, therefore, explain why FZ is a core kin-type and is not reducible. The answer seems to lie in the fact that among the Chopi the position of FZ is unusual, in that she can, in certain circumstances, take the place of ego's father in the ritual sphere. In the event of ego's father dying, his place as the head of family and lineage rituals should be taken by his younger brothers, but, if this is impossible, the hahane is called upon to perform these tasks. Her position, clearly, is of great social importance, and this is given recognition in the social system and terminology, by making it a core kin-term.

A further sociological argument, dealing more specifically with kinship and relations between groups can also be put forward. It appears to me that another possible reason why hahane is a descriptive term, can be found in the relationship between wife-giving groups and wife-receiving groups in the society. If we accept the proposition that the wife-giving group is accorded superior status to the wife-receiving one, then the picture is much clearer. MB, as a wife-

giver, is, in the Chopi terminology, 'raised' generationally. FZ, on the other hand, belongs to ego's agnatic group, so she herself is not 'lowered' generationally, but her husband, as a wife-receiver, is.

The etymology of the term for son-in-law (mwane) is 'little', or 'small', a fact which denotes his low status relative to his wife's group, and the children of this women and her husband are called ntukulu, ('grandchild'); the generational 'lowering' fits my hypothesis of the relatively lower status of the wife-receiving group. Intriguingly, however, the etymology of the term ntukulu is ntu-, meaning 'person', and -kulu, meaning 'big', so that one's grandchild or sister's son is a 'big person', which gives a strong indication of the quality of the relationship between them, especially when one bears in mind the slightly demeaning term mwane ('small') for the father of one's sister's sons.

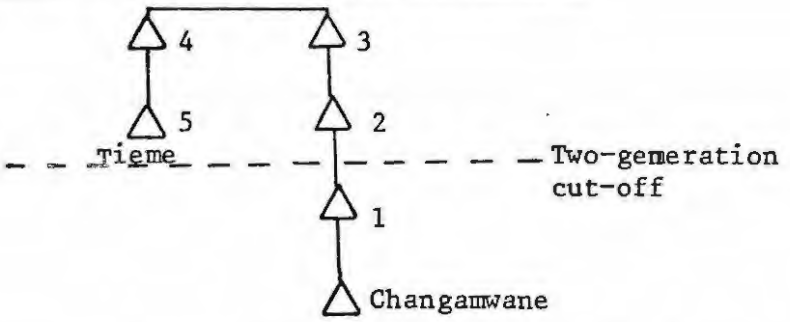
(ii) The two-generation cut-off

This, the fourth of the transformation rules of the Chopi kin term system, is by way of being a special modification of the Omaha type III system. What this rule amounts to is that any relative who is two or more generations above ego is called koko ('grandparent'). The reason for this again appears to be the simple premise that a society tends to elaborate (culturally) those things which are socially relevant, and to under-elaborate those things which are less relevant to social life (cf. Tyler 1969: 3-4). Thus, we find a large amount of elaboration of kin terms and the rules which generate them, with regard to kin who may be alive during ego's lifetime, but those who are dead, or as yet are unborn, are not of the same immediate relevance, and kin terms relating to them are consequently elaborated less. In kinship systems, socially relevant kin are those with whom a man is likely to have had contact in his own lifetime; this effectively means close kin two generations above and below ego.

The two-generation cut-off rule dovetails with the short genealogical memory of the Chopi, and together they reflect the fact that kin more than two generations above ego are of relatively little importance. An exception to this proposition is the case of an individual's personal family ancestors, who nevertheless are usually only two or three generations above him (cf. chapter nine); beyond that, genealogical amnesia sets in. It will be noted that there are kin terms which designate positions three and four generations below ego, viz., mwane and chizukulwane ('great-grandchild' and 'great-great-grandchild' respectively). They only exist because, on ego's father's sister's side, the generations are 'lowered', with the result that individuals who are only one and two generations below him must, in terms of the kinship logic, have terms of the third and fourth generations.

Genealogical amnesia and the two-generation rule combine to provide a cultural environment which has the potential for exploitation, which is shown in the following example. The headmanship of the headman's district of Mangani fell vacant, and two contestants emerged as contenders for the position. One, Changamwane Nyakwaha, asserted that a previous incumbent, Tieme Nyakwaha, was his koko (which was true), and that Tieme was his FF (which was less certain). In cross-checking the information, (by questioning some of the old women who have long memories of these matters), I found that the consensus was that Tieme was probably Changamwane's FFFBs, which, despite the adelphic succession, would weaken Changamwane's claim vis-a-vis his opponent. The point is that because there were few people who were alive at the same time as Tieme, no one could be really certain of his relationship to Changamwane, who was able to claim that Tieme was his koko ditsuri ('real grandfather', i.e., FF) instead of merely his classificatory 'grandfather' (in this case FFBs, see diagram below).

Figure 38: The manipulation of a kin chain



Changamwane, then, appears to have falsified linkages of the kin chain joining him to Tieme; it was possible for him to omit links 3 and 4 of the chain and subsequently to merge 5 and 2 (which is, of course, what the reduction rules do), thus making his genealogical credentials stonger. A person is linked to various koko (or almost any classificatory kin type) by different kin chains, and if he chooses to misrepresent the linkages, it is difficult to prove him wrong. The lack of clarity that results from the two generation cut-off, where the kin term used between two individuals is public knowledge, and the kin chain is not (necessarily) known, allows room for manoeuvre.

To summarize the merits and demerits of the analysis of the Chopi kinship terminology provided thus far, I believe that, by using the formal and transformational analyses, I have been able to represent the kinship system as a logically coherent whole which, on one level, it is. It is important that we isolate and understand the structures and substructures that underly ideational systems. But a formal analysis is unable to handle the metaphorical uses of a kin term, such as the term nfowetu, which can be applied to a person who is not a kinsman, nor connected to ego by extended affinal links.

Lounsbury has suggested that a formal account of a kin term system is a profitable means of orienting an ensuing functional account (1965: 175); indeed, he argues that a prior formal description is

indispensable as a 'direction finder', pointing the way to important areas for sociological analysis. On this contention, I tend to agree with Lounsbury, although, as will be apparent, I do not think he goes far enough. There is undoubtedly an intimate link between the three rules that Lounsbury abstracts and important social facts that are concomitant with them (and, indeed, with the fourth rule that I abstract and the limiting case of the FZ); but whereas Lounsbury relegates any sociological analysis to secondary status, I believe that it must be given equal weight in any analysis.

What we have provided is a transformational grammar that provides the rules that generate the structure of the terms of reference of the Chopi. This is possible because the elements of a kinship terminology are interdependant. The relationship between elements means that there is a kind of unity whereby a change in one part would involve concomitant variation in others. Coult (1967:37) points out that few systems can faithfully reflect sociological principles and remain logically integrated. A compromise must be found.

> 'That any terminology should be completely expressive of such principles may be impossible, for it is not only rules of social order that are expressed in terminologies but also rules of logical order, and the latter frequently take precedence.' (1967:37).

This may well explain why kinship terminologies are so resistent to change, and only follow social change after a considerable time lag (presumably during which time the changes must be going through the delaying process of objectification). The kin term nfowetu is a case in point. It is a fairly recent innovation, yet it could only be 'fitted' into a structurally equivalent position to its original Zulu meaning.

But as Coult pointed out, there is the matter of the relationship of terminology to society. It is not a one-to-one relationship, yet to fully understand the meaning and implications of kin terms, it is a vital area of interest. Let us now turn our attention to the sociological implication of the foregoing analysis, and to provide sociological expla-

nations for the problem areas.

The sociological perspective

There have been many sociological attempts to explain the Omaha-type kinship terminology. I intend briefly to expound four which appear to me to have made some contribution to our understanding of the Omaha syndrome. I mentioned above that there are two modifications that apply to the Chopi, which can only be made intelligible by appealing to sociological determinants. In this section I explain these determinants, and finally, the special case of the term nfowetu is examined. The four sociological explanations that I will be dealing with are hypotheses based on: (i) marriage rules, (ii) lineage solidarity, (iii) dispersed affinal alliance, and (iv) the positive role of the terminology.

The first hypothesis I shall deal with, that involving marriage rules, provides a complementary explanation of how Lounsbury's three transformational rules work in the sociological sphere. The meaning of the kin terms are here given pointed sociological determinants.

(i) Marriage rules

The merging rule, which allows one to substitute one sibling of the same sex for another (for example, ♂FB —— ♂F), has been a problem that has interested anthropologists from early times. Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 18) has referrred to this as the principle of the equivalence of siblings. The half-sibling rule could be of the same order - one identifies half siblings with full siblings.

It has been suggested that there is a relationship between marriage rules and kinship terminology.[1] For example, the merging rule or the principle of the equivalence of siblings could be an idealized reflection of the institutions of widow inheritance and sororate (both of which are practised by the Chopi) whereby a man may be called

(1) Rivers (1914), and more recently, Faron (1961), support this view.

upon to take the place of his dead brother or, a woman, the place or her dead or barren sister. The reasoning is that the children of the original marriage are taught to behave towards, say, their father's brother as if he were their father, because if the latter were to die, the former could replace him. The kin terminology by which both men are called 'father' anticipates a hypothetical future situation.

This explanation based on marriage rules, could also account for the type of situation that may give rise to Lounsbury's skewing rule. The argument is based on the existence of preferential secondary marriage. (Again, this is found among the Chopi.) Chopi state that a man has the preferential right to marry his wife's younger sister, and also his wife's brother's daughter. Indeed, it is one of these women who would replace his wife if she were to abscond, die at an early age, or prove to be barren. Taking ego to be the son of the original marriage, he will accordingly tend to call his mother's sister by the same term as his mother, and his mother's brother's daughter (MBd) by the same term.[1] Following logically from this, if ego calls his MBd 'mother', then he should call that woman's father 'grandfather'. This is the case among the Chopi, where MBd is called mame, and MB is called koko, meaning 'mother' and 'grandfather' respectively.

Lounsbury's skewing rule is a statement of equivalence, in certain contexts, of a man's sister and his daughter. The 'marriage rules' model, whereby emphasis is placed on the logical implications of the preferential secondary marriage of a man to his wife's sister and her brother's daughter, provides a sociological explanation of why there should be the formal equivalence of the skewing rule. For

(1) Apart from the logical determinants here, there is also the fact that a kinship terminology, amongst other things, defines who are eligible and ineligible as potential marriage partners, for ego. Father and son ideally should not compete for the same women, as this would cause disruption of family life, so the fact that ego's M, MZ, and MBd are all called mame (mother) by him, effectively rules them out as potential marriage partners. They are, of course, preferred partners for ego's father.

if we look at the situation from the point of view of the wife's brother, we find that, when his first sister marries, then all his other sisters become potential wives of his sister's husband, and his own daughter/s likewise. In other words, they are given a kin term which expresses their equivalence as potential wives of another man.[1]

(ii) Lineage solidarity

The foremost proponent of this hypothesis is Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 49-89) and, more recently, Coult (1967). The principle of lineage solidarity has the effect of merging all members of a particular lineage, so that all male members of ego's mother's lineage are called by one term. This is dependant upon the existence of a strong unilineal principle, which can override generation distinctions.

My reaction to this hypothesis is ambivalent. The Chopi terminology does appear to reflect to a certain degree the possibility that ego's mother's kin group is viewed by him, an outsider, as being unified. But, as I have demonstrated, the Chopi do not have strong unilineal groups. Scheffler also expressed some doubt as to the existence of a unilineal principle in Crow-Omaha systems. In his study of the Baniata, he found that lineages, and even clans, did not form part of the 'folk' explanations of the kin terms;

> 'in this context it is important to note again that no one attempted to explain the 'matrilineal' extension of kinship terms to me by reference to clans (rana) or relations between kin, as members of clans. Thus, neither version of the 'unity of the lineage' theory of Crow- (and Omaha-) type systems of kin classification receives support from Baniata speakers.' (1972(a):375)

Let us probe the lineage unity hypothesis. It does explain why all members of the lineage (of the same sex) share one kin term. In the Chopi case, all female members are called mame and all male members are called koko (grandparent, i.e., mother's father). It is also possible to hypothesize why those particular terms are used:

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(1) This argument is given force by the fact that these same women are all called lamu by the husband. The term was explained to me as meaning 'preferential marriage partner'. In other words, ego calls mame those women whom his father calls lamu (preferential bride); cf. Figure 20.

the term mame is used because ego calls all female members of the lineage by the same term as his closest relative belonging to it, i.e., his mother. The term koko, which I here take to mean mother's father, is probably used for all male members of the lineage because it was this man who represented the lineage at the marriage; it was he who was paid the lowolo or bridewealth, and who is responsible for it and its possible refund in the case of a divorce.

Again, Lounsbury's skewing rule, which is the main feature of the Omaha-type system, is made comprehensible in sociological terms by the solidarity hypothesis. One has to introduce the additional concept of the developmental cycle of the family group, however, because it must be realised that a man's son will replace him eventually as the family head. When this happens, the son is responsible for all his father's obligations, including that of bridewealth. In other words, the rights and duties of a father-in-law pass to his son, who then becomes a 'sort' of father-in-law, even though he is, or was, really a brother-in-law. This approximates to a sociological equivalent of Lounsbury's skewing rule corollary, where a woman's brother is structurally equivalent to her father.

The possible use of rules of succession as an explanatory device in this context may be useful, but should nevertheless be treated with caution. Fortes has shown in his work on the Ashanti (1956), that the possession of the same kin term does not automatically infer identical behaviour patterns. Thus, among the matrilineal Ashanti, 'a man's children address his sister's son as father (agya) if they wish to show respect to him, since he might well step into their father's position some day.' The term is given to all FZ sons, but there is a qualitative difference between the behaviour expected from F and FZs; the term used is the same, 'But the jural and affective relationships associated with the use of these terms in their primary contexts are not automatically extended ...' (ibid: 278).

Fortes' viewpoint could therefore be described as being extensionist. His view is that classes of kin have a primary referent and any given term is extended in such a way as to refelct rules of status succession. The extension of kin terms, therefore, has the effect of defining a category of people who are potential successors, in a jural sense, to the holder of the position nearest (genealogically) to ego. But I would agree with Scheffler and Lounsbury that 'rules of kin-class or terminological extension may reflect rules of status succession, not that they necessarily do so.' (1971:155)

(iii) Dispersed affinal alliance

This hypothesis has been put forward by Lévi-Strauss and, in some ways, resembles the first hypothesis, for it deals with marriage rules. To quote Lévi-Strauss,

> '... the function of a kinship system is to generate marriage possibilities or impossibilities, either directly between people calling one another by certain terms, or indirectly between people calling themselves by terms which are derived, according to certain rules, from the terms used by their ascendants'. (1966:14)

The value of Lévi-Strauss' hypothesis is that it does not only seek the internal logic of kinship terminology systems, or regard them as a mere reflection of sociological principles; he views the Omaha-type categorisation in a positive light, emphasizing the fact that it forces a certain pattern of marriages, which he calls dispersed alliance, on the possessors of the terminology. (1)

The Chopi material bears out Lévi-Strauss' hypothesis. The kin categories make it impossible (in terms of exogamy rules) to marry a person from the clan of one's mother or father. An asymmetrical marriage pattern is therefore impossible, for an alliance made by ego's father immediately rules out the possibility of ego also marrying into that clan. In other words, new alliances must be made

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(1) This assertion should be seen in the light of other types of marriage patterns, such as asymmetrical alliance, where a certain group receives wives from another and gives its sisters as wives to a third group. There are fixed wife-giving and wife-receiving relationships, and the alliances thus formed leave small scope for choice.

with different clans every generation, creating what Lévi-Strauss called a 'probabilist alliance network' (1966:19).

Lévi-Strauss thus clearly demonstrates one of the most important features and positive results of Omaha-type categorizations (when read with their attendant exogamy rules): they give rise to a large number of dispersed affinal alliances (cf. chapter six). These alliances are, however, ephemeral, for the affinal alliance formed by one man expressly cannot be renewed by his son. The result of the categorization, then, is to spread alliances widely throughout society on an individually-contracted basis (cf. chapter on marriage). Lévi-Strauss argues that such systems,

> 'allow history to play a part in social life. Instead of acting as a regulating device which is constantly tending to set the society back on its old tracks, (as in asymmetrical alliance systems) they leave it a measure of freedom which may lead to change.' (1966:20)

The Chopi social system has been shown (in the two preceding chapters) to be such that a great number of alliances of various kinds are contracted. A feature of the system is not only that there are a large number of alliances formed, but also that they tend to be transitory in nature.[1] The 'dispersed alliance' marriage system that arises out of the Omaha-type kinship categorization dovetails with the rest of the social system, which emphasises the need to spread one's ties as widely as possible.

(iv) The active and operative roles of kin terms

This heading refers particularly to the hypotheses of McKinley (1971(a), 1971(b)) and Bloch (1971). McKinley's argument takes up where Lévi-Strauss' leaves off. He considers that the traditional sociological viewpoint that kinship terminologies merely 'reflect' certain important social principles is a one-eyed view of the situation. He postulates that the terminology has a positive role to play in that,

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(1) Vide, for example, the high divorce rate, the geographical mobility of individuals, which of necessity means the leaving of some ties etc.

'... kinship terminologies have ideological properties which are often used in reconciling certain basic contradictions inherent in particular social systems'. (1971(a):228)

According to McKinley, the contradiction that exists in the Omaha (and Chopi) kinship system arises out of the dispersed affinal alliance that the terminology imposes on society. The paradox is that, while the social system places great value on alliances and the terminology disperses them as widely as possible, the terminology also forbids a son's renewing the alliance created by his father. Every generation a new alliance must be formed, which is obviously advantageous; but it is equally advantageous to maintain old alliances as well. Yet there is a rule that forces a change of alliances every generation and so cuts off the possibility of maintaining the old alliance through marriage.

McKinley asserts that this contradiction is overcome by the ideological role of the Omaha-type system, which works 'to fill up the gaps in the social system as it exists' (1971(b):408). Relying on the lineage solidarity argument, McKinley points out that since members of ego's mother's lineage have the same kin term (depending on sex), one would be justified in saying that the generation factor is being held constant (1971(b):408). This has the effect of making time 'stand still', and an alliance that is generationally ephemeral[1] is given a longer life-span. In other words, the terminology places ego's mother's entire descent group in a relationship with him which will not change over time. For example, he will call his MBsss (i.e., a person two generations beneath him), koko. Despite the fact that marriage alliances must change each generation, the kin terminology keeps ego's relationship (i.e., alliance) with the group to which his father was allied, constant over an indefinite number of generations. At the same time, it transmutes an affinal alliance (of the father) into a matrilateral (i.e., kinship) bond for the son.

(1) I.e., an alliance that would normally only last for only one generation.

The paradox of the Omaha system, therefore, is a desire to retain old alliances while at the same time creating as many new ones as possible. McKinley urges that more attention should be given to the ambivalent situation created by such a system,

> 'For there are advantages to maintaining old relationships, just as there are advantages to forming new ones. Yet a rule that causes alliances to shift in each generation closes off the former option. Given such a system, I suspect that people will find ways of restoring some of the advantages of the blocked option. When they wish to keep up mutual obligations founded on past marriages, they will stress complementary filiation and other ties which will indirectly extend previous affinal ties. They will also favour a terminology which attributes continuity to these relationships. (My emphasis). I hypothesize that by holding generation constant Crow-Omaha systems supply this convenient fiction' (1971(a):245).

A point that McKinley does not make strongly enough is that the alliances to which he is referring are individual-oriented. By this I mean that although the generations of ego's mother's clan are held constant, and he as an individual can have an ongoing relationship with up to four generations (the number he is likely to personally encounter) of her kin, he cannot pass this set of alliances on to his own son. A father's affinal alliance becomes to his son a bond of matrifiliation, and this relationship falls away entirely with regard to the latter's son. Thus, while the system of kin terms does act to hold generation constant in ego's mother's clan group vis-a-vis himself, this is not a bonding between two lineages . It is a bond between an individual and a set of people who may, or may not, form a lineage-type group.

The usefulness of McKinley's hypothesis for the understanding of the Chopi system of kin terms should now be apparent. Like Lévi-Strauss, he has argued that while kin terms can, and do, form an ordered system that may have a sociological foundation, the system has an existence sui generis and plays an active, positive role in social life. McKinley writes of the social relevance of the Omaha kin term system, by which he means the social conditions giving rise to the terminologies and the influence the terminologies themselves

have on the action patterns that are social relations. While these two aspects of social relevance are closely related, they are not identical:

> 'They partake of a dialectical interaction. Society acts on terminology, and terminology acts back on society' (1971(a):228).

The manipulative possibilities of kin terms

All the explanations presented so far have seen kin terms and sociological factors as systems, and the analysis proceeded on an institutional, structural, or 'macro' level. Let us now turn our attention to the 'micro' or sub-structural level, where the system of kin terms and the terms themselves can be accepted as social facts, and as 'given'. With a concentration on the individual one can show how persons are able to use and manipulate the kinship system and its terms. Perhaps the best way of demonstrating the usefulness of this approach is to take the example of a kin term, such as nfowetu which, while it can be given a formal (and structural) definition, quite clearly has meanings and usage in contexts beyond the kinship system itself.

As was mentioned above, nfowetu is an interesting case because it is not an indigenous Chopi term; it is a borrowing from Zulu. Contained in the meanings of the term then, is the knowledge of contact between Chopi and Zulu, directly or indirectly. The history of the area shows this to be the case. In the 1820s, a Zulu leader, Soshangane, fled from Shaka and settled in the southern part of Mozambique, where he proceeded to lay waste the countryside. The impact of this invasion, socially and culturally, was vast and it seems reasonable to suppose that this was roughly the time when the term was introduced to, and later accepted by, the Chopi.

The term, as already stated, means 'brother'. But the Chopi also have terms nkoma and landa, meaning elder and younger brother, respectively. Why, then, the borrowing of the Zulu term? The answer seems to lie in the fact that the Zulu borrowing fits the social situation particularly well. It happens that ego uses nkoma and landa for brothers in his own patrifilial group, where status is ordered in terms of primogeniture.

On the other hand, one finds the use of nfowetu for brother in ego's mother's agnatic group. Ego probably does not interact with these people on a daily basis, so the problems of relative status are not as acute. Nfowetu is a term that is 'neutral' in terms of status because, unlike nkoma and landa, it has no connotations of primogeniture and the accompanying status differentiation of age. One could postulate that nfowetu is used as the term for brother where no status distinctions are intended.

This assertion is illustrated by the case of the three daughters of Caetane Nkome: Clementine, Rosa, and Filismina. These three sisters are married to men who are not consanguinedly related to each other, but who now call each other nfowetu. These three men are accorded equality of status. The term appears, therefore, to express an ethic of egalitarianism which no other term in the Chopi lexicon is capable of doing (all other terms involve the differentiation of status in greater or lesser degrees). Nfowetu is also used to refer to MZs and MBds, both of whom are linked to ego through intervening affinal links, and who belong to different clans to ego. It seems that, being outside of ego's own descent group, it is not necessary to subject them to the nkoma-landa status differentiation. To return to the case of the three brothers-in-law: structurally, they are marginal in relation to the kin group (the Nkome clan) of the three sisters. They are all outsiders who are allied to the group to which the girls belong, and are in the same structural position vis-a-vis that group. The position they hold in common, therefore, is that of outsiders who are accepted by the group and, indeed, who add to the viability and strength of the group (cf. my statements in this regard when dealing with the vicinage in chapter nine).

It is useful to turn once again to the etymology of the term of nfowetu, for it affords us some insight into the complex of meanings that are encapsulated in the term. Unfortunately, dos Santos, in his Chopi dictionary, does not provide etymologies so I am therefore forced to rely on my own inquiries in this regard, together with the equivalent term and its etymology provided by Doke and Vilakazi (1958) in their Zulu dictionary. The use of the latter reference is justified, I believe, on two grounds: firstly, the Chopi freely admit that the term is not indigenous, ascibing it to 'Shangaan' (Zulu) origins; and secondly (and more convincingly), my own investigation showed many of the same shades of meaning provided by Doke and Vilakazi.

It appears that the Zulu term umfowethu [1] is derived from -fo (umufo), the meanings of which are listed below, and suffix -wethu, which means in Zulu, and in Chopi, 'our'. Doke and Vilakazi (1958:197) list the following meanings of the stem -fo:

'1) Basic term for 'man'.
2) Fellow, man (chap).
3) Stranger, enemy, opponent, rival.
4) (in compound poss. expressions) Brother.'

Leaving aside the first meaning, then, we can say that nfowetu (or umfowethu) can mean 'our fellow, our chap' or 'our stranger, our enemy, or rival', or 'our brother'. [2] A clear ambivalence emerges, for the term can have positive connotations, as in 'brother' or 'chap', but an element of reserve, distance, or even hostility is apparent in the aspects of 'stranger', 'enemy' or 'rival'. It is this very ambivalence that invests the term with its potential versatility.

This last assertion brings us to the work of Maurice Bloch (1971), who suggests that kinship terms should be understood in terms of their moral and tactical meanings. In other words, one should look at the meanings that are implicit in a term, and one should also note

(1) I have already explained the reason for the use of a different orthography for the equivalent Chopi term.
(2) The formal analysis can, by definition, only supply this meaning, and none of the others, which tend to imply affect.

the contexts in which they are used. Despite the fact that Bloch argues that his approach can account for the all types of kin term, it appears to be particularly appropriate when we wish to understand the less formal type of term, such as nfowetu.

Bloch argues convincingly when he claims that it is difficult, or impossible, to list all the persons to whom a kin term may refer, and his answer is to recognise that certain words, which may include kin terms, should be viewed

> '1) in terms of the place they hold in the system of values; and 2) from the point of view of which tactical uses they can serve.' (1971:80).

Bloch attacks both Leach (terms as social categories) and Lounsbury (transformation rules) for ignoring the strategic uses of kin terms. He points out that Lounsbury seems to see the process of extension as being an 'automatic process, the result of impersonal rules, rather than human choices.' (ibid: 81). This is undoubtedly true, but this is precisely the strength of Lounsbury's work: he has demonstrated the internal logic of the system.

Bloch's approach does not necessarily contradict this; on the contrary, it complements it, for while Lounsbury is studying the terms as a system (i.e., its internal arrangement and structure), Bloch takes the system as 'given', or as a 'social fact', which can be used by individuals tactically to communicate messages of social importance to other individuals, who may, or may not, be their kinsmen. It appears to me that while all kin terms are susceptible to the kind of non-structural extension that Bloch uses, even to the extent that they may be applied to non-kin, some kin terms are better adapted than others to this type of extension. The reason for this is that certain terms, which denote a particularly close relationship with ego, for example, tate (father), have specific moral meanings attached, which makes their tactical usefulness somewhat limited. Other terms, such as nfowetu, however, denote more social distance,

and the moral meanings (and rights and obligations entailed) are more vague and therefore more flexible in application.

It was mentioned earlier that transformation rules cannot account for the full range of uses and meanings of the term nfowetu, especially in the case when a Chopi will address a non-kinsman (for example, a friend or a fellow Chopi on a South African gold mine) by that term. Clearly, this person is not his structural kinship brother in either case. We must therefore examine his intention and the meaning he conveys by the use of the term. We must examine the context - whether ego uses the term to refer to 'true' brother (structurally) or whether he has extended the use to other people.

The moral meaning of the term nfowetu is discoverable partly from its actual meaning in the kinship system. I have pointed out that it is used to express an equality between the users of the term. Another moral underpinning comes from the fact that it is, after all, a kinship term, and denotes a close kinsman at that. There is an ethic of kinship amity implicit in the use of any kin term, and it is reinforced by such a close kin term, 'brother'. This connotes an even stronger bond than mere kinship: that of the family. The term nfowetu then, has the moral meanings of strong kinship and family identification, amity, and equality.

Tactically, the term is ideal for use in a situation which domestically, shows a relaxed egalitarian relationship with a kinsman or a special relationship with another man - a special friend, perhaps; and finally, away from home, where ethnic identity may become an important factor (as in the socially and culturally heterogeneous circumstances of the migrant labour situation), the term can be used to identify common tribal identity as against other tribes. Implicit in every case are the moral imperatives of kinship amity and equality.

Despite all the positive and egalitarian connotations attached to the term nfowetu and its popularity as a kin term which can be

used in many diverse situations, we must not lose sight of the negative aspects as well: the fact that one's nfowetu may also be a stranger, enemy, real or apparent (and after all, is not a brother-in-law a potential enemy that marriage has turned into a friend?). The ambivalence which is at the essence of the meaning of the term also makes it particularly fitting as an instrument of flexibility. One's relationship with such a person is characterized by 'prescriptive altruism' (cf. Bloch 1971:81), but despite the fact that one should treat him rather like a brother, it must not be forgotten that he is still 'our stranger'; the relationship can be friendly, but each party must keep at arm's length. This fact was brought to my notice by the behaviour of my interpreter, a stranger in the area of fieldwork, (he lived in a headman's district some miles away) who called many individuals nfowetu, (and they reciprocated) but who never formed a really strong relationship with any of them.

