

Preliminary Report on Feasting in Futuna

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The goal of this report is to assess cognitive versus ecological explanations of lavish feasting behavior in Polynesian chiefdoms, as represented by these practices on Futuna Island. The study of the importance and role of feasting in traditional societies has become a major theoretical focus of recent archaeological and ethnoarchaeological work (see chapters in Dietler and Hayden 2001). Ethnoarchaeological studies in traditional societies have demonstrated that feasts are central in creating and maintaining the political structures of communities as well as socioeconomic safety networks for individual households (Clarke 1998, 2001). Feasting also plays a major role in the creation of socioeconomic inequalities within communities. Political ecology analyses of feasting in tribal transegalitarian communities has clearly linked feasts to practical advantages concerning power, wealth, security, and reproduction (Clark 1998, 2001; Hayden 2001; Perodie 2001; Dietler and Herbich 2001; Dietler 1990; Junker 2001). However, more cognitively oriented scholars and grant proposal reviewers have questioned the validity or usefulness of an ecologically based analysis for explaining feasting in more complex societies such as Polynesian chiefdoms where it is argued that belief systems play much more dominant roles in structuring politics, economics, and feasting. In order to assess the relative merits of this cognitively based explanation of feasting versus political ecological kinds of explanations, we decided to go to one of the most traditional Polynesian islands to learn what we could about the role of feasting in chiefdoms. Dr. Christophe Sand and Richard Shutler suggested that Futuna would be the best and most traditional island for this type of study, a sentiment repeatedly

reiterated to us in Futuna by administrative officials and ethnographers. Although Futuna became Catholic over 150 years ago, the underlying social, political, and feasting structures seems to have changed little (Kirch 1994). The names of deities and ceremonies may have changed but their roles and functions of rituals and feasts have basically remained the same. Futuna certainly represents the closest sociopolitical approximation to traditional Polynesian ideology and socioeconomic organization that currently seems to exist. With the help of a research grant from SSHRC, we visited Futuna in August 2001 in order to undertake an exploratory assessment and analysis of feasting in Polynesian chiefdoms. This report summarizes our current understanding of the role of traditional feasting on Futuna, imperfect as that may be given our brief stay and the changes that have occurred there since World War II. We were exceptionally fortunate to have benefited from the extensive experience and assistance of the Association Cultural de Futuna, the French Delegation, the Service d'Economie Rural (and particularly Frédéric Dentand), several instructors at the College Sisia, and Pere Lafaele Tevaga.

Theoretical Framework

In order to evaluate the relative merits of cognitive versus political ecological explanations for feasting behavior, a number of expectations can be formulated. First, according to ecological expectations, it is above all costly behavior (in terms of time, energy, and resources) as well as widespread behavior that should be most strongly associated with practical benefits. Thus, we will pay particular attention to the most costly and widespread kinds of feasts in our examination. Second, if cognitive factors are more important for explaining costly feasts, then we should expect to find no practical benefits systematically associated with the most costly feasts. Third, if cognitive factors were responsible for feasting, we might expect major changes in feasting patterns associated with major changes in ideology. On the other hand if ecological factors are most important, we should expect major changes in feasting behavior to be associated first and foremost with economic changes and only associated with changes in ideology as an incidental by-product of the more basic and prior economic changes. We will assess these factors in our conclusions.

Futuna

Futuna is a moderate sized volcanic island about 500 km Northeast of Fiji, with an area of 135 square km. From 1840 to 1890, the population varied between 1100 and 1500, remaining relatively stable around 1500 until the 1920's (Burrows 1936:15). Today the population is about 5,000. However, there is considerable evidence for former more intense use of the land along the coast and of higher populations possibly up to 4,000 (Frimigacci 1990; Roziars 1963:104 -- see also "Royal and Village Feasts" below). The subsistence economy is based principally on breadfruit, bananas, coconuts, fish, irrigated taro, with yams and taro also grown in swidden plots. The end of the dry season (July to October) was the period of potential famine (*oge*)

which features strongly in oral histories and was never an “abstract threat” (Kirch 1994:267). As elsewhere in Polynesia, there is virtually no storage of any foods except yams placed on mats in houses, and surplus breadfruit fermented in pits for several months (no longer practiced -- Kirch 1994:275; Kirch and Green 2001:157). Considerable specialized production by village occurs for food distributions at intervillage feasts where villages with irrigated taro fields are obligated to bring only wet taro, other villages are obligated to bring only swidden taro, other villages specific types of yams (F. Dentand, personal communication). This resembles Sahlins’ classic model of chiefdoms as redistribution systems, but the origin of chiefdoms is now more generally attributed to other factors such as warfare (Frimigacci 1990:170-4) or political strivings (Earle 1997 – See below).

Political and Social Organization

There are two basic socioeconomic units in Futunan communities. The first is the corporate land holding group called the *kaiga*, the second is the family descent group called the *kutuga*.

The Corporate Kaiga

Villages are divided into narrow strips extending from the beach to the base of mountain slopes. Each strip is owned as inalienable land by a corporate descent group termed a *kaiga*. Each corporate *kaiga* has a name by which it is referred to. Typically, there are 17-23 people and two to three structures in a *kaiga*. Each corporate *kaiga* has a name by which it is referred to. Typically, there are two to three structures in the *kaiga*. Some *kaiga* contain up to 80 people with nine structures (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:107). One of the structures is used for feasting occasions as well as the sleeping quarters of some *kaiga* members (especially unmarried, widowed males today who would have resided in the community bachelor’s house -- the *fale uvo*

-- in former times, but also junior family members in general, either unmarried or married). The other house(s) were major residences of the principal families or other related or adopted family members. The more important family items seem to have been kept in these residential structures. This pattern of a designated feasting structure (usually with an open patio area before it for *katoaga* food distributions) may be a recent development reflecting population increases since early photographs and contemporary, more traditional style settlements on nearby Alofi Island appear to have only a single structure per parcel and one general feasting/ceremonial structure per neighborhood. Nevertheless, similar settlement patterns to these present today may have existed in the past under high population density conditions.

Kiaga tend to be patrilocal (Burrows 1936:65,82; Panoff 1963) and members of the *kaiga* generally appear to be closely related, with the eldest capable male of the male line usually assuming the role of the main administrator. Children can claim rights to either a father or mother's natal *kaiga* (Burrows 1936:70,82). In the case of the Felati'ale *kaiga* in Mala'e the main residential structure was used for sleeping by an older widower, his son (a former village chief) and married wife, and one unmarried daughter. The feasting structure was used as a sleeping location by an unmarried son of the former chief (occupying a divided room) and a married daughter, her husband and three young children. Another married daughter lives in another *kaiga*. Today, food is communally prepared in separate cooking structures for preparations involving pots or in the traditional earth ovens (*umu*); however structures on Alofi often have hearths inside structures and at least some people thought that breadfruit was cooked on the coals of open hearths in the past for meals, however all tubers were either boiled or cooked in the earth oven (*umu*). Burrows (1936:134) reported that indoor hearths were common and used for "incidental" cooking of fish or boiling. Food production was probably shared

within the *kaiga* with the use of any surpluses being controlled by the administrative head. Requests for contributions to village feasts or other “taxes” or *fatogia* come from the village chief and go to the *kaiga* head (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:113). Similarly, responsibility for paying fines levied against individuals fall mainly on the *kaiga* of which the guilty party is a member. Benefits of supporting chiefs in this fashion include receiving portions of food and wealth given to chiefs at feasts and formerly military protection (now mainly salaried positions).

Douaire-Marsaudon (1998) provides an extended discussion of the *kaiga*. Kirch and Green (2001:217) conclude that the *kaiga* as just described was a fundamental feature of the first Polynesian societies and that another socioeconomic unit (the *kainanga*) was also a feature of these societies. The *kainanga* was a kinship group composed of a number of *kaiga* (residential production/consumption groups). The *kainanga* held ultimate title to lands of its constituent *kaiga* and ensured that land was not transferred to other kinship groups due to the demographic vicissitudes of small socioeconomic groups. Thus, there are two types of land-kin groups, which complement each other and function together. On Futuna, the *kutuga* corresponds exactly to Kirch and Green’s description of the *kainanga*. As they note, there is an inherent tendency to form ranks in these groups, and presumably between them.

The Kutuga

On Futuna, not everyone residing in a *kaiga* belongs to the descent group (notably those who marry in or who may be adopted) and members of the same descent group (generally about 100 people in all) often reside in a number of different villages. This ambilateral descent group (all the descendants of a given ancestor through both male and female lines) is called the *kutuga* or “family.” Burrows (1936:71-84) largely equates the *kutuga* with the *kaiga* while conceding that the *kutuga* is somewhat broader since it includes all people recognizing common kinship (up to six generations and third cousins), even those kin who do not reside on the *kaiga* land but have potential claims to it. While title to *kaiga* land may reside ultimately with the *kutuga* kindred, it seems advisable to clearly distinguish between the two since it is difficult to imagine entire kindreds as described by Burrows (plus inmarrying partners) residing in one to two small structures. Burrows (1936:71) also indicated that formerly *kutuga* comprised entire villages or even districts, which clearly would have involved far larger memberships than the *kaiga*. Today, it is unclear if there are more than one *kaiga* in many *kutuga*.

The main function of the *Kutuga* appears to be the control of land and political power within and between communities and entails, as a consequence, the organization of family feasts. In more specific terms, all of the important political positions, from paramount chief to minor village administrators are traditionally controlled or “owned” by specific families who decide which family member will fill their family’s post. Totemic gods (deified ancestral spirits?) were also associated with individual *kutuga* and more or less inherited (Burrows 1936:88). It is undoubtedly these *kutuga* gods that were thought to possess chiefs and speak through them. Each *kutuga* had a shrine for its protective god and hereditary priest-medium-healers “*toe matua*” (Rozier 1963:113,115,118). We will refer to the families that owned important political

positions as the “noble families” in Futuna. The elders in the *kutuga* have the most power in these matters with the eldest male (of the highest ranking lineage) in the family acting as chief administrator (*pule ole kutuga*) and wielding the most power. Formerly, he seems to have acted as the family priest (*toe matua*) as well (Smith 1892:38; Panoff 1963:150-1 -- Kirch and Green 2001:226 argue that this was the case in ancestral Polynesia). If the elders of the family decide that their figurehead is not performing adequately, they remove him and put another member in his place--a relatively common event even for paramount chiefs (“kings”) who rarely last more than four to five years. If there is no suitable candidate within the *kutuga*, (including members from other villages or even overseas), the elders can decide to invite someone from outside the family even if the person does not belong to a noble family, in which case, his descendants can claim “noble” status and there will be two or more families with potential claims to a specific title (also Burrows 1936:89). In the past, titles and land could also be transferred from one family to another by killing a titleholder (Frimigacci 1991:170, 173). As in other transegalitarian societies (Hayden 2001a,b) and perhaps most two-tier chiefdoms, the number of people with potential claims to noble positions (i.e., belonging to noble families) is surprisingly large, even outnumbering those people with no possibility for such claims. The percentages that we were given were that villages consisted of 20% non-nobles and 80% nobles in all villages.