Bloch maintains that this technique of seeking the moral base of terms, and then noting their tactical usage, can be applied equally to all kin terms. I prefer to narrow the scope, for, as I have noted earlier, Chopi informants have a definite idea of who the 'real' holders of a kin term are, and are aware that the term is thereafter extended to cover other people as well (cf. I. Mayer 1965:52ff.). In other words, when the term is applied to non-kin, it seems to be done in a metaphorical sense: a kin term is given to someone who is not a kinsman, but whom one intends treating as if he were a kinsman; he, in return, may accept or reject such a prestation by reciprocating or not reciprocating the term. Once the individuals have established this exchange of goodwill, the business of behaving in a manner befitting kinsmen must then logically follow. As I. Mayer has put it,

> 'kinship behaviour might be construed as a formal etiquett and set of symbolic observances due from one person to another, expressing one of the attitudes or sentiments appropriate in a given relation: e.g., deference, respect, intimacy.' (1965:49)

In this area of behaviour, a subtle interaction or even competition takes place, for the kin term that is 'offered' by one individual may not be acceptable to the other. Both have certain ideas which constitute their subjective definitions of the situation and which may not match. Goffman, in his various works, deals with such situations, which he labels 'encounters' (1972:17ff.). There is an element of the encounter whenever one person addresses another by a kin term which is not rigidly prescribed by their kinship relationship, for, as Goffman points out,

> 'When we allow that the individual projects a definition of the situation when he appears before others, we must also see that the others, however passive their role may seem to be, will themselves effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response to the individual and by virtue of any lines of action they initiate to him.' (1971:20).

Thus, for example, there were occasions when my interpreter would address an acquaintance by the term nfowetu, only to be rebuffed by being called a slightly more distant nyaha ('friend') in return. My interpreter was trying to establish a relationship with the other person that was closer than the latter was prepared to accept, who then replied with a term which, although it signified here a partial rejection, was nevertheless a statement of amity. The two men were involved in a process of 'impression management' (Goffman 1971:203 ff.), and their respective definitions of the situation were slightly different, although they both clearly wanted their relationship to continue, and on a friendly basis.

On one occasion my interpreter was snubbed when he addressed a man some years his senior as nfowetu; the man totally ignored both the term of address and the question that it prefaced. Rather shamefacedly, my interpreter rephrased the question, leaving out the familiar term; this time the question was answered. Here, the interaction had taken the form of an encounter, where the interpreter had misjudged the situation (or perhaps was 'trying on' a higher

status). The intractable, even insulting, response he received led him to re-evaluate his definition of the situation and, stepping down, he retreated into a more polite and formal relationship of the stranger.

The analysis that such an approach provides can only be described as 'micro', for it deals with interpersonal interaction and individual transactions, with encounters taking place between two persons and no more. It is a different focus to the hypothesis put forward earlier in this chapter, where the analyses dealt with structures and groups, or at least individuals as representatives of groups. I do believe, however, that a Goffman-type approach provides insight into an important aspect of kin terms: viz., that kin terms are capable of manipulation. The strategic use to which kin terms can be put is demonstrated by a personal anecdote(1).

After being in the field for some time and desperately seeking to establish rapport with my Chopi neighbours, I was delighted when a man jokingly offered his three-year-old daughter as a wife. I jokingly accepted, and addressed the girl as nkatangu, 'my wife'. whereupon the father called me mwane ('son-in-law'). Subsequently two other men (of different clans) did the same, and a fourth clan 'adopted' my wife as a clan daughter (the result being the same: I was their son-in-law). Now, a fifth clan was already in a wife-receiving (i.e., son-in-law) relationship to the fourth, so I became a 'brother' (of the nfowetu type) to them. Thus, I had acquired a network of fictive kin and, by accepting the kin term of mwane by which I came to be addressed, I had also accepted the definition of the situation offered by my 'father-in-law'. As it happens, I had an imperfect knowledge of the rules of the game and did not fully

(1) I make no excuses for the use of this anecdote for it will become apparent that I was a passive actor in the situation; I became a 'social fact' at which certain strategies were directed.

understand the implications of the situation as it had been defined. Son-in-law is perhaps the most lowly of kin positions; one treats one's parents-in-law with the utmost respect for some years; a one-way flow of gifts is expected to travel from the junior to the senior partners; and I have already shown that one meaning of the term mwane is 'small'.

In order to balance the above account, it must be pointed out that in Chopi eyes, one of the most obvious ways of incorporating a stranger into a social milieu is to allow him to marry a daughter. To my Chopi neighbours I was a potentially dangerous foreigner, who had expressed the desire to enter into social relationships with them; I was already married under monogamous law, so clearly could not marry a daughter. What remained then, was to make use of the strategy of drawing me into the fold as a fictional son-in-law. A similar situation pertains in the Chopi perception and relationship to the spirit world, where (amongst others) a malevolent spirit, allegedly of Ndau origin, causes illness and bad luck to occur to individuals. The means of dealing with this spirit, known as nkwambu, is to offer a young girl in marriage to it. The Chopi do not know the etymology of the term nkwambu, but I have been informed by a research worker among the Ndau that the term means 'son-in-law' in that language (C. Armstrong: personal communication). The principle is the same: a potentially harmful outsider is rendered harmless and, hopefully, amicable, by the judicious application of a fictive kinship relationship, which is symbolized thereafter by use of the relevant kin term.

Conclusion

It will be apparent that while there have been a number of attempts to explain the nature and the function of kinship terminologies, no single explanation has been adequate. In this chapter I have drawn together those attempts which, I believe, can make some contribution to our understanding of the Chopi system. The approaches fall into

two main categories: (i) the analyses of terminologies as ideational and ideological systems (e.g., Lounsbury and, in part, McKinley); and (ii) sociological explanations, which tended to view kinship terminology systems as reflections on an individual level of important sociological principles (e.g., Radcliffe-Brown's lineage solidarity and the marriage rule hypotheses).

It is often thought that because of the widely differing theoretical orientations of the proponents of each type of approach, and consequently the models they build, that they are mutually exclusive. McKinley, however, points to a constructive new direction and, following Berger and Luckman, and their view of a dynamic, three-phase dialectic, we are provided with a meta-model which allows us to incorporate within one framework these diametrically opposed orientations.

This dialectical model has the advantage of allowing for social and cultural change; man can, for example, create new patterns, in the externalization phase. Yet this is not a closed system: there exists the possibility that input may come from extraneous forces, such as in conditions of culture contact or enforced social change. Any new input must go through the objectivation phase whereby it becomes an accepted part of the social and cultural reality. For Lounsbury and Marx to argue for the primacy of their particular substructure is therefore to focus on one area of a three-phase process, in which no one phase can be attributed primacy over any other. At any given moment in time, all three are exerting influence on the others.

I believe that the diverse approaches of, say, Lounsbury, Leach and Bloch, who all take seemingly irreconcilable stands, can in fact be reconciled on two levels. Firstly, it seems that within a given terminological system, not all kin terms are equally susceptible to each form of analysis. Lounsbury's extensionist method,

imputing a primary referent and 'extending' the term to cover other individuals works well where the primary referent is within the nuclear family, but is less effective in analysing more 'distant' terms, such as koko, whose primary referent could be any one of FF, FM, MF, MB and MM. It is precisely this type of term which is best understood by Leach's contention that such terms are in fact 'social category terms', where there is no primary referent; but he appears to me to be unconvincing when applying this analysis to terms such as tate (F) where informants acknowledge a primary referent. Bloch's technique appears to operate best when applied to kin terms indicating a relationship some distance (socially) removed from ego (although it can be used with regard to almost any kin term) and which contains some ambivalence in its meaning (e.g., nfowetu).

Secondly, using Berger and Luckman's dialectic, it would appear that the Leach model falls at the phases of externalization and objectification, for the terms arise out of social and economic behaviour, then become objectified as social facts; the Lounsbury model focuses on the phases of objectification and internalization, for the system of kin terms is seen as existing sui generis, imposing on individuals a 'grammar' of kinship; and Bloch's model deals predominantly with the phase of externalization, where, with the 'objectified' system of terms at the disposal of an individual, he uses the terms in different contexts for different tactical ends; this manipulation of the terms is essentially innovative, and is the moment at which social change may occur.

If we can accept the dialectical model, then the traditional division between explanations from the sociological and ideational orders, with their attendant biases, is resolved; for there is an element of truth in the deterministic assertions of both disciplines, but when both claim primacy, they overstate their case. The dialectical model, which allows a synthesis of diverse arguments, does not seek origins,

or primacy for one of its phases. Rather one should see it as a model of the present, a closed circle, with no beginning and no end; each is a moment in time, and each phase exerts an influence on the other two.

This chapter on kin terms brings to an end part III of the dissertation, the aim of which was to present to the reader the complexities of the systems of kinship, inheritance and marriage of the Chopi. The main emphases have been on the normative aspects of these institutions, the structuring of sentiments, although I have not hesitated to demonstrate the possibilities of such systems for social action. In part four, which follows, the emphasis is shifted entirely to social action. The focus is on individuals and the groupings and action sets that they recruit or belong to. The institutions dealt with up to this point provide individuals with the social resources which any person requires in order to cope with, or advance himself in, his society. There is a sharp change in perspective therefore, from structures and institutions, to the micro-level of individual-oriented action.

PART FOUR

INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIAL ACTION

Chapter IX

Institutions and Action Sets in Economic, Legal and Religious Contexts

Introduction

We now move from the examination of the structures and categories of kinship to the analysis of social action. In this, part four of the dissertation, the focus of attention is changed from the normative (i.e., institutions) to the pragmatic and dynamic (i.e., the analysis of individuals acting out sequences of action). In this chapter specifically, which deals with social activity in economic, legal and religious contexts, the technique of situational analysis is used. As a background, a general outline of the institutions themselves is provided. This is followed by the analysis of particular situations, which usually revolve around how an individual, faced by a problem, gathers around himself a set of helpers and followers, and tries to overcome the obstacles in his path. In the process, it becomes interesting to note who his helpers are, why they help him and by what organisational principles such help is rationalised. Such action sets are valuable items of study because they permeate the entire fabric of social life, and this admittedly microscopic view of society points up important social activity which might otherwise be missed, or glossed over.

Parts one, two and three of the dissertation provided the necessary foundations for our understanding of the actions of individuals; the form the ecological, social, and political environment in which sequences of action take place and become comprehensible. Part four brings the analysis full circle, by examining how individuals use and manipulate these social, ecological and political resources. The contents of the present chapter have already been indicated, and this is followed by the final chapter, which deals with the problem of the individual in social action, and the micro-political processes that take place in Chopi society.

In this introductory section, I shall discuss some of the techniques that I use in the following analysis. During fieldwork, I collected

(wherever possible) information relating to social networks, especially of actual sequences of social action. I also incorporated in a general questionnaire a series of questions asking informants whom they regarded as indispensable helpers or supporters in such areas of social life as work parties, court cases, ritual activities, etc. This gave me some indication as to whom an individual would regard as 'core' supporters in various contexts of social life, against which I could measure who actually did lend assistance in the course of such events. In this way, I was able to build up a picture of individual networks which, while not complete, was nevertheless extensive. I was able to examine the overlap of such networks, their changing composition over a short period (my attempt to acquire a time dimension of some years proved futile - informants had difficulty in remembering who attended work parties in previous seasons) and, from this examination, I was able to observe which individuals in Nyatsiku emerged as recurrent members of various networks (usually persons who have particular skills). These are clearly 'nodal' persons, who wield much influence in their particular area of specialization.

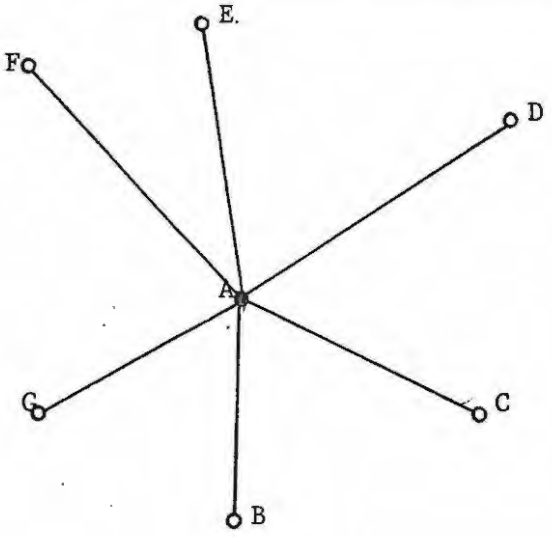
While my collection of network data during fieldwork was on a generalized level, my analysis has become focused and sharpened by the insights of writers such as Barnes (1969), Gulliver (1971), Mitchell (1969) and, more recently, Kapferer (1972). It will be apparent that, following Mitchell, I view the concept of social network as a means of analysis as 'complementary to and not a substitute for conventional sociological or anthropological frameworks of analysis' (1969:8). The concept of network is, of course, an analytical abstraction and does not exist 'on the ground'; the mapping of the network then, is a process of model-building. It is necessary to clarify the terminology I intend using, and in this regard I must state that by social network I mean the links that join individuals together in relationships or potential relationships. In this form it is neither egocentric nor group-sociocentric.

Having established this minimal definition of network, we must now move to sharper distinctions within the concept before it can be analytically useful. I have already briefly referred to some of these distinctions in chapter five, and will elaborate them shortly. Barnes has in a recent article (1969) turned his attention to improving the precision with which networks should be used, and in this chapter I intend following his usage, together with that of Gulliver (1971:16-27), who in the main, appears to agree with Barnes. Barnes has provided useful subdivisions or components of networks, the first of which being the 'partial network', which is extracted from the total network on the basis of a criterion that may be applied throughout the total network. Thus kinship, religious, political networks are all 'partial' networks, and are neither egocentric nor sociocentric (1969:57). Barnes finds the term 'ego-centred network' to be too loose, so he dissects the network further into even more specialized units, calling these 'stars' and 'zones'; he is here shifting his focus, making the individual the centre of the analysis.

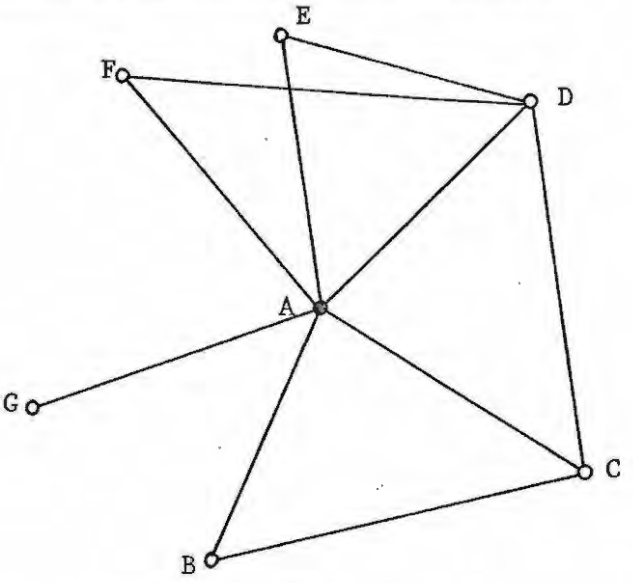
In this and the following chapter I shall be concentrating on individual-centred action, and I therefore find Barnes' approach useful. According to his terminology, we should select an individual (Alpha) and seek his dyadic relationships with other individuals. 'We then have a set of relationships which may be pictured as radiating from, or converging on, Alpha' (1969:58). This extract from the total or partial network is Alpha's 'primary' or 'first-order star' (ibid:58). Barnes then points out that if, say, A has eight individuals in his primary star, there is a strong probability that some of them have linkages with each other. This formation is called a 'primary' or 'first-order zone' (ibid:59). One also finds 'second-order stars', where B is a contact of A, and while they share certain other contacts, at least some of B's will be foreign to A. However, A still has access to these contacts, albeit indirectly, through B (ibid:59). The concept of 'zone' can

likewise be expanded to take in 'second-order zone' (ibid: 60) which is all existing relationships between two persons, A and one of his first- or second-order contacts (it is this type of linkage that Adrian Mayer reports in his analysis of voter recruitment in India (1966)).

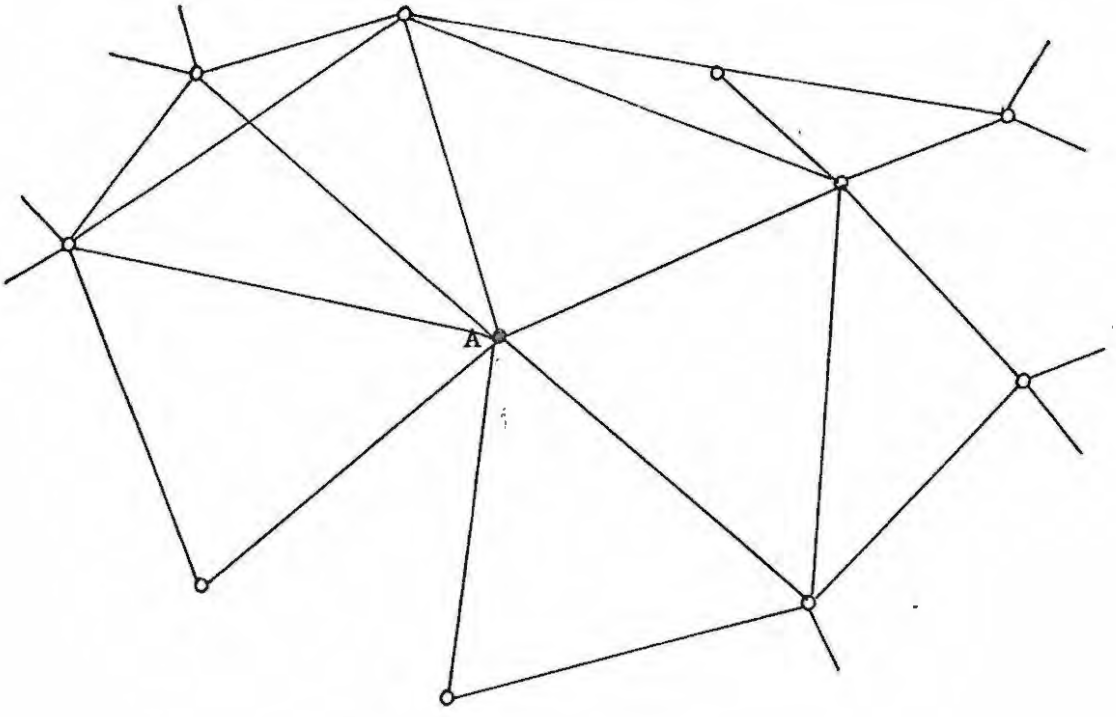
Figure 39: Stars and zones as abstractions from the social network[1]



(1) First-order Star



(2) First-order Zone



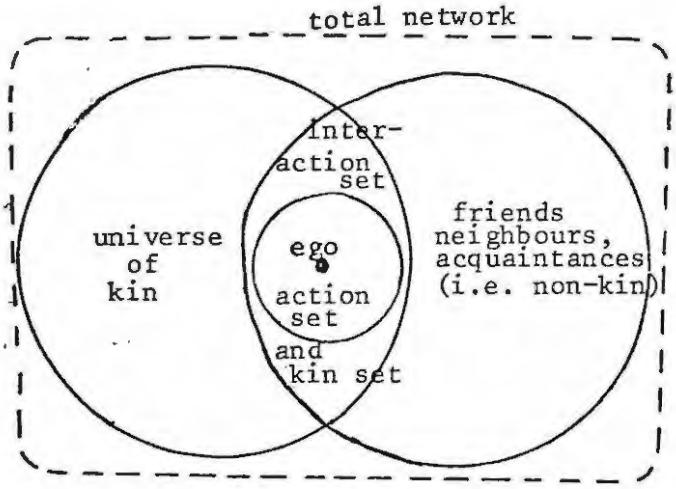
(3) Second-order Zone

(1) After Barnes (1969: 59 and 61), and Gulliver (1971: 22).

The three aspects of network depicted in Figure 39 draw our attention to the fact that the concepts of network, star, zone, etc. are analytical constructs. I have already pointed out that networks per se are neither egocentric nor sociocentric; the 'stars' and 'zones' bring the focus of attention down to an individual, Alpha, and since we are in this chapter concerned with individuals and their behaviour, it is useful to examine what Barnes calls 'the ego-centric properties of the network' (ibid: 68). Much of the analysis which follows therefore, deals not with networks as such, but with portions of networks, such as stars or zones.

Having established certain of the characteristics of networks isolated by Barnes, let us now examine these in relation to other useful concepts provided by Adrian Mayer, Gulliver, and Firth, which were briefly introduced in chapter five of this thesis. These include 'the universe of kin' (Firth 1963; Gulliver 1971: 17) which refers to all the people to whom ego is related by cognatic kinship and affinity (i.e., a first-order star, in Barnes' terminology) and the 'kin-set', which is a sub-section of the universe of kin, 'comprising all those with whom at any particular time he (ego) maintains an active relationship' (Gulliver 1971: 17), which, as defined here, is also a first-order star. I am here forced to introduce a concept of my own, for the above terms deal only with kinship, and I have demonstrated that much of Chopi social interaction takes place between persons not related by kinship (rather, for example, by neighbourship or friendship). I have earlier referred to this configuration as the 'interaction set', which refers to a set of individuals with whom ego interacts, comprising cognatic kin, affines, and also non-kin. The use of this term allows us to broaden the scope of the 'action set' from Gulliver's narrower interpretation (in his definition it is drawn from the kin set (1971: 18)) to the wider view of Mayer (1966: 98) which does not limit it to kin only, but can incorporate friends, friends of friends, etc.

Figure 40: The place of the action set in its context of the social network



In Figure 40 above, I have depicted the segments of the total network in the form of a Venn diagram, with the two major categories of the universe of kin and non-kin, which intersect, the overlapping portion giving rise to the interaction set (which includes the kin set). At the centre of the diagram is ego (since our concepts have been defined around him) and the most intimate of the sets - the 'action set', which is an ad hoc conglomeration of individuals, drawn from the interaction set, with the aim of collective action in a particular social situation. People are recruited to action sets by a central individual, by his activation of whatever structural linkages may join them, and the set disbands once the purpose for which it was created, is fulfilled. No two individuals will have identical action sets, and no two action sets of the same person will be the same; they are situationally defined and ephemeral.

Any individual needs the support of others in collective action in all spheres of social life: religious, political, economic, and jural and it is contended here that the support is recruited on the basis of action sets. The reasons why the composition of such sets varies so widely, despite the fact that they are drawn from the same interaction set, are manifold. Some members may have particular skills and are therefore more useful than others, while some will only recognise obligations in certain spheres. The participants may also weigh

up the relative gain to be won, and the strength of their claims on each other at any moment in time. For example, a kinsman with whom a double bond may exist (say through the namesake institution) is doubly obliged to render assistance. Factors such as residential proximity play a part - neighbours are easier to mobilize than a kinsman living some distance away (through sheer availability), and at any given time ego is on better terms with some kinsmen than others. On the negative side, there will always be some potential members who are otherwise occupied at that specific time, or who may have a conflict of interest, because two competing action set leaders were both making claims on their support.

The concepts thus far put forward have been deliberately concentrated upon for their ego-centred properties, i.e., as first-order stars; but in reality they are part of the wider network and are more accurately depicted as second-order stars and zones, which means that many members of an action set are linked to each other independently of the ego who recruited them in any given situation. Barnes suggests that it is useful to note the 'density' of such stars or zones by noting how many of the various individuals are linked to the others in the set. This is then reflected as a percentage of the total number of possible links, and gives an indication of whether the portion of network being viewed is tightly- or loosely-knit. Certain areas of the network with a high density (of about 80 per cent) is referred to by Barnes as a 'cluster' (1969:64).

Where such clusters exist, there is the potential for more or less the same set of individuals to be recruited to one person's action sets in different contexts; here we are witnessing the emergence of quasi-groups (Mayer 1966). This important insight points to the fact that there is much significant social behaviour that takes place on a level at which corporate groups do not operate. The analysis of action sets is, as Gulliver points out, a form of situational analysis (1971:20) 'in which we can examine impermanent (and substructural) collective

action.' In the description and analysis of case material which follows, I shall be dealing with examples of action sets drawn from various situations, recruited by different individuals. It is, of course, better to use information on a limited number of actors in an extended case technique, but an ethnographer has only a limited period of time for his data collection, and events do not often conspire to produce neat sequences of social action that are amenable to extended-case study.

In this chapter, I shall be dealing with action sets arising out of activities in the spheres of economic, religious and legal life. The action sets which may be described as economic are recruited in terms of the most diverse principles; indeed, many of the decisions regarding recruitment are based on pragmatic considerations, such as the availability and current demand for labour, the proximity of potential helpers and the existence of obligations owed to the convener of the work party. Normative considerations also play a part, because an individual can expect the help of kinsmen, if he requests it, but in general, the somewhat mercenary nature of economic activity is reflected in the principles of recruitment which are activated, with the main criterion being efficiency in raising the required members.

Action sets recruited to handle problems in Chopi litigation are smaller in size and rely more on normative principles in recruitment than is the case of economic action sets. Again, it seems that in the nature of things, legal problems may have repercussions within the kin group and is therefore the concern of a tighter, normatively constituted set of people around ego. Religious activities, perhaps even more than legal ones, are recruited along normative lines, because the Chopi have an ancestor cult. This, more than any other institution, should provide a window through which one can view the workings of a kinship group, for it should be revealing to examine who are regarded as significant ancestors and who comprise the congregation. Political

activity, which is examined in the next chapter, is less reliant on a normative ethic, but here too, the support of kin is essential to provide a solid foundation on which to build a coaltion of political followers.

Action sets in economic activities

There are certain occasions through the year on which economic activity takes place on a large scale. The basic economic unit is the homestead: a man, his wife, and unmarried children, and while this small group can for the most part adequately provide for its own needs, certain activities, such as the clearing of a new field out of virgin forest, or the building of a hut, calls for a labour force that is considerably larger than the elementary family can provide. It is on occasions such as these that a work party (didimwa)) will be called. Most work parties require the participation of both men and women (such as the two above and sope-making, which is more a social occasion rather than hard work), while others, such as the manufacture of pots and ucusu oil, are the preserve of the womenfolk only. Work on the preparation of fields and the making of ucusu and sope, are activities that take place annually, while hut and pot-making are undertaken less frequently.

The Chopi combine a pattern of slash-and-burn agriculture with field rotation, so that some fields (usually two) are under cultivation at any given time, and two or three others are lying fallow. Due to the hot climate and good rainfall, the sub-tropical undergrowth and quick-growing saplings can become entrenched within a couple of seasons of the discontinued use of a field. When the field is to be reopened, or a new field cut out of the forest, it is an extremely arduous task, involving the felling of trees and the backbreaking task of removing thick grass and vines by use of only a small hand-hoe (nkwati). On such occasions a didimwa is called, with the menfolk tackling the shorter, but more arduous, tasks of tree-felling and bush-removal, and the women typically taking on the long, slow task of clearing the

tufts of grass and smaller bushes from the field.

The clearing of a new, or heavily-overgrown field can take place at any time of year, but is most frequently tackled in June, when the weather is coolest, and the raising of a work-party during this period is not difficult, there being no necessity for a particular choice of the date. Clashes of dates during this period would be, and usually are, circumvented. It is another matter entirely, however, when one examines the pattern of work parties which follow immediately after the first heavy rains in about October of each year. Suddenly, the community becomes a hive of activity, with work parties being called almost every day, and clashes of dates invariably occur. The rains have softened and moistened the soil, and it becomes a matter of urgency to hoe and plant while the soil is still amenable, and before the the next downpour.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the dry season is a long one, and October is invariably a month of hunger, as the stocks of maize and peanuts in the granaries run low and the surrounding forests (from which the Chopi are so adept at gathering) provide poor pickings. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the first few weeks of the new rainy season provide a condensed period of intense, and sometimes bitter, competition, as individuals vie for the advantage of calling work parties as early as possible. This period usually lasts about three to four weeks, depending on the weather conditions, and there is a great demand for labour and consequently there is competition between individuals for the services of helpers.

Ideally, a certain amount of discussion takes place as to the various dates that the work parties will be held, and friends and close kin may even plan ahead to the next season so that one person who may have been disadvantaged by a late hoeing one season may be compensated at the next. A work party varies in size, but on average comprises about eight men and about twice that number of women. There is a small

'core' of people who can be relied upon to always attend, but on the periphery of the action set are a constantly-changing set of individuals. The 'core' members tend to be close kin, friends and neighbours, but the more peripheral members, while also being drawn from the same categories, are of interest because it is these individuals who become the object of competition between rivals who may have called a didimwa for the same day.

If two men call a work-party for the same day and neither is prepared to change the date, then it can be assumed that there is rivalry between them. Here, the relatively innocuous activity of economic cooperation becomes the arena of a subtle competition for status and influence. The core members of the action sets of each convener can be expected to remain resonably constant, but there will be a few individuals who will find themselves in the difficult position of having to choose which of the conveners to support.

There can also be wider political implications for, if the two men are potential rivals for political office, then this encounter over the work party can be used as a measure of probable support in the event of a real political dispute that may arise later. In the event, these micropolitical encounters, although of relatively small consequence, tend to end in pyrrhic victories, because it means that both work parties will be smaller than would normally be the case, and some individuals will be forced to make difficult and unpleasant choices between the conveners. Occasionally, the choice is clearcut, where one bond is clearly stronger than another, but often the two bonds may be of equal strength, or more likely, of equal vagueness. It is here that difficult evaluations of a transactional nature must be made; relative gains weighed against relative costs, for by honouring one set of obligations, the other ones are simultaneously weakened or even broken.

Economic cooperation, as we have seen above, has ramifications beyond its intrinsic usefulness. There is a manipulative dimension

as well, for an individual can work towards the strengthening of his social resources by entering into new transactions with others. It must be understood that certain people are invited to attend a work-party, especially if the convener particularly desires them to attend. Regular attenders are informed of the intention to hold a didimwa and, with others, the knowledge is spread by word of mouth; anyone who wishes to attend may do so. Thus, if a person wishes to extend his network, he may do so by inviting new members to join his work party or he may merely attend the work party of someone whose allegiance he wishes to cultivate. In doing this, he is offering the 'gift' of his labour, which decency demands should be reciprocated by the convener. The pattern that follows is that if the convener is pleased by the gesture, he will attend the next work party called by his helper. If, on the other hand, he does not value the relationship, he will tend to miss the next work party, and reluctantly join a later one. The reciprocity, thus balanced, the relationship can now lapse; if the original convener wishes the relationship to continue, he must specifically invite or inform the helper when next he convenes a work-party.

The didimwa institution, like other areas of Chopi life, involves interpersonal relationships which must be nurtured if they are to survive. Viewed in a developmental sequence, the members of an individual's work-party action set reflect the state of his social network. If there is a large intake of new members, then he is attempting to expand his network (this rapid intake is characteristic of a young newly-married man, who needs to broaden his network as quickly as possible, in order to establish himself in society). If the intake is minimal, it reflects an established man whose social network is at optimum size and who does not need to expand it further.

One case that emerged from my study was that of Pedro Nkome, a progressive young man, whose network appeared to be expanding rapidly through no great effort of his own. In his case his relatively good

education and business acumen made him an attractive ally, and his main difficulty was to try to keep his obligations down to manageable proportions. This raises the problem of an overextended network. A man has to be careful not to spread his obligations too widely, for in doing so the ties may lack enough moral content to provide the motivation to hold them together. They may become purely transactional and their large numbers mean that not all of their demands can be met. Tactically, therefore, it is advantageous to have a core of support that is morally as well as transactionally bound, with a larger, more remote, category of people who can less frequently be called upon for support. A preponderance of the latter type gives rise to a fragile and transient quality in the network, with a high turnover of impermanent members.

If one looks at the action sets of economic cooperation that emerge from one household, it will be seen that a broad spectrum of individuals is recruited. The man of the household is most probably living near many of his kin, and the choice of people that he recruits to his action sets will reflect this. His wife, on the other hand, for reasons that were enumerated in chapters six and seven[1], will probably recruit action sets which have few kin and a preponderance of friends (both formal and informal), and other categories, such as wives of her husband's kin, will also be common. Looking at the household then, one is given the impression of an effective and wide spread of pragmatic alliances (dyadic contracts) radiating from it, the alliances being based on mutual obligations.

Case 14. Tomwane Ntsambe's work parties of 1968 and 1969

In this case, I have the following data at my disposal: Tomwane's conception of who are core supporters at his work parties, i.e.,

(1) Briefly, the reasons are that exogamy rules and the injunction to 'marry out' of one's area, result in the importation of women to areas to which they are probably strangers. These women, lacking kin nearby, rely upon dyadic contracts and friendship in order to people their personal social network and, therefore, action sets.

people whom he expects to attend; the actual attendance at his work party on October 4, 1969, which I personally observed and recorded; and Tomwane's recollection of who attended his work party in 1968, or more accurately, who attended in that year but not in 1969, and who in 1969 was new compared with 1968. While the difference in attendance may in part be due to unforseen circumstances that prevented an individual from attending, Tomwane was aware of these and informed me of them. The change in membership of his economic action-set, therefore, shows how fluctuating allegiances in social networks occur.

In 1969, heavy rains began falling on October 2, and two days later Tomwane Ntsambe convened a work party to hoe and plant a large field that had been lying fallow. Work began early in the morning and continued through the day until about 3.30 p.m. In accordance with custom, a stoppage was made in the late morning for a meal provided by Tomwane's wife, with refreshment of uputsu, a mild, slightly fermented brew made from mealie meal. When the work was completed, the work party retired to Tomwane's homestead, where its members relaxed and were plied with uputsu and sope; the first to quench the thirst, the second to be savoured and to encourage conviviality.

Figure 41: Composition of Tomwane's work parties of 1968 and 1969

Core supporters	1968 attendance	1969 attendance
Musisi Ntasmbe	Musisi Ntsambe	Musisi Ntsambe
Pedro Nkome	Pedro Nkome	
Sangatelo Nyakwaha	Sangatelo Nyakwaha	Sangatelo Nyakwaha
Joao Nyangumbe	Joao Nyangumbe	Joao Nyangumbe
Menetiyane Lipanga		Menetiyane Lipanga
Makause Ussake	Makause Ussake	
Menetiyane Nyakwaha+	Menetiyane Nyakwaha+	Menetiyane Nyakwaha+
	Eliyasia Mawhai+	Eliyasia Mawhai+
		Mehemina Nyangumbe+
		Ropanyane Nyakwaha+
	Tenyane Mbiye	Tenyane Mbiye
	Joao Mbiye	Joao Mbiye
	Chibalwane Ntsambe	Chibalwane Ntsambe
	Atanase Nyangumbe	Atanase Nyangumbe
	Handelane Homu	
	Satanyane Homu	
	Auline Nyangumbe	Auline Nyangumbe

+ People who reside outside the headman's district of Nyatsiku

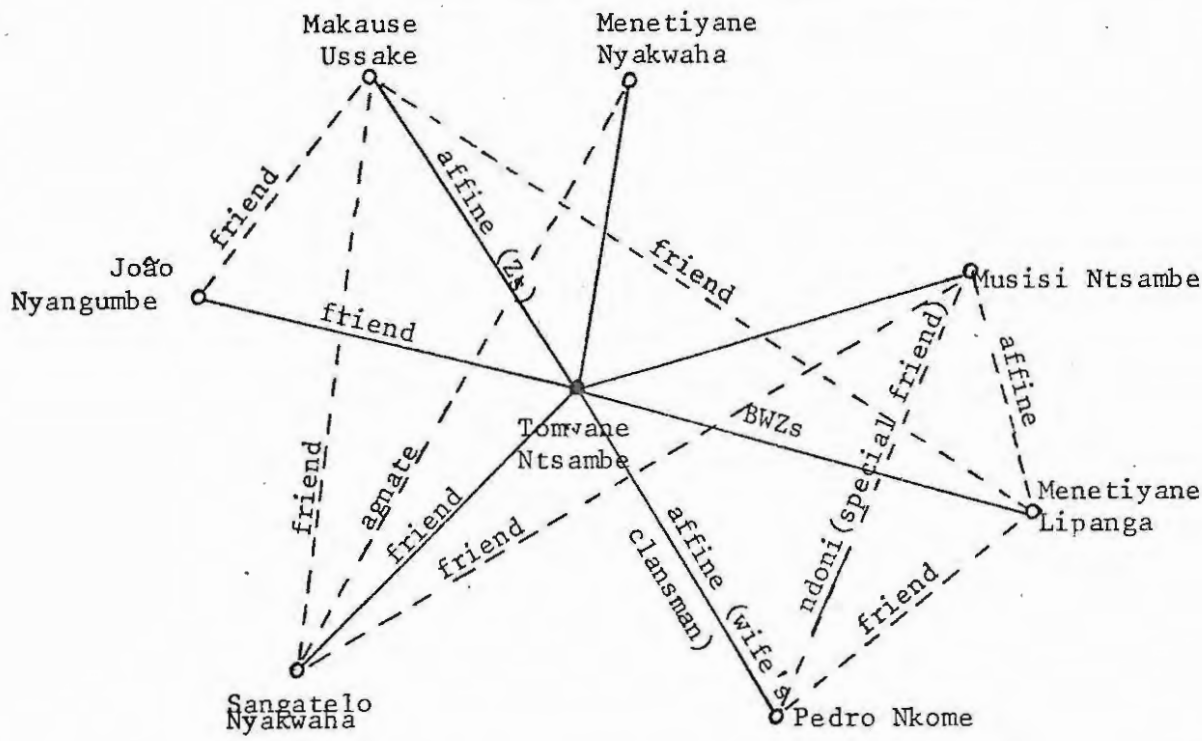
In the above table I have presented three categories. The column on the left depicts those individuals whom Tomwane regarded as regular participants and with whom there was a moral bond that ensured their reciprocal aid. The central column records those men who actually attended the didimwa of 1968[1] and the column on the right depicts those men whom Tomwane could recall as having attended his work party in the 1969 season. The table permits the analysis of the stability of the core support, and the discrepancy between the composition of the 1968 and 1969 work parties may provide an indication of changes on the periphery of Tomwane's social network.

Analysis

Starting with Tomwane's view of his core supporters, it is revealing that, of the seven individuals that he named in this connection, only one is an agnate (his brother, Musisi), and he can trace tentative kinship linkages with three others. These kin chains are to Menetiyane Lipanga, who is his BWZs, Pedro Nkome, a clansman of his wife, and Makause Ussake, a classificatory Zs. The first of these latter relationships is so tenuous that to regard it as a tie of kinship is to stretch credibility and the other two are distant classificatory kin, where no actual linkage can be accurately traced. The remainder of Tomwane's core supporters are individuals with whom he has built up a relationship over some years, and whom today could be classed as strong friends (although stopping short of the ndoni relationship). The one person who belongs to the inner circle but who lives outside the headman's district, Menetiyane Nyakwaha, is one of Tomwane's ndoni (indeed, he is his closest friend).

(1) I have here reported only the men who attended the work party, since we are examining the obligatory bonds between men, and not women. Wives, because they tend to be relative newcomers to the area, have in any case diverse principles of recruitment, which probably have little or no political significance. It is possible, however, for a man to send his wife to a work party in his place if he himself cannot attend.

Figure 42: Tomwane's core supporters



This diagram represents that portion of the social network which is activated by Tomwane for economic cooperation and from which he can expect a dependable response. The unbroken lines radiating out from the centre form a primary star, and show the nature of the relationship between Tomwane and the Alter (as far as I have been able to reconstruct it). The dotted lines show the linkages of the other members to each other, forming a primary zone, with a density of 50%.

The examination of core support is particularly important because such supporters have a relationship with Alpha which ideally is characterized by generalized reciprocity, and as such, there is a strong moral bond which is clearly opposed to the transactional relationship with the more peripheral followers. F.G. Bailey (1970:44-79) makes clear the distinction between such 'core' and 'follower' types when dealing with factions, stressing the commitment to the leader by the core supporters, while the 'followers' tend to be more mercenary, attempting to gain the maximum possible benefit in the short term. If there appears to be more to be gained by changing allegiance (or by attending one man's work party rather then another's) then such followers

do so.

Bearing these assertions in mind, one might reasonably expect to find a high proportion of kinsmen represented in the 'core' of an action set. After all, the relationship of Alpha to core members is underpinned by a moral bond, and the universe of kin provides an already-extant human reservoir which has the advantage of involving relationships which demand 'prescriptive altruism'. In Tomwane's case however, we find this is not so. Despite the fact that he has a number of agnates living nearby, only one of them, his full brother, attends his work parties. If one seeks corporate kin activity as evidence of a strong kinship system, then one must assume the reverse here: Tomwane's case points not to strong, corporate kin groups, but rather to an individual, acting almost alone, activating relationships as he is able, by whatever linkage possible.

Referring back to Figure 41, it will be seen that two core members, Pedro Nkome and Makause Ussake, attended Tomwane's 1968 work party, but not that of 1969. Tomwane explained that Pedro, a busy man, was away at the time of the second didimwa, and that his absence did not denote a breakdown of their relationship. Makause, on the other hand, appears to have deliberately snubbed Tomwane by not attending the second didimwa. Makause was not away at the time, and excused himself by saying that he was entertaining his son, who had recently returned from a trip to the gold mines. This, it was generally considered, was a poor excuse, bordering on insult. Tomwane viewed the matter in a serious light, and in return, refused to attend Makause's work party a couple of weeks later. I was unable to ascertain what was the cause of the breach between these two men who had previously been good friends, but it became apparent that they were rapidly drifting apart. Not only did they cease their reciprocal aid, but they were increasingly to be found on opposite sides in factional disputes between third parties.

The only other core supporter who was not at both work parties was Menetiyane Lipanga. Menetiyane attended the 1969 didimwa, but not that of the year before. He is a recent recruit to Tomwane's core support, having become involved through Tomwane's brother, Musisi, who is his MZH. The chain of events that led to Menetiyane's recruitment is as follows: Musisi married Nyowe Nkumbi many years ago, and her sister, Chakwasi, came to settle in the area as Musisi's wuyi, after she divorced her husband. Her son, Menetiyane, after living with his father for some years, married, and left his home area to join his mother in Nyatsiku also as a wuyi of Musisi and, by extension, of Tomwane, who is the former's elder brother. It is, therefore, through the introduction of Musisi that Menetiyane met Tomwane and, over a period of about five years, worked intermittently in his work parties. While he did not participate in 1968, Menetiyane was well enough known in 1969 to be regarded as a core supporter.

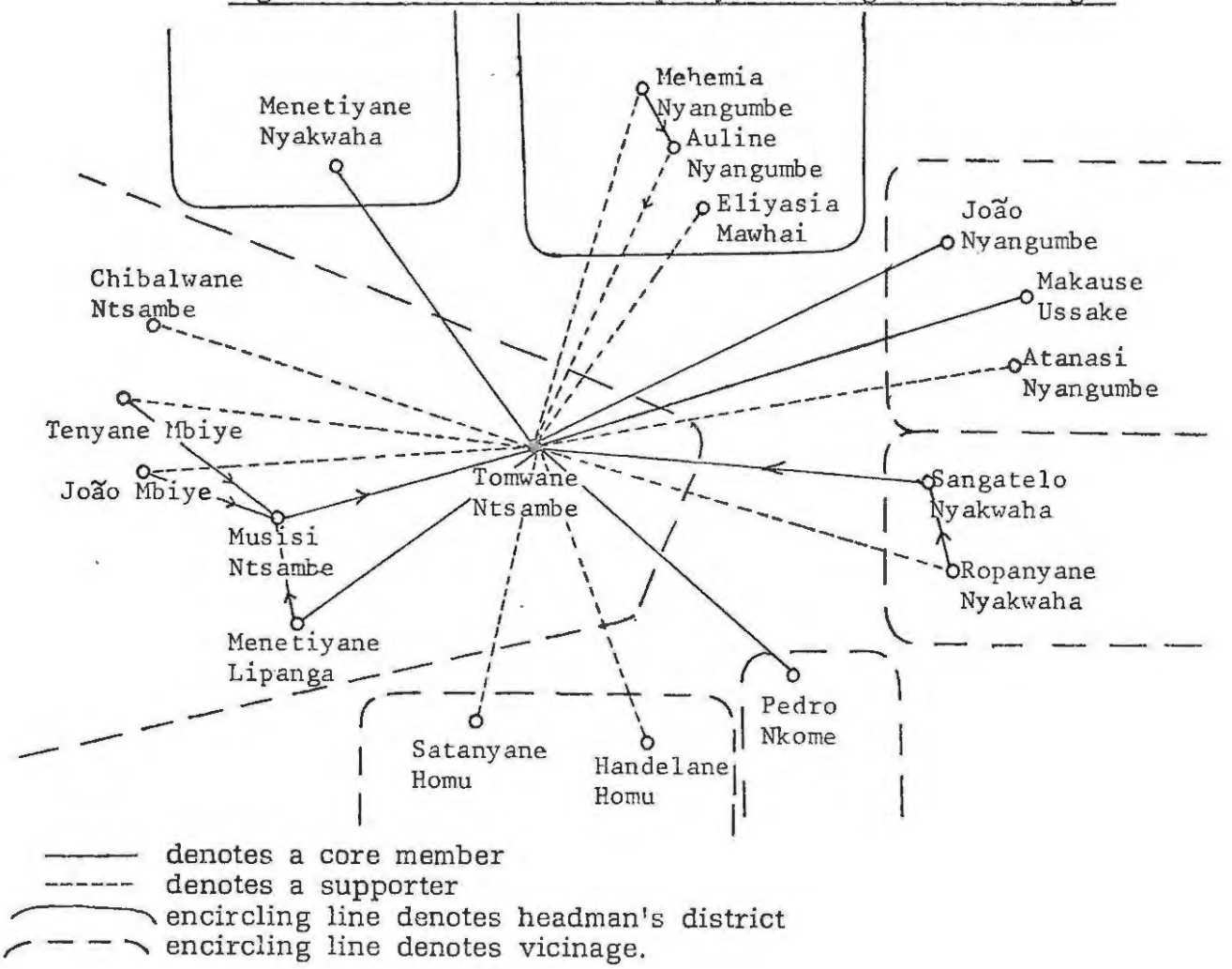
Let us now turn our attention to the more peripheral members of the action set. We find that Eliyasia Mawhai and Auline Nyangumbe are two individuals who came from far afield in both 1968 and 1969. Both are good friends of Tomwane, but do not qualify as core supporters because of their erratic attendance over a number of years. The same problem exists with the other peripheral members: Joao and Tenyane Mbiye are wuyi of Tomwane, but do not regularly attend. Zalambe Ntsambe is a latent political rival (they both have claims to the succession to the big-manship of the Ntsambe vicinage) but they nevertheless are on friendly terms.

Satanyane and Handelane Homu attended the 1968 work party, but not the following one. When asked about this, Tomwane explained that he had lately become friendly with Piepe Homu, who was the original 'big man' of the Homu group, but a numerically strong faction under Nyamune Homu had broken away and relations between the two factions were very strained. Tomwane's favouring of Piepe had therefore alien-

ated the other side. Tomwane regretted this, for the Nyamune faction was numerically more powerful and, therefore, more useful as allies, but he had a long-standing friendship with Piepe that he was not prepared to break. It seems quite likely that Satanyane and Handelane had joined Tomwane's madimwa in the past in the hope of getting this suppot in their dispute with Piepe. When this ploy failed, they withdrew their economic cooperation from Tomwane.

The two new faces in 1969 were Mehemina Nyangumbe, who was recruited by his brother Auline, and Ropanyane Nyakwaha, who was encouraged to attend by his FB, Sangatelo (a core member). Both these men are young, and, particularly in the case of Ropanyane, who is in line to become headman of Nyatsiku one day, the strength of his social network would be enhanced if an influential person such as Tomwane were to become involved in a system of reciprocal obligations with him.

Figure 43: Tomwane's work party, showing areas of origin



From the above diagram, it is apparent that only two of the seven core members (joined to Tomwane by unbroken lines) are drawn from his own vicinage, while two others came from the powerful Masakula vicinage, one from Nyakwaha (this person, Sangatelo, was also the headman of Nyatsiku at this time), and one from the Nkome vicinage. The vicinage of the at this time), and one from the Nkome vicinage. The vicinage of the Homu people is also represented in the action set, but not by a core member (cf. map of Nyatsiku vicinages on p.64). Four members of the action set live outside Nyatsiku, one of whom is a core member, Tomwane's best friend, Menetiyane Nyakwaha. The other three members all come from the headman's district of Masita, the area where Tomwane spent much of his childhood and adolescence under the fosterage of his namesake. These were men whom he had befriended during the period of fosterage, and who, over a long period, but somewhat erratically, assisted at his work parties.

Tomwane is a politically ambitious man (see next chapter), and the composition of his action set reflects this. Each of the main vicinages of Nyatsiku are represented, with the exception of the small Homu faction led by Piepe, and it was shown that even with this man Tomwane had a good relationship (which in fact caused the two other Homu men to withdraw their cooperation from him). Moreover, in the persons of Sangatelo Nyakwaha, Pedro Nkome and Makause Ussake, he had formidable allies. The former was the district headman, the second is an entrepreneur who is building a powerful position through his access to external resources (see next chapter), and the third is regarded as the best orator and expert on legal procedure in the district. (although Tomwane was apparently in the process of losing the support of this man). Tomwane had therefore gathered around him support from all the main groups of the district, a fact which he later tried to exploit politically.

It appears that kinship, and more particularly agnatic kinship, plays a minor role in recruitment to economic action sets. One finds instead ego-oriented coalitions of individuals, who are recruited by diverse principles,

giving rise to widespread allegiances. Only 41% of Tomwane's work party was drawn from his own vicinage and, of the outsiders, 24% were drawn from outside the headman's district. I collected detailed material of nine other work parties that were convened in 1969, and of these, the average recruitment from within one's own vicinage was 44%, which suggests that Tomwane's case is not significantly atypical.

The number and importance of the individuals who attend a person's work party can be seen as a rough measure of the importance of the convener. Tomwane's work parties had a spread of strategically-placed and influential men. Piepe Homu, on the other, hand, who is old and infirm, and who has lost the allegiance of most of his vicinage (of which he was once the undisputed head) has neither enough resources to brew the uputsu and sope nor the strength to reciprocate the labour that others would provide at his work party. Consequently, Piepe cannot call a work party and has few allegiances of any sort. In short, he is socially bankrupt, with virtually no possibility of reconstituting his network.

The assistance rendered at work parties can also be used as a powerful social sanction either to keep a person in line or to punish him for persistant anti-social behaviour. One man, Bombanyane Nkome, provided an illustration of this. Bombanyane, who is a social misfit in the district, was going through the final stages of being initiated as a spirit medium. At one stage of the proceedings he was ordered to immediately build a hut to house his sicuembu (spirits) and acoutrements. He attempted at such short notice to recruit the assistance of his fellow vicinage clansmen, but was spurned by all of them. He had apparently consistently refused to help at their work parties, claiming to be too busy, and they contended that he had forfeited any moral right to their assistance. Clearly, a balance must be struck between extreme individualism and group demands. Bombanyane failed to realise this, and was suitably punished.

Action sets in dispute settlement

It is difficult to estimate what proportion of disputes are resolved

in court, but it appears to be rather small, especially when one considers the individualistic and competitive nature of Chopi society. In this social milieu, where one finds much friction between individuals, and social situations in which there are conflicting norms of society itself, one would anticipate a high turnover of disputes appearing before the various courts. During the 14 months of my fieldwork, however, there was only one official court case and another dispute, the arbitration of which was informal and took the form of a moot in the headman's district of Nyatsiku. The court of sub-chief Nyakwaha officiated in only four cases during the same period, while the court of Chief Nkumbi heard about fifteen cases per week, but, although the latter number appears to eb high, it must be seen against a population of about 25 to 30 000 people.

Since the great majority of disputes do not find their way into the courts, it is to be expected that there are other well-used channels which syphan off such potentially disruptive events as disputes. The reason for this appears to lie in the apparent contradiction between the ethic of individual advancement and the mode of gaining that advancement, viz., the recruitment of a coalition of followers, whose allegiance is often tenuous. In this situation, individuals must be careful not to involve actual or potential supporters in legal actions that would alienate them. Nor do followers need the legitimation of a legal dispute to cut their allegiance from a leader; the simple remedy is to transfer loyalty, or in extreme cases, to leave the vicinity.

The very fluidity of the social system then, appears to be a factor in the paucity of court cases, especially at the local level. A court case can often be a trial of strength between two rivals, but Chopi society provides a number of alternative contexts where more subtle encounters provide the contestants with messages of their relative strength vis-a-vis each other; one such arena is the field of economic cooperation described above. Another arena is to be found in Chopi musical activity (vide infra). In the compositions of songs,

which take the form of social commentaries, and in the competition between the dancers for popular acclaim, one finds that opponents can appeal to public opinion in a contest for honour and prestige.

Figure 44: Hierarchy of courts available to Chopi litigants

FINAL COURT OF APPEAL	-	Administrator's Court
COURTS OF ARBITRATION, ALLOWING APPEAL TO THE COURTS ABOVE		Nkoma (Chief's) Court
		Cabo (Sub-chief's) Court
		Nganakana (Headman's) Court
		Nyadibanzi (Sub-headman's) Court

As is shown in Figure 44, the Chopi have five courts of which they can avail themselves. There is a qualitative difference in the nature of the decision-making process of the various courts. At the lower levels of sub-headman's and headman's courts, the arbitrator has an intimate knowledge of the litigants, their relationship, and the history of the problem that became a dispute and ended in court. In this situation, evidence which relates to the total relationship of the litigants, going back over a number of years is considered relevant for the dispute that has arrived in court may be the 'trigger', while what is at stake could be the culmination of many contributory causes. The participants are likely to be neighbours, or from the same district, and emphasis is placed on compromise and reconciliation of the opposing parties. Also at this level of arbitration, the assembled menfolk play a far greater part in the proceedings and the final decision than is the case in the higher courts.

The various types of court can be viewed as points along a continuum, the poles of which are governed by two considerations. The first is the relative presence or absence of face-to-face relationships between the adjudicator and the litigants. The second, and complementary, aspect is the participation of those who attend the court proceedings and the extent to which they affect the final judgement. The court of the sub-chief would be a mid-point on such a con-

tinuum, for it is likely that he will know something about the litigants, but his knowledge will not be of great depth.

In the higher courts fo chief and Administrator, the content of the litigation process changes. The Chief's Court is presided over by an induna (a representative of the Chief) or, in difficult cases, the chief himself. The Administrator, or one of his staff, hears the cases brought to his court. The adjudicator in these courts is most unlikely to have any contact (through, say, kinship) or any background knowledge of the dispute. He is therefore in a position to give a more 'objective' judgement on the merits of the actual dispute presented to him, but will lack the knowledge of the social matrix from which the protagonists are drawn. It is true that this may be established to a certain extent and, indeed, these adjudicators make a practice of eliciting such information; but no amount of questioning can substitute the knowledge gained in social interaction that the headman and sub-headman can accumulate.

The problem of impartiality may arise in the lower courts, where the headman may be related to, or be a friend of, one of the litigants. This, however, is minimized by the fact that at this level of litigation, the man presiding plays more the role of an arbitrator or mediator, and the final decision depends to a large extent on the consensus of opinion of those present at the hearing. Moreover, when questioned on this matter, headmen and sub-headmen were at pains to stress that they tended to be more strict with their own friends and kinsmen than others, so that no accusation of favouritism could be leveled against them. An individual intending to take another to court is aware of the difference in the form of justice dispensed, and he accordingly weighs up his chances in each court before selecting one in which to initiate action. Ideally, one should begin in the lowest court and if decisions go against one's wishes, then successive appeals to higher courts can be made. This is expensive and

time consuming, and one may initiate proceedings at any level, especially in the court which one believes will arrive at the most favourable ruling.

Case 15: Sub-chief's court: Dispute arising from assault

This case was heard in the court of sub-chief Nyakwaha, to whom the assault was reported. The disputants were Kisimisiyane Nkome (K) of the headman's district of Nyatsiku and Raol Mahute (R) of Seven Jack. The relevant facts are that K was visiting a friend in the headman's district of Seven Jack, when R arrived. They drank together and after some time, R began to taunt K about the loose morals of the latter's wife, who had (apparently) been R's girlfriend before she married K. When she married K, she was in fact pregnant by R, and there had been some dispute over the ownership of the child. After an exchange of insults, the owner of the homestead sent them both away, telling them to argue elsewhere. Shortly afterwards, a fight took place, and this was the matter under discussion at the hearing.

R, who charged K with assault, argued that K, who had been carrying a bush knife, put it down, and beat him (R) with his fists. During the skirmish, K picked up the panga, but R wrestled it from him, cutting K's hand in the process. The fight was going K's way when R broke off and ran to the sub-chief to lay a charge. K's version of events differed. He said that he had set out for home after the argument and that R went to cut a stick with which to attack him. In the fight which followed, K was cut by his own bush knife which R had picked up from the ground. The fight continued until R ran to the cabo for protection.

The two antagonists elaborated upon their themes under cross-examination from the large crowd of about 50 men present (all men of the sub-chiefdom had been summoned to hear this case - and to decide upon joint action to combat a locust swarm that was plaguing the area. Many men stayed away because of prior commitments or lack of interest). After some time, all elders (big men and senior men) of the sub-chiefdom

were called to one side to decide on the merits of the case. They returned, and Tomwane Ntsambe of Nyatsiku and Twelufane Chirunu (both respected elders) of Seven Jack conveyed the general decision: that the matter of assault was of little consequence, and facts surrounding it were unascertainable. The real issue, they had decided, was that R had gravely wronged K by humiliating him in public over the matter of his wife. At this point a member of the crowd shouted 'R is wrong, we all see that'', which precipitated an uproar with the majority of people noisily agreeing, to the opposition of a vocal minority.

Musisi Ntsambe (of Nyatsiku), summing up the feeling of the crowd, said to R, 'We all see you are wrong, and we are going to fine you; what do you say?' R replied by repeating his story from the beginning, but Menetiyane Nyakwaha (of Mangani) stopped him, saying that the story had been heard and that it would just waste time to hear it again. The crowd showed its agreement vocally. The elders again retired for consultation, and returned to give a verdict. The decision was conveyed by the sub-chief's son, who said that since R was clearly in the wrong, he should pay a fine of 100 escudos and one fowl (a sign of admission of guilt).

At this point R and a group of Seven Jack supporters went to one side and discussed the decision. They returned to say that they were unhappy and would appeal to the Chief's court. This angered sub-chief Nyakwaha, who saw it as an insult to his court, but the elders again conferred and agreed to cut the fine to one fowl and 30 escudos. R and his followers agreed to this finding and one went to fetch the money and the fowl, which was slaughtered and cooked on a nearby fire. R and K were first given portions to eat, and the remainder was shared among the elders. The sub-chief took a lower leg and foot of the fowl and suspended it from the banza (meeting place) tree, to symbolize the conclusion of the case.

Analysis

First, some general observations. It became obvious early in the proceedings that the fight that had taken place was only the final event in an accumulation of hostilities between the two men which stemmed from sexual jealousies. Attention was accordingly turned to the history of the relationship between the protagonists, and it was on their total relationship that the final judgement was made. It was also apparent that the adjudication was largely by consensus, with the sub-chief as the nominal head, lending legitimacy to the proceedings. Most of the hard decisions were taken by the elders present, who comprised the 'big men' of the three headmen's districts that make up the sub-chiefdom and sundry other senior men.

The dispute presented here was judged on its merits, but certain strategies by K and his supporters helped ensure that the decision went their way. Each principal in a judicial proceeding is accompanied by a group of people who are called witnesses[1] (tifakazi; sing. fakazi). Their role is to assist their man by cross-examining his opponent and to ensure that he gets a fair hearing. If one examines those who took a leading part in the proceedings of this case, it is revealing to note that three of the five were tifakazi of K (their relationship to him is shown below). None of the three are directly related to K and all are elders, so were involved in the crucial decision making-deliberations of the elders.