People with no possibility of claiming noble positions also form *kutuga*'s, however they hold very minimal feasts, or none at all, even though they supposedly can own as much land and resources as noble families. This indicates that feasting may be quite intimately linked to political power and only indirectly to economic power. It is clear that the *kutuga* head and elders are the ones who determine the nature and magnitude of the major feasts involving members of the *kutuga*, including birth, baptism, first communion, and marriage feasts. These men also

appear to ensure that adequate contributions are forthcoming from members in various *kaiga* of the *kutuga* to meet their requirements. Elders also assume some responsibility for fines levied against family members if the *kaiga* of the guilty party cannot pay. The lavishness of family feasts may be used to promote desirable marriage alliances between families (and perhaps in internal struggles with the family branches) or between several families with claims to a single title for determining successors to administrative positions. While competition is not supposed to exist within families (M.T.), *kutuga* are constantly splitting and segmenting (Frimigacci 1991:174), indicating that strong competitive forces probably do exist within *kutuga*'s. We were told explicitly that competition between families only takes place between families of the same rank, never with a family of a lower or higher rank (M.T.).

While it is often denied that families put on ostentatious feasts to advance political or economic interests (they are said to be held only for "face" or "custom") it is readily acknowledged that *kutuga* compete fiercely and become social enemies, again ostensibly without any political or economic motives. Similarly, Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:137-8) observes that there is strong competition and rivalry between *kaiga* to demonstrate which is stronger and has the most mana by amassing and distributing food and wealth at feasts. Some such rivalries lead to excessive expenses that can ruin families, especially for marriage (and formerly funeral?) feasts. From an ecological perspective, it is difficult to understand how this could develop without one of the families having felt politically or economically threatened by rival families. Such rivalries may have considerable time depth. In one specific case described to us, one family had been elevated suddenly to the rank of a royal lineage due to valiant war deeds (the killing of an enemy king). The existing royal *kutuga*'s must have felt threatened and redoubled their efforts to demonstrate their superiority in every domain, including feasting. While this

occurred a century and a half ago, the rivalry between those *kutuga*'s continues today. In fact, the relative elaborateness of the oldest child's first communion feast is still continually used as a point of reference for the respective merits of each of the rival families. Feasts may therefore play an important role in jockeying for position within, or even perhaps in acceding to a higher rank or being moved down to a lower rank.

All this leads us to surmise that those who aspire to hold the high titles controlled by their family probably contribute most to feasts for all family members, while those who systematically under-contribute or make no contributions at all are probably left out of family genealogies and eventually disowned, as in Torajan noble families (Hayden 2000). Changes in the relative ranks of individuals and families probably occur in the same fashion, depending on feasting contributions and performances.

Village Chiefs

Village political life is dominated by chiefs and officials from noble families, elders of noble families, and former chiefs or officials. In their appearance, they did not differ from normal villagers except at feasts and in war (Rozier 1963:100). However, their houses were larger than normal (17 m. high) with elaborate bindings, and posts 1.5 m. in diameter (Rozier 1963:93). Each village chief usually has one to two minor assistant chiefs including a commoner work crew chief. The role or influence of elders from non-noble families is not clear and needs further investigation; however, it would be surprising if they exerted much influence outside their families. While theoretically, all married men with offspring can express their opinions in public assemblies (either *Fono* or *Tauasu*), the reality that we observed is that noble elders and office holders dominate discussions and heavily influence decisions. This is also reflected in their relative seating positions in meeting houses or at feasts as well as the order in which they receive kava during these meetings. In general, it appears that the chief does the bidding of his family elders. He may appear to exercise absolute authority when announcing decisions made by the most powerful village elders, but he speaks with the full weight of support of the elders, and if he does not, then he can be fined or deposed by them if he fails to act properly (see also Burrows 1936:99-100). Others argue for a stronger hereditary basis for village chiefs and their ability to be possessed by their ancestral god (Rozier 1963:100-101). This type of elder-based political organization is not significantly different from that found among Thai hill tribes and it is possible that it was a social characteristic of ancestral Austronesian societies.

Kirch and Green (2001:226) describe ancestral Polynesian chiefs as hereditary, priestly *kainanga* heads who held land and title for the group, and who had rights to a portion of the first

harvests and the best portions at feasts. Curiously, they do not mention chiefly roles in warfare, in organizing feasts, or in long distance exchanges -- all of which have been suggested as critical factors in the creation of chiefdoms. On the basis of information that we and others have obtained, contemporary chiefs have several functions including:

- 1) allocation of communal lands in the mountains and plateau;
- 2) adjudicating disputes (often over land) which cannot be resolved within *kaiga's* or *kutuga's*, meting out justice, and levying fines for transgressions;
- 3) organizing village feasts, and redistributing a part of what is received;
- 4) representing village interests at *fono lasi* councils of the paramount chief (and to the Territorial Conseil);
- 5) formerly conducting propitiations to deities and serving as priests;
- 6) formerly organizing military forces;
- 7) defending chiefly and/or village interests;
- 8) establishing elaborate complexes of taboos;
- 9) organizing public works.

While chiefdoms were originally established through the conquests of great warriors enabling them to distribute conquered lands among their supporters (Frimigacci 1991:170-4), the advantages to individuals of filling political positions already established in chiefly polities is not entirely clear. Burrows (1936:89) even suggested that "chieftainship leads to poverty." Yet, chiefs wielded great power, and chiefs were not poor. Statements concerning the destitute conditions of chiefs may simply reflect a public image ploy by chiefs to extract more contributions and support from others to finance chiefly "responsibilities." There were undoubtedly political advantages in assuming the role of chief. Certainly, village chiefs could

have defended the economic and political interests of their own family in community decision-making. Certainly, chiefs could defend family members against accusations of trespass and wrongdoing; and certainly chiefs could broker more favorable marital alliances. But is this enough to explain or compensate for the heavy investment of time, effort, and resources required of chiefs and higher administrators? It is said that chiefly *kaiga*'s did *not necessarily* hold title to the most productive fields, or the largest fields although close supporters of chiefs and their families probably had large herds of pigs and were supposed to give the largest pigs at village feasts. On the other hand the paramount chief, district chiefs, and village chiefs are given the entirety of all food assembled for distribution at feasts. The chiefs are then supposed to distribute this food to everyone in their jurisdiction (whether royal family or village *kaiga*'s). As indicated by Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:100), these administrative officials undoubtedly ensure that their own needs and wants are adequately met before redistributing the remainder of the food and may justify their larger portions on the basis of needing more to adequately fulfill their feasting, hosting, and administrative functions (see below: Traditional First Fruits Feasts). These same officials, as well as the priest, also receive substantial portions from family feasts in their jurisdiction.

In the past, the material advantages for holding high offices were considerably greater, but so were the risks. Traditionally, when chiefs needed help in their fields, a member of each *kaiga* would assist the chief. We were told that this usually amounted to three days per month, but in some seasons might only be one day every two months. Even today, in Wallis, villagers' work duty (*fatogia*) includes the giving of ceremonial gifts to chiefs. Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:99) reports that in 1998, each family head had to give 20 pigs -- perhaps an extreme example. The paramount chief, the chief, and the priest all received a portion of every *kaiga*'s

first harvest and every fish catch (see below). While some ethnographers pretend that a chief's duty to give could render him destitute, it is clear that the chiefs promote others' duty to feed and support their chiefs (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:123), and capable administrators must have profited handsomely. Each level of the hierarchy had the duty to support the next higher level. While it is generally and repeatedly claimed that noble families do not have more land or better land than non-noble families, examination of the distribution of irrigated taro gardens in Nuku (the only village for which data is available, but representing the largest irrigation system on the island -- in fact, one quarter of all irrigated land on Futuna) clearly shows that the paramount chief's family and that of his "First Minister" own 70% of the irrigated taro gardens. The other parcels are owned by other noble families (Frimigacci 1991:131, 155). In addition, only chiefs were polygamous (Viala 1919:254; Burrows 1936:67) which must have increased the labor pool on which they could draw as well as their political support (from affinal families). On Wallis, Viala (1919:244) observed that formerly the number of pigs owned was determined by the rank of the chief and that today chiefs still try to give the biggest and best pigs at feasts. This is, and probably also was, true in Futuna. These amount to significant benefits for political title-holders. In the past, nobles probably also controlled large-scale inter-island voyaging and exchanges, as well as the construction of long distance and war canoes (undoubtedly underwritten largely by corvee labor as well to supply noble mastercraftsmen who made the canoes -- Burrows 1936:87). In the 19th century, Futunan chiefs succeeded in banning all unauthorized inter-island sailing (Viala 1919:237).

On the other hand, as in other tribal and chiefdom societies the people who benefited the most from these systems (and who created them) were also those who competed most intensely for their control even to the point of killing adversaries by stealth or warfare. Thus, they ran

high risks. Within “kingdoms” the relative ranks of chiefs were essentially synonymous with political power at the higher levels, and competition was intense both between district chiefs and village chiefs for the highest ranks (G.F.I-36). There were often “revolutions” for minor pretexts (Viala 1919:231). Fighting could erupt between rival chiefs vying for political positions. These wars often only involved the noble families, and are reputed to have been especially frequent around the time of accession of new paramount chiefs (M.A. II-6). But war in general was frequent (including two major wars in 1838), and among the most coveted spoils of war (or reasons for war) were the control over irrigated taro gardens and the forest wood resources of Alofi and some northwestern valleys (Rozier 1963:101-3).

Today, the most extreme risks have largely been eliminated and cash economy has undermined many of the material benefits of traditional chiefs, but some benefits have been retained in the form of salaries for political leaders provided by the French government. In the face of competition for new cash resources, there are continuing requests for new chiefs. Although paramount chiefs are more difficult to unseat, there were nevertheless six changes between 1939 and 1958 (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:101)

Paramount Chiefs

Traditionally, it is unclear if there were two tiers of political control above the village chief (“ministers” and the paramount chief locally referred to as a “king”) or if the paramount chief ruled directly over village chiefs as claimed by Viala (1919:232) with the second order chiefly “ministers” being a more recent introduction. Burrows (1936:95) refers to subchiefs having authority over “Tua” district villages but does not elaborate. The early missionary accounts analyzed by Kirch (1994) and Rozier (1963) do not seem to make any mention of ministers or district chiefs. As with village chiefs, titles for all these officials are/were held by specific families who chose members to fill the roles and could depose them as well. Privileges, benefits, and risks for the highest political positions were similar to those of village chiefs but existed on a larger scale due to the larger population base. Clear reference occurs to “titles” for the paramount chief at the first yam harvest (Kirch 1994:271).

There were two paramount chiefdoms on Futuna at contact (Alo and Sigave) and these polities still exist today. However, today, second order chiefs (ministers) are responsible for specific administrative areas such as education, health, roads, or culture; and their relative ranks are fixed and rigorously respected (Table 1). It is unclear to what extent such specialized ministers may have existed in the past (or may be imitations of the French bureaucracy), while relative ranks appear to have been matters of continuous contention (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:293).

The number of villages in each chiefdom seems to have been relatively small with only seven to ten villages within each paramount chiefdom. Viala (1919:232) reports only 12 villages for the entire island. Villages today vary in population from 130 to 500 (Milleron 1992:9), and at the time of first European contact may have only been a third as large so that the number of

people under the control of paramount chiefs was probably at maximum never more than two to three thousand, and usually considerably less.