The dispute was complicated by the fact that the two men came from different headmen's districts, and men from the third, uninvolved district, (but containing relatives of the principles). Ideally, one should build a coalition of support that includes men from all three districts. Among the elders who secluded themselves to discuss the case was Tomwane Ntsambe, who is an affine of the Nkome clan. It seems that

(1) The term witness here refers to their purpose of witnessing the fact that their man gets a fair trial; they are not witnesses of the alleged offence. In effect, they are the litigant's supporters.

he was permitted to attend the deliberations despite his affinal link with K. It was he and a man from Seven Jack who made known the elders conclusion. (This appears to have been a deliberate attempt to put forward a united front by the elders of Nyakwaha: the spokesman representing the two areas from which the litigants are drawn.)

Later in the proceedings, Musisi Ntsambe (Tomwane's younger brother) attempted to articulate the feelings of those attending the case, which was directed against R. Later, when R began to defend himself, he was silenced by Menetiyane Nyakwaha, a senior and influential man from Mangani who, in so doing, kept R on the defensive and the assembly hostile towards him. These three elders were clearly in K's camp. Tomwane, who led the elders, is not only K's affine, he is also his nextdoor neighbour. The other two individuals who helped maintain the momentum in K's favour were Tomwane's brother and Menetiyane.

When it became clear to R and his supporters that their cause was lost, they resorted to a frequently-used tactic: that of pleading an unfair hearing and threatening to take the case to a higher court. This threat can always exert some leverage, for it could be interpreted as a reflection of the quality of justive of the court. It is also expensive to take cases before the chief's court, and a successful party in a dispute would be reluctant to put his victory at stake in a second hearing. In this case a compromise was reached with an admission of guilt by R, and a nominal fine was paid. The case was concluded by the killing and sharing of fowl, symbolic of reconciliation and acceptance of a decision.

Figure 45 below shows the composition of the body of tifakazi that accompanied each antagonist.

Figure 45: Fakazi action sets of the participants in the assault dispute (case 15)

	NAME:	LINKAGE TO ALPHA:
K's action set:	Tomwane Ntsambe	Affine
	Makause Ussake	Friend (legal adviser)
	Bombanyane Nkome	Agnate (F)
	Maele Nkome	Agnate (vicinage head)
	Wiyilane Nkome	Agnate
	Sangatelo Nyakwaha	Affine (headman)
	Mutatiyane Nyangumbe	Friend
R's action set	Pedro Mahute	Agnate (FB)
	Handele Mahute	Agnate (FB)
	Jotham Mahute	Agnate (FB)
	Senderiyane Masiya	Affine
	Chimoliyane Kwambe	Affine
	Ernesto Mbande	Matrilateral kinsman (MB)
	Albino Masita	Friend

These two action sets presented here represent those individuals whom the litigants specifically asked to attend as fakazi. Both action sets were recruited entirely from within the same headman's district as the convener. I cannot comment in detail of R's supporters as I was unfamiliar with them. My comments are therefore based mainly on K's set. In general, however, of the seven supporters that each man recruited, each had three agnates and two affines. The category of 'friend' was represented in both cases, and a matrilateral kinsman lent support to R.

Both the number (seven) and the relationship with supporters is to an extent fortuitous. K's agnates comprised his father, his vicinage head, and his closest friend (among his agnatic kin). He would have liked Pedro Nkome also to attend, but Pedro was away on business at the time. Some other agnates attended the case, but were not regarded as true fakazi. Tomwane Ntsambe, an affine and neighbour, was asked to attend because of his influence throughout the sub-chiefdom. He is elderly, well-respected, and is a composer of repute. He also has the advantage of having influential friends and relatives. His brother Musisi, is the induna of Nyatsiku (a policeman-type role), and his friend Menetiyane Nyakwaha is in line to inherit the headmanship of Mangani. Both these men are influential, and the latter appeared to swing behind K

the support of most Mangani men present at the court case. Of the two friends present, Makause Ussake is a skilled orator and has a vast knowledge of legal strategy; he was K's didoto ('talker'). K's other friend, Mutatiyane Nyangumbe, appears to have no special skill, but is K's ndoni.

In summary then, K recruited his action set partly for reasons of strategy (e.g. Tomwane, who was the crucial member, with links to other important men) and partly because of kinship-derived reciprocal obligations. Tactically, it is important to utilize relationships that radiate beyond one's circumscribed kinship group, and the further the strands of the network can stretch , the better. K won the case because of two factors: firstly, and vitally, the merits of the argument were on his side, and secondly, his action set could mobilize support over a far wider radius than R's. While one might expect that most of Nyatsiku would support K and Seven Jack would lean towards R, the Mangani people were uncommitted. Menetiyane Nyakwaha, by his aggressive attitude to R, appeared to nudge the Mangani people firmly onto K's side.

In short, K was able, through the members of his action set, to build a coalition that cut across the boundaries of the headmen's districts, thus giving him a broader base of support than R could muster. A successful court action depends upon the two variables of a reasonable case to present and a strong power base. Neither variable can alone win a case but, in combination, the chances are good. The original action sets themselves again show that agnatic kinship does not dominate and certainly has no corporate reality.

Religious beliefs and activities

The groupings that arise out of legal or economic activities are, I have shown, centred on an individual who is the convener, who recruits others by activating whatever linkages he may have to them. These may be either morally or transactionally based. In either event, considerations of reciprocity are important. There are also contingent considerations, such as the availability, contiguity

and possession of particular skills by potential action set members. Some action sets, by their nature, have a greater number of members who are recruited through moral commitment. The archetypical one is to be found in the religious sphere, where certain ritual performances demand helpers and an audience. The Chopi being ancestor worshippers, one would anticipate that the action sets arising from ritual activity would be drawn entirely from those members of an individual's social network who are related to Alpha by kinship, and in general, this is the case.

In this section, I shall be dealing not only with the actual composition of worshipping groups, i.e., the 'congregation', but also with general beliefs about ancestors, other spirits, such as ghosts, and witchcraft. All these provide insights, for writers such as Douglas (1970 (a) and (b)), and Lewis (1971) have shown that witchcraft beliefs and spirit mediumship cults provide useful 'peepholes' into the structure of society. This assertion has, of course, become a truism in anthropology when dealing with the ancestor cult (Hammond-Tooke 1968:26). Bradbury, in giving an exegisis of Goody's (1962) views on the subject says,

> '... in ancestor worship there is a readily discernable congruence between the form and organization of the cult (including relations with the ancestral beings) and the form of a social group, namely a kin group, membership of which is based on something other than mere common religious interests (1966:128).'

Thus an examination of, not only the congregation, but also the ancestors who are the object of worship, can be expected to be revealing of important social-structural features of Chopi society, especially those of kinship.

A brief description of Chopi cosmology is in order. Chopi believe that a great sky-god, Nungungulu, made the world and then retired to a place somewhere in the sky. He is a vague, impersonal deity and is not worshipped. The system of beliefs regarding morality are centred upon the ancestor cult, which involves the veneration of the forbears of the participants. Ancestors (tinguluve; sing. nguluve) are custodians of public morality in that they punish the sinful and reward socially approved behaviour. The Chopi also populate their cosmological universe with a number of other

meta-physical beings of the sort that Lewis has termed 'peripheral spirits' (1970: 294; 1971: 32). In the main, these spirits are morally neutral, but can bring misfortune in certain circumstances. Misfortune is also the preserve of witches (valoyi) and a particular malevolent spirit, called mpfukwa.

The ancestor cult

Hammond-Tooke, in describing the ancestor cult of the Cape Nguni, says,

> 'It is with the unilineal descent groups that we are primarily concerned ..... for, as Goody, among others, has shown, it is this form of grouping (and in particular the lineage), that is the typical congregation of the ancestor cult (1968: 26).

He shows that the Mpondomise congregation comprises a lineage or lineage segment, the ancestors being invoked tend to be undifferentiated clan-ancestors (ibid: 41). Moreover, the Mpondomise 'never pray to or call on any specific lineage shade, but always to the lineage dead as a whole (ibid: 40).' This is a good example of the ancestor cult reflecting a society with patrilineal descent groups and a centralized political structure. I use this example to throw into relief the contrast between the Chopi and some of their southern Bantu neighbours. In what follows I describe the Chopi ancestor cult, then draw from this parallels in the social structure.

The Chopi, like all southern Bantu, practise cult activities with regard to their ancestors. Strictly speaking, this does not unify the tribe, for each small descent group propitiates its own shades, there being no overarching structure or single god which is worshipped. This fits into the general southern African pattern for, as Hammond-Tooke has recently noted,

> 'The picture emerges, for all the (southern African) tribes, of a large number of discrete cult groups, each worshipping its own set of shades' (1974: 345).

Chopi place much importance on named, personal ancestors who guide and guard each individual. These take priority over a body of shades such as one would expect to find in association with lineages. This is not to say that such 'lineage' ancestors do not exist, for they do, but they are not directly propitiated, and do not play a large part in ritual

and belief. They are remembered and called upon, in a secondary way, only after an individual has invoked his personal, guiding ancestors.

Following Wilson (1957,1959) and Hammond-Tooke (1974:352), one must distinguish between rituals of kinship and communal rituals. The latter are infrequently practised in Chopiland, and usually take place in times of drought or pestilence, where a chief will invoke his shades to request protection for the community as a whole. Kinship rituals are, on the other hand, frequently practised and, in this regard, Chopi practices are similar to other southern African types. Hammond-Tooke argues that these can characteristically be divided

> 'into (a) life-cycle rituals, the sacralization of important stages in the life of the individual,
> and (b) piacular or contingent rituals, those performed in response to specific stimuli, in particular to illness divined as sent by the ancestors for some neglect of custom' (1974:352).

Rituals usually involve a blood sacrifice. Important rituals, such as the consecration of a marriage, call for the slaughter of a goat, whereas in smaller rituals (say, for a minor illness), a fowl is sacrificed. Offerings of sope, beer, water, and maize are also made.

In marked contrast to the Cape Nguni, the Chopi have named, personal ancestors who are invoked at all sacrifices. Every adult man (and some women) who has a deceased parent is entitled to have personal ancestors, whom he can himself invoke, and which play much the same role as the guardian ancestors of the Plateau Tonga described by Colson (1965:439-40). A Chopi can also lay claim to a broad category of undifferentiated ancestors, who are the dead members of both his father's and mother's clans, but they are seldom invoked, save for the infrequent larger celebrations which propitiate important ancestors. Every homestead possesses ancestor shrines: normally, the major one is a large tree, centrally situated among the huts, the base of which serves as the shrine. Sometimes a small hut is built to house an ancestor and this is also situated under the tree. Two other places are often used as shrines in conjunction with the main one, and

they are located at the head of the bed and hearth of the hut belonging to the homestead head. These shrines are used for small private rituals that concern only the person and one of his individual ancestors.

Informants remarked that a large blood sacrifice (chidilo) for one's ancestors should be held once every year, failing which, misfortune and illness would result. These rituals can, however, prove very expensive and unless an individual was suffering frequent misfortune, they tended to be held every three or four years. The chidilo aims to keep a person's own personal ancestors contented, but is also directed at the mass of unnamed clan ancestors. When a chidilo is held, all one's known and accessible relatives are expected to attend and, during the ritual they call on their own ancestors to attend and witness the celebration. Thus, while personal ancestors tend to be like guardians of individuals, and sacrifices to them are usually semi-private, personal affairs, the chidilo ritual is an open, public event, where a much wider grouping participates and a wider spread of ancestors is invoked.

Figure 46: Relationship of personal ancestors to informants in Nyatsiku

Relationship to individual:	number	percentage
F	40	31,5
FZ	8	6,3
FF	27	21,2
FB	6	4,7
FFB	1	,8
FFF	2	1,6
FM	10	7,8
FFM	1	,8
M	20	15,8
MB	3	2,4
MF	6	4,7
MM	3	2,4
	127	100,0

The statistics represented here refer to the personal ancestors of all the household heads in Nyatsiku. The number of ancestors per person ranged from one to five, with an average fo 2,5 ancestors per person. Forty two of the 127 named ancestors (i.e., one third) are female. Looking at the figures, the categories of F and FF account for just over half of all ancestors (52,7%), with the category of M supplying the next largest number of 15,8%. There are 12 different types of relationship represented here, and from

interviews with informants it appeared that the reasons why a particular ancestor became relevant were idiosyncratic. A few were namesakes, others had lived at one time with a grandparent who was now dead, many could give no reason at all.

Figure 47: Structural relationships between informants and personal ancestors

Kin type:	Number	Percentage
agnates	84	66,1
matrilateral kin	29	22,9
matrilateral kin of agnates	11	8,7
matrilateral kin of matrilateral kin	3	2,3
	127	100,0

If one may take as given the fact that ancestors are spiritual reflections of important social categories, then the above figures are revealing. Where the Mpondomise only have agnates as ancestors, and where the clan ancestors as an undifferentiated group are invoked, mirroring corporate patrilineal descent groups, the Chopi situation is more varied. There is no doubt that agnatic kin predominate (roughly two thirds of all named ancestors), but matrilateral kin provide nearly a quarter of the total. The categories of personal ancestors point to conclusions drawn in earlier chapters: that the Chopi kinship system is basically cognatic with a patrilateral bias.

The existence of two or three ancestors who are tied by personal bonds to an individual is another image reflected from Chopi social reality. I have demonstrated the propensity that exists for personally recruited allegiances with selected individuals, and how advancement in society is obtained through careful manipulation of such alliances. Institutions such as the namesake and ndoni friendship provide means whereby dyadic contracts can be strengthened by the injection of moral content, and personalized ancestors perform a similar function on the spiritual plane. The surprisingly high number of female ancestors must also be explained. Again, I would argue that it is the relative emancipation of women in Chopi society (compared with, say, the Nguni), where many find fame and fortune as spirit mediums; divorce can be initiated by them, and women,

tune as spirit mediums; divorce can be initiated by them, and women, especially the older ones, can play a significant part in ritual. A woman who is the survivor of a line of siblings frequently becomes the ritual head of the group, and is even addressed not as hahane (FZ), but tate (F). These facts point to the important role that women play in Chopi society, and the ancestor cult enshrines women's value.

Only one chidilo took place during the course of my fieldwork. It was Maele Nkome, head of the Nkome vicinage who, after suffering protracted illess, undertook to propitiate his father who, the diviner claimed, was angry with Maele for neglecting him. At the ritual, there was a crowd of about 60 people, of which 41 were relatives of Maele, the remainder being friends and neighbours who came to observe and enjoy the feast. Six of his seven wuyi (followers) heads of homesteads were present (the seventh was at odds with Maele and refused to attend), and four other agnates from Mangani and Seven Jack, together with their wives and children, also took part. Also present were two matrilateral kinsmen, three sons-in-law, and six vatukulu (grandchildren, sister's sons, FZ sons etc).

Viewing these kinsmen of Maele who participated in the ritual as an action set, we find once again that the congregation includes kin drawn from agnatic, matrilateral, and affinal spheres. Indeed, the ritual demands it. Sons-in-law (vamwane) and vatukulu , who include diverse types mwane includes son-in-law, sss and Zss; ntukulu includes ss, Zs, sd, Zd); are given explicit rituals to perform (the former skins and carves the slaughtered goat), and are allocated special portions of the sacrificial animal. I pointed out in the chapter on kin terms that the terms mwane and ntukulu are applied to kin who are agnatic, affinal and matrilateral; in the rituals the incumbents of kin positions designated by such terms are not differentiated, they are treated as a group.

The chidilo is the one occasion when the wider kin group meets for the purpose of ritual. It is apparent in Maele's case that the kin who attended were not all members of one lineage; the agnates present

formed at most a clan fragment, but there were also non-agnates who were participating (e.g., Zs, dH), and indeed, were indispensable. At the point where Maele made the ritual offering to his father/ ancestor and also called on his other personal ancestors (in his case his FM and MF) and clan ancestors, all his kin clapped their hands slowly (and respectfully and called their own ancestors to witness and accept the sacrifice. The effect of this is that while vague clan ancestors were certainly being called upon, they were not named, whereas all those kin present were invoking their own personal ancestors, none of whom went back further than three generations. A broad spread of ancestors (two to three generations deep), were therefore being venerated, , and not a hierarchical body of shades which can be seen as a deep, pyramidshaped lineage or clan. The ancestor cult here reflects Chopi preoccupation with the present and recent past. Chopi kinship only stretches two or three generations into the past. It appears, therefore, that laterality rather than lineality as a principle, is enshrined in Chopi ancestor beliefs and practices.

Peripheral spirits (sikwembu)

Belief in ancestral spirits is only part of the Chopi supernatural universe. Misfortune may be caused by one or more of a number of malevolent spirits, disaffected ancestors, or witchcraft. Chopi preoccupation with illness and misfortune is reflected in a thriving spirit mediumship cult. When a man is afflicted, the ideal course of action is to consult a diviner (nyatishlolo), who will diagnose the cause. The next step is to go to a spirit medium (n'anga) to be healed. Most illness is caused by angry ancestors, witchcraft, or one of the peripheral spirits, or, very often, a combination of these. The task of the n'anga is to remove the spiritual cause of the afflictions so that the body may recover.

The 'peripheral spirits' to which I refer are elsewhere so termed by Lewis, who defines them as being,

'...peripheral in the sense that they are not morally charged powers held to be responsible for upholding public morality ...' (1970:294)

Lewis argues that these peripheral spirits are not immoral, they are merely amoral - they are outside society: 'they are capricious and mischievous, striking without any cause that can be directly referred to social relations or moral assumptions (ibid:301).' This description fits the Chopi ethnography well, as will be seen from the evidence adduced below.

There are four categories of spirit that play a part in the spirit mediumship cult, collectively referred to as sikwembu (sing. chikwembu). The first is the nguluve, or ancestor spirit, because one is called to become an n'anga by an ancestor. There is a category called Ngunu, which is the spirit of an Nguni or Shangaan, and another called Ndau, after the tribe found in the south eastern parts of Rhodesia. The fourth category is known as Majuta, which literally means Jew, but here refers to any non-black person, and more particularly European or Indian.

These categories of spirit are interesting because, with the exception of nguluve, they reflect a traumatic and often violent contact at some time in the past with the peoples to which they refer. Ngunu refers to the Nguni raiders under the leadership of Soshangane who ravaged the Chopi in the 1820's. The reference to the Ndau is no doubt because of the fact that Soshangane's grandson, Ngungunyane, came south from the Sabi River with an army composed mainly of Ndau, and proceeded to lay waste the countryside in a far more systematic fashion than his grandfather. Each category of spirit has its own distinctive clothing and acoutrements, and that of the Majuta chikwembu is particularly revealing: it is a long, flowing white robe, muslim fez, and imitation rifle, all of which points to Arab slave traders.

Typically, a chikwembu spirit is believed to roam the bush and to inhabit thickets. They tend to seek out a descendant of the man who killed them in battle, and to demand a home. It is believed that these spirits, once accepted and brought under control by an n'anga, can work for their 'owner'. Possession of such spirits allows one to become a spirit medium,

given the correct training. Illness is often attributed to a spirit seeking an owner, and most Chopi have at least one chikwembu, but most resist its call to the profession of shamanism. To become an n'anga, one needs at least three spirits (the Majuta spirit is comparatively rare).

The fact that ancestral spirits play a large part in the spirit mediumship means that the cult itself is not a peripheral spirit possession cult in the true sense. It combines aspects of both peripheral and central possession cults. Most of the acolytes in the cult are women, but the spread of fully-fledged tin'anga between the sexes is about even. This means that many of the women do not complete their training, and it seems that they were using what Lewis called 'strategies of oblique attack' (1970:300). This refers to an attempt to obtain redress in a situation of adversity by 'making claims for attention and demonstrations of regard from a superior in a relationship of inequality without completely challenging that relationship' (ibid:300). In other words, illness caused by some external force draws sympathy and attention to the sufferer, who feels oppressed. It does not threaten the relationship, as a witchcraft accusation would (a strategy of direct attack), it rather 'ventilates aggression and frustration within the status quo' (ibid:300). Some women in Chopi society, therefore, who feel themselves restricted by the impositions upon their sex, utilize the insttution to alleviate the conditions, and also, among the successful spirit mediums, to advance themselves both economically and in terms of status.

However, the existence of ancestral spirits, and the large number of male mediums (eight out of 15 mediums known to me were men) who are not marginal or oppressed individuals makes it obvious that the sikwembu syndrome is also a central possession cult. It is interesting to note that Lewis, in his survey of such possession cults, found that they exist where there are 'acute and constantly recurring social and environmental pressures which militate against the formation of large, secure social groups (1971:35).' In this context the Chopi data support Lewis' claims, for there is a definite tendency towards the formation of small, fragile, social groups.

Witchcraft and malevolent spirits

The Chopi believe in witches (valoyi) and witchcraft (wuloyi), and this is frequently diagnosed as a cause of misfortue. Despite this strongly held belief, a Chopi seldom directly accuses another of witchcraft; of the three such cases that I encountered, two were accusations between men competing for headmanship and the third was a woman who had become inordinately wealthy through the sale of sope. On the other hand, I observed many cases where witchcraft was diagnosed as one of the causes of illness, yet the afflicted person made no effort to try to discover the identity of the witch.

The Chopi do not believe that a witch has to be a close relative. He may be, certainly, but frequently, witchcraft can be sent from afar, especially through the agency of a familiar, such as the owl (chikova). These non-directed witch beliefs are significant, because, as Douglas remarks, 'witchcraft beliefs are essentially a means of clarifying and affirming social definitions' (1970: xxv). Thus beliefs about the nature and activities of witches can be revealing of a society's view of itself: 'it would seem that the way the witch works, his sources of power, the nature of his attack on his victim, all these can be related to an image of the community, and the kind of attack to which community values are subject (ibid: xxvii).'

Bearing in mind that witches are not named and are frequently believed to originate from some distance away, one should also note the existence of a malevolent spirit, called mpfukwa, which is essentially a spirit of revenge. This spirit allegedly brings illness to a person when that person or one of his forebears owed a debt or caused some harm to the family or person of the mpfukwa. The mpfukwa is frequently the spirit of an n'anga. This spirit of revenge can only be appeased by the repayment of the debt or the gift of a goat or 100 escudos to his family, who may be totally unknown to the victim and who may live some miles away.

Two such payments were observed during fieldwork and one was

struck by the obvious lack of prior connection between victim and fortunate recipient of the payment. It appears, however, to warrant much the same kind of explanation as the belief in 'indirect' witchcraft. Chopi political advancement depends upon an individual gathering as many adherents as possible, and these must perforce frequently come into the vicinage from other areas. Moreover, an individual must keep his options (and therefore alliances) open in areas outside his own vicinage.

However, a problem lies in the fact that it is just these outsiders on whom a potential big man relies to build up his power base, who are the potential destroyers of his strength. They are an unknown quantity to most other vicinage members, and may easily cause disruption, and, therefore, fission in the group. It is the immigrant too, who, if he brings others with him, is the point of fission, because he may build a big enough following of his own to form his own autonomous vicinage. The paradox lies in the fact, therefore, that outsiders are essential, yet a threat, to the strength and wellbeing of the group. It is this concern with the fragility of the group and its boundaries that the beliefs concerning the mpfukwa spirit and witchcraft appear to conceptualize.

An important consideration regarding the absence of direct witchcraft accusations is, of course, the fact that with the tenuous nature of Chopi alliances, any serious dispute between two members of a vicinage would threaten its stability, and a witchcraft accusation could shatter it completely. This also answers a second possible problem. Marwick (1965), has shown how witchcraft accusations can be used to 'blast away' unwanted social relationships. This need does not arise among the Chopi. Individuals need little or no excuse just to get up and leave an area or break off a relationship, and in any event, the hardship for the Chopi is to keep the group together, not break it up.

Sansom, in a recent article dealing with a similar problem (1972), makes an important point when he argues that the social system (especially where it is fluid) may impose limitations on individuals who wish to make an

accusation. The point is that one has to ensure that enough people in the district feel the same way about one's opponent to make the accusation stick.

> 'When either a Cewa or a Lele was accused, there was a proto-coalition to which the accuser appealed. Accusers are emboldened to accusation by the knowledge that accusation demands a response that will be made in terms of existing alliances (Sansom 1972:210).'

Sansom makes the point that where there is a high turnover of alliances it is difficult to put forward a coalition broad or strong enough to make the accusation stick (ibid: 210). This is true of the Chopi situation. An individual will not risk the failure of an accusation, for it is a two-edged sword, and the accuser may suddenly become accused.

Furthermore, the Chopi do not need witchcraft accusation to relieve tension in stress areas of the social structure. I have already mentioned that they believe in multiple causation of misfortune. Tensions between rivals have a number of outlets, the most important of which being the musical practices of the Chopi. Chopi sing songs containing self praise, humiliating insults to opponents, and social commentaries that act as potent sanctions. This forms an efficient 'safety-valve' for social tensions.

Conclusion

To conclude, it appears to me that the brief examination of some action sets provided above again demonstrates the flexibility and fluidity of Chopi social organization. Admittedly, action sets, with their situational definition, ego-centredness and action orientation, focus on areas of social life which demand flexibility and pragmatism; but normative considerations play an important part. If strong unilineal descent groups existed in Chopi society, they would surely have been manifested in the action sets; they were not.

Certain themes that emerged in previous chapters were again in evidence here. Success in almost any area of social life depended upon the ability to gather together a coalition (often temporary) of individuals. The strength of such a coalition lay in the need for a solid core of support, complemented by as broad a spread fo followers as possible. Individuals

with special skills also played a part, for example, a man with specialist knowledge of court strategies and procedures. A truly effective action set would draw upon cognatic kin, affines, friends, namesakes, neighbours and sundry other individuals with whom a bond of obligation exists.

This leads on to another point. It is apparent that a Chopi individual does not utilize all the possible relationships open to him in his social network. There are frequently kin, agnatic or otherwise, who are available for participation in an action set, who either are not invited to do so or choose not to attend. In other words, kinship provides a moral bond with reciprocal obligations, but individual self-interest also plays an important part. Gulliver (1971: 225) makes this point with regard to the Ndendeuli. An examination of the core members of action sets shows that they are not necessarily kinsmen, and indeed, many non-kin appear. Core members are those with whom by definition, ego has moral bonds, which makes their attendance obligatory. Once again kinship, and in particular, agnatic kinship, is demonstrated to be only one of a number of structures which are available to individuals in social strategy and action.

This chapter has dealt with action sets in the contexts of legal, religious and economic activities. One major area has yet to be examined: that of political activity. In the following, and final, chapter, the action sets that arise in the political arena are dicussed; more particularly, the formation of factions is the area of focus. Another focus of attention that is here explicitly examined is the social individual, who has been implicitly invoked throughout this dissertation. Without this perspective, the examination of social action, which this fourth section of the thesis undertakes, is impossible. Yet the emphasis on the individual is not merely a methodological convenience; on the contrary, it is contended that Chopi society gives rise to a degree of individuality which is unusual in southern Africa.

Chapter X

The Individual, Leadership and Factions

In the previous chapter, certain areas of social life were singled out and action sets that arose in their contexts were examined. In the following, the aspect of politics and political action at the local level (cf. Swartz 1968) is examined. Once again, the individual is a focus of interest, both in his participation in, and organization of, action sets (in this case, factions). Attention is also drawn to areas of social life where the individual is able to exert a considerable influence on his own destiny. He is able to exercise self expression and gain prestige in such activities as spirit mediumship, music and song composition. The esteem he is able to gather in such areas is often considered ample reward in itself but, it is argued, this can also be turned into political capital. Many of the themes of preceding chapters are again relevant, for what is described here is how certain of the social principles, such as that of kinship, are sufficiently vague as to allow individuals an amount of manoeuvreability. This flexibility, together with the availability of certain alternative social structures, such as the quasi-kinship described in chapter seven, provides the individual with a social environment which can be used tactically in various combinations to advance his political ambitions.

There are few activites that are immediately obvious as being 'political'. There are, of course, political positions, hierarchically arranged in a structure, the occupants of which engage in political behaviour. But there are other areas of social life, which do not ostensibly form a part of the political system, yet which are inextricably bound up in political processes. Swartz remarks that,

> '"politics" refers to events and not to structures and functions ... wherever there are activities relating to the formulation and implementation of public goals and/or events having to do with the distribution and/or use of public power, these activities and events will be considered political.' (1968: 1-2)

It became apparent that certain individuals, such as good musicians, especially composers, men skilled in legal matters, entrepreneurs, successful spirit mediums, all acquire respect and prestige, which can be converted into political capital. The biting satire of the songs composed for public performances, and the admiration the composer may receive, can be seen as political if the composer later uses advantages thus gained, in a contest with a rival for a political position. The composition and performance of songs is, of course, a self-rewarding activity, but there are frequently occasions when an individual uses the lyrics to attack or undermine a political opponent. On these occasions the goal is clearly a political one. It is therefore the pursuit of public goals that is the diacritical feature of political activity, and any event which advances a person in such a direction, can therefore be construed as 'political' even if the activity is in a field which at first sight seems unrelated.

It follows, then, that what has been described in chapter five, where men can, and do, falsify their pedigrees, or in chapter seven, where it was reported that men name their children after important individuals, or seek out others to be special friends, or in chapters six and eight, where marriages and kin terms, respectively, can be employed as tactical devices, all these can be employed as political support. The term 'support' is here used as in the formulation of Swartz, Turner and Tuden to mean, 'anything that contributes to the formulation and/or implementation of political ends' (1966: 10). More particularly, they take the form of 'indirect' supports in that they are not intrinsically political, but are used in the pursuit of political goals (ibid: 24).

The Individual

The common denominator of all the above points is the individual. It is by observing individuals, the choices they make between competing ends, and the actions they perform in achieving their goals, that the

potentialites of the Chopi social system becomes apparent. It is in the sequences of action, set in motion by individuals, that issues become chrystallized, political resources become apparent, and the goals that are strived for are brought into focus. My preoccupation with the individual as a unit of analysis springs, not so much from the usefulness of this approach as a research technique, but from the data themselves. The Chopi social system, with its high tempo of sociation (high divorce rate, changes of residence, etc.) and its large and varied number of achieved statuses (vide infra), is characterized by a form of individualism and egalitarianism. Chopi individuals are fiercely independent, and only reluctantly accept the leadership and dominance of others over themselves. Even when they find themselves in positions of inferiority, they regard it as a temporary state and that they will in time assert their own superiority.

Competition between individuals takes place in many areas of social activity, and success often depends upon the cooperation of others. A person therefore has to rely upon a team of supporters, who frequently have ambitions of their own. The unity of such a coalition is therefore tenuous. Much effort is expended by individuals in the attempt to gain prestige and, therefore, to improve their status vis-a-vis their peers. To do well in this situation, a man must become proficient in manipulating other people; he may activate an existing linkage to them, such as kinship or friendship, or may establish a new bond, which is facilitated if he has access to a scarce resource that his competitors may lack (he may, for instance, be wealthier than most). For whatever reason, individuals become differentiated from each other, and engage in either competition or cooperation.

There is more individual expression and freedom in Chopi society than is permitted in most traditional societies in Southern Africa (with the possible exception of the Tsonga ethnic group, with which the Chopi has close affinity). In a comparative review of kinship and

marriage in Southern Africa, Eleanor Preston-Whyte points to the greater 'flexibility' and 'individuality' of Tsonga and Chopi societies, 'especially when compared with Nguni and Lobedu' (1974: 209). This appears to derive from the interaction of a number of factors, among the most important of which being the ecology, the marriage rules, which means that members of a descent group have widespread and individuated alliances, and the potential for mobility. This latter point is important because in the three or so moves an average Chopi makes in his lifetime (cf. chapter seven), he has on each occasion, to build up his social network almost from scratch. In other words, an adult Chopi has had some practice in the tactics of making and breaking of relationships and the manipulation of other individuals. The ability to move without difficulty also permits individuals the independance which is less frequent in other societies on the sub-continent.

It was suggested in the Introduction that one possible cause of the almost total lack of forceful and coherent Chopi opposition to the invading groups of Zulu was because of the factors mentioned above. There are no deep lineages, certainly none with the size and organizing ability of the Nuer, which Sahlins (1961) and others have contended were particularly well suited for military organisation and, therefore, 'predatory expansion'. The Chopi tendency to factionalize means that it is difficult to mobilize even a small unit such as the headman's district. Consequently, the small but well disciplined Zulu were able to conquer peoples numerically much stronger, but militarily disorganized.

The aptitude Chopi show for managing and organizing social networks is reflected in another area: the work situation on the South African gold mines. Workers are recruited from rural areas by the Mine Labour Organisation, and are subjected to aptitude and intelligence tests on arrival in Johannesburg. These tests deter-

mine for which category of work the labourer is best suited. The labourers are then allocated to various mines (which they may select themselves). On the mine, the workers are housed in compounds, which consist of barracks with rooms housing about twelve people. One is allocated a room according to broad ethnic grouping (Chopi are, with all Mozambique peoples, regarded as being 'Shangaan'). The labour policy is that, when working underground, gangs of labourers should be of heterogeneous composition and should be led by a 'Team Leader' (formerly termed 'Boss Boy').

This position of leadership is the highest position to which an African can aspire on the mines. The post requires qualities of leadership and an ability to take responsibility, and has the rewards of prestige and of being the highest-paid category of worker. For many years there has been a stereotype among white miners and supervisors that a 'Shangaan' is of higher intelligence than other ethnic groups, an assertion that clearly has no scientific validity. It is true to say, however, that the Chopi, as part of the general Shangaan (i.e., Tsonga) ethnic group, have acquired the reputation of being co-operative, intelligent and good leaders.

Like most stereotypes, there is, however, a 'kernel of truth', however slight, that bolsters the belief. The tests to which recruits to the mines are subjected are, it was noted above, designed to examine intelligence[1] and aptitude. Those who obtain a good intelligence rating are then subjected to a 'Leaderless Group Test', in which a group of about ten individuals, drawn from various ethnic groups, are given a task to perform. The task necessitates teamwork, and has a practical problem to solve that requires some ingenuity. For the test to be satisfactorily concluded, it is necessary or an individual to exercise leadership over the others and to impose

(1) Although, it appears to me, that the tests are more a measure of adaptability rather than intelligence.

his attempt at solving the problem upon them. The men are then given a rating on leadership potential. Those who attain certain predetermined standards are then given specialized training as Team Leaders and are put in command of a group of African miners to work underground.

It is unfortunate that there are no specific and accurate statistics available as to the number of Chopi working on the South African mines at any given time. For the purpose of data collection, the Chamber of Mines divides its intake of African miners into broad geographical areas, one of which being the 'East Coast south of latitude 22 degrees south', which includes such peoples as the Ndau, Tswa, Chopi and Tsonga. All of these peoples appear to have in common a more fluid social organization than the Nguni and Sotho peoples (cf. Eleanor Preston-White, 1974), so that while I am attempting to illustrate a point with regard to the Chopi, the argument revolves around the whole Tsonga family of ethnic groups, of which the Chopi may be regarded as a part.

Figure 48: Composition of African work force on mines in 1972 by geographical area[1]

Cape	17,2
Rest of South Africa	4,5
Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland	24,5
Tropical areas (Malawi and Angola)	31,4
East Coast	22,2
	100,0

Figure 48 shows that the broad Tsonga grouping provided 22,2 per cent of the total African work force in 1972. At about the same time, a research unit of the Chamber of Mines [2] was collecting information about the ethnic grouping of Team Leaders on a represen-

(1) I am indebted to the Chamber of Mines, Department of Statistics for this information.

(2) The Chamber of Mines Human Sciences Laboratory. I am grateful for the assistance given me by its director, Dr Lawrence, who provided me with computer run-offs of research data.

tative sample of gold and coal mines affiliated to the Chamber. The categories chosen unfortunately do not correspond to the total work force, except, fortuitously, the peoples of the East Coast.

Figure 49: Proportions of Team Leaders according to ethnic groupings

	number	percentage
East Coasters	853	39,0
Transkeians	448	20,5
Basotho	448	20,5
Cape Sotho	34	1,6
Tswana	312	14,3
Others	91	4,2
	2186	100,0

When one matches the two sets of percentages in Figures 48 and 49, one finds that while Africans from Mozambique made up 22,2 per cent of the work force, they provided 39,0 per cent of the positions of leadership in the work situation. It must be stressed that the selection process for these leadership positions is determined by a standardized set of tests which are taken by all recruits to the mines. It should also be pointed out that the original 'intelligence' tests taken by all miners to select those who will go on to the leadership tests, are not entirely culture-free. They appear to be tests which examine adaptability to changing circumstances and environments. I believe that the fact that East Coast (Tsonga) peoples provide 16,8 per cent more of the Team Leaders than their proportional representation of the work force is to a large degree due to their social systems.(1) In these, self-reliance is a virtue, and individuals learn to activate and manipulate social relationships. J. van Velsen argued in similar fashion for the lakeside Tonga of Malawi (1964: 282, 312, and in Mitchell's Foreword: vii, viii).

There are certain other indicators that point to an emphasis on the individual in Chopi society. One such indicator is a high inci-

(1) It must be pointed out in mitigation that many of the more ambitious Africans from South African tribes seek work in secondary industries rather than the mines. On the other hand, many of these begin their labour experiences with one or two trips to the mines, and are therefore subjected to the leadership tests, and those who do well are encouraged to return to the mines.

dence of suicide. Statistics which would provide a suicide rate are unobtainable, but Chopi informants volunteered the information that there were many more suicides in Chopiland than in neighbouring areas. This assertion was confirmed by the District Surgeon of Inharrime and Zavala in 1969 (the administration districts covering Chopiland), who reported that in all his experience in Mozambique (covering some 20 years), he had never encountered such a high incidence of suicide. He also mentioned that the incidence of homecide was higher than most other Mozambique tribes (Dr J. Fernandes, personal communication). It was my impression that there was also a high alcoholism rate, and in the heat of summer, when the alcohol is distilled, the rates of homicide and suicide reach a peak.

During the period of my fieldwork, there were no cases of homicide or suicide in the sub-chiefdom of Nyakwaha, although there was one alleged attempted murder. Nevertheless, informants mentioned that there had been three suicides in the recent past. The most notable of these was the previous sub-chief himself who, it appears, found the task of administering the sub-chiefdom overbearing, and hung himself. The second was a man who had apparently been in competition for the leadership of a vicinage and was defeated. The general opinion was that he had committed suicide out of a combination of pique and humiliation. The third case was of an elderly widow who, having no children and not being taken by widow-inheritance, hanged herself six months after her husband's death. There had also been two homicides in the recent past. One occurred where a spirit medium had shot his brother's wife who, he claimed, was a witch. The second occurred when a man killed his neighbour's wife in a fit of drunken anger when she dropped and broke a 20-litre bottle of sope (worth 100 escudos).

The three instances of suicide described here are far too few to

be able to discern any overall pattern. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the first two mentioned appear to fall into the category of what Durkheim termed 'egoistic suicide', where an individual feels himself to be so liberated from or rejected by, other members of his group that the pressures for conformity of the group have no effect on him (Durkheim 1952: 208ff.). The suicide of the widow appears to fall either into the category of 'anomic suicide' (ibid: 241ff.), or perhaps the 'egoistic' type. Indeed, one might expect to find a high proportion of egoistic suicides among the Chopi, because their society is characterized by a lack of rigidity, leaving individuals much freedom of activity. Bohannan draws our attention to this correlation:

> '"Individualism" is a situation in which large areas of life are purposely not institutionalized. If we call this an "open society", we can say that in an open society it sometimes happens that a person who is not closely bound or integrated to other people may commit "egoistic suicide"' (1960: 9).

Regardless of whether the majority of suicides among the Chopi may be of the 'egoistic' type, Durkheim's basic hypothesis regarding suicide has never been effectively challenged. Drawing on different sets of data, he demonstrated that in each of the societies or institutions that he termed 'religious', 'domestic', or 'political', suicide varied inversely with the degree of integration (1952: 208). He came to the general conclusion that, 'suicide varies inversely with the degree of integration of the social groups of which the individual forms a part' (ibid: 209). The relatively high incidence of suicide among the Chopi can therefore be interpreted as an indication of individualism and the 'loose structuring' (cf. Bohannan 1960: 11) of the society.

The individualism to be found in Chopi society is not confined to the men, for the women also appear to be relatively emancipated. There are avenues for individual advancement open to women; most notably the spirit mediumship cult which, it was remarked in

the previous chapter, has a preponderance of female acolytes. Most of these acolytes drop out before achieving full status as an n'anga, and they were presumbaly, in Lewis' terminology, employing 'strategies of oblique attack'. In other words, they were using the excuse of an illness and its diagnosis as being caused by sikwembu spirits as a means of obtaining solicitous attention from their menfolk. Those women who continue their training and become fully fledged spirit mediums, have every chance of obtaining respect and prestige equal to that of any man in the same profession. Indeed, Chakwasi Nkumbi of the headman's distict of Nyatsiku commands respect that approaches the numinous.

Like the Lobedu, and to a lesser extent the Venda (cf. Preston-White, 1974), Chopi women play an important part in the kinship system and religious life. Perhaps the person who is treated with the greatest amount of respect in Chopi society is the hahane (father's sister). She is regarded as being second in importance only to one's tate ditsuri (real father) and has a say in all matters affecting the local kinship group. Many women, as they get old and are either widowed or divorced, return to live with their brothers in the place of their birth. These women, past the age of childbearing, are increasingly regarded as equal to their brothers in status, with the sex differentiation being less important. It is common to find such women being called tate (father) by their brother's children. It was mentioned earlier that the hahane (FZ) can, and often does, become the ritual head of a kinship group if her brothers have all predeceased her. In these circumstances she is the person who officiates at the chidilo and slaughters the sacrificial animal, calling on and propitiating the ancestors of the group.

Perhaps the most telling indication of the social importance of individual women in their own right is, ironically, apparent only after their death. It is a truism that only individuals who were

socially important while alive become venerated as ancestors. Not only do Chopi venerate female ancestors, but they do so in large numbers. In my sample of named personal ancestors in Figure 46 (chapter nine), 42 out of 127 were women, which is a fraction over 33 per cent. A phenomenon which appears to be of a more recent and less traditional origin is the growing tendency for women to buy their own divorces. It is a guide to the emancipation and independence of women that they are able, by working in Lourenzo Marques, or selling alcohol and cashew nuts, to raise the sum of the lowolo, and to buy their freedom with it. In more general terms, Chopi women are not required to pay excessive respect to their menfolk, as in the Zulu hlonipha custom. There tends also to be equality in the fields, where men and women work side by side in the everyday tasks of cultivating.

Achieved Statuses in Chopi Society

Chopi individuals have open to them many areas of social life in which there are statuses that are competed for and achieved. The sphere of musical activity is such an example, for here a competitive spirit is actively encouraged and reinforced, and public approbation is most freely given to the outstanding performers. Prestige is sought after and is gained because of the possession of some special skill, access to a scarce resource or occupation, personal magnetizm or charisma. Chopi informants placed high store on the achievement of fame (upfalo) in whatever field a person may have an aptitude, and the attainment of esteem was seen as an end in itself, as when one was praised as a good dancer, was respected as an n'anga or a didoto ('talker', at court cases). Yet the repute and goodwill achieved in these areas can, and is, frequently used as a political resource in a contest for a higher position, for example, the leadership of a vicinage, or a headmanship.

The n'anga (spirit medium).

I have already mentioned (in the previous chapter) the n'anga and

his/her[1] central position in the ritual and possession cult of the Chopi. The n'anga, as was previously established, is principally a spirit medium, but is sometimes also a diviner and herbalist. Ostensibly, therefore, the n'anga is a healer and attracts clientele by the success of treatments given. But the situation is more complex than this for the spirit medium is a charismatic figure, drawing clients by the virtuousity of his performance when in a state of possession, and if there is a hint that he dabbles in sorcery, then he is all the more to be accorded respect. These facts give rise to an ambivalence in the relationship between medium and client.

The charismatic attraction which is instrumental in recruiting new clients is effective only in the short term; once a new client is drawn to the medium, he must be kept by some constitutive process. The n'anga can only manage this by providing a successful treatment in combination with a number of less important factors. These factors include a broadening of the relationship into a kind of friendship, but a friendship tinged with respect and a little fear. The spirit medium cultivates an aura of mystery, as befits one who has dealings with the supernatural, and the suspicion that he might be adept at sorcery is enough to make a client hesitant to break off the association, lest it be turned against him. The client is therefore subjected to conflicting pulls; he is attracted to the medium for his healing prowess and prestige, but he is apprehensive and a little resentful of the hold the n'anga has over him.

The success of a medium is measured by the size of his clientele and the area over which it is spread. Ideally, he should build a reputation for competence and skill in order to attract new patients, and he must be original and innovative to establish himself as a viable alternative to other mediums. Occasionally, one n'anga is able to bring together all the components in a unique combination,

(1) Henceforth I shall refer to the n'anga in the masculine gender. This is merely a stylistic convenience; it must be remembered that there are roughly equal numbers of male and female spirit mediums.

and attains an awe-inspiring reputation. One such man, who is known by his spirit-name, Pengu, has achieved such fame. He draws his custom from throughout Chopiland and beyond its borders. He also has Asian and European customers drawn from a wide area of Mozambique and even South Africa.

A client generally goes to a spirit medium in the following way. When a person is ill, he consults a nyatishlolo (diviner), who throws the bones and interprets the nature and cause of the illness. The diviner is not a healer however, and recommends the patient to an n'anga for treatment. The patient may also bypass the diviner and go straight to the spirit medium. Informants stated that it was preferable to consult a diviner and medium who lived some distance away from one's own home district, a preference based on the belief that objectivity improves with distance. In fact, they did not want to deal with someone, who, in the nature of his work, must pry into family and personal secrets, and who could later use the information thus gained against them.

The effect of this is that one would expect the medium's clientele to be spread over a wide area, rather than drawn from his own headman's district. To a large extent this is true, but there are always some individuals, usually kin, friends, or neighbours, from the same district, who are also his patients. Moreover, the n'anga depends on local support for the success of his séances. Two or more people are needed to play the tingoma (ngoma, sing.), a set of four, sometimes five, drums which are beaten in various rhythms to summon different spirits to the n'anga. An audience is mandatory, for they sing the special ritual songs and question the spirits, captured by the medium, which are causing the illness of the patient.

A séance is a social event, with many people attending for the spectacle and excitement of the performance (indeed, it is one of the

few entertainments available to Chopi in the evenings), and the popularity of a medium is gauged by the size of the audience which attends. The prestige of an n'anga spreads in two or three directions: firstly, among his colleagues; secondly, in his home district, because some of the aura of his prestige rubs off, thus increasing his stature among his neighbours (and consequently making him an attractive ally); and thirdly, beyond his home district, for his reputation as a formidable medium will attract more of the clientele that is the basis of his power. The spirit medium therefore needs a base of local support: people who assist in a casual way (drum players, singers, etc,) and the presence of an audience is important - people must be seen to be cured, and impressively so. But his real strength must come from the numbers of patients he attracts from outside his own headman's district.

One of the main attractions of being an n'anga is undoubtedly the status that accrues with success. Also, a person is given scope for individual expression and an outlet for creativity. A typical scene at a séance would be: in the early evening, a large fire is built in the centre of the medium's homestead, with the drums lying around it, skins tightening in the heat. The patient is brought forward to sit or lie near the fire, while the n'anga kneels nearby, flanked by two or three female acolytes. A small crowd of onlookers begins to gather, and a senior acolyte/assistant to the spirit medium arranges the paraphernalia that will be used by the medium later that night.

The n'anga begins to sway gently, and sings a few lines of a refrain that is a song of praise to a long-dead Ndau. The acolytes take up the refrain, accompanying it with the pulse of rattles. A couple of men step forward, tap the drums to test the timbre, and, finding them satisfactory, stand them in a row a little back from the flames. A young boy begins to beat a staccato rhythm on a small alto drum, and a man opens up on the four large drums in a distin-

ctive pattern. It is the Ndau rhythm (which is one of four known to all Chopi - for each category of spirit). As the repetitive beat settles down, the n'anga begins to shake and jog his body, still in a kneeling position, with head hanging limply, jogging with the shoulders and arms, which are loosely co-ordinated.

Suddenly, with great rasping intakes of breath, the n'anga signals that he is being possessed by one of his spirits. The drums, rattles and singing stop, and he looks around the assembly in what appears to be a dissociated state. He begins to speak rapidly in a foreign language, and the senior acolyte steps forward and greets him in the same language. The spirit, inhabiting and speaking through the body of the medium, identifies itself as an Ndau warrior, killed in the wars of Ngungunyane's times. This is the personal, named Ndau spirit which 'belongs to' and 'works for' the n'anga. The acolytes dress the spirit medium in the appropriate clothing: a headdress of cowrie shells and a loincloth with a sun motif. The assistants act as translators for the spirit, conveying messages to the audience. After a while, the Ndau announces that he was 'just visiting' and bids the crowd farewell. The medium lapses into silence, and his body relaxes, head drooping slack upon his chest.

The drums begin again, this time with a new rhythm - the Ngunu. The acolytes sing a different song, calling out the praises of a dead Nguni (Zulu) warrior this time. The n'anga again begins the curious jogging motion, still on his haunches, and after a period again signifies that he is possessed by the laboured breathing and exaggerated motions. The drums are silenced, and the spirit is greeted and interviewed. The spirit (chikwembu) indicates that he is going to attend to the problems of the patient. The n'anga is clothed in the distinctive red and black clothes of the Nguni chi-wembu and the singing starts again. Shortly, the Nguni spirit begins to speak to individuals in the crowd who encourage him to identify

himself. After the preliminaries are dispensed with, the n'anga begins to work with the patient, using a horse tail switch (chizingo) to sweep and to brush the patient's body, sniffing at the chizingo after each sweep.

From time to time, the n'anga, sniffing the switch, inhales deeply, his body shivers, and he collapses, apparently unconscious, to the ground. His assistants rush forward and hold the chizingo under his nose. He sneezes loudly, two or three times, then sits up looking sullen. He is aggressively interrogated by the assistants - who are you, where are you from, etc. It appears that the Nguni spirit has 'captured' some ghost, which was residing in a part of the anatomy of the patient, causing the illness. It is this which is now interviewed, asked what it wants (in order to appease it if it is an ancestor or mpfukwa), or if it is a witch or chikova (owl, i.e., witch's familiar) it is expelled into the dark outside the protective ring of medicines planted around the homestead.

This whole dramatic performance has as many nuances of style as there are tin'anga, each one attempting to be distinctive and impressive. The n'anga is the centre of attraction and has perforce to be something of a confidence man. The virtuosity of the performance is appraised by the onlookers, who are skilled at recognising weaknesses of technique. A flaw in the performance that novices are particularly prone to, is to peep out of the corner of the eye to gauge audience reaction when one should be in a dissociated state. A performance that had been convincing up to that point is negated.

It is apparent that the spirit mediumship cult is an attractive outlet for individuals who are relatively dispossessed in society. Women, particularly, notwithstanding their relative emancipation (vis-a-vis other Southern African peoples) are jural minors, and in most cases are subservient to their husbands. This undoubtedly gives rise to a negative image of self. Meade has shown that an individual can

only gain identity when projected against, or seen in the context of, other individuals or groups. A woman in this society no doubt evaluates herself as highly as women elsewhere, but the reflection that is 'bounced back' from her menfolk is lower than her own self-evaluation. The mediumship cult is one of the few outlets for women which allows the individual self-expression. It is also a means of achieving status outside the domestic and kinship spheres. Men also participate in the cult, and it was my impression that there was a fairly even split between men and women of those who could be termed successful tin'anga. Men who were social misfits undoubtedly tried to enter the profession, but usually were failures in this enterprise, as they had been in others. They were generally disregarded or scorned.

The spirit mediumship cult, of all the outlets for individual talents, is perhaps the most egalitarian, because both men and women can achieve recognition and fame. It must be stressed that while it is obviously attractive to marginal individuals, spirit mediumship is essentially a means for ordinary men and women to achieve a position of high status. It is important because the status is not defined in any political sense. Political positions and statuses are competed for by individuals who are fortunate enough to belong to the ruling clan, and political office usually excludes women. In this institution, there are no such restrictions, and anyone has the theoretical potential to succeed. The spirit mediumship cult can however, take on significance in a political sense. In a case cited below, one individual used his own status as a diviner, and his wife's status as a medium, to enhance his attractiveness above that of his two rivals. The prestige and attraction generated in this institution can therefore be used as a political support in competition.

The 'Big Man'

Chapter four was devoted to the vicinage and its leader, the 'big man'. It was pointed out that the term 'big man' was employed because it was a direct translation of the vernacular wahombe. Gulliver (1971), faced with a similar problem, preferred to call such men 'notables' in order not to confuse them with the big man syndrome of New Guinea. Chopi big men differ quite considerably from the typical New Guinea type, which is to be expected, especially since the social and political milieux from which they are drawn are so different. Nevertheless, I have chosen to retain the use of the term because it is, after all, a literal translation from the vernacular, and despite the marked differences in content between the institutions in New Guinea and Chopiland, there are undoubtedly certain structural similarities between them.

The most marked differences lie in the economic sphere. Melanesian big men are usually wealthy, have many gardens, are involved in exchange transactions, and frequently display an ostentatious show of wealth. The Chopi do none of these things. It is doubtful if Chopi big men are significantly more wealthy than their followers, and although they have the power to allocate fields, land is not a store of wealth. Finally, far from showing the world how rich he may be, a Chopi, big man or commoner, will tend to hide it; a kind of 'image of limited good' (Foster, 1967) appears to be in operation, whereby individuals feel cheated if their peers are better off. On the other hand, a big man in both societies is only as big as his group of followers (cf. Young 1971: 75ff.), and there are similarities to be found in the relationship of leader to follower in Melanesia and Mozambique.

The big men in both areas rely on a group of close supporters, probably with a core of agnatic kin, but he can only increase their status by interaction with outsiders. Indeed, outsiders (who may be

defined geographically, or in terms of kinship) are the vital means of increasing one's prestige, because they must be attracted to become part of the following. Sahlins (1963) shows how the big man's supporters are essential to him in his maintenance of relationships with outsiders, but that there is a tension. He must balance his obligations between his followers and the outsiders, for if he neglects the former, they may split off, and if he neglects the latter, he will never become a really important big man. While in Melanesia the idiom is one of economic exchange, the Chopi big men, in order to be prestigious, must attract outsiders who, once they have joined the group, are a threat to its stability because of their strangeness; their loyalty must still be proved, and they may split the group by suddenly leaving. Strathern has shown (1971) how big men in New Guinea manage to keep a subtle balance between the demands of the followers and those of the outsiders.

It has been noted that the term wahombe is not lightly given, and is reserved for individuals who, through some personal achievement, or inheritance of office, have attained a status which is considered worthy of respect by the people. It does not only refer to political office, although it is in this context that it is most frequently applied, but can be extended to individuals who achieve fame in other areas of social life, for example, a good composer, like Tomwane Ntsambe, or a man such as Makause Ussake, who helps people in the preparation and conduct of court cases. The term is therefore applied to outstanding individuals in all spheres of life, although informants stated that the term was primarily intended in the political sense, i.e., to mean the head of a local kinship grouping or a vicinage.

As was demonstrated in chapter four, a big man in the arena of the vicinage gains his position by being at the centre of a network of links, radiating outwards to others. In order to be successful,

he should ideally have a core of agnates, plus a coalition of other followers who are linked to him either through other kinship bonds, matrilateral or affinal, or non-kin: friends, namesakes, acquaintances, etc. Much of his strength is acquired through 'second-hand' linkages, for example, friends of an agnate, or affines of a friend, etc. In other words, some of his followers might be allied to him because of a prior linkage to another follower of his, and are mediated by this link.

Success as a big man is therefore a function of not only one's ability to attract followers, but also their ability to attract their own followers, who also accrue to the original wahombe. This clearly gives rise to fissiparous tendencies, and it calls for considerable skill to hold the group together; the more outsiders recruited, the less coherence within the group, while the wahombe nevertheless becomes stronger. He is therefore constantly trying to balance the centrifugal and centripetal forces. The whole big man paradigm is characterized by the theoretical potential of any adult man becoming a wahombe.

The didoto ('talker')

This refers to another status in Chopi society which can be achieved by an individual, provided he acquires the necessary skills. Perhaps the best way of explaining this type of person is to use an actual example. Makause Ussake is a man in his fifties, who has been in Nyatsiku for about twenty years. He is a member of the Masakula vicinage and has no followers of his own, except for his son, who will shortly set up homestead near him. Makause is an important man in Nyatsiku. One can see this because he is in great demand as a namesake (he already has four), and others attempt to establish bonds with him by inviting him to join their hunting groups and drinking parties. His popularity has much to do with his debating skill and legal knowledge. As part of a general questionnaire, I

asked the people of Nyatsiku to name whom they considered to be the important people in the district, and why. They named vicinage heads, spirit mediums, an entrepreneur, a composer and dancers and, frequently, Makause. Their reason for regarding him with esteem was usually related to his legal knowledge and ability.

At court cases most litigants bring along a man to represent and advise them. It is an informal arrangement, where the man, known as a didoto (pl. madoto), behind the scenes, as it were, guides his friend on what tactics to employ. He plays an active role as well, sometimes cross-examining witnesses or arguing a point (as is the right of any person who cares to attend a dispute). The didoto is therefore a person who acquires a reputation as a clear thinker, persuasive speaker, and incisive examiner. It is often said of Makause that he can 'cut a straight line through an argument'.

Part of Makause's expertise was gained fortuitously. He is of the Ussake sub-clan which some time ago used to be the ruling group of the Chiefdom of Nkumbi, under the leadership of Chief Ussake Nkumbi (the sub-clan has subsequently split from the main Nkumbi clan). Makause, as a young man, lived at the Chief's court, and used to pass the time by attending cases. He therefore has a good knowledge of how cases are conducted at this level, and what kind of argument is likely to succeed in a given case. Thus in cases that are to be heard outside of the headman's district in say, the sub-chief's or chief's court, he is uniquely qualified to dispense legal expertise.

Within the headman's district itself, Makause, despite belonging to the Masakula vicinage, is something of a loner. His clan has only one other representative, and he is therefore a relative outsider with few vested interests. He also has not tried to use his influence to build a following, and is regarded as being the more trustworthy because of it; people are prepared to believe that he is

behaving altruistically if he makes no obvious move to aggrandize himself at their expense. What then, is the motivation of a man like Makause? He does not accept remuneration for his help and advice, and every time he counsels a friend or client, he is putting his reputation at stake. If he were to be instrumental in the losing of too many cases, his credibility and standing would be lost.

The answer to this problem appears in part to be determined by the idiosyncratic features of Makause's case. Points of general importance appear however, to include the following. As Sahlins (1965), using concepts generated by Mauss (1954), has shown, where one makes the 'gift' of services to another person, the latter is in his obligation. If, furthermore, the giver refuses to accept repayment for the service in some tangible sense, for example, cash payment, then the 'gift' must be returned by some intangible prestation. In effect, this amounts to the fact that a didoto would be repaid in the coin of prestige, respect and esteem. It is possible to convert this into political capital, by making oneself an attractive person, and gathering followers. One's prestige can then become a political resource.