Historically, paramount chiefs probably did their best to restrict conflict between lower ranking chiefs within the paramount chiefdom and to forge alliances between chiefs in the confederation for warfare. However, the most common activity seems to have involved the organization of rituals and feasts for lower ranking chiefs throughout their domain, and often for the entire island. Early missionaries reported an island-wide feast at Poi in December 1837, that involved both paramount chiefs and many people. In January, the paramount chief of Alo feasted “with a great multitude of men.” In February, he and the other paramount chief (of Sigave) attended a small feast given by two villages (perhaps organized by a district chief). In September, there was a “royal” feast to which the “entire island” (or representatives from the most important households of the island) was invited and in particular the chief of Sigave. In October, there was another large island-wide feast at Poi to celebrate the yam harvest with people from Sigave attending. In November there was a feast at Vele to which elders from Sigave brought much food (as with other major feasts). The main chiefs congregated again in November to eat the first breadfruit (location unspecified). There were also a series of village feasts from January to April at which the Paramount chief undoubtedly attended (just as he does today) together with other chiefs in the paramount alliance, at which time all chiefs received considerable quantities of feasting foods and surpluses (the detailed accounts are given by Kirch 1994). It seems highly likely that these chiefly gatherings were primarily for the purpose of politicking, creating or consolidating alliances, and protecting or advancing family (*kutuga*) interests. We will return to this topic in the next section on feasts. In the past, it seems probable that chiefs hosted each other in feasts in order to consolidate alliances in preparation for war and

to celebrate victories (Kirch 1994:273-4). The general impression is that the paramount chiefdom was an unstable confederation of villages with each village chief retaining a great deal of autonomy and able to switch allegiance according to political conditions. Feasting and warfare appear to be what held paramount chiefdoms together.

Since the 1840's, dramatic changes have taken place at the highest political levels. While paramount chiefs and second order chiefs (district chiefs or ministers) still exist, their powers and advantages have been seriously eroded (Panoff 1963:152-4). The French government put an end to warfare, assumed responsibility for long distance relations and exchange, set up an alternative power structure (the Territorial Council with many benefits including generous salaries for the seven elected counselors from Futuna), and promoted a cash economy that has eliminated *corvée* community labor, and is rapidly dismantling traditional subsistence production and the sociopolitical relationships predicated on it. In the most "modernized" chiefdom of Futuna (Sigave), it was even recently difficult to find an individual willing to assume the position of paramount chief despite its generous salary. Power is clearly shifting to the Territorial Councilors who control the most important resources (cash) for contemporary Futuna decisions concerning authorization and spending for Territorial projects for which France ultimately provides funding. In fact, salaried positions and contract work is entirely under the control of the noble families who monopolize the seven Territorial Councilor positions and designate specific individuals that are to be hired and insist that these wishes be followed. This situation generally obtains in regard to all salaried positions on the island.

Noble families, and alliances thereof, also seem to control the election of Territorial Councilors in a fashion strongly resembling the past selection of chiefs, i.e., the elder "sages" of noble families decide among themselves who should fill Councilor's positions and then advise

the constituency of their decisions at village councils (*fono*'s) or neighborhood councils (*tauasu*'s). Elections appear to be acclamations rather than true political contests between individuals. In this respect, candidates often show off their support base through lavish public donations of money, and undoubtedly in feasts, and through competitive gifts to other chiefs, the paramount chief, and the local priest -- all of whom can affect his political ambitions. This may explain the relatively recent increase in lavishness of feasts which resembles the situation in the Torajan area of Indonesia (Hayden 2000).

Decision Making Contexts

At the highest levels, Territorial Councilors within each chiefdom get together at regular intervals with the paramount chief (and perhaps other influential people?) in a special building (in Ono, at least) to discuss issues and formulate positions. We were unable to determine whether any special feasting accompanied such meetings. The same is true of all the villages and second level chiefs who seem to meet at frequent intervals (at least once per week) usually at the paramount chief's residence. Similar meetings must have also characterized earlier chiefdoms and probably were accompanied by feasts given the long distances by foot involved and the probable lower frequency of such meetings.

At the village level, decisions were largely based on opinions expressed by elder sages from the higher ranking families (especially ex-office holders) at village councils, (*fono*'s and *tauasus*'s) which have been described elsewhere (Burrows 1936:95,100; Rozier 1963:101; Panoff 1970; Douaire-Massondon 1998). The essential elements that concern us here are the rigid ranking that prevails in the seating position of the officials and elder sages, and the order in which they are served *kava*. This order indicates the relative influence or political power of each of the noble attendees, but factors such as age, the size of the family, personal qualities, and presumably their material success (see discussion of feasts) could be important criteria as well. From our observations, the length of the time individuals speak, as well as their order of speaking appears to indicate the "weight" their opinion carries. Elders from non-noble families sit to the sides generally in order of age (Fig ?). The overall structure strongly resembles the power relationships and hierarchy of Thai Hill Tribes (Hayden and Maneeprasert 1995). In neither case, however, is it evident whether these councils constitute real forums for decision making or whether they are more apt to be forums to announce decisions that have already been

arrived at by key elders of the most powerful families in more private consultations and feasts. It was certainly stated that chiefs sometimes announced decisions at these councils (also Burrows 1936:100). These decisions must have had the concordance of the most powerful elders. The proper candidate to vote for in Territorial elections is only one instance of this. Formerly, it is said that chiefs ruled more due to the fear they instilled rather than from any innate feeling of obedience (Froment, n.d.) and this may have been a prominent aspect of the power politics used by chiefs to keep lower ranking title holders or commoners in line.

Conflicts and Resolutions

Aside from the inherent conflicts over positions of power, there were a number of other sources of conflict requiring adjudication between individuals. These most frequently involve conflicts over rights to use land (especially claims to *kaiga* land by family members who had not resided at the *kaiga* for some time) and use of communal swidden lands under the jurisdiction of village chiefs. However, marital discord sexual misconduct, crop damage from pigs to crops of other families, inheritances, fighting, theft, and other issues were probably all sources of conflict between *kutuga* or *kaiga*. According to Burrows (1936:97,141), the most tenacious of these lawsuits were over rights to irrigated taro patches. When these could not be resolved between the respective family or corporate administrative heads, they were taken to chiefs or village councils (*fono*) and might be appealed to the paramount chief. Even today, most conflicts and wrongdoings are handled in this fashion, although crimes listed in the French Constitution are subject to prosecution in French courts. It is said that in former times, opposition to the decisions of the paramount chief was rare and dealt with severely, often by death. This seems confirmed by several anecdotal accounts by Schouten and LeMaire (O'Reilly 1962:60,62,88). There appears to have been a traditional police force (*leo*) controlled by the elite (Panoff 1963:154). Today, punishments are much more benign according to all informants, amounting to no more than performing a month or two of work for the chief or the community, giving a large pig to the chief and elders as a "punishment feast," or giving bark cloth levied for the most serious crimes (incest and theft). Panoff (1963:154) also reports that the fines imposed by chiefs are viewed as their exclusive profit (in part justified to cover their chiefly hosting expenses), and that "spices" are often given to chiefs sitting as judges. Formerly, when pigs were not penned, owners were fined for damages they caused (Burrows 1936:100). While this is the official

interpretation, covert admissions by reliable individuals indicate that chiefs still sometimes have individuals whipped for transgressions. If individuals or their *kaiga* refuse to pay fines levied they are threatened with the prospect of the entire village descending on their *kaiga* to consume all of the available pigs and food until the *kiaga* is essentially destitute (*saufono* as described by Burrows 1936:98 and Rozier 1963:99). If offenders did not comply with these demands, they were beaten and their fields were trashed. It is not clear if this has actually occurred within living memory.

In addition to conflicts, there were and perhaps still are a long series of laws and taboos imposed at various times and often at the whim of chiefs (Smith 1892:40; Viala 1919:229). Apparently, for instance, attendance at mass was formerly mandatory (G. F:35 and was still a reason for being fined in Burrows' (1936) time). The function of the numerous and capricious regulations may be similar to that proposed for similar rules in Hill Tribe societies (Hayden and Maneerprasert 1995), i.e., to provide an additional means for aspiring elites to intimidate and control non-elites via unavoidable transgressions of rules together with differential (negotiable) punishments for transgressions depending on the political power of the families of offending parties. Fines provided those in power with free labor or food or wealth (Panoff:1963:154), as well as forcing individuals to produce and surrender surpluses or borrow them and thus indebted themselves to more affluent families. Burrows (1936:98) makes the interesting observation that acquittals are rare in complaints against others perhaps indicating that the poor rarely bring charges against the powerful. The rationale for these punishments is probably also the same as in transegalitarian societies, i.e., that transgressions of taboos or local laws endangers the spiritual purity of the most sacred members of the community or angered the deities that were thought to

inhabit the bodies of chiefs thereby threatening the spiritual and material well-being of the entire community, but especially endangering the spiritual and physical life of the chiefs.

FUTUNAN FEASTS

Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:116,139) clearly states that giving food and wealth is performed in the context of creating, maintaining, or destroying social relations. Food and wealth are exchanged principally within or between *kaiga*, or sometimes between villages (in this context, considered as a large *kaiga*). Feasts are described as a visual representation of a social group, and as a demonstration that the social group is based on rules and on agents necessary for order. That order and those agents are displayed for all to see in feasts (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:117-119,122-3). Feasts also display to everyone the social position and power of individuals. They are thus main arenas for the playing out of rivalries between both social groups and individuals. Food gifts establish, maintain, and restore the social order when it is disrupted by changes in status (births, maturity, marriage, death, disputes, political or military contests). Higher ranking individuals or groups must give more than lower ranking ones -- but higher ranking ones also receive more in terms of other economic arrangements.

Traditionally, although sometimes characterized as almost continuous (Rozier 1963:110) Futunan feasts were strongly linked to the most productive agricultural parts of the year, with few if any feasts occurring at the end of the dry season (late July to September) when food was scarcer (Kirch 1994:277; Kirch and Green 2001:265). This clearly supports previous arguments that feasting is predicated on surplus production and as such is likely to be motivated by ecological concerns rather than an ideological concerns. Feasting foods center predominantly on pigs, chickens, and specially prepared mashed taro, yam, and/or arrowroot pastes cooked with coconut milk and seasonings, sometimes served with coconut oil (*fai kai*). Large (1-2 meter) boat-shaped wooden bowls (*koumetes*) are used exclusively for preparing feasting *fai kai* dishes

and the most elaborate dishes require two days of preparation (Burrows 1936:137; Piazzi et al. 1991). Only pigs, dogs, and chickens were eaten for feasts before the introduction of imported commercial foods (Viala 1919:244). They, together with pigeons, coconut, crabs, certain grubs, arrowroot, and coconut milk dishes constituted the main delicacies (Burrows 1936:133,137). Daily food consisted mainly of fish (Rozier 1963:90). Little clothing was generally worn except on feasting occasions when it was used lavishly (Rozier 1963:94).

Before discussing the nature of Futunan feasts and their functions, it is worth emphasizing a feature that was described to us by a member of a royal family (M.T.:39-40) who stated that before one can enter into political positions, one must demonstrate that he is materially successful. Being materially successful demonstrates that a person has great *mana* (*fi'a lasi, fi'aaliki*) and therefore authority. In this respect, Futunan society and Polynesian society in general, is decidedly materialistic. While today one's *mana* and success may be displayed in terms of cars, houses, money given away publicly at kermesses, and trips overseas, in the past *mana* and success was largely demonstrated by the size and duration of the feast that a *kutuga* or chief was able to organize (see for example Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:137-8). If there was/is any dispute between individuals, families, or villages, those that cannot produce as much as their adversary are told to be quiet because they are only "hot air" and cannot really do or produce anything. We will first discuss feasts described from more traditional times and then discuss modern feasting.

Traditional Chiefly Feasts

From early accounts, it is possible to obtain some idea of the general nature and size of the more important Futunan feasts.

Village and Royal Feasts: Village feasts were arranged by the chief and his council (*fono*) attended by the paramount chief and invited chiefs from other villages (Kirch 1994; Smith 1892:46; Rozier 1963:101) as part of a cycle of reciprocal feasting and food-gift giving. In terms of: 1) the ostentatious display (up to 500 pigs -- Viala 1919:244) and *katoaga* giving away of food (to the other chiefs), 2) the reciprocity involved, 3) the competitive drive to hold large impressive feasts in front of chiefs' houses or in village plazas (Rozier 1963:91), these feasts clearly appear to be alliance feasts between villages or their political leaders. A very long time-depth for these types of feasts may be indicated by a Proto Polynesian gloss (**quinati*) for a share of meat at a feast -- presumably a chief's share (Kirch and Green 2001:259) Because alliances between villages seemed to be constantly changing with wars sporadically breaking out between varying realigning factions, the specific chiefs invited to village feasts must have been constantly changing, with failures to reciprocate indicating potential or impending hostilities. Even during our fieldwork, relations between the two "kings" had become hostile due to the failure of one to attend a feast held by the other. Such village feasts were almost certainly used not only to negotiate alliances, but also to assess each village's economic resources, manpower, and degree of political (or military) strength. In the 1830's the alliances appear to have been much more fluid than today which may account for the island-wide nature of some feasts where chiefs or elders and even the paramount chief of Sigave attended the most important feasts in Alo (Kirch 1994:267-271) undoubtedly to assess prospects for changes in their respective alliance networks.

In one major feast observed by Père Chanel at Poi in 1839, young men from Sigave brought food accompanied by three village chiefs. They ate and danced until sundown, and then danced until 1AM again when people from three valleys arrived. At 4 AM more men arrived singing. After a breakfast, representatives from each valley danced in turn (undoubtedly as a competitive display of force) after which the feast ended (Roziar 1963:110,112). This competitive dancing seems to have been an important element in all village (and perhaps *kutuga*) feasts. All this occurred less than a year before the outbreak of major warfare between the paramount chiefdoms. Reciprocal invitations to similar feasts, reciprocal royal salutations, as well as disputes were recorded by the first Europeans to visit Futuna (O'Reilly 1963:65-67). Modern village feasts seem to continue this tradition for other proximate motives (see below) with the difference that formerly, invited chiefs and their village sages seem to have brought some foods or kava (Kirch 1994:271; O'Reilly 1963:66-67) undoubtedly as signs of support (as in the Torajan and Vietnamese cases studied) while today the food eaten and given away is exclusively supplied by the host village. The paramount chief's hosting of large feasts seems to have been similar in nature, but undoubtedly with the goal of consolidating the alliance of villages that formed the chiefdom as a whole. The basic structure of the intervillage feasts (as described for contemporary feasts) has not changed since first European contact almost 400 years ago (O'Reilly 1963:66-67). At the earliest recorded feast of this type, the paramount chief of Alofi with 300 men carrying kava plants arrived at a feast hosted by the paramount chief of Sigave. Nine hundred men attended, plus another "troop" of people from Alofi bringing kava. It appears that only 16 large pigs were prepared for this feast, two of which were given to the Dutch (ibid). If these figures are accurate, the population of Futuna at that time must have been close to 3-4,000. It is not clear whether the paramount chief provided food for these "royal"

feasts (and if so, how much) or only relied on guests or other chiefs to contribute the necessary food. Smith (1892:46) reports that these feasts were to honor the gods, but the gods were thought to reside in the chiefs who were paramount or heads of villages. Assessment of food and work contributions from community members was undoubtedly carried out as described below for contemporary village feasts (see also Burrows 1936:100).

First Harvest Feasts: This type of feast is recorded in the early records for Futuna and also seems to typify many other Polynesian cultures probably originating from Proto Polynesian times (Kirch and Green 2001:161,259) especially for the first yam harvests (Kirch 1994:271,283; Smith 1892:47). These feasts are generally described as “tribute” or “tithes” feasts, and were the greatest feasts of the year. In the earliest accounts, the paramount chief at Poi together with *kutuga* priests (*toe matua*) prepared for 15 days in October for the feast. They built a temporary small god house and held an extraordinary royal kava with abundant food. The night before the main feast, there was another kava ceremony with a *katoaga* distribution. This was repeated for the main feast, accompanied by boxing matches (Rozier 1963:117). In preparation for this feast the paramount chief placed a taboo on the eating of new yams, breadfruit, and pigs for the three months prior to the feast in order to ensure that there would be an abundant supply of these (and other?) items for the feast (Rozier 1963:117). Similar practices were probably used for all large feasts and are followed today (see discussion of *fakatele* below). Few details are available for Futuna regarding the nature of any feasting or return gifts, or what was done with the surplus thus amassed. It may be significant that these feasts centered on yams and that yams are the only crop (besides arrowroot and breadfruit – Burrows 1936:138) that can be stored for any length of time (up to several months --F.D.). However, we are fortunate to have an early 19th century account of food distribution for a Tongan major feast (probably a first

fruits feast). In this case, 420 large pigs and 3,500 yams were divided as follows: 20 pigs and 500 yams were set aside as offerings at the tombs of past Tu'i Tonga chiefs (therefore probably appropriated by the reigning Tu'i Tonga). One hundred large pigs and 500 yams each were given to the following groups: the reigning Tu'i Tonga paramount chief; the secular "king" (*hau*); the gods (priests); and the ranking chiefs. Except for the part given to the Tu'i Tonga, these portions were immediately subdivided and redistributed to subchiefs, warriors, and key supporters who in turn subdivided their portions down the hierarchy until every household had at least some (Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:117). However, it seems clear that the paramount chief (and undoubtedly other chiefs), kept a very large share for their own use. To obtain some magnitude of the resources involved, three somewhat small feasts on Wallis in 1988-9 involved 14 tons of pork alone according to Douaire-Marsaudon. Tribute feasts may be one of the more distinctive and widespread types of feasts in chiefdoms.

Propitiation and Calamity Feasts: Early accounts also clearly describe feasts to ask for rain, apparently led by the paramount or other chief about two months after the first fruits feasts (Smith 1892:46; Kirch 1994: 272, 275; Rozier 1963:117). Since these generally occur under conditions of duress when supplies are low, one may surmise that they are promoted primarily as a pretext to indebt less powerful families (see Hayden and Gargett 1990; Hayden and Maneeprasert 1995).

Council Feasts: While village and chiefdom council meetings are held in the evenings today, they appear to have been held in the early mornings in former times (Kirch 1994:268) continuing up until the 1930's (Burrows 1936:101). These are included with feasts because they all involve the ritual consumption in abundance of *kava* and Kirch and Green (2001:256) indicate that the *fono* was originally food served with *kava* at assemblies. Just as today large

numbers of men attend these meetings on a frequent basis, so large numbers appear to have frequently attended them in the past, for early missionaries complained that these kava ceremonies interfered with attendance at church masses (Kirch 1994:268).

War and Victory Feasts: These are typical occasions for feasts in transegalitarian and chiefdom societies, so it is not surprising to find indications of them in the earliest records (Kirch1994: 273-4). War preparation feasts are obviously to consolidate alliances and/or induce support of allies through payments. Victory feasts can be viewed in the same light. We can probably assume that peace-making feasts also existed.

Inauguration Feasts: These are briefly mentioned by Rozier (1963:100) who only comments that it was open to all and that the local population assumed the costs. Such feasts are common in most traditional societies, although in transegalitarian societies costs are usually assumed by the office-holder's supporters as is the case today (see below), while complex chiefdoms and archaic states use installation feasts to extract surpluses from local communities (Kobishchanow 1987).

Miscellaneous Feasts: are described for the paramount chief consisting of "small feasts" at specific villages (perhaps for negotiating alliances or undertakings or to obtain tribute to maintain the administration of the chiefdom).

Traditional Family Feasts

There is little information about feasts at the family level in earlier times, and there appear to be no other levels of social organization at which feasts were important. We have no information on naming feasts, although these probably existed. The most important family events appear to have been birth, circumcision of boys at the age of puberty, followed by tattooing, marriage, and funeral feasts.

Birth Feasts: According to Bataillon (1838, cited in Froment et al., nd.), parents brought 3-400 baskets of food each containing six yams and a fish to the village common house (*fale fonono*) to give their newborn a name. They also provided roast pigs, tapas, mats, and necklaces presumably as gifts. It is difficult to imagine every family undertaking such lavish expenses for their children, and we strongly suspect that these large-scale feasts were probably only held by the most well-to do noble families and probably only for the first born of a family. These are clearly ostentatious promotional displays meant to enhance the desirability of marrying with or otherwise allying with the family putting on the display. The benefit was clearly not for the child who was too young to even be aware of the feast, in addition to which the child was often, or could be, adopted into another family after the feast, probably to strengthen bonds of alliance between noble families much as in other chiefdoms like the Celts.

These lavish birth feasts continued into the 1930's when Burrows (1936:58) observed that both the father's and mother's *kutuga* assembled for the feast and prepared food in turn, and that guests brought food (pigs, cooked roots) or mats or bark cloth, but were in turn given gifts. The gifts were placed before the kindred elders in the *fale* where they were drinking *kava* while women packed the adjoining house full. The birth feast that Burrows witnessed was attended by the paramount chief and several ministers, the village chief, and chiefs from neighboring

villages. Since the birth was illegitimate from an unknown father, the ostentation was clearly in honor of the *kutuga* rather than the mother. Junior members of the lineage handled all preparations, while the village chief directed the *katoaga* distribution of food and the baby's grandmother distributed the mats and bark cloth.

Circumcision Feasts: Circumcision was necessary for a boy to marry. The earliest accounts refer to almost two weeks of circumcision ceremonies or feasts given in various localities, culminating with a large major feast involving a *katoaga* food distribution (Kirch 1994: 272; Viala 1919: 252; Smith 1892: 36-37; Rozier 1963:105). Details of the organization are vague, but the focus on young children (12-14 years old), the coordinated large celebration for all initiates on one specific day, and the obvious large scale and importance of the feast with a *katoaga* are key features to be explored below (see modern first communion feasts).

Tattooing Feasts: apparently were given (Smith 1892:86; Rozier 1963:105), and since tattooing was an expression of status for males (Viala 1919:250), these feasts may have been to enhance the value of noble offspring (child growth or investment feasts) and/or may have been associated with the assumption of family or political roles.