Makause, on the other hand, chooses not to do so. Although he has very few relatives in Nyatsiku, he does have links with all the vicinages of the district. His ties are of friendship with some, namesakes with others, and a number of others are in his debt for help he has given them. The support he has accruing to him is diffuse and often not strong enough to convert into a political following, where individuals would have to leave their present homestead (probably within a neighbouring vicinage) and move nearer him as a wuyi. Makause appears content in the knowledge that he, by setting an example (by throwing his support behind a candidate for some political office), will probably influence many others to follow his lead. Because his influence reaches to all parts of the headman's district, no aspirant big man can afford to alienate Makause. While alone, he cannot make or break a contes-

tant, Makause clearly has considerable 'king-making' powers. It is in the long term that his rewards are apparent, and indebtedness is not called in immediately, for Makause prefers this amorphous influence to the more tangible and obvious support of vawuyi, which would tie him down and taint him with the suspicion of sectional bias. It was my impression however, that madoto from other areas often opted for the short-term rewards of gathering followers. In this way, if one's reputation as legal adviser were one day to fail, then one still has a potential vicinage in the people who have attached themselves as wuyi. Makause has also achieved more tangible recognition for his expertise. Some years ago, the headman of Nyatsiku (who was Sangatelo at the time) chose him to be his adviser at court cases.

The stay-behind (wasalela)

The stay-behind is a man who deliberately shuns the common masculine custom of migrant labour. Normally, even the wasalela (pl. vasalela) will undertake a few trips to the mines (indeed, it is probably essential for him to do so, in order for him to raise enough money to set himself up independantly) but thereafter will stay behind while his peers go on regular migrant labour trips. It is this set of events which opens up the possibilities for him to exploit. While members of every vicinage try to take care not to let their group become denuded of able-bodied men through migrant labour, it is inevitable that in some of the smaller groups there will be a shortage of men for the heavy tasks of field clearing and ploughing. The embryonic Mbiye vicinage is a case in point. There are only three adult males in this group (see map no 3) and in 1969 there was a period of about three months when all three were in South Africa. Two of these men had made arrangements with kin or friends to help their wives with the heavy tasks, while the third employed the services of a wasalela.

A stay-behind will typically have saved some money from his migrant labour and will have turned this into some investment. It is

often the purchase of a plough with one or two oxen (it must be remembered that the Chopi do not normally keep cattle), or a hand-operated grain mill. One individual was even able to buy a tractor. When the rainy season begins, these men hire out their ploughs and teams of oxen, and it is usually men who know that they will be away during this season who will contract with the stay-behind to do the heavy work that they themselves would normally have done. The demand for ploughing services exceeds supply, and the cost of hiring the plough ranges from 80 to 100 escudos per field, varying according to the size of field to be ploughed.

The successful wasalela is consequently in great demand, despite the high price he is able to command for his services. Many people are unable to pay the fee in full, having to await the return of a migrant who will help them, others may be temporarily incapacitated, and a man about to embark on a trip to the mines cannot afford to pay the ploughman immediately, and must wait till his return. In all these cases, the stay-behind is content to let the debt be carried, and this relationship of economic indebtedness can continue over a number of years, developing into a kind of patron-client relationship. These relationships cut across the boundaries of headman's districts and vicinages, giving the wasalela a widespread network of individuals on whom he has considerable claim, and whom, if necessary, he can pressure into giving him support.

There are situations where these bonds of indebtedness can be used as a political resource. Nyangalume Masakula, leader of the Masakula vicinage, is on who has only three labour trips to South Africa to his credit. He is one of only two men in Nyatsiku who owns a plough and oxen. (The other is Pedro, who is described later.) Originally, he used savings from his migrant experience to buy a hand-operated grain mill and from the proceeds of the hiring out of this machine he was eventually able to purchase the oxen and plough.

Today, his services are in great demand, especially within his own vicinage. It was remarked in chapter four that Nyangalume, as leader of the Masakula vicinage had a powerful, but potentially fragile following. He has only one agnatic kinsman as a wuyi, and there is a large group of Nyangumbe people who form an embryonic vicinage, which could potentially split from his leadership at any time. Nyangalume is aware of this problem, and much of his time is spent ploughing the fields of members of his vicinage, including the Nyangumbe people. He refuses to accept payment for the work done in the fields of his followers, saying that he is 'like a father to them' (he is in fact younger than many of them). While he avers an altruistic motive, the effect is that his followers, unable to pay him for his services with cash (because he will not let them), can only repay him with loyalty and allegiance. Nyangalume is therefore able to exploit the imbalance of the exchange to his political advantage.

It must be pointed out that not every man who chooses to 'stay behind' instead of migrate is able to be successful. Indeed, it is the exceptional person who can succeed. Some vasalela are not able to migrate because of health reasons (the mines do not accept men they consider medically unfit) and others do not try to extend their income-gaining powers. Many of those who stay at home and attempt to make a profitable living do not succeed. Among those who buy oxen and plough, there is a critical early period which they must survive. There is a long season when no ploughing is done, so that the oxen must be bought just before ploughing season and must be pressed into service as early as possible, so that the seller can be quickly repaid and enough extra money is made to cushion the lack of income in the long slack period.

It is during the first two or three seasons that a wasalela is made or broken. He is vulnerable during this period, and if some contingent expenditure were to arise, he might have to sell an ox to meet it.

Another fear most vasalela have is that one of their oxen will die during this period, leaving them with only half a team and no funds to replace the dead one. Many fail during this period and return to the migrant labour pattern, or continue to stay at home in poverty. The stay-behind is in an ambiguous position. I have said that there is a general belief among Chopi that the experience on the gold mines is part of the socialization process. A wasalela is a man who has not yet proved himself, and is regarded with some disapproval, yet a successful one, like Nyangalume, is indispensable.

The broker

Where one finds, as is the case in Mozambique, a western, money economy and a colonial structure superimposed on traditional societies, there is always opportunity for go-betweens, brokers and entrepreneurs to operate. An entrepreneur is essentially an innovator and risk taker, and operates in an area of social or economic life which is ambiguous. He usually operates in the interstices between the local traditional structures and the new, modern western, economic world.

Case 16: Pedro Nkome, an entrepreneur and broker

Pedro Nkome is the only successful entrepreneur and broker that I encountered in Nyatsiku. His background is that he was given a good education on a nearby Catholic Mission station, with the result that he is fluent in Portuguese and is one of only two literate men in the district. He owns a barque and travels to the administrative centre of Inharrime regularly, and consequently has far more frequent dealings with the Portuguese than any of his neighbours. Despite this foot in the outside world, Pedro also participates actively in the most traditional and conservative Chopi customs. As recreation in the evenings, he beats the drums at the sikwembu séances of Chakwasi, an n'anga. He is also one of the leading dancers in the Nyatsiku nzumba (dances).

As a young man, Pedro worked on three occasions on the mines of South Africa, and saved enough money to pay the deposit for a

barque, which was amde by a nearby carpenter. Now, aged about thirty-eight, he has paid off the remaining amount and is making a reasonable profit out of buying and selling peanuts and grain in the lean (drought) season of October. His method is to travel upriver (westwards) in his boat and either buy mealies from, or act as agent for, other men. He then takes a load of about thirty bags of mealies back to Nyatsiku, and sells them. He also uses his barque as a ferry across the wide Inharrime river, or to the town or mission downstream, where he has dealings with white traders.

Despite the fact that he is probably the wealthiest man in the headman's district, Pedro eschews an ostentatious show of wealth. There are certain generally accepted symbols of wealth in Chopiland, including: a house made with cement walls and floors (as opposed to the traditional wood-and-daub structures); a hand-operated grain mill; the possession of one or two oxen; and to marry polygynously. Pedro has none of these. He has permitted himself the luxury of a bicycle, which is rare in the area, but his homestead, which he shares with his brother, has no special features. The clothing of his wife and children are ordinary, and he himself is, if anything, worse dressed than most men.

In Nyatsiku, Pedro is in a unique position. As one of the few individuals who has received an education, and has experience of dealing with white traders and administration officials, his services are frequently called upon. He translates letters, gives advice on dealings with whites, and frequently conducts dealings with missions, traders or the administration on behalf of other people. He is, in fact, a go-between or a middleman, bridging the gap between the small-scale traditional structure and the large scale one of the Portuguese administration. The small-scale tribal structure of the Chopi is encapsulated by the large-scale Portuguese administrative structure, and although the Portuguese attempt to use traditional leaders, such as

chiefs, sub-chiefs and headmen to communicate policy to the tribesmen, this is an imperfect means. Furthermore, there are mundane dealings on an informal level which must be carried out daily, and which fall beyond the province of such traditional leaders.

In such conditions, there is a gap in communications between the encapsulating structure and the small-scale one which it encompasses. The chiefs and headmen tend to be identified with the encapsulating structure and become increasingly alienated from the ordinary tribesman. Individuals like Pedro are therefore ideally placed to bridge the gap in communications that exist. He has a foot in both camps (cf. Bailey 1970:167) and, by being one of the people themselves, he can better perform the function of linking the peasant to the wider system.

In bridging the communications gap, the middleman is able to turn the situation to his advantage. Pedro, on his frequent trips up and down river and to the administrative centre, is able to pick up scraps of information which he then disseminates. He is in touch with new developments with regard to the white government and other chiefdoms along the river. He is therefore a purveyor of information, and can manipulate the situation by withholding or spreading the information he gathers, according to whether he believes it is to his advantage to do so. His position as a communications link is emphasized by the role of translator that he is often called upon to perform.

It is important to realise that the middleman is performing an important and necessary function. With the breakdown in communication between the encapsulating and tribal structures, there exists the possibility that the administrative system would impinge harshly upon the traditional one. Individuals who perform brokerage roles help their fellow peasants to adapt to the demands of the wider system. Indeed, the middleman, by acting as a go-between acts as a buffer

(according to Foster 1963), protecting the peasant from the exploitation and harsher effects of contact with the wider world.

Pedro Nkome is therefore in a position to act as a broker and exploit, to his own advantage, the gap between administration and peasant. His ownership of a boat and his travels on the river combine to allow him opportunities as an entrepreneur. Sometimes, locusts or plant disease will decimate the crops of one part of Chopiland, and when Pedro hears this, he will buy sacks of grain and peanuts and move into the area to sell it. In Nyatsiku, there is a seasonal shortage every October, and Pedro imports grain to sell. His profits are high (by local standards) and are derived from his intelligence network - he is always alert for news of shortages or potential shortages, and from being in the right place at the right time. His risks are also high, and are both financial and social. Sometimes he makes the wrong decision, and buys grain some time in advance of an expected shortage, which fails to occur. He is then stuck with about thirty bags of grain which he cannot sell, except at greatly reduced prices.

The social risks are also high, perhaps more so than the financial ones. The entrepreneur or broker is not a traditional role in Chopi society and has come about in response to a need arising out of the colonial situation. This is similar to the emergence of the 'new men' in Botswana (Kuper 1970:54ff.). Such 'new men' risk being regarded as 'traitors' by their fellow-peasants. The problem is that no matter how necessary the function they fulfil, tradition-minded conservatives (as most peasant or tribal societies tend to be, cf. Foster 1967) will always feel threatened by the middleman through whom innovations are introduced to the community. If the middleman is also an entrepreneur, then the position is exacerbated, because the entrepreneur thrives on innovation, as Barth (1963) and Strathern (1972(b)) have shown in Norway and New Guinea respectively.

Middlemen are therefore a threat to the status quo and, as Bailey (1970:169) points out, they consequently incur opprobrium. Strathern argues that the entrepreneur 'establishes certain innovations, including innovations in the management of persons who support him' (1973:368). Pedro Nkome found himself faced with resistance to this aspect of his activities. Pedro has attracted a number of the younger men of Nyatsiku, who are in a relationship of friendship with him, who act as crew on his barque, and clearly have intentions of following his example. He has also done many favours for people and has built a network of individuals who are indebted to him throughout the district. These asymmetrical ties of obligation cut across the traditional political boundaries of vicinages, and he has a reservoir of support drawn from the entire headman's district, not just one section of it.

Pedro's usefulness to the individuals in the community is reflected by the number of people who regard him as an ndoni, or at least a friend, and the number of children who are his namesakes (six). The asymmetry of the relationships is perhaps reflected in the fact that far more people claim him as a friend than he is prepared to acknowledge. Pedro's attempts at impression management, whereby he tries to show he is 'one of the people' by wearing shabby clothes and having a nondescript homestead, point to his awareness of his ambiguous position in the community. He is useful to the people, yet he is a threat and he gains his wealth by anticipating and meeting their needs. In the dry season, they need his grain, but they believe he exploits them and they resent it.

As one of an emerging class of 'new men', Pedro is also a threat to the traditional political system, for he does not appear to be inclined to compete with others in the gathering of wuyi to form a vicinage. Indeed, it was perhaps the fear that he would encourage other young men to follow his example, which could give rise to a new elite based

on education and entrepreneurship that was the underlying cause of a dispute in which he became involved. The issue arose one day in November, shortly after a dibanza (meeting) at which the headman had conveyed instructions from the Administrator to the people about the need for innoculations. About a month before this, Pedro had sold many sacks of grain to the people of Nyatsiku, and had presumably made a substantial profit.

On this day, as the meeting of about thirty men was breaking up, Nyangalume, as head of the Masakula vicinage, suddenly accused Pedro Nkome of not paying tribute to the headman, Sangatelo. A heated discussion followed among those who remained, whose numbers had dwindled to about ten, comprising mostly elders and vicinage heads. The essence of the discussion was that Nyangalume had invoked an old custom whereby any person who had come into wealth should pay a portion of this to the local headman or chief. It was argued that Pedro had neglected to do this, and it was moved that he should be fined 300 escudos. Pedro's defence was that he had already paid a trading tax to the Administration and that the present fine would be to duplicate this payment. His role of middleman is apparent here, for what he was attempting was to defend himself against charges leveled at him from a traditional standpoint, in terms of conflicting norms of the wider administrative structure. Pedro's defence was overruled and he had to pay the fine.

The headman, Sangatelo, to whom the fine would be paid, left the proceedings at an early stage, because he did not want Pedro to have the impression that he had instigated the proceedings (he had not). It became apparent that there was collusion among the vicinage leaders and one or two elders, such as Makause. It was Nyangalume (the Masakula leader) and Makause (the didoto) who argued most vehemently against him. Nyamune of the Homu vicinage was also ranged against him, as was German of Nyatsiku. It is significant that these men all

achieved their positions of eminence within the traditional political structure. Pedro is exploiting new resources and appears to be succeeding in gaining the loyalty of many of the young men of the district. He is therefore a clear threat to those who aspire to positions in the traditional system. It is through men like Pedro that social and political change is brought about, and the traditionalists, naturally enough, fear it. This dispute was their way of putting Pedro in his place, and they no doubt hoped to discourage him from his ways.

Individuals such as Pedro, who bridge the gap between strutures, are a threat to traditionalists for another reason. With a foot in both camps, they have access to resources that other men do not. They therefore have an advantage over their peers, which can be exploited by perhaps becoming an entrepreneur, i.e., turning it into economic advantage. But if the individual chooses to use his strategic position to perform the role of broker, he can become a potent political force. The broker, it will be remembered, acts as a go-between for the traditional and wider structures, helping peasants to handle the bewildering complexity of the Administration. He has access to information and gossip which is not common knowledge, and most important, he conducts dealings with the outside world on behalf fo the peasant, getting favours on his behalf, selling their surplus produce, etc.

It is his position in relation to the two structures that gives the broker his advantage over, say, an individual performing the role of patron (I am here particularly indebted to the formulation of A.C. Mayer 1967). A wasalela, such as Nyangalume, involves himself in patron-client relationships. He personally provides a service, and if he fails to perform it satisfactorily he will lose his client (as when he has, say, five fields to plough, but time only to do three). A broker, on the other hand, often cannot 'produce the goods' himself, because it depends upon the favours of, say, an administration official. He only acts as go-between, and if the desired results are not brought about, he is

able to blame someone else, over whom he can exert only a small amount of influence. Furthermore, as a broker, he has access to a wider range of resources (various administration officials, traders, etc) than a patron, who can dispense only one kind of service. The broker therefore, because he has far more resources at his disposal, is potentially able to attract a greater number of followers than a patron. This appears to be one of the reasons for the antagonism between Nyangalume, in particular, and Pedro. Their rivalry is further illustrated in the following section.

Composers and Dancers

Chopi music is varied and complex. Indeed, Tracey regards the Chopi as 'one of the leading, if not the most advanced groups of instrumentalists on the African continent' (1970:i) (1). He is referring to their ensembles of xylophones (timbila, sing. mbila), drums (tingoma, sing. ngoma), which are invariably accompanied by dancers (vasinyi). There are various forms of music and dance, the most popular of which being the ngodo, with the nzumba being almost as popular. Briefly, ngodo music tends to be more melodious than nzumba, and drums are used sparingly, if at all. Ngodo dancers wear the acoutrement of Zulu warriors: cowhide shield, assegai, angora skin leggings, and ostrich plumage. The dancing mimics Zulu military manoeuvres, such as pincer-movements. There is more freedom of expression and less regimentation in nzumba dancing. Drums are invariably used and the tempo is lively. The dancers do not use the Zulu-type 'uniform', and wear rattles on one calf and angora skin on the other. While much of the dancing is done as a team, employing precision movements, much more emphasis is placed on individual expression and interpretation, with frequent solos and pas de deux.

(1) For fuller, but somewhat dated, descriptions of Chopi music, instruments and songs, see Kirby (1968:47ff.) and Tracey (1970). But note reservations regarding Tracey's treatment of the subject in reviews by Webster (1973) and Montagu (1972).

In Nyatsiku, the musical form practiced is the nzumba, and this is also the style used by the orchestra of sub-chief Nyakwaha and chief Nkumbi. Apart from the obvious entertainment value of the orchestra and its function as a focus of group identity, its most important aspect is contained in the lyrics of the songs, which act as vehicles for social commentaries, social sanctions, and political and territorial chauvinism. In this aspect, there is no difference between the ngodo and nzumba. I was able to record many examples of each type of music and lyrics and found no intrinsic differences. Indeed, the Nyatsiku orchestra only recently changed from playing ngodo to nzumba, and the content of lyrics have changed little.

The recruitment to orchestras roughly corresponds to the larger territorial and political divisions. Most headman's districts are represented by an orchestra, and these combine to form the orchestra of their sub-chiefdom. The orchestra of the chiefdom itself may either be drawn from the best players and dancers of all the sub-chiefdoms or, more frequently, the best of the sub-chief's orchestras is selected. The lyrics of songs are composed with a specific audience in mind. Thus, if a song is to be sung at a celebration within the headman's district, its content refers to local personalities and events. The context in which performances most frequently take place is where the audience is drawn from various parts of a sub-chiefdom, and the lyrics accordingly heap praise on the composer, his neighbours and headman's district, while vilifying those who are from the rival districts. When the orchestra of a sub-chief performs, especially when at the chief's capital, the songs reflect the fusion of its component headman's districts, for they glorify their own sub-chiefdom and denigrate the others. One also finds that the orchestra representing its chiefdom likewise employs lyrics appropriate to the occasion. Similarly, Chopi miners in South Africa use the Sunday mine dances to assert their own ethnic identity, reminisce about home, and to poke fun at the other ethnic

groups who work with them.

At dawn of the day of a celebration at which there will be a dance, a drummer beats out a tattoo which broadcasts to all within hearing range that a dance is to be held. Later in the day, a fire is lit, and the drums that will be used are placed next to it in order to tighten the skins. A crowd of onlookers gathers, and the xylophone players begin to play (kuveta) to get the feel of their instruments (in Nyatsiku there are four timbila and one ngulu (bass mbila) that makes up the orchestra, together with three tingoma (drums)). The dancers (there are 15 in Nyatsiku) don their dancing clothes, and line up facing the orchestra. The leader of the orchestra begins his lead-in, playing only to the accompaniment of two rattle-players (vanjele). This is followed by the full orchestra playing a brief melody, which gives way to another solo. Soon, the dancers begin to sing, the lyrics being interspersed with dancing and instrumental sections. Each movement is very short, lasting about five minutes, although the total performance lasts over an hour.

In Chopi music, leadership is exerted in two spheres. There is the leader of the orchestra, i.e., timbila players, and a leader of the dancers. The leader of the orchestra attains his position through a combination of being a good and prolific composer and also a virtuoso player of the mbila. Any person who has the inclination may compose songs, or even one or two verses; they are then incorporated into a song by another composer. Theoretically, any individual is able to compose, or have a hand in composition. This is important, because the songs can be used as a political device, by slandering an opponent, or a means of making wayward individuals aware of public opinion.

Leadership of the dancers also depends on a combination of factors. The virtuosity and energy of an individual's performance are important considerations, and the leader must be one of the older members of the dancing team. External factors can play a part as well, for a man of

influence in everyday life can use such influence as he has on his colleagues in order for them to appoint him leader. Personal popularity therefore plays a large part in the selection of leaders. The leader is the person who decides which steps should be used and what routine should be followed. He generally takes his place at the centre of the rank of dancers, who stand shoulder to shoulder and face the orchestra when performing.

The music and dancing provide the most accessible means of gaining the admiration of one's fellows. All young men aspire to dance for their represetative orchestra, and a good display always gains recognition. In the course of a dance, the older men constantly evaluate the perfomance of individual dancers, and rank them accordingly. This is done by firstly acknowledging the dancer's ability by placing a small coin or token on the crown of his head. Later, when there is a pause in the performance, the elders move the best dancers towards the centre. The leader maintains his central position, but the process of ranking continues around him throughout the dance. From one dance to the next individuals are constantly re-evaluated, which means that while importance is attached to unison and precision dancing, the performers individually attempt to attract attention, especially in their opportunities as soloists. The dance can, therefore, be seen as an arena of competition among the dancers, and if, over time, one dancer consistently performs well, he may himself challenge the leadership.

Like so many other aspects of Chopi society, the apparently innocuous recreation of dancing can take on political significance, especially with regard to leadership. This can take place if two men who vie for leadership are also rivals in another sphere. Their success or failure in the contest for popularity is a less dangerous and damaging means of discovering the depth of support available. The prestige gained through such manoeuvres can be a contributory support in a wider contest. It must be remembered that dancers have to be fit and vig-

orous, so that ages range from about sixteen to perhaps forty. The rivalry that may exist is therefore usually between men who are not yet fully established in a political sense. They may well be aspiring to the leadership of a vicinage, and be in the long, slow process of mobilizing support.

When I began my fieldwork in Nyatsiku, the leader of their dancers was Handelane Homu, a man of about thirty five, who is undoubtedly the most talented dancer in the district. He is personally popular, and has no political aspirations. Soon after my arrival, he was displaced as leader by Pedro Nkome, who has been described above. Pedro is an ambitious man, and as an entrepreneur and broker, appears to be gaining a widespread power base in the district that is not confined to one vicinage. By participating and becoming leader, Pedro was reinforcing his spread of influence, and was also establishing himself firmly in an activity that has conservative approbation. As one of the 'new men' Pedro had to be careful not to alienate himself from traditionalists and conservatives in the district.

On my most recent field trip, I found that Pedro had been replaced by Nyangalume Masakula who, it will be remembered, is leader of the Masakula vicinage, and also a wasalela (stay-behind). Nyangalume and Pedro have certain similarities. Both are stay-at-homes, both are entrepreneurs (Nyangalume, with his plough, in a more traditional sense, Pedro with his boat and trading practices, in a more modern way), and both are politically ambitious. If their political aspirations were confined to the level of the vicinage, there would be no real conflict between them, for Nyangalume is already the big man of his, and Pedro would be operating within the Nkome group. There is, however, a bitter rivalry between the two men, which seems to arise from the fact that both are competing in the same arena, which is larger than the vicinage, and is not bound by traditional boundaries. Nyangalume, with his plough, has built up a network of patron-client relationships throughout Nyatsiku,

and even in neighbouring headman's districts. Pedro likewise has built up a network of broker-client relationships throughout and beyond the district, sometimes with the very same individuals who are obligated to Nyangalume. In the process of social change, the position of headman is becoming increasingly irrelevant, and it is the patron and broker who are gaining in importance. In Nyatsiku, the only two men who are in a position to exploit the new situation are Pedro and Nyangalume, and their rivalry is therefore not unexpected.

On one occasion I, as an outsider, unwittingly precipitated an encounter between these two rivals. On a short field trip in 1972, I took a number of football jerseys, vests, neckties and handkerchiefs, all of which are popular items of apparel among dancers. There was not enough of each type of clothing to be distributed equally among the players and dancers and, being uncertain as to how to distribute them, I called on the leader of the dancers, who was Nyangalume, to carry out the task. Nyangalume proceeded to present the most favoured items (vests and jerseys) to the mbila players, and then to his kin, friends and supporters among the dancers, and also to one or two others who, as far as I could judge, could not be regarded as his supporters. Significantly, he left Pedro Nkome till last, giving to some young boys before him, and he then added insult to injury by presenting him with only a handkerchief. Pedro, furious with his treatment, stormed off to his homestead, followed by three of his friends.

What this drama illustrated was the real and intense rivalry that can exist between men, even in the sphere of recreational acivities. Here was an incident which, for a moment in time, chrystallized the antagonism between the two men. Pedro was the immediate past leader of the dancers, but in the wider political context of the headman's district, was a distinct threat to Nyangalume's ambitions. Both seemed to conceptualize their advancement in terms of a zero-sum game, where the advancement of the one can only be at the expense of the other. Nyangalume,

in this situation chose, not to placate his rival, but rather to humiliate him. He took advantage of the resources with which I supplied him. He first gave to the xylophone players, who are regarded as being more important than the dancers. He then rewarded his own followers and demonstrated his generosity by giving prized objects to two non-supporters (whose allegiance he might have been trying to win). But he chose to belittle Pedro with the insulting award of a handkerchief. The clash was but one in an ongoing series of encounters in which the men gather support to themselves and try to undermine that of their rival. It is of interest that Nyangalume obviously thought his position strong enough to get away with such boorish behaviour.

I have so far been concentrating on how men with leadership potential compete for prestige within the context of the dancing team. The prestige thus gained feeds back into the wider political sphere, for a good dancer and leader becomes an attractive person and this may become an additional factor in his favour when other individuals have to decide say, in the competition for leadership of a vicinage. But what of the other members of a dancing team? Thoden van Velzen has recently criticized the 'Big man paradigm' (1973: 592) for not paying enough attention to the also-rans and followers of the leaders on which many recent studies have concentrated. In a Chopi dancing team, there are rewards for all participants. It is regarded as an honour to represent one's district as a dancer, and I have shown that any individual who dances well is rewarded by being ranked in the dancing line according to public opinion. Theoretically, every dancer can one day become the leader of the dancers, but in the interim, a dancer is the centre of attraction in any performance.

Composers and songs; lyrics as information management.

During a performance, eyes are turned towards the dancers, since they provide the spectacular and visual aspect. But it is the composers of songs who ultimately have the power to influence the audience. Norm-

ally, any man who plays the mbila will also be a composer, but some have more skill or flair then others, and their compositions tend to be more widely accepted. Thus, in Nyatsiku, Tomwane Ntsambe is regarded as the undisputed leader of the players (vaveti) and the majority of songs played are composed by him. His brother, Musisi, is also highly regarded and one or two of his compositions are also played. Sometimes Tomwane takes lyrics provided by other individuals and puts them to music. The songs are therefore often quite representative of the thoughts and feelings of the whole district for, although Tomwane undoubtedly dominates, he is always open to suggestions and willing to include ideas and verses form individuals in Nyatsiku.

The songs are esoteric and cryptic. To an outsider, the lyrics are incomprehensible and one needs detailed explanation from the performers or composer. There is seldom one theme that runs through any entire verse, which rather resembles the flow of the 'stream of conciousness'. A few words, referring to an event, person or place, can carry much meaning which is left unsaid but is fully understood by performers and audience. Songs generally take the form of social commentaries, refracted through the eyes of the composer. He selects which incidents to record, and what interpretation to place upon them. He is able to undermine opponents, by including gossip or scandal about them, and can make transgressors of morality, like adulterers, feel the weight of public opinion by exposing them to ridicule.

A composer therefore engages in a process of information management, selecting and sifting those items that are at least not harmful to himself, and sometimes deliberately distorting and using information that is useful to his own cause (should he have one). The composer is consequently in a powerful position. He is an important ally to one who has political ambitions and sometimes, as in the case of Tomwane (as will shortly be seen), a composer can exploit his pivotal position to further his own political ambitions. There are limitations placed on a composer

in that he depends upon the support of his audience. He cannot, therefore, grossly misuse his advantageous position; the people are expecting him to display bias, and evaluate the songs accordingly. When the lyrics closely approximate public opinion, for example, when an unpopular man is accused of becoming too swollen-headed, the composer is rewarded by a roar of laughter from the audience; his barb has struck home. If, on the other hand, his jibes do not conform to public opinion, there is a silence from the crowd that soon communicates that he is wide of the mark. A composer is constantly incorporating new material, keeping his successful verses, and discarding unsuccessful or outdated ones.

Song lyrics can have two perspectives, which may be called inward- and outward-looking. Where the subject-matter of the song is derived from within the composer's own headman's district, the lyrics tend to deal with significant local events, such as births, deaths, etc. They can also take the form of social sanctions, self-praise, or gossip. Outward-looking lyrics refer to people or events in other districts, and normally take the form of pungent and obscene insults or accusations of witchcraft, all of which are treated in a 'joking' fashion. There is a definite joking relationship between districts conveyed by the lyrics. Outrageous inuendos and accusations are bandied back and forth, and no-one is permitted to take offence, because it is all mayembana, (joking).