Marriage Feasts: Marriage was an informal and unstable relationship for non-noble individuals, however, for nobles, it was an important event in which virginity was valued and status was displayed involving a great deal of pork and clothes (Viala 1919:254; Rozier 1963:106). Polygyny was rare except for elites. Because of the substantial costs, formal marriage was relatively rare (Smith 1892:38) as lavish birth, circumcision (first communion) and funeral feasts must have been, i.e., confined to the wealthiest families. In order to increase the magnitude and status of the event, weddings were all held on the same day of the year and the feasting lasted eight to ten days. Smith (1892:38) reports that the bride and groom's families

united for the marriage feast for which the groom's family provided a great number of pigs so that the feasting could continue for several days while the woman had to provide fine mats (*kiesina*) for the feast. Due to the expenses involved, few families (presumably the richer noble families) seem to have sponsored official marriages. In the 1930's, Burrows (1936:65) observed that the wedding feast consisted of gift exchanges principally between families of the bride and groom very similar to the birth feasts (see also Rozier 1963:106). Both the kin of the groom and bride prepare food which is eaten at the house of the groom's father with kin and neighbors who bring gifts of food, mats, and bark cloth and are given gifts in return. Near kin give highly valued prestige objects (whale ivory ornaments, Ovulus shells, silver rings). The bride is dressed in the best prestige fashion that her kindred can provide—clearly a promotional and solidarity display probably meant to impress the groom's kindred as well as others attending the feast.

Curing Feasts: Although these apparently are no longer practiced, Smith (1892:45) relates that offerings were made to the gods ("priests") in cases of sickness. Such feasts may have been used to display family success as in Vietnamese hill tribes, or to create family solidarity as in Thai Hill Tribes, however no further information is available.

Funeral Feasts: In former times, funerals are reported to have been quite substantial, lasting seven to ten days (depending on one's rank) during which time family members provided food to "the entire island" (or at least the elders from one side of it), assisted by neighbors (Smith 1892:39; Burrows 1936:68-71; Rozier 1963:109; Froment et al., nd.). The main part of the feast lasted only four days, during which four meals a day were prepared. Guests consisted primarily of elders from the various valley polities of the island. The last guests left after about ten days (Rozier 1963:109). There were also fighting sports (somewhat reminiscent of Egyptian and Minoan bull sports) and even a mock war at the death of a paramount chief. As in tribal

Southeast Asia and the Torajan area of Sulawesi, these funeral feasts were probably promotional events that also enhanced family (*kutuga*) solidarity, for families were often impoverished by funeral feasts (Rozier 1963:109).

Friendship Feasts: Rozier (1963:90) briefly mentions that dogs were only consumed at dinners between friends.

CONTEMPORARY FEASTS:

Village Level

There is much continuity between past traditional feasts and contemporary Futunan feasts despite significant socioeconomic and political changes in the past 150 years. As others have noted (Fitzhugh 1985; Hayden and Maneeprasert 1995) ideologies often persist long after the socioeconomic basis for their creation has changed. Elites, in particular, hold tenaciously onto their traditional genealogical titles and rights as well as the traditional means of operating the sociopolitical system (e.g., via feasts) in the hopes that their old power line will someday be re-established together with their past glories and advantages of their families. Thus, it is not surprising to find significant continuity with the past in feasting even under changed conditions (especially concerning the village feasts, council feasts, first communions, and marriage feasts). However, there have also been some important changes in feasts that are perfectly comprehensible as adaptations to the practical aspects of a new-world. Thus, there are no more war-alliance, peace, or victory feasts, first harvest feasts, curing feasts, and perhaps calamity or propitiation feasts also appear to have disappeared from general practice. Other feasts such as first communions may be transformations of former feasts such as tattooing and circumcision feasts becoming first communion feasts. We will now discuss the modern set of feasts and their inferred functions.

Village Feasts and Church Inauguration Feasts: Aside from special island-wide events such as July 14th celebrations and second millennium celebrations, the largest, most impressive feasts on Futuna today are the annual village feasts, including the island-wide feast at Poi in honor of the sainted missionary murdered there in 1837, Pere Chanel. Ironically, this continues the native pagan tradition that he recorded of island-wide annual feasts at Poi including both

paramount chiefs and many nobles from both chiefdoms (Kirch 1994:267). As in the past, the main guests and recipients of food gifts are chiefs from other villages and the paramount chief, today with the Catholic priest, and the French Delegate added. It is not clear if the paramount chief hosts an annual feast in addition to that of the village where he resides, or whether he makes food contributions to one or more of the village feasts in his dominion. Apparently, political candidates use village feasts to consolidate their support by giving very large pigs (FD: 12).

As in the past (see Burrows 1936:100; Kirch 1994:270), planning for these village feasts is undertaken by the village chief, his administrators, and the village elders, especially heads of families (*kutuga*). These individuals decide the proper magnitude of the feast given village resources (or whether the feast should be postponed or not held) as well as which chiefs or dignitaries should be specifically invited. They also form a “production committee” (*fakatele*) which visits each *kaiga* in the village to inform them what and how much they are expected to produce for the village feast. The *fakatele* committee even selects specific pigs from *kaiga* sties and marks them for village feast use by cutting off part of one ear (F.D; I.11). The committee also assigns quotas of mats, tubers, and other necessary items. This clearly constitutes pressure from those in power exerted on the community to produce surpluses and surrender them for undertakings of the nobles. The same system was in place a hundred years ago as well as an accounting system kept by the chiefs (Viala 1919:247). Chiefs and elders also keep track of individual *kaiga* contributions today (F.D: 13). Although Burrows (1936:100) states that households could complain if they felt their assessment was excessive, we were told that if a *kaiga* does not meet their quota, a fine or other punishment could be levied. Alternatively, the feast could be postponed or annulled, or the chief could be deposed. Some of the food obtained

is prepared for consumption at the feast, however most of it is slated to be given away creating a cascading type of feast from the main locus to individual households or other groups. A number of preparatory feasts are also held leading up to the main event. These auxiliary feasts at the *fale tauasu* are for raising excitement and solidarity as well as practicing dances and songs and preparing materials for the main feast.

The major event takes place in a plaza area either in front of the village church or *fale fono*. These areas measure between 600-900 square meters with a much larger expanse at Poi, comparing favorably in size with the platform area recorded for the paramount chief's contact residence at Lalolalo a village mala'e at Loka (Kirch 1994:263; Burrows 1936:124). This is a pattern of ritual architecture that appears to have originated with the earliest colonizers of Polynesia. Kirch and Green (2001:249-257) argued that ancestral Polynesians held ceremonies and feasts in plazas (*mala'e*) with a *fono* structure at the seaward end of the plaza. The *fono* was a place of assembly (as today) but also referred to food consumed with kava (indicating the probable feasting nature of *fono* meetings). Today, as with most feasts, the first event is attendance at a mass. However, the remainder is almost an exact iteration of the feast recorded by Schouten and LeMaire in 1616 (O'Reilly 1962:62). The mass is followed by a *kava* serving to the paramount and other chiefs in the *fale fono* in strict order of their sociopolitical rank. Women are always excluded from drinking kava and sitting in the council houses. Kava has psychotropic effects and is said to be the means of contacting god for the chiefs. The serving of kava is followed by a very large communal breakfast prepared and served by community women first to the chiefs in a special structure usually at the opposite end of the plaza from the *fale fono* (and across the road), followed by men of lesser rank from other villages served after the chiefs. In 1616 Schouten and LeMaire observed yams and taro being served from huge stretchers 20-30

feet long (O'Reilly 1962:67). Women and children generally eat outside under trees, in the open, in temporary shelters, or at nearby houses (also true in the past -- Rozier 1963:91). They are generally given the food not eaten by men. Breakfast typically consists of kava roots, pork, chicken, fish, corned beef, langoustres, *faikai tutu*, coconut crabs, coffee, and wine. Many villagers eat their breakfast in their own homes.

After breakfast, a second serving of kava takes place outside for chiefs and elders. This is the most solemn part of the feast and centers around requests to god for fish, rain, abundance, honesty, and respect for god-aspects reminiscent of the earliest recorded feasts (Kirch 1994). Elders also recite traditional poems to the officials, including a traditional gratitude poem for kava and orations of thanks for all the gifts displayed in the plaza area, consisting of rows of pigs, roots, *siapo*, mats, and food baskets. This is the *katoaga*, or the place with everything. The priest blesses the *katoaga*, after which the distribution frenzy begins. The food contributions will have been assigned to specific rows designated for specific chiefs by one of the village "sages." In former times, this division and designation of gifts for all villages was performed by a single person called the *sa'akafu* for the entire chiefdom (F.D: 33; Burrows 1936:58). From photographs it appears that there are usually about 10 or 12 rows with 10 or more pigs clustered with other food and gifts in each row plus other baskets of food. The central row containing the largest pig is designated for the paramount chief, while the other rows relate to the seating positions of chiefs in the *fale fono*. It is not clear if each chief received the same amount as all others or whether different qualities were allocated according to the different populations of the villages or other criteria. One person stated that larger villages did get more as well as the village chiefs who would soon host a village feast. The paramount chief distributes his row of food among his family, while village chiefs take their rows to their villages, retaining what they

want and distributing the rest among the village *kaiga*. The priest and French Delegate receive lesser portions as gifts to those in positions of power. It is unclear how much chieftom ministers may get or to whom they might redistribute gifts. In addition, individuals such as political candidates and the first born of families make public displays of giving money to dancers, perhaps recalling the earlier food gifts (*omoe*) that were given to those who decorated and prepared dancers at feasts (Smith 1892:47). Today, these gifts are clearly promotional and in some cases have even been referred to as “buying votes.” However, it is not clear to whom the funds given to dancers go, nor how the funds are used. Dancers are predominantly, if not exclusively, from more important noble families. From an ecological point of view it makes obvious sense to give the French Delegate and his entourage a substantial gift, since he has considerable influence in administering French policies and full authority in distributing the ample funding allocated for general Futunan administration and welfare. Why the priest is included is perhaps not obvious until it is realized that until recently, the priest was often the only responsible French representative in residence and was therefore the *de facto*, if not actual, French Delegate through whom all dealings with the French government passed (Burrows 1936:21). The schools and medical services were started by the priests, the Futunan Constitution was written by priests, priests protected Futunans from the French, priests dictated basic mortality (forbidding cannibalism, murder, warfare, polygamy), priests adjudicated disputes, and priests held the power to transform the social status of individuals or families through baptism, first communions, confirmations, and marriages (see below). Thus the Catholic church and its priests became linked with the exercise of power and the social and political order on Futuna, just as pagan chief-priests maintained power in the past. The Catholic priests claimed spiritual, *mana*-like powers, and they constituted powerful connections to the French authorities.

Therefore, other power figures (chiefs) courted the favor of the priests with food gifts and endorsed the new belief system in ways that would continue to support the traditional power base. The priests were used, in effect, to sanction the feasting and *kutuga*-based political system.

Following the *katoaga* distribution of the annual village feast, dancing and singing continue for a number of hours until a small closing *katoaga* of baskets of food is offered to participants with a traditional dance and oration of thanks delivered in the *fale fono*. Sometimes after the feast, there is a village meeting in the *fale fono* or *tauas* in order to assess how well the feast was conducted and to comment on the contributions of the village *kaiga* and the gifts given in the *katoaga*.

While it is generally stated today that there are no political consequences stemming from these feasts because the relative rank of village chiefs has been permanently fixed by the priests, there certainly were political benefits in the past (see previous discussion) and these village feasts continue to be highly competitive displays between villages involving very large amounts of surplus given in reciprocal fashions. We suggest that these enduring and even vibrant characteristics are the hallmarks of alliances in which relative power or other benefits is not fixed but dynamic, as seems particularly typical of chiefdoms. There are a number of indications that the real relative exercise of power within the chiefdoms may not be a strict reflection of the assigned and fixed sociopolitical ranks of ministers and village chiefs. We were told that village chiefs could form alliances to agitate for the removal of specific office holders such as ministers or paramount chiefs. If a village is small with little surplus production (as seen in their village feasts) then they have lower “status.” In the event of any disputes between villages, chiefs from

those villages that produce less are reportedly told to be quiet because they are only “hot air” and can’t produce.

However, these considerations seem too pale when compared with the much more powerful forces clearly at work in the modern political scene where the control of Territorial funds, the awarding of contracts, and the hiring of salaried employees is all controlled by the most powerful noble families who explicitly use village feasts to promote their election campaigns, demonstrate their material success (*mana*), and court the favor of chiefs in the most populous and productive villages. The chiefs on their part must also be anxious to demonstrate how populous, productive, and politically organized their chiefly families and villages are so as to reap as many rewards as possible for supporting successful candidates. We were told several times that today “everything is politics” in Futuna, and certainly competition to control an abundant resource such as external French funds is probably the single most important element - much as it is in the Torajan Highlands of Sulawesi (Hayden 2000). From this perspective it would be extremely interesting to record precisely which chiefs, elected officials, and other important figures attend which village feasts. As in the Torajan areas this seems to represent the use of traditional sociopolitical structures in order to control new economic and political conditions. There has been a dramatic escalation in the magnitude of the major competitive display feasts with the advent of a cash economy and political control over the major sources of cash. Whereas each *kaiga* traditionally raised its own pigs and gave one pig for village feasts, some now buy pigs and give up to six, an increase which is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that Futuna has no significant exports.

The inauguration of newly (re-) built churches in villages is a very occasional event, but one that follows the same pattern and logic of normal village feasts.

Council Meetings: These are essentially the same as described in the section on political organization. Kava roots, the only item consumed at these meetings is today provided by those who regularly attended neighborhood council meetings, or is harvested from communally grown plots.

Political Office Installation Feasts: Chiefs at both the village and paramount levels (and probably “ministers” as well) are inducted into office in the context of feasts which their *kutuga* sponsor. This seems normal since it is the *kutuga* that owns the title and chooses to replace and install chiefs. They are therefore described under “family” feasts rather than village feasts. Similar feasts must have existed prior to European contact, but there is no written record of them in the histories or ethnographic documents. These are above all celebrations (promotional events) of the economic and political power of the *kutuga* holding the most important titles. They vindicate the right of the *kutuga* to hold these titles by dint of material success within the community. They reflect the primary functions and self-interest of the most important *kutuga*. However, with the erosion of chiefly power and the traditional subsistence base by cash economics, it seems that these events may be diminishing in importance.

We were fortunate to be able to attend one such installation feast for the chief of Tavai whose family held the title of “Tapea.” This feast began in the morning with a kava drinking ceremony and culminated with a noon feast after which there was a food distribution involving about 1 large pig and 4 medium sized ones, or parts thereof, and the departure of most guests. The feast took place at the *kaiga* (named Laloli) of a former chief which continued to be used by the *kutuga* as the most suitable location for family and community-related feasts and which was used for community meetings but now is the residence of an elder of the family and his son. Traditionally, new chiefs took up residence in the houses of former chiefs (FD I-30), however,

today chiefs' stay in their own residences. A cement cross stands in the plaza area in front of the structures to designate the structure as a chief's residence.

Over 60 adults attended the feast, including 40 men and probably about 20 women as well as about 5 resident children. Theoretically, the feast is open to the entire village to attend, but clearly this does not take place in practice. In fact, there may have been no unrelated villagers present. By far, the vast majority of the participants were junior members of the *kutuga* who prepared and served all the food. Most of these individuals did not eat in the *fale fonu* and did not participate in the kava drinking. The most important individuals in the *fale fonu* were the chief (a minister) in charge of chiefdom traditions (with the title of Manafa, or the Saatula for the Sigave chiefdom). It was he who had the authority to install new chiefs for the district (the villages of Tavai, Toloke, and Fiua), and he arrived with two secondary chiefs (Motote) from his village and his assistant (Poulekakai). Chiefs from other villages can also be present at these installations, but their presence is not required. In addition to these high officials, there were 5 elders from the chief's *kutuga*, the new chief, and more junior members of the family who helped prepare the kava and serve it. In all, there were 8 high ranked individuals holding titles, 8 junior members serving kava and preparing it, and 4 junior members in the back, including the owners of the household.

Food preparations involved the use of both earth ovens behind the household as well as an open hearth set up outside near the house for cooking food in large pots, plus the use of at least one open hearth of a neighbor. Some food arrived already cooked. The open hearths are very similar to those used elsewhere in Southeast Asia for feasts, but it is not clear whether they would have been used in Polynesia before the introduction of cooking pots. *Koumetes* (3 of which were 75-90 cm long) and kava bowls were prominent feasting food preparation vessels,

as well as a number of large cooking pots (at least 9 over 35 cm in diameter of which 3 were owned by the household).

Kutuga households contributed all the food, kava, and necessary plant materials (fuel, banana leaves, palm fronds for making baskets), and presumably the most important of these families received the largest food portions to take away; however, it seemed that virtually everyone attending received at least a palm basket of food (fish, chicken, pork, taro, fai kai). The chiefs attending from other villages, especially the Manafa, did not contribute any food, but received the largest portion of pig as a gift, presumably for performing the appropriate rituals and validating the taking of office by the new chief.

The feasting continued at the night meal and we were told probably only involving a few of the most important elders and close

Family Feasts

Birth Feasts: We have very little information on contemporary birth feasts aside from statements that these are smaller and shorter versions of the more important family feasts, such as First Communion feasts (see below). Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:128) emphasizes the food and wealth exchanges between paternal and maternal families --a pattern repeated in the other rites of passage feasts. It thus appears the marriage is used to create alliances between the intermarrying *kutuga* -- at least some of the time. The most elaborate birth feasts are undoubtedly for the first born child and for the richer or more important noble families. These feasts last one to two days, and if a chief is present, then a small *katoaga* food/gift distribution is required involving four to five small pigs.

Precisely why the eldest child, especially males are so important in Futunan society, rituals, and feasts is not entirely clear. This is a general feature of most Polynesian societies (and perhaps other Austronesian cultures). There are many privileges and proscriptions for the first born. They are given the largest feasts, they must marry first born children of other families, they are preferentially chosen for important sociopolitical positions, the first born males never serve kava but must always be served, and they use or weave a new *kapakau* (fine mat) for their first communion which is a symbol of high rank. The institutionalized importance of the first born, especially or perhaps only among noble families, may be due to several factors:

1) From the outset, Polynesian society seems to have been organized according to chiefdom principals. One of the main tenets of most chiefdom societies is that chiefs obtain their spiritual power (*mana*) from powerful ancestors. First born children are viewed as being closer to their immediate ancestor and therefore derive more *mana* from them.

2) The male head of a family is not considered to be a full member of society (a full man) with full privileges at village council meetings until he has children. Thus, when the first child is born (male or female), this represents a major change in the social status of the family, and especially the father. This explanation does not really account for the subsequent special treatment of firstborns throughout their lives.

3) The importance of the firstborn may also stem from the fact that they will eventually be the head of the *kaiga* and or *kutuga* (or branches thereof). However, these positions may not pass directly from father to son, but from father to father's brother and so on, so that this may not be a real consideration.

Thus, it is difficult to be sure as to why the eldest is so important. Chiefdom concepts of ancestral *mana* probably plays an important role but other factors may also be important.

First Communion: First communions have taken the place of traditional circumcisions as being the most important event to celebrate before marriage, particularly for the first born children of important noble *kutuga*. Because of the promotional role that these events play in displaying noble family power and rank, the heads of the *kutuga* of the father and mother often jointly decide what magnitude and duration of feast is warranted to maintain their respective social image in relation to available resources of both *kutuga*. In this respect, the more important family feasts are kindred affairs, for which kindred resources are pooled to protect and promote the interests of the *kutuga* as a whole rather than any one individual household. This is similar to feasting organization and social structure in Southeast Asian tribal transegalitarian communities (Clarke 2001), although in Futuna it is clear that the kindreds are important competing units for political titles of power, while in Southeast Asia, lineages are important for providing socioeconomic safety networks as well as political power. We would suggest that in order to put

on displays of kindred socioeconomic power, any event of significance might be chosen, whether circumcision, birth, tattooing, haircutting, confirmation, marriage, or other events. The actual pretext is relatively unimportant. Clearly, lavish displays cannot be held for all of these events for all members of the kindred. The costs would simply be prohibitive. This is probably why first communions have been arbitrarily chosen and why first born children from the most important households (probably of members closest to founding ancestors) are chosen for the most lavish feasting and celebrations although all members are given some feasts for these events.

These events are clearly promotional events as is evident from their long duration (around seven days for the most elaborate) the large amounts of surplus involved (including a large *katoaga*), the attempt to have high ranking officials (especially chiefs) as guests at the more lavish first communion feasts, and the giving away of large amounts of food. That these events were used in the competition between families of equal rank for important positions in the sociopolitical hierarchy is demonstrated by one person's statement that in verbal contests between rival families (*kutuga*), first communion feasts were always brought up, never forgotten, and cited as evidence of the relative worth of the respective *kutuga* (M.T.). Thus, it is a competitive, promotional type of feast between *kutuga*. We were also told that the rich try to give a great deal at these feasts and denigrate those who cannot give as lavishly (L.T. I-22).

Communion feasts are also probably used (like their circumcision and tattoo feast predecessors) to invest surpluses in children of important families in order to augment their value for marital alliances between families--i.e., to be able to broker the most advantageous relationships and wealth exchanges between intermarrying families. In general terms, first communions occur at about eight years old and are celebrated by everyone of the same age on

the same Sunday in October. The most elaborate first communion feasts are underwritten by the *kaiga* of the child being fêted, with substantial contributions from the two parental *kutuga*'s and neighboring friends. Contributions usually consist of pigs, chickens, yams, taro and manioc. Apparently, most people who attend communion feasts bring some food contributions (as with many Southeast Asian feasts) as indications of support or solidarity, however the largest contributions are from the closest relations and friends. The older men stay around the host household during the feasting that occurs during the week preceding the Sunday in October designated for all first communions on the island. They keep track of the major food contributions that are brought and keep mental records are kept of this and other kinds of support. Reciprocal help is expected but we did not establish who was generally involved (between *kaiga* within the *kutuga*?, households from other villages?, friends?, or *kutuga* in marital alliances?).