Many of the points I have been making here are well illustrated in the lyrics of the nzumba that was performed in Nyatsiku in 1972. This nzumba is a long work, the performance lasting an hour and a quarter. I provide here the first few stanzas of the lyrics, most of which were composed by Tomwane Ntsambe, with one or two verses contributed by Handelane Homu and Nyangalume Masakula.

First movement:

Madando, madando numbe
vanateka chigoma chawe vefundamela
veteka minyonyo ya vasikate yawe
venata sitsewe sotsheva sihaka.

O hengani malala!
O hengani malala!
Hengani malala vaka Maluvila
Mblolo ya Chijangwe!

Kutswela kuhanya nawona nyonyo
Vaka nya tiTsambe!
Nyonyo ya Kufana!

Gomichi watsula kabweni
Kuyidanisa Tomwane, kufunye wahombe
Nyadimyani, adukudaya - vangamana
achisela sope ya Chijangwe.

Translation:

Eggs, eggs of the locust
They take their clutch and hatch them
Take the vaginas of your wives
Go make fish traps (with them) and catch fish.

O, be quiet
O, be quiet
Be quiet, men of Maluvila . . .
The penis of Chijangwe!

Stay alive, and see a vagina!
We are the men of Ntsambe!
The vagina of Kufana!

Gomichi goes to the sub-chief's home
and lays a complaint against Tomwane, he is jealous
of the big man
Nyadmyani was killed - they found him
drinking the sope of Chijangwe.

Analysis:

These stanzas were composed by Tomwane. The song opens with a reference to locusts: a swarm of locusts destroyed the crops in the rainy season of 1968, and this traumatic event is here being recalled. Tomwane then turns his attention from this sad event, and mischievously suggests, 'take the vaginas of your wives and make fish traps with them. It is not stated explicitly, but he is here insulting the women of Seven Jack. He is suggesting that their sex organs are so large that they would make admirable traps. In explaining his meaning, he

said that such large vaginas could only come from frequent, adulterous intercourse. It must be pointed out that perhaps the worst insult available to a Chopi is to abuse the sexual organs of a man's mother, sister or wife.

The second stanza dramatically calls on the audience to be quiet, the music becomes softer, and then suddenly, the men all shout, 'The penis of Chijangwe!' The silence, broken by the shout, lends emphasis to the crude insult. Chijangwe is a well known figure in Seven Jack, for he is an n'anga and is also the full brother of sub-chief Nyakwaha, who lives in Seven Jack.

The third stanza opens with the line, 'stay alive and see a vagina'. This is a praise of the sexual act: life is made worthwhile by sexual intercourse. This is followed by the proud, 'we are the men of Ntsambe' - Tomwane, in a moment of self-glorification, has incorporated a verse in praise of his own clan and vicinage. The stanza ends with the shout invoking the vagina of Kufana, who is the wife of the headman of Seven Jack. Again, the insult is aimed at the entire rival headman's district as symbolized by the sister-in-law of its leader.

The last stanza has serious political content. Tomwane accuses Gomichi (Ntsambe) of sneaking off to the sub-chief to complain about him. This must be seen in the context of the competition between these two men for the leadership of the Ntsambe vicinage, which effectively means the sub-headmanship of Guveni as well, since the Ntsambe vicinage, controls the sub-district. Tomwane is accusing Gomichi of using unfair tactics, and suggests that Gomichi is bringing the sub-chief into a domestic dispute. Tomwane, in making this accusation, is attempting to publicly discredit his opponent, and he tries to make his definition of the situation more credible by claiming that Gomichi is jealous of him, the 'big man'. Tomwane is, of course, already a wahombe in the field of music, but he appears to be suggesting here that he is already the big man of the

Ntsambe vicinage. He is evidently trying to mobilize popular support in his quest for the sub-headmanship.

The first movement concludes with the statement that Nyadimyani was killed after drinking the 'sope' of Chijangwe. It appears that a man died in Seven Jack, and it was rumoured that he was killed by witchcraft. Tomwane seized this opportunity to accuse Chijangwe of witchcraft. It will be remembered that Chijangwe is an n'anga and is the brother of the headman of Seven Jack. The implication here, according to Tomwane, was that the people of the neighbouring district were valoyi, witches. In the song, one is permitted to jokingly accuse others of witchcraft, something which is seldom done in serious life.

Second movement:

Rambanani vaka tanu henangamugela
Menetiyane vantalede!
Halakasa ndilo nzozo ya Chipwala
Yinyo yakwe yachiveluvelu

Timbila tafaneyo Tomwane tapwola kutsamba
Hingasikwa ditsuri!
Chimbiswe alekako nyonyo yakwe
Chimbiswe anadya mblolo yakwe!

Wonilamba ngu ditsuri?
Chiseve, nguha nisina lihlayiso
Wubemba wako wahombe

Edi kale, ka mayembana nidanwa kuemba.
Wubemba wako wahombe!
Womimelwa ngu ditiko dotselele.

Translation:

Gather round, our people, let us tell you
Menetiyane was fined!
Let's poke the fire in the clitoris of Chipwala
Her vulva opens and closes.

The xylophone of young Tomwane sounds nice.
We will play (his music) for sure!
Chimbiswe leaves his (wife's) vagina.
Chimbiswe eats his penis.

Do you not like me for sure?
Chiseve, you will not get (a husband's) gifts.
You great whore!
Long ago, jokingly I gave it to you (warned you) in song
You great whore,
The whole area sees you!

Analysis:

The lyrics of this second movement were not composed by Tomwane, but by two other Nyatsiku men, Handelane Homu and Nyangalume Masakula. The first stanza opens by calling on the audience to come in closer, there's a piece of gossip to be told: Menetiyane was fined. It refers to the brother of the headman of Mangani, who was accused and found guilty of adultery with a neighbour's wife. By choosing a prominent person from a neighbouring district and dredging this offence from his past, Handelane was mocking the district, pinning them with guilt by association. Attention was then turned to the other neighbouring headman's district, where Chipwala, a relative of the headman was singled out. The 'fire' in her clitoris is an imputation of nymphomania, and the reference to her vulva opening and closing represents the act of sexual intercourse.

In the second stanza, Handelane praises the music and orchestra of Tomwane. There is a gentle touch of irony when he calls Tomwane young, for he is about sixty-five, and looks older. Chimbiswe, of Seven Jack, is then singled out for attention, and is accused of withholding conjugal rights from his wife and indulging in masturbation instead. Once again, the person singled out for attack is an agnate of the headman and this can be seen as an oblique, but obvious, attack on that personage and his district.

The lyrics of the final stanza were composed by Nyangalume Masakula, and are addressed to his third wife, who has left him. He has been publicly humiliated by her loose morals and final desertion. He begins by wistfully asking if she really does not like him, then tries to wheedle by threatening to withhold the gifts a migrant husband always brings his wife. The tone changes to bitter accusation - 'you great whore!' Nyangalume had warned her in an earlier song, but she paid no heed; now she stands condemned as a whore before the whole district (and this is painful to him, as his manliness is demeaned). There

is a manifest attempt at social control in lyrics such as these. Nyangalume had previously used the medium of the song to try to shame his wife into leaving her immoral ways. This had failed, and now that she had deserted him, he used the song to disgrace and humiliate her, even though in doing so, his own reputation would suffer.

To summarize, the songs of the Chopi carry a number of different messages. They tend to promote unity within a headman's district (or whatever unit the orchestra may be representing), by using lavish self-praise while simultaneously denigrating neighbouring districts or units. Much use is made of joking relationships, which are necessitated by the friction that exists between rival district, which are conjoined by propinquity and the sharing of say, a common sub-chief, yet disjoined by the semi-autonomy each district enjoys (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1952: Ch. 4). The 'jokes' also have a cathartic effect, for the lyrics often express the real views of the composer which could not be openly stated; he can always safely say, 'nasakana baas' - 'I am only fooling'. Obscenity is probably so widely and frequently used[1] because it shocks the listener to attention, thus ensuring that the message being put across is absorbed.

A performance by the orchestra of a headman's district is an occasion for all to turn out and participate. It is a focal point of group cohesion, which is usually reinforced by the lyrics. It is also an arena for individual achievement, for a good composer, player or dancer wins immediate recognition and admiration. Thus, while a performance promotes cohesion on one level, there is nevertheless often fierce competition among performers to win acclaim. The lyrics of songs can be put to personal use as well, as when Tomwane attempted to mobilize support for himself and undermine his opponent in a political dispute. The

(1) The use of obscenity in Chopi songs, appeared to me to be virtually universal (pace Tracey). I recorded songs from various parts of Chopiland and all contained obscenities.

spreading of gossip and scandal, whether under the guise of a joking relationship or not, is a form of information management which is a powerful weapon in the hands of the composer. Finally, imagine the impact of Nyangalume's attack on his unfaithful wife, if she were present at the performance. In front of the whole population of the district, twenty or more men sing out her name and confront her with her alleged misdemeanors; it would be a humiliating experience. The songs can, therefore, be potent social sanctions.

Leadership, Arenas and Factions

Thus far I have examined how individuals are able to achieve recognition, status, and positions of leadership in spheres of social life that are not normally considered 'political'. It has been shown that individuals who possess some talent or acquire particular skills are able to carve a niche for themselves as brokers, entrepreneurs, spirit mediums, etc. In chapter four, the vicinage was examined, and it was pointed out that a successful 'big man' was one who was able to attract numerous followers, by activating structurally diverse principles. In this section, I examine the contests for leadership in various local-level arenas (1) : the vicinage and sub-headmanship (which coincides in the case to be presented) and the headmanship.

In chapter nine, I concentrated on the formation of action sets in various spheres of social life: economic, legal, and ritual. The distinguishing features of action sets are that they are ego-centred, ephemeral in nature, and are convened in order to get a job of work done. Once the work is completed, the action set 'dissolves' and lies dormant until the next time the convener calls on the constituent individuals for help. My present purpose is to observe the dynamics of political competition in Chopi society and, more particularly, the problem of the relationship of leader to follower. It is argued that much political activity comprises contests

(1) 'Arena' is here used in Swartz's sense: 'the arena is viewed as the environment in which political contention occurs' (1968:10).

between opposing factions which, in form, are similar to the action sets described above.

Despite the fact that competition for political office in Chopiland is confined to members of the relevant ruling clan, and is to that extent ascribed, there is nevertheless a high degree of achievement[1]. The lateral devolution of office (described in chapter six) ensures a vagueness as to who is the rightful successor, effectively throwing open the competition to virtually every adult male of the local clan group. Thus one can find brother pitted against brother, cousin against cousin, uncle and nephew, or individual against individual who have nothing in common but a shared clan name. Given this background, it becomes apparent that any person who vies for office will be competing with an agnate for support among their kinsmen. Thus, the agnatic group is riven by dissention, with some supporting one candidate, some the other. But the arena is almost always wider than the kinship group, and within it one finds matrilateral and affinal kin, friends and neighbours. The successful candidate therefore is compelled to put together a faction or coalition of supporters, recruited in terms of different structural principles; the agnatic kinship system alone is inadequate.

It is important to establish exactly what is meant by a 'faction' and in what follows, I make use of the formulation of Nicholas (1965: 27-29), who makes five propositions regarding the concept:

1. 'Factions are conflict groups.' Like an action set, the composition of a faction is latent and only emerges (in this instance) at a time of conflict.

2. 'Factions are political groups.' I would argue that a faction is the 'political' manifestation of an action set.

3. 'Factions are not corporate groups.' They convene for a particular (political) purpose and then 'dissolve' again. They are ephemeral.

4. 'Faction members are recruited by a leader.' Indeed, the faction gets its raison d'etre from its leader; it is an ego-centred group and would disintegrate without him.

(1) Theoretically, any individual may also hive off and start a vicinage of his own, provided he can entice enough followers. This, however, rarely occurs.

5. 'Faction members are recruited on diverse principles.' The leader activates whatever ties he has available to recruit followers.

These propositions of Nicholas provide a comprehensive picture of factions, their formation, and contexts. It appears a more satisfactory account than that of Bailey, who regards all members of factions as being in a transactional relationship with the leader, and who are his 'hirelings', thus ruling out any moral commitment to the leader (1970: 52). Nicholas can account for followers recruited on moral or transactional grounds, for example, kinsmen or clients, respectively.

Case 17: Succession problems in Ntsambe and Guveni

The events that arose in this case were precipitated by the death in September 1969, of Chipanyelo Ntsambe, the sub-headman of Guveni and leader of the Ntsambe vicinage. Shortly after his death, speculation began as to who should be his successor. In the first instance, two names were on everyone's lips: Chibalwane Ntsambe, a young man of about 30, and Gomichi Ntsambe, aged about 50. Chibalwane had the advantage of being on the spot, whereas Gomichi was in Lourenzo Marques at the time, working as a migrant labourer (although he was expected back shortly). There were also two other potential contestants. Tomwane, and Zalambe Ntsambe (the latter also being in Lourenzo Marques), but their chances did not appear to be highly rated at this time by the people of Guveni.

There was much at stake for the individuals who contested the right to succeed Chipanyelo, because there was not just one, but two, positions left vacant. Essentially, the problem was to find a new leader for the Ntsambe vicinage and, on this level, the arena of the contest was circumscribed by the vicinage itself. But the Ntsambe vicinage had long ago grown so large that it had been accorded the status of a sub-headman's sub-district. Thus the man who succeeded in the contest for leadership of the vicinage was automatically the sub-headman as well. This wider dimension meant that the issue of succession also

became a matter of importance in the headman's district of Nyatsiku as a whole, and a second arena encompassing influences from outside the vicinage came into play.

The day after Chipanyelo's death, preparations for his burial began, and Musisi Ntsambe, the younger brother of Tomwane, played a leading role. He sent out messages to Chipanyelo's relatives who lived further afield, supervised the washing and preparation of the body for burial, and went to consult a diviner as to the cause of death. Normally, these would be carried out by the senior agnatic kinsman, but Gomichi and Zalambe were both away, and the other senior man, Tomwane, is almost blind. However, the point was not lost on the Ntsambe people that it was a representative of Tomwane's faction who took the initiative which, later, when the minutiae surrounding the event had faded from people's minds, would appear to be to Tomwane's advantage. Indeed, he did benefit from the incident, because it was later seen as a legitimating factor: a Tomwane supporter in 1972, when arguing with an ally of Gomichi asked, 'and who was it who buried Chipanyelo? - Tomwane and Musisi!' This was being used as evidence of the closeness of the relationship between Tomwane and the previous incumbent, and thus, by inference, strengthened his claims.

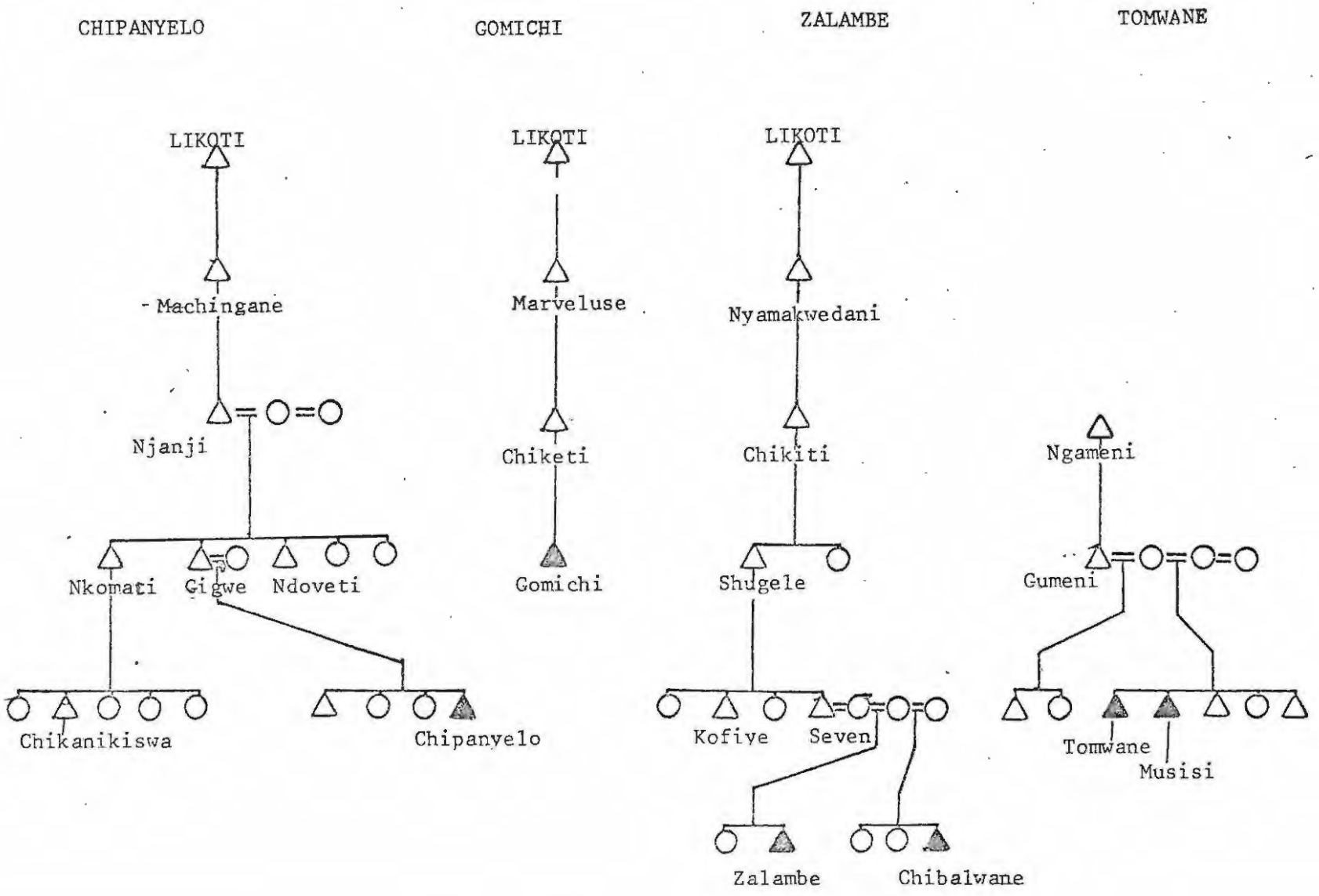
During the two years after the death of Chipanyelo, the contest over succession progressed. In the beginning, Tomwane pressed for a speedy conclusion (his main rivals, after all, were absent), but he was frustrated by Chibalwane, who was also vigorously claiming the leadership. During this period, however, both Gomichi and Zalambe returned from Lourenzo Marques, and both pressed their respective claims to the headmanship, so that, at this stage, four contestants had emerged: Chibalwane, Zalambe, Gomichi and Tomwane. Chibalwane quietly withdrew after Zalambe's return, since he is a junior direct kinsman of the latter (his elder half-brother, vide infra, figure 50). Chibalwane then supported Zalambe's candidature, which was clearly

in his interest. He is young, and can afford to wait, and if Zalambe were to win he, as the younger half-brother, should become the next sub-headman. The rivalry for leadership among the men of Ntsambe had therefore been reduced to a three-way contest between Zalambe, Gomichi and Tomwane.

Let us now look at the respective claims of the three men, their support, and chances of success. Figure 50 depicts the pedigrees of the three men and Chipanyelo, the previous incumbent. There is unanimity on one factor - that a man called Likoti was the first member of the Ntsambe clan to arrive in this area of Guveni. He was followed by others of his clan and most Ntsambe men of the area today claim to be descended from him, with the notable exceptions of Tomwane and his brother, Musisi. In a dispute over succession, it is important to establish the legitimacy of one's claim by appealing to impeccable descent from important ancestors. 'Legitimacy' is here used in the same sense as Swartz, Turner and Tuden, who assert that it is, 'a type of support that derives not from force or its threat but from the values held by the individuals formulating, influencing, and being affected by political ends' (1966:10, my emphasis).

Tomwane's claim was weakened because he was unable to demonstrate descent from Likoti, while Zalambe and Gomichi could (Chipanyelo, in gaining the sub-headmanship, was also able to claim a good pedigree). However, while it is unusual for a person to be able to gain office without the correct genealogical credentials, it is not impossible. If Tomwane could have presented himself as a really attractive candidate, and thus gain widespread support, it would have been possible for him to achieve the position. As was explained in chapter six, succession to office is collateral, which means that one's lineal link to the founding ancestor is of minor importance. Yet Zalambe, Gomichi and Chipanyelo all appealed to thier lineal ancestor to legitimize their claims. It was no doubt less than fortuitous that the pedigrees of the three purport

Figure 50 Pedigrees of Chipanyelo and his potential successors



to show that each one is the only direct descendant of Likoti, and therefor, the only possible legal successor to the leadership of the vicinage. The pedigrees, which have been abbreviated (some lateral relatives have been omitted) do not acknowledge the existence of the rival contestants, nor the links that might join them. It is apparent that the rivals for the position, and the previous incumbent, all belong to different descent groups in a fragment of a clan which probably arrived in the area about a century before.

A study of the pedigrees reveals that at least two of the protagonists, and perhaps three, have falsified their accounts in order to give their respective claims added legitimacy. Since Chipanyelo is now dead, Zalambe and Gomichi are the two survivors claiming Likoti as an ancestor. Of the two, Gomichi's pedigree makes the stronger claim, for it depicts Likoti as his greatgrandfather, whereas Zalambe claims Likoti as his greatgreatgreatgrandfather. If Gomichi is to be believed, then his claim was even stronger than that of Chipanyelo, but it is certain that there has been a telescoping of generations. A more reliable guide may be found in kin term usage, and here Tomwane appears to benefit, because both his rivals call him tate, 'father'. But the position is complicated when one examines the kin terms Gomichi and Zalambe use for each other: each refers to the other as landa, i.e., younger brother. There is little doubt that they are classificatory brothers (since both call Tomwane 'father'), but it is a logical impossibility for them both to be 'younger brother' to each other. Here again, one finds the manipulative possibilities of kin terms being exploited, each man attempting to add to the legitimacy of his candidacy by defining himself as an 'older' brother.

On the face of it then, and using genealogy as a yardstick, Gomichi's claim appeared stronger than his rivals, Tomwane and Zalambe. In effect, however, the latter's claim was no less strong, as he claimed to be the only real direct descendant of Likoti (with Chibalwane, his younger half-brother). Another factor is that it is common knowledge

that pedigrees are altered to suit the needs of the protagonist (who will nevertheless vigorously deny any such falsification). Tomwane could not assert direct descent from Likoti because it is generally known that he and his brother Musisi are descended from the elder brother of Likoti, but who arrived in the area later than him, and was therefore his wuyi.

Tomwane, being weak in this sphere of legitimacy, tried a different line of attack. Being the senior man in kinship status, he played on the fact that Gomichi and Zalambe are his 'sons'. He also officiates at their sidilo, killing the goat that is sacrificed to the Ntsambe ancestors. The prestige gained from this is important, because in the ritual, he is symbolically acting out the leadership of the kinship group (which in this case is distinct from the vicinage). Tomwane also accused his competitors of mismanagement, saying that the Ntsambe vicinage had been poorly led. In this he was linking Gomichi and and Zalambe with Chipanyelo who, it is true, did not lead the vicinage well. He was unimpressive in court cases, displaying a lck of coherent thought, and he tended to be submissive in his dealings with the headman. Tomwane was able to tar his opponents with the same brush because he had contested and lost the leadership with Chipanyelo five years before, and he lost because Gomichi and Zalambe had aligned themselves with the rival faction.

Another asset Tomwane had was his musical ability and his leadership of the Nyatsiku orchestra. People from outlying areas who know nobody in the headman's district know Tomwane, and regard him as a kind of personification of Nyatsiku. The section on music (above) illustrated how a man can dominate others through his compositions. Vilification, vituperation, and humiliation are weapons at a compser's command and, indeed, in 1973, Tomwane was in the process of composing a new song in which Gomichi is humiliated.

The real, if informal, leadership of the Ntsambe vicinage appeared

to come from Musisi, Tomwane's younger brother. Musisi was the vicinage member who was the most visible, and perhaps best-known in the wider society. He was, and still is, the induna of the headman's district, and in this capacity travelled frequently, representing Nyatsiku. He is also a good xylophone player and composer, and is a man whose opinion is sought on a wide range of subjects. In crises, such as the death of Chipanyelo, he comes to the fore by quietly and efficiently taking charge, giving orders and overseeing the various tasks to be performed. He was most useful of all in his ability to raise support for Tomwane. Indeed, most of Tomwane's supporters owe their allegiance to Musisi, who in turn throws their combined weight behind his brother (cf. chapter four).

This brings us to the most important support[1] of all: the followers that each faction could muster. As far as I am able to reconstruct, it appears that Chipanyelo originally gained his position despite competition from Tomwane and Gomichi. The latter apparently decided that he could not win, and withdrew, supporting Chipanyelo's claim. This turned out to be the crucial factor in the dispute, which Chipanyelo subsequently won, and who was recognised as the sub-headman of Guveni by the headman of Nyatsiku. In winning, he was able to put together a larger faction of supporters than Tomwane but, like most factions, this was an ego-centred coaltion of individuals, who were personally recruited, and which disintegrated on the death of its leader (cf. Nicholas 1965: 28-29). Thus, after Chipanyelo's death, a totally new game began with the various contestants gathering in support and trying to gain uncommitted individuals who had originally supported the previous leader.

The three rivals who remained in the contest had to set about activating links to other individuals in order to raise support. This

(1) 'Support' being 'anything that contributes to the formulation and/or implementation of political ends' (Swartz, Turner and Tuden, 1966: 23).

process of faction formation took place in arena of the sub-headman's sub-district of Guveni. The boundary of the arena was thus clearly defined, the participants being all the adult males of the sub-district, plus two women who, through their age and status as heads of homesteads, were also regarded as important supporters. Since the arena was relatively small, it was possible to discover (at least in most cases) where the sympathies of each person lay. Each of the contestants likewise obviously had a good idea of whom could be counted on for support, although there were two or three individuals who were undecided as to whom to follow. This is scarcely surprising, because most members of a vicinage are related to almost every other member in one way or another; it is merely a matter of tracing the pathway. Each individual in the arena was therefore forced to make a choice between the three candidates and to decide with which one the greater obligation or affection lay. There was probably a conflict of loyalties in every choice made, but some bonds were stronger than others, so the choice was not difficult, but where there was equal weight, the decision was hard.

In figure 11 (p 99) the links of allegiance to Chipanyelo were traced sometimes through intermediaries. It will be noticed that Tomwane and Gomichi are the main intermediaries, each having a core of supporters which could form the basis of a faction. There were ten other individuals whose primary allegiance was to Chipanyelo and who, after his death, were potential new recruits to other leaders. I am uncertain as to whether figure 11 accurately depicts the cleavages of the sub-headman's sub-district, because the information was supplied by Chipanyelo himself and is probably an idealized, even rationalized, account. Some of the linkages are vaguely articulated, some overlap: friendship and neighbourship are both important organizing principles, but if a marriage takes place, this affinal linkage is given precedence. Another problem in collecting evidence of allegiance is that one needs a crisis, like a succession dispute, to chrystallize issues, and only

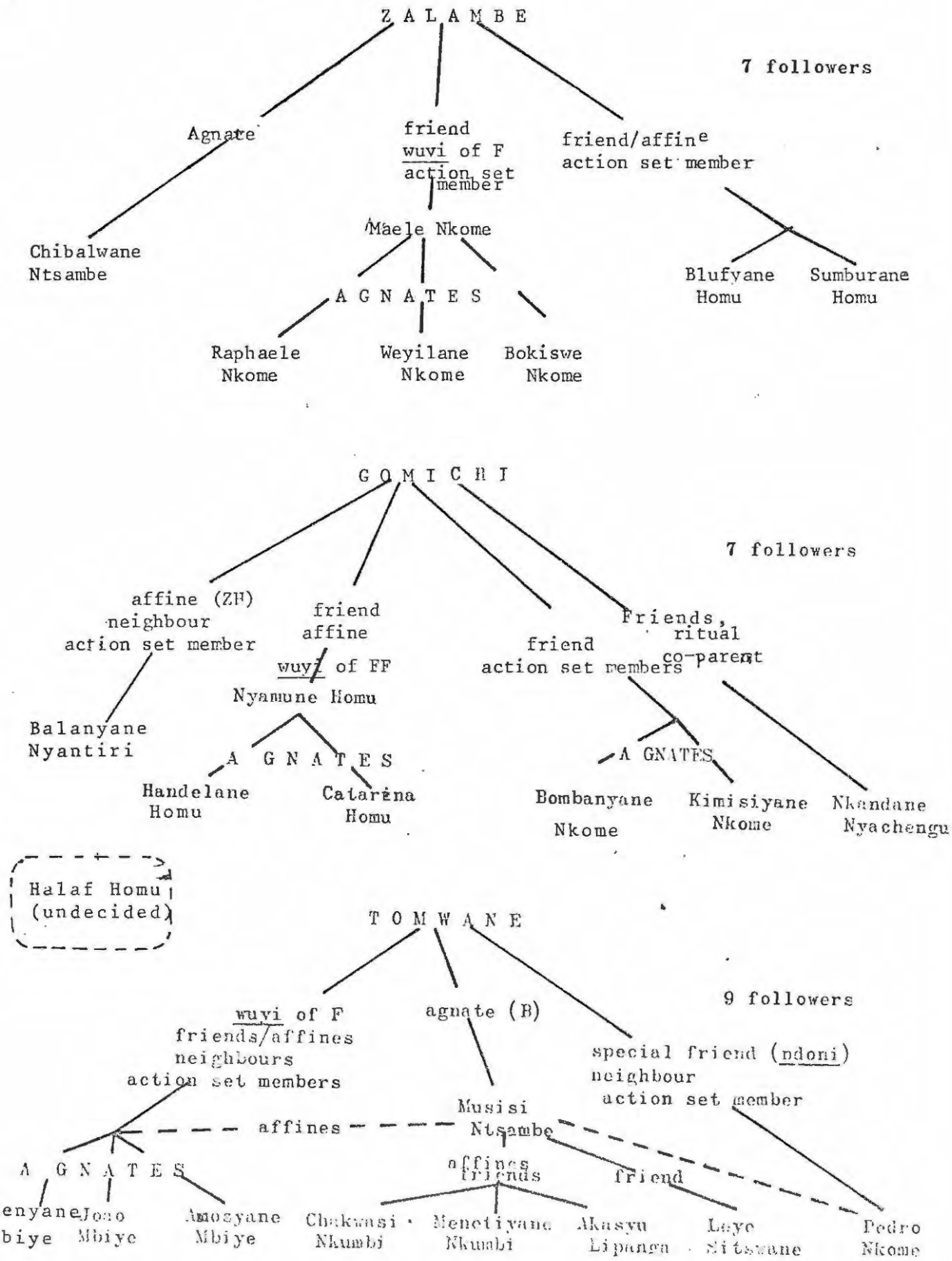
then does allegiance become overt. When collecting this information, there was no crisis, which was only to come later in the year.