Generally 50-60 people (but up to 100) attend the evening feasting at the host *kaiga* during the week. Feasting is theoretically open to everyone in the village or visitors. In reality, it would be surprising if anyone beside kin and friends attend. People often disperse or visit during the days, with elder men staying at the *kaiga*. On the Sunday designated for first communions, everyone attends mass at 6:00 am. At about 8:00 am there is either a main meal or a kava ceremony for older men and the chief if he is present. Chiefs are always invited, however, they clearly cannot attend every first communion feast and most likely attend only the first communions of the eldest children of the most important families. The kava ceremony is generally held in the most traditional, open-style *fale* available (if a suitable structure cannot be found within the host's *kaiga*, a neighbor's *fale* is often used). Other structures are used for eating. People attending the Sunday feast usually bring gifts for the new communicant.

Up until the 1970's, first communion feasts usually involved only about five large pigs (up to 200 kg each) for a full week of feasting since pigs were difficult to raise (four to seven years for maximum weight). With the introduction of granulated feeds and wage labor (enabling individuals to purchase pigs from others, the time required to raise large pigs has decreased to one or two years, and the number of pigs involved in communion feasts has dramatically increased. Today, poor families use five to six pigs while normally ten pigs is considered the minimum and 20 pigs are about the maximum with most being killed on the main Sunday of celebration and given away in a *katoaga*. If the paramount chief happens to attend, he can receive a line of up to 10 pigs to be distributed among his *kutuga*. Village chiefs might receive a leg, an entire pig, or even a line or two of pigs depending on the number of pigs available. The older male family heads (of the *kutuga*?) are responsible for dividing the food gifts. Other major gifts are given to the priest and the most important contributors to the feast.

In one communion feast for an eldest son that was described to us, the host *kaiga* provided five large pigs, the husband's parents gave one large pig, his sister and her husband gave one large pig, the wife's parents and brother and sister who all lived together gave two large pigs, another of the wife's brothers gave one large pig, and her sister's husband from another village gave one large pig. Neighbors from other *kutuga* gave small or medium-sized pigs. These pigs were used for a Friday morning feast (one large pig and eight medium sized ones), Friday evening (three medium pigs), a Saturday night feast (one large pig and two medium ones) and the Sunday feast (10 large pigs mostly given away) (I.A: I:34).

Confirmation Feasts: Like birth feasts, confirmation feasts are reported to be smaller and shorter versions of communion feasts, with perhaps the possibility of greater elaboration among some wealthier families. It seems likely that confirmation feasts (held when children are about

12 years old) may serve similar functions as earlier tattooing feasts, i.e., to mark a further step in acquiring social status for children, and especially for important/wealthy families, to increase the socioeconomic “value” of children for subsequent marital alliances between families.

Marriage Feasts: Marriages were formerly arranged by marriage brokers for noble children or at least choices could be extremely constrained to a few choices for first-born children of the most important noble families (II-1). Premarital sex was forbidden (at least for noble families). Poor families might still not bother with formal weddings or celebrate them with a simple meal, whereas at least prior to 1992, rich important families held large marriage feasts with substantial gift exchanges between the families (L.T. I:20--see also Douaire-Marsaudon 1998:129). The heads of the *kutuga* (*ulu matua*, or “head old”) of the bride and groom together decide on and organize the marriage feasts. Previously, these feasts seem to have lasted up to a month; whereas now they seem to last about two weeks, with a week of feasting at the parents of the groom and a separate week of feasting at the parents of the bride, followed by the couple taking up residence in whichever location they choose. Interestingly, each week of feasting appears to primarily (or only?) involve the *kutuga*(s?) of the groom for the first week and the corresponding families for the bride in the second week. It is not clear if this is a solidarity and promotion event for the groom’s *kutuga* (or alliance re-affirmations or exchange between those of his father and mother) or if something more is transpiring, including gift exchanges. We were told that the groom’s family was formerly supposed to give two to three pigs to the bride’s family, however, more data is required. While we were in Futuna, there was a marriage feast in Ono for an eldest noble daughter (which we missed because of a new chief’s installation feast at the same time) who had eloped with a man from Wallis. The bride had not wanted a traditional marriage, however. the elders of her *kutuga* and her parents had

insisted upon a traditional marriage feast, undoubtedly to maintain the *kutuga* sociopolitical image/respect and to display *kutuga* political power and wealth to other rival *kutuga*'s and for political promotion. We were told that about one hundred people attended, including the chiefs of Ono, and that 15 pigs were killed for the event. The family used a neighbor's four traditional *fale*, since it had none of its own. Men and women used separate structures according to tradition. These marriage feasts clearly seem designed to create solidarity and promote *kutuga* political images as well as establish or re-affirm alliances between *kutuga* (in this case the *kutuga* of the father and mother of the bride). This also seems to be accomplished by the practice of adopting children from other families, a practice common among noble Celtic families as well.

Funeral Feasts: While funeral feasts used to be more elaborate (see sections on former feasts), today they are usually more simple. This may be due to funeral feasts having been targeted by missionaries as being too closely linked with the cult of the ancestors. In any event, we were told (LT:I-23) that today, when a person dies, kava is drunk by the important men of the family for 3 days after which there is a feast and a distribution of pigs to related households as well as a leg which is given to the priest. In all, 10-20 pigs seem to be employed for funerals in large, rich families, while poor families might consume and give away around 8 pigs. It is interesting that very recently, we were told that at least one family has held a funeral that surpassed any living memory of lavish funerals and resembled funerals of a much earlier time. It seems clear that this must be part of a promotional effort to demonstrate the economic success of the family in order to garner political or other support, we might speculate for a future Territorial election.

As in transegalitarian and other simple chiefdom societies, the main purpose of funeral feasts seems to be to create solidarity among allied kindred households (or reaffirm ties between member households) and to promote *kutuga* success by displays of productivity, wealth, access to spiritual power (drinking kava and installing deceased members in “heaven”) for all nonmembers who might attend (see Hayden 2001; Hayden and Maneeprasert, n.d.).

CONCLUSIONS

Having described the general feasting structure of Futunan society, we are now in a position to make some general observations concerning the structure of feasting in Polynesian chiefdoms and see how they compare with Southeast Asian transegalitarian societies. Comparing the functions of feasting in Table 2 with the functions represented in other studies, and comparing the general sociopolitical structures of Thai, Torajan, and Futunan communities, it is clear that there is a great deal of similarity, whether one is dealing with transegalitarian or chiefdom communities. Some of these similarities may derive from common Austronesian heritage as suggested by Kirch and Green (2001); other similarities may be the result of common strategies used by aggrandizers. The basic elder head of the kindred/lineage power structure is especially remarkable. The fundamental unit of socioeconomic and political competition still appears to be at the lineage/kindred level, as noted by Clarke (2001) and Hayden (2000), with large displays of food and wealth arranged for the feasts of the most important members of the lineage/kindred. It is at the kindred level that the most numerous and the second most ostentatious feasts occur. At the chiefdom level, however, and in contrast to Thai Hill Tribes, villages also become important competing and feasting units. Nor is there anything like the Futunan tribute feasts in Thai Hill Tribes. These appear to be unique to chiefdoms perhaps together with competitive village feasts.

When comparing chiefdoms, the corporate nature of the *kaiga* is especially comparable to the Torajan *tongkonan*, while no real equivalent exists in Thai Hill Tribes. It is also striking that noble positions in both Polynesia and Toraja seem to have been established through warfare and that many of the functions of the chiefs revolve around warfare and maintaining alliances for war through feasting and rituals. The Hill Tribe area has long been pacified and may not be

entirely comparable, but Condominas' ethnographic studies and those on the Iban and Melanesia may provide better comparative observations. War was certainly prevalent in New Guinea and alliances were constantly being formed and reformed. If one wishes to seek the origins of chiefdom organization in warfare, it is necessary to explain why chiefs emerged in some areas of endemic warfare, but not others. We suggest that the critical variable is the productivity of the areas and the ability of groups to produce enough surpluses on a regular basis to support the higher levels of feasting as well as the administrative bureaucracy that are required to maintain permanent alliances and superordinate power structures capable of subduing dissent or disputes within their ranks (at least most of the time). We suggest that this is why competitive displays and gift giving to other village chiefs at village feasts emerge in Polynesian and other chiefdoms as a new type of feasting complex. This is probably also why traditionally, households provided the paramount and village chiefs with labor, food portions from all large family feasts, and special first harvest feasts. Not to do so might jeopardize the position of one's *kutuga* or *kaiga* or even one's village within the alliance system resulting in political isolation and vulnerability to attack. Without such contributions and feasting complexes, the chiefdom clearly could not be sustained, and without adequate surpluses, such feasting and large-scale contributions could not be sustained.

Today, the threat of war and the necessity of maintaining alliances for safety no longer exists. However, once complex sociopolitical structures emerge that provide privileged sources of power and wealth to some members of society, these members are usually reluctant to give up the advantages that they have established and therefore seek other means of consolidating their positions. Thus, such sociopolitical structures can persist long after the original conditions favoring their appearance have disappeared. Since the arrival of French missionaries, other

important interests of communities and elites have taken the place of warfare. Initially, there may have been fear of reprisals from the French for having killed one of the missionaries, however, this was soon replaced with elite access to shipping, French defense of the island (Tongans had attempted to conquer Futuna a number of times), elite control of the most productive lands on the island, negotiations with the French concerning Futuna rights and welfare, and most recently the control of the very lucrative funds for Territorial projects and salaries that the French have decided to provide.

Using traditional chiefdom political structures, elites on Futuna could reinforce their traditional positions of privilege and provide benefits for their supporters, thereby maintaining the vitality of traditional political structures. We suggest that the people who are most active in supporting family and village feasts are probably the ones who have some aspiration of becoming chiefs or filling important roles in the future, and are using feasts to build a base of supporters. However, with the increased scale of wage labor and the cash commercial economy in Sigave, even these benefits of the traditional chiefdom system do not appear to be enough to prevent major transformations from occurring, including the obsolescence of the paramount chief's position there. Alo has curtailed commercial activity to a much greater extent and still remains much more traditional with a more vital traditional political structure. However, changes are beginning to occur there as well.

IDEOLOGY vs. ECOLOGY:

Expectation 1: Practical benefits: Thus, it seems clear that in terms of the expectations that we outlined for an ecological explanation of feasting, there were and are clear practical benefits to the feasting complex that we have documented. These involve wealth exchanges, the creation of debts that can be manipulated, but above all the creation of alliances that establish

political power. Political power today involves practical benefits that arise mainly from allocation of salaries and Territorially-funded projects.

Expectation 2: Feasting changes versus changes in ideology: Moreover, the fundamental feasting structure seems to have changed very little given a very dramatic change in ideology. Notably, when Christianity was adopted in the 1840's, one might have expected the power of the chiefs to have diminished since their justification for their powerful mana and their right to rule (and impose taboos) was based on the fact that their ancestors had powerful mana and that the gods spoke through them (in fact they became gods). All the village feasts were putatively held to honor the gods of the chiefs or, more precisely to appease the anger of the gods (Smith 1892). Thus, if ideology was really the basis for chiefly power (i.e., if as some scholars suggest, people provided food for chiefly feasts and obeyed chiefs because they believed that they were gods or had awesome mana, or to appease angry gods), then the entire political and social structure should have collapsed with the adoption of the benevolent god of Christianity who did not need to be appeased and with the discrediting of the power of the old gods and the chiefs. However, nothing of the sort happened. Instead, the chiefly families continued to wield power; village feasts continued to be as important as ever (now under the patronage of Christian saints), and taboos continued to be imposed by chiefs because they were integral elements in wielding and creating political power. We conclude that the feasting system was maintained because it provided important practical political (and socioeconomic) benefits for the participants in dealing with outside polities (especially the French) and protecting their own interests as based on a subsistence economy.