In 1971-2, the cleavages in the sub-headman's sub-district and vicinage had become clearer, and each of the three rivals was able to indicate with some accuracy the individuals who would support him and those who would support the others. The allegiance of the three 'embryonic' vicinages: the Mbiye, Homu and Nkome people, was still largely given en bloc, but among the Nkome and Homu groups, there were a couple of individuals who did not go along with the preference of their vahombe, preferring to support rival candidates. The most significant realignment was a clustering of followers around Zalambe because the Nkome group, which had been Chipanyelo's main power base, threw their weight behind the man who did not have any apparent support (remembering that Tomwane had Mbiye followers, and Gomichi had Homu support). Figure 57, which should be seen in sequence with Figure 11, depicts the new dispensation, as it emerged in early 1972.

It emerges that Gomichi had seven followers on whom he could rely, as did Zalambe, while Tomwane had nine, and one man, Halaf Homu, was undecided. His dilemma was that he was a wuyi of Gomichi, like the others of his Homu group, but Tomwane was the son of his father's sister, was a next-door neighbour, and they were good friends. Many other individuals had similar conflicts of loyalty, but Halaf could not decide. In Figure 51, the lines of allegiance are drawn, with an indication of the nature of relationship between leader and follower. Multi-stranded relationships between leader and follower obviously make for a stronger abcnd between them, and there is less likelihood of a change of allegiance. Single-stranded, or transactional relationships, on the other hand, are the ones which are the weakest, and where erosion of support is a possibility.

Zalambe picked up support from his younger half-brother, Chibalwane, and from four of the seven Nkome men, under the leader-

Figure 51. Factional support for the three contestants in the Ntsambe succession dispute.



ship of their wahombe, Maele. The Nkome people were vawuyi of Zalambe's paternal grandfather, and there was a bond of friendship between Maele and Zalambe, which manifested itself in participation in each other's work parties and mutual social visits. It is interesting, though, that the Nkome group were not solid in their backing: two of them, Bombanyane and his son Kimisiyane, are regular members of Gomichi's action sets, and the former is an ndoni of Gomichi; a third, Pedro, is an ndoni of Tomwane, they are also next-door neighbours and exchange action set membership. This is an example of the point made earlier, that where moral or multi-stranded relationships exist, they take precedence over transactional or single-stranded ones. The same factors account for the fact that Zalambe was able to attract two of the Homu people who, as a group, owe their allegiance to Gomichi. Sumburane Homu, who is a friend and affine of Zalambe's, is also the ritual co-parent (cf. chapter seven) of one of the latter's sons. Blufyane Homu, as Sumburane's full brother, was presumably persuaded by that person, to also ally himself with Zalambe.

Gomichi managed to pick up two of Chipanyelo's supporters, in Balanyane Nyantiri and Nkandane Nyachengu. Balanyane is married to Gomichi's father's sister, and regularly particpates in work parties and beer drinks with Gomichi. Nkandane is a close neighbour and the ritual co-parent of one of Gomichi's children; the bond here is close and strong as well. As was mentioned above, Bombanyane Nkome and his son Kimisiyane are both counted as Gomichi's supporters, the former being his ndoni. Balanced against these gains to his faction, must be measured the loss of two Homu men who were formerly his followers, and who now support Zalambe (for reasons described above).

The third faction, formed around Tomwane, appears the most solid in composition. In the fluid period after Chipanyelo's death, Tomwane lost no supporters, and may have gained one (Halaf Homu, who is undecided). The Mbiye people, as close supporters, stood by him for a

number of reasons, including the fact that his father sponsored their arrival, and a change of allegiance so soon would be unseemly. In any event, their relationship with him is good, all participating in each other's work parties, drinking together, etc. Recently, too, Musisi married a young Mbiye woman, making the bond between them and his brother even stronger. Four other members of Tomwane's faction are recruited through Musisi, for they are all fairly recent immigrants sponsored by him: Chakwasi Nkumbi was the first to arrive, being Musisi's first wife's sister, then Menetiyane Lipanga and his brother, Akasyu, and finally, Leye Sitswane, a friend. Tomwane's ninth supporter, Pedro Nkome, is his ndoni, next door neighbour, and member of his work parties.

As things stood at this time then, it seemed as though Tomwane had a slight edge over his two rivals. But events took a new turn when Zalambe suddenly withdrew, announcing that he thought Gomichi was the correct choice as the new leader of Guveni. The reasons for Zalambe's withdrawal were not immediately obvious, but some of the following factors were undoubtedly relevant. It seems that although Zalambe and Gomichi appeared to be equally strong, with the same number of supporters and the same kind of claims to legitimacy (i.e., descent from Likoti, the founding ancestor), Zalambe's case was generally regarded as the weaker of the two. The headman of Nyatsiku, Sangatelo Nyakwaha, was putting pressure on the Ntsambe people to reach a decision about their leader, as the quarrelling had been going on for three years. If he had appointed any one of the three, he would have chosen Tomwane, not only because of the numerical strength he enjoyed over his rivals, but also because Tomwane was an especially good friend; they often drink together and work in each other's madimwa (work parties).

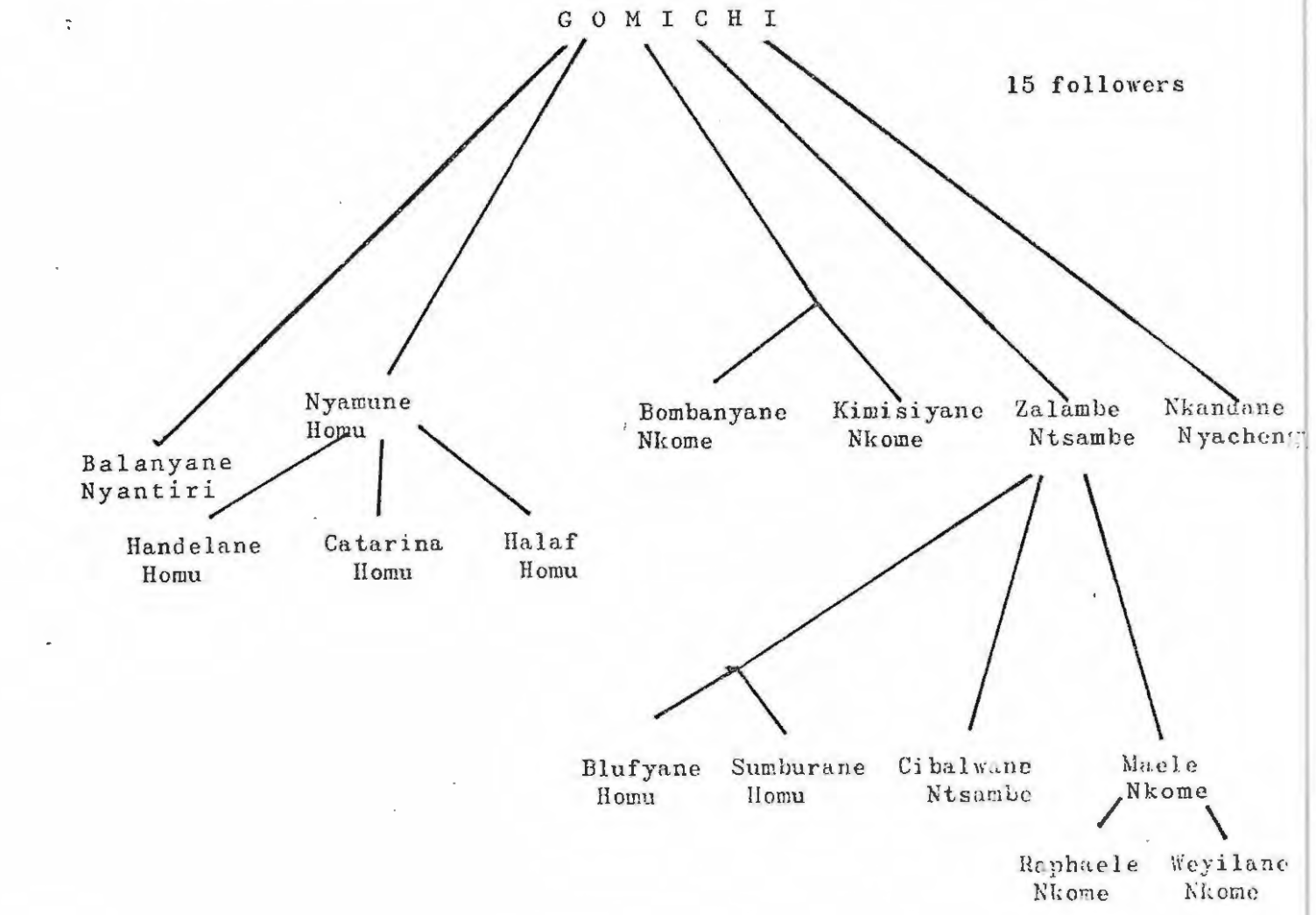
Zalambe and Gomichi were aware of these factors which favoured Tomwane, and the consequences of him winning were ominous for the

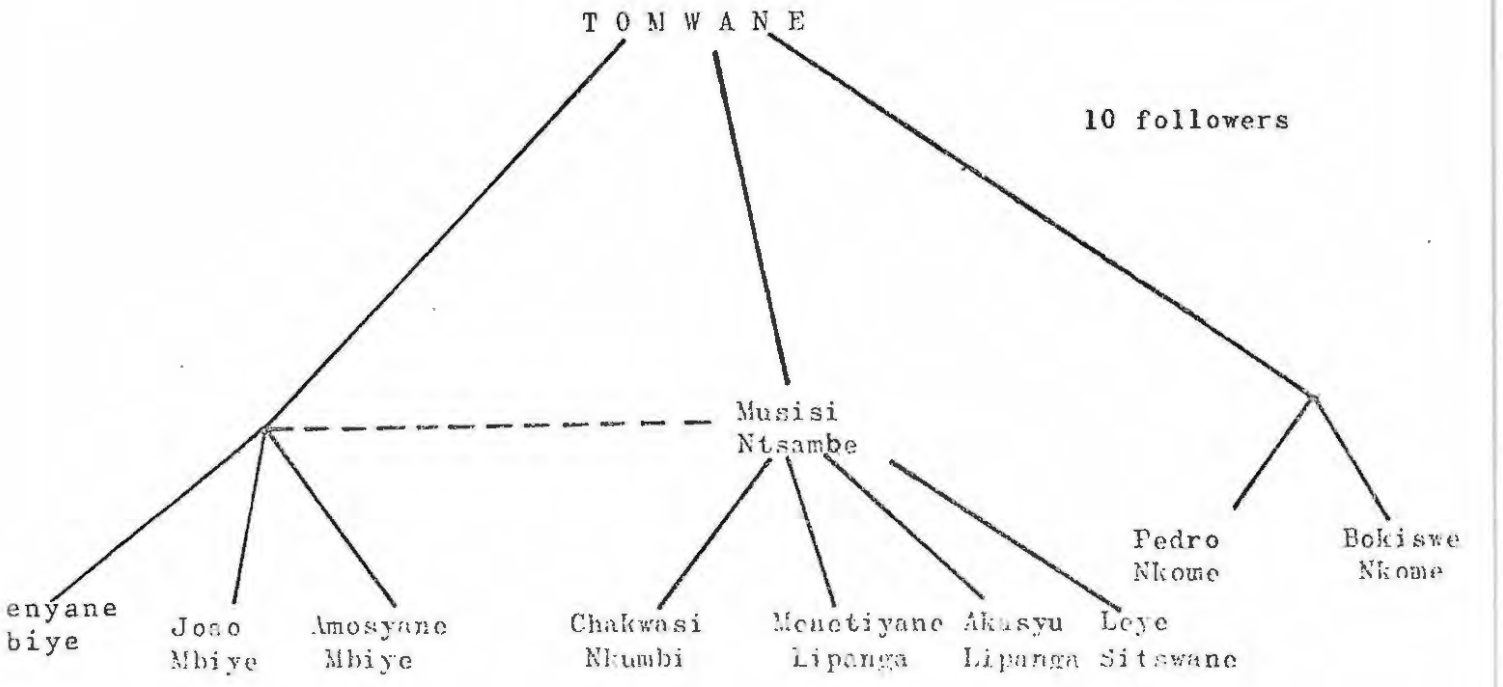
future of their axis. If Tomwane were to win the contest and be appointed by Sangatelo, one of their strongest weapons, their claim to legitimacy as descendants of Likoti, would become irrelevant. It would mean that their segment of the Ntsambe clan would no longer have exclusive access to the position of leadership. It also follows that after Tomwane's death, his brother, Musisi, would have an excellent chance of succeeding him, especially in view of his strength in support and prestige, which he was presently throwing behind his brother. It was apparent to both Zalambe and Gomichi that they should form a coalition to beat off the challenge from Tomwane and, since the claims of the former were slightly weaker, and being the younger of the two, he stepped down in favour of the latter.

It was by no means certain that all of Zalambe's followers would follow his lead and switch their allegiance to Gomichi, since he had personally recruited them, and they were attached to him by a unique set of links. Most members of his faction also had links to the other contenders, and it remained to be seen which side they would take. Figure 52 shows the new alignment that emerged after Zalambe's withdrawal. In the event, most of his supporters did follow his lead, the only exception being Bokiswe Nkome, who preferred to follow his brother's son, Pedro, in supporting Tomwane. Halaf Homu who, up to this stage, had been undecided, then threw in his lot with Gomichi, so that Gomichi could now claim 15 followers, while Tomwane could only muster ten.

The dispute over the succession to the leadership of Ntsambe vicinage and sub-headmanship of Guveni had finally drawn to a close. Tomwane had a number of 'indirect' supports, i.e., features which did not directly bolster his claims (see Figure 53), yet which might attract unattached followers; but his great weakness was the lack of legitimacy of his pedigree. Gomichi, on the other hand, had fewer indirect supports, but could claim legitimacy (a demonstrable link to the founding ancestor, Likoti). Ultimately however, the indirect supports are of

Figure 52. New dispensation in Guveni after Zalambe's withdrawal.





small value unless they can be turned into direct support, i.e., the allegiance of followers. People must be convinced as to the viability and attractiveness of a candidate before they will take his side.

Figure 53. Inputs and Supports of Tomwane and Gomichi in the succession dispute.

Tomwane

INDIRECT SUPPORTS

1. Prestige from musical ability
2. Songs he composes: powerful weapon and sanction.
3. His age, and the respect it accrues
4. Strong ties with headman, Sangatelo.
5. His superior kinship status.
6. His influential younger brother.

DIRECT SUPPORTS

1. Ten followers.

Gomichi

INDIRECT SUPPORTS

1. His age, and the respect it accrues.
2. Membership of same line as the previous incumbent.
3. Strong genealogical claim to legitimacy.

DIRECT SUPPORTS

1. Fifteen followers.

Figure 53 shows that despite Tomwane's superiority in the sphere of indirect supports, he was not able to muster enough followers. These, of course, owe their allegiance for a number of reasons, while others have economic ties. Still others ally themselves with the candidate from whom they hope to gain the best advantage. Ultimately, it became apparent that Gomichi had the greatest support and, in 1973, he was officially recognised by the headman as the leader of the people of Guveni.

Throughout the dispute, there were two arenas in operation. Firstly, the Ntsambe vicinage formed a bounded area geographically and socially, in which the competition took place. This arena was homologous with that of the sub-headman's sub-district of Guveni, so that, effectively, the rivals competed for both positions and both required the support of the same reservior of individuals. The resources, or

'supports' available to each contestant were not bounded by the arenas described above. Tomwane especially attempted to use his musical skills and friendship with the headman into play, which was an attempt (which appeared partially successful), to fight a political battle in one arena by 'importing' inputs from outside domains.

Like Boissevain, Nicholas, and others, I view factions as the basic unit of political conflict in any society (cf. Boissevain 1968:551). The events reported above are essentially political action sets, i.e., factions. The clusters of supporters that each contestant mustered were individually recruited; some were activated by moral obligations, others by more mercenary considerations. The factions cut across traditional corporate groupings, such as kinship groups: indeed, they had to, because the contestants were all agnates. It appeared,too, that after Gomichi was formally acknowledged as Chipanyelo's successor, the divisions in the vicinage, which had appeared all too vividly, began to dissolve, perhaps to lie dormant until the next internal crisis.

A political leader, once he has been acknowledged, cannot afford to rest on his laurels. He must provide leadership and earn the respect of his followers, because if he does not, he may be deposed. A defeated candidate in a succession dispute therefore need not cease his activities for, although he was not able to muster enough support the first time, he might be able to erode enough of the support from the successful contestant to be able to challenge him later. This, of course, is difficult to do, since there are many perquisites that become available to the incumbent, which he can then redistribute, and in so doing, obligate many individuals who previously supported his rival. Nevertheless, informants agreed that it is possible to depose an incumbent and, indeed, Sangatelo Nyakwaha, the headman of Nyatsiku, lost his position in 1972 to German Nyatsiku, a man who appears to be his cousin. Unfortunately, the event took place in between field trips, so

I was not able to observe the process. This disadvantage was exacerbated by the fact that few individuals wished to talk about the event subsequently, least of all Sangatelo himself. What follows then, is a tentative reconstruction of what happened.

The original headman was Kalichani Nyakwaha and, after his death (in about 1966), three men of the Nyakwaha clan emerged as candidates: Sangatelo, German, and Chimela. At the time of Kalichani's death, German was in Lourenzo Marques on a migrant labour trip. Effectively, therefore, the dispute over the succession was between Sangatelo and Chimela (who is German's younger half-brother). It seems that the dispute dragged on for about two years, during which time German returned, and thus became a viable contender. It was to no avail, however, for shortly after his return, Sangatelo was appointed headman by the sub-chief, who had established, through informal discussion, that a majority of Nyatsiku people favoured Sangatelo.

What were the reasons for Sangatelo's success? It appears that he was able to amass a far greater weight of both indirect and direct supporters than his rivals. In the sphere of genealogical legitimacy, it seems that none of the three contestants had an advantage over the others; the situation was confused because all claimed descent from the founding ancestor, but that was where their agreement parted company (vide supra, chapter five).. Chimela acknowledged German as his senior kinsman, while German's pedigree did not even note Chimela's (or Sangatelo's) existence. Sangatelo's pedigree excludes the other two, and posits Kalichani, the dead headman, as his younger classificatory 'brother' (FFss).

It seems certain that here again, pedigrees were falsified in order to give added legitimacy to each claimant, with the result that each claim looked equally good (except for Chimela's, but he supported German). This stalemate was broken, whether fortuitously or by design, by Sangatelo's decision to claim Kalichani's widow in

terms of the custom of widow inheritance. This immediately enhanced his cause, because, while theoretically any male of the same generation of the dead man could claim the widow, the younger brother has first option. Sangatelo's action had the effect of making him appear to be the classificatory younger brother of Kalichani, an important point in his favour in a system of collateral succession.

Sangatelo also had other strings to his bow. He was a nyatish-lolo (diviner) of some repute, and had a widespread clientele in the district. His newly-acquired wife was an important n'anga (spirit medium), and she, too, had many clients spread throughout the district. They were presumbaly able to activate the strong links that such practitioners have with their patients, and successful diviners and mediums always generate respect and even awe with the general public. Their ability to communicate with, and sometimes manipulate, the supernatural gave them an amount of secular power; it would be potentially harmful to alienate such individuals.

Perhaps the most important factor in Sangatelo's success was his access to key individuals throughout the headman's district. For instance, he was resident in the important Masakula vicinage, and had their support to a man. He also had a good relationship with the Ntsambe people, the other really important vicinage. He had not been away as a migrant for many years (his profession enabled him to forgo the disruptive existence of migrancy) and thus had unlimited opportunities to cultivate ties with key personalities in Nyatsiku. In other words, Sangatelo's social network was well-cultivated, so that when the crisis of succession arose, he was able to put together a powerful coalition. German, on the other hand, had been away for a number of years, and his social network was in a state of disrepair. The debts and obligations which Sangatelo could call in had taken him years to cultivate; it was too much to expect German to match him in so short a period of time.

Sangatelo was appointed headman, but did not display qualities of leadership. He delegated the distasteful duties that accompany the position to younger men, and took advantage of the benefits (tribute, a portion of the taxes, etc.). His repute as a diviner declined, and he alienated his Masakula supporters by moving from their vicinage to a neighbouring one. During this time, German was quietly mending his fences, gathering vawuyi (followers) and cultivating friendships.

Some time during 1972, presumably after the traditional manoeuvre of calling work parties at the same time as Sangatelo, in order to gauge his strength in a contest in which one need not lose face, German challenged Sangatelo. The challenge was quietly made at a meeting of the menfolk, convened for another purpose. The matter was discussed at length, and another meeting called for the following week. During this period, the rivals presumably canvassed support, but it became clear to Sangatelo that German was in the stronger position. At the meeting, he conceded defeat, and German became the new headman. The sub-chief was informed, and ratified the decision. Subsequently, the situation has been rationalized in kinship terms. The people today explain the events by agreeing with German's claim that genealogically, he is the correct successor. Ironically, this was exactly the same rationalization used for the installation of Sangatelo originally. Obviously, this kind of 'legitimacy' is to an extent arbitrary, for one needs a majority of supporters before it is conferred; it is an ex post facto legitimation of what is an achieved state of affairs.

A final point before leaving this topic. In 1969, sub-chief Ntumbetumbe Nyakwaha suddenly called to a secret meeting a number of the important men of his sub-chiefdom (including headmen, sub-headmen, vicinage leaders and other men of influence). He alleged that his eldest son, who was acting as one of his tinduna, had tried to kill him in order to usurp the sub-chieftainship. The facts surrounding

the event were vague, but involved a physical assault on the old man, with the son wielding a heavy cudgel. It was general knowledge that the son had been increasingly taking on airs and presenting himself as the sub-chief, so the accusation was not implausible. The meeting took place, and it was decided to hold a surprise meeting of the whole sub-chiefdom the following day. This was done, and the son was confronted with the accusation of the sub-chief. A heated argument ensued, but the outcome was that the son was banished from the area with immediate effect.

What this example illustrates is that tenure of office is not necessarily an inalienable right, once achieved. The fact that the son believed (erroniously, as it happens), that he could depose his father suggests that this was not impossible. The sub-chief, by the surreptitious way he called a meeting of his influential friends and allies, also showed that he was aware of the danger to his position. The son had clearly misjudged the mood of the people and although he had a clique of young men as supporters, they were clearly in the minority, and he had to suffer his punishment. But there was no doubt that, in certain circumstances, the sub-chief could have been deposed.

The two examples above illustrate the uncertainty and instability of tenure of office in Chopiland. It has already been shown that, within the parameter of belonging to the ruling kinship group, succession depends on a number of factors, but ultimately on the ability of an individual to build a more effective coaltion of support than his rivals. Succession to office is, then, largely an achieved status and, once achieved, must be vigorously maintained because, if a rival is able to gather enough support, he can still become a threat to the incumbent. It was mentioned in chapter six that the Administator has the power to intervene in a succession dispute, and to appoint the man of his choice. A chief or sub-chief who is considered incompetent or 'difficult' may also be replaced by the Administration. Here, the colonial

structure clearly impinges on the traditional one, sometimes even down to the local level.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate the fluidity of the Chopi social system, which provides a fertile environment for the emergence of qualities of individualism. When an individual has ambition to be more than just a cultivator or peasant, there are ample opportunities for him (or her) to achieve prestige and status in various spheres of activity. Much time and energy is expended in the pursuit of repute and influence and, apart from the traditional political structure, there are a number of avenues for the fulfilment of such aims. Even such an apparently innocuous activity as music and dancing, which the Chopi have developed to a high art, takes on greater significance when one notices the intensity of competition for eminence among the dancers. The composers of the music and lyrics have a powerful weapon at their command which can be turned on miscreants, deviants or in this context, political opponents. The fame of a good composer and the respect it generates, make him a powerful individual or ally.

A diviner or spirit medium, especially the latter, is also able to gather an aura of power and fame. Two points of interest emerge here: firstly, spirit mediumship provides a ready-made outlet for the ambitions of women, who are generally lacking in real status or participation in decision-making processes, and secondly, the profession is open to literally everyone who aspires to it. While music and dancing are pastimes (albeit extremely important ones), spirit mediumship is a full-time occupation. Apart from their function of providing avenues for self-expression, the prestige and influence gathered by such activities can be turned to political advantage. Tomwane Ntsambe and Sangatelo Nyakwaha both used advantage gained through such activities to further their own political ends.

The examples given above are part of the Chopi culture, and can

be seen as traditional structures being turned to political use. This is not true of the structures operating in the occupations of entrepreneur and broker. By definition, such men have access to particular resources which are denied to their peers. They tend to be progressives, the 'new men', who make use of the wider administrative and economic structures brought by the Portuguese. There are, therefore, many opportunities for an individual to become noteworthy and gain repute. The traditional political structures of vicinage leadership, headmanship, chieftainship etc. are vigorously contested by clansmen, the successful candidate being he who is able to build a strong coalition of followers. It was apparent that political contests were fought with the most intensity at the lowest level: the vicinage. This is an apparent anomaly, because the 'prize' or rewards are small but, significantly, it is the only political position which has no dealings with the Portuguese Administration. Headman and chiefs are to an extent associated with the Administration, and their reputatuion suffers concomitantly. The vicinage wahombe, on the other hand, has no such official constraints, and is able to voice the opposition to the colonial structure which is felt, in greater or lesser degrees, by all peasants in Mozambique.

Political action, when it takes place (especially at the local-level), takes much the same form as action-patterns in other spheres of social life, such as those of economics, law, and ritual. The motivation and generating power is in an indvidual, who has apirations to a position of power. The process is a long, and sometimes perpetual one, whereby the individual mobilizes political capital, keeping his relationhips with his various kinsmen in a state of good repair, attending to his obligations and duties towards them. Through the wuyi sponsorship system, he tries to attract followers who will owe their allegiance to him, and he will attempt to maintain a good flow of reciprocity with his neighbours. Friendship and ritual co-parenthood are also important means of establishing lasting bonds with other individuals who are

non-kin.

In short, the enterprising individual attempts to create a network of people on whom he can call for support in a time of crisis. When such an occasion arises, he will call on them in terms of the relationship that binds them together, and it appears that the most successful men are usually those who are able to gather a faction which comprises people linked to him by agnation and sundry alternative structures, for example, affinal and matrilateral kin, friends, neighbours, namesakes, clients and others who are transactionally bound. It is essentially an action set which is constituted for political activity. Indeed, it is the homomorphology of the faction and action sets constituted for other purposes that permits political quarrels to be carried out in the sophisticated and subtle fashion that they are. Much time is spent in discussion of who attended whom's work parties, and why. It is a barometer of changing strengths and wavering allegiances, and a political aspirant can have a test of strength by calling a work party at the same time as his rival, and forcing uncommitted individuals to make a choice. This is less damaging than a straight political confrontation (which could be precipitated by a witchcraft accusation or a court case), and the loser does not lose too much face.

The Chopi conception of manhood values the attainment of the status of wahombe. Every man is expected to try to earn the appelation of 'big man' which, as was described in chapter four, can be achieved in various spheres. This ethic encourages self-expression and individuality, and the flexibility of the social system complements this. When one notes the high mobility of Chopi individuals, where each move necessitates the rebuilding of his social network, the variety of areas in which individuals can achieve status and recognition, and the means by which these are attained, it is not surprising that they obtain positions of leadership on the gold mines. They spend most of their lives in the practice of manipulating other individuals, and con-

sequently, leadership tests devised by the Chamber of Mines are an easy transformation for the Chopi. An individual is, however, subjected to a dialectical conflict: there is the centripetal pull of the group, contrasted with the centrifugal tendencies of individualism. It is a problem faced by every society and, in the Chopi case, has not been successfully resolved, as the high divorce, suicide, homicide and alcoholism rates show. Chopi may yet have an important role to play in the future of Mozambique, not as an ethnic group, for they have not in the past, and are unlikely to now, been able to mobilize on any scale larger then the local-level. I refer to the number of Chopi who fill important positions in the hierarchy of Frelimo. While most of the actual fighting was carried out by recruits from the north (predominantly Makonde), the leadership has come from men of the south (Mondlane, Machel, etc.) who are drawn from the Chopi and their immediate neighbours.

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