Expectation 3: Feasting changes with economic changes: As is consistent with ecological expectations, this system is beginning to crumble today (or at least undergo the most dramatic

transformation it has ever experienced), not because of ideological changes, but due to economic impacts of wage labor and a cash economy.

It is questionable; in any event, to what extent the ideologies promoted and adopted by elites are actually accepted or believed by common, or even noble, people. As Rappaport (1999) notes, people may provide lip service and outward acceptance for publicly promoted beliefs or values without really believing them or accepting them inwardly. Many of the commonly recorded beliefs and values found in ethnographies or early accounts come from elite sources and it is doubtful whether early ethnographers ever consulted the poor and disenfranchised. The usefulness of such beliefs for promoting the self-interests of the elites is often embarrassingly obvious, as with the restricted ability of deceased to enter heaven and become supernaturally powerful entities based on wealth and the number of animal sacrifices provided for the dead in the Torajan area (Sandarupa 1999). In Polynesia, the concept of *mana* is clearly another such concept as are the ideas that in order to enjoy a happy afterlife and avoid a gruesome hell, one had to honor the gods (who possessed the chiefs), obey the chiefs and all taboos, to be married, and draw blood in battle (Smith 1892:39). The belief that the gods take over or “live in” the bodies of the chiefs, that the chiefs are reincarnations of gods or totemic ancestors, and that all the chiefs’ actions or desires are sacred, are yet other such self-serving notions (Smith 1892:47; Rozier 1963:100). Beliefs in which the gods create misfortune and sickness that can only be alleviated by giving offerings to chiefs or priests are further examples of ideologies that promote the exploitation of others (Rozier 1963:113-5,118). However, these beliefs were clearly not the real basis of chiefly power as the cognitivists contend, for if everyone really believed that the gods lived in the bodies of the chiefs, how could anyone ever argue or act against them much less depose them, which by all accounts occurred frequently. Moreover, cognitive explanations

for chiefly power and feasting completely fail to take into account the dynamic nature of social norms or explain how norms which grossly favor one faction of society can become established. Recent research in this area clearly establishes that decision making occurs at the individual level and that the most important sources of change in norms are asymmetries in bargaining power (Ensminger and Knight 1997). Thus, cognitive/ideologically-based explanations of feasting and the political power of chiefs fail in all three expectations whereas political ecological expectations seem clearly vindicated. Where obeisance is given to priests today, this ultimately seems to stem from their roles as traditional wielders of power and benefits rather than from strict ideological beliefs.

From this perspective, it may be asked how such beliefs as the chief's power over weather, crops, and animals, might be construed as favoring elites since crop failures are described as one of the reasons for deposing chiefs. This is a common belief in transegalitarian, chiefdom, and early state societies, from Maya villages to Sumerian and even medieval European kingdoms. Thus, while superficially appearing disadvantageous to elites, one might suspect some hidden advantages. We suggest that in the first place, early aggrandizers frequently put much more effort into gardening and raising animals and often did produce more and larger crops than less ambitious or enterprising individuals. Such aggrandizers clearly use their agricultural successes to bolster claims to powerful mana, magic, or supernatural support. Such claims could be used to advance aggrandizing agendas by promising better crops for others in exchange for political, ideological, and other forms of support. As long as harvests were good (the normal case scenario), aggrandizers could claim credit to bolster their positions. But what happens when crops failed, as surely they did? Gifted elites will have curried the favor of elders and other powerful supporters so that acceptable excuses could always be found to deflect

responsibility (scapegoat, enemy sorcerers, villagers who have broken taboos, incest in the village, etc.). Powerful elders and others might also have been happy to embrace the fiction of chiefly responsibility for crops precisely because it provided a recurring opportunity and excuse for getting rid of unpopular leaders (or inventing excuses to keep popular ones). In good times, people can often put up with even oppressive leaders, but the same is not true in difficult times. In this respect, such a procedure is not unlike periodic elections in modern states where elections are based largely on past economic performance.

Prestige Items: Given the intense degree of competition that occurs between villages and *kutuga*, as well as the high levels of surpluses produced, we had expected to find considerable material manifestations of ostentatious display behavior in the form of prestige goods. These were notably absent in transegalitarian feasts, and it seemed appropriate to expect more such items to be used in chiefdom contexts. Douaire-Marsaudon (1998:124-134) provides a comprehensive discussion of prestige items (*koloa*) and their use. She divides them into 3 categories:

I: Items that could be made by any woman (mats, bark cloth, coconut oil). Many of these were used for exchange or barter, but were also gifts presented or used in feasts in a fashion reminiscent of Northwest Coast blankets. The quantity of mats and cloths that a family possessed was an indication of the rank, wealth, and power of the family. Also the designs used to decorate them were owned like family crests. The finest examples were reserved for the highest ranking elites and were inherited. Some mats were also considered as sacred family totems where the protective family tutelary spirit resided.

II: Items manufactured by, or under the direction of elite women for the exclusive use of high ranking elites. These included decorated baskets, combs, and chiefs' ornaments, none of which are still made.

III: Items made by male craft specialists, financed by chiefs, and made for the personal use of the chiefs or for feasting gifts. These include: maces, spears, canoes, carved whale teeth, head rests, and kava mixing bowls. Most of these were hereditary items used only by high ranking elites, especially whale teeth. They are no longer made or used today for feasts or power brokering.

Most prestige items are exchanged together with food between family groups (especially maternal and paternal kin groups) for rites of passage feasts (birth, circumcision, marriage, death) or in chiefly feasts. They were all used to fulfill ceremonial obligations to one's *kaiga* or to one's superiors. Some prestige items were consumed at the feasts (food, coconut oil, funeral wrappings), some were exchanged, and some were family treasures only meant for display. Aside from their manufacture, prestige items were acquired through feasting as gifts, as payments to specialists (including administrators), and through warfare plundering (often as an important motivation for fighting). Families apparently strategized to acquire *koloa*.

Today, as in the past, there are few prestige items used in feasts that would withstand the ravages of time to be recovered by archaeologists. Aside from the bones of domestic animals, which are the premier prestige objects, the other display objects used in feasting contexts are almost all perishable (Table 3). Mats and bark cloth are the two most labor intensive prestige display items, neither of which would survive, although bark beaters might be preserved. Kava mixing bowls (*tanoa*) are also clearly prestige display items, and it seems likely that the large wooden *koumete*'s are also used in this way for serving people at feasts. However, today, there

are no other distinctive serving bowls or dishes. Only simple coconut bowls are used for serving kava, and banana leaves are used for serving all people at feasts. Nor are special prestige items now worn by the more important persons attending feasts, although they do sit in privileged positions and the chiefs certainly wear somewhat distinctive solid color Occidental-style clothing and shoes. In the past, shell beads, whale teeth, and other ornaments appear to have been used as well as specially carved and decorated wooden bowls to serve the highest ranking individuals (still available in tourist shops in Fiji). Burrows (1936:65) reports that whale tooth ivory pendants, *Ovulus* shells, and silver rings were among the most valuable prestige items during his study. Even earlier, it seems likely that the elaborately decorated Lapita pottery was used for serving the high ranking chiefs and elders in each kindred or *kaiga*. Thus, while there are considerable prestige items used in feasting contexts on Futuna, these do not now include individual serving vessels, nor are they archaeologically “visible.” On the other hand, prestige foods abound. There is an entire recipe book of Futunan foods, almost all certainly for feasting occasions (see also Burrows 1936:133,137). However, none of the remains of these foods would preserve well aside from the domestic animals.

Refuse: Given the importance of feasting in understanding the dynamics of traditional cultures, a major question is the degree to which feasting can be inferred from the archaeological record. In order to assess this, it is important to monitor and record refuse patterning in contemporary feasting situations. The discard of animal bones is particularly important since these are some of the most visible remains of feasting.

We can make a number of important observations on this subject. First, with the introduction of automobiles, all pigs on Futuna are now penned rather than allowed to roam around freely. Whereas bones and other food wastes might have simply been thrown on the

ground around feasting areas in the past where dogs and pigs could consume them, today most food waste is cleaned up and thrown in the pig pens to be devoured. We were unable to determine what is done with large inedible bones such as mandibles although on Alofi where there are no vehicles, pig mandibles and other bones are frequently found in the vicinity of some households.

Second, because of the substantial gifting of food, including killed pigs, chickens, and other items, with subsequent redistribution by chiefs or elders to the supporting *kaiga*, feasts actually become cascading events with the most important individuals attending the main event, and subsequently bringing back feasting foods to their own households and households of supporters to continue the feasting in every household. As a result, there is a very widespread distribution of prestige feasting animal bones throughout entire settlements, and even throughout the entire chiefdom or island. Because family feasts shift location according to who is celebrating births, communions, marriages, funerals, or other events, any concentration of bones from the main feasting events would become randomized among lineage/kindred households over time, unless there was a specific lineage shrine where such events preferentially took place.

Third, there are clearly some locations at which feasts tend to be held on a preferential basis. These are typically households of chiefs or households where chiefs traditionally used to reside, as was the case at the installation of the Tape'a in Tavai. Today, families who do not have appropriate houses to hold feasts (either due to size or modernization), borrow the compounds of other *kaiga*, either neighbors or kin, and these houses become preferred locations for family feasts. Similar situations may have existed in the past; however, this is an aspect on which we need to obtain more information. We assume that preferred houses would belong to elite families, however, this may not have always been the case. Certainly, the former chief's

household where we saw the new chief taking office appeared to have a larger number of large cooking vessels, more earth ovens, and probably accumulated more bone refuse in the toft or midden areas than normal households. However this needs to be verified by more systematic household interviews. Since women and children often tended to eat under the trees in front of houses where feasts occurred, we might find more frequent bone refuse in these areas as well.

Fourth, the mere presence of domesticated animals and some prestige items in an archaeological context of a village site would be strong indicator that feasting was a major component of the village dynamics.

Fifth, large village celebrations must generate substantial amounts of food and other refuse which is typically swept up and deposited either in nearby stream channels, on the foreshore, or simply thrown in the surrounding toft area of the adjacent forest, such as occurred around the *fale fonono* on Alofi Island. There are often special feasting structures associated with these large public plazas where the high ranking individuals eat their meals (e.g., in front of the *fale fonono* of Mala'e which is next to the church). We expect considerable accumulation of feasting refuse around these structures, although we do not know where the refuse was discarded from the structures in Mala'e.

Sixth, the very specialized *tauas* community meeting houses/kava drinking structures have clearly distinctive refuse associated with them and their kava drinking feasts. This refuse typically consists of discarded kava roots in back of the structure, many cigarette butts and packages, match boxes, beer cans, and occasional soda or juice cans to the sides and in the associated midden. Many of the smaller items are mixed with the gravels both inside and surrounding the structure, but the larger materials together with organic refuse from other events is dumped in midden or toft areas adjacent to the structures.

Seventh, as in many other traditional societies (the Maya, Thai Hill Tribes), organic refuse is often accumulated (swept into piles) at the edge of patio or toft areas and burned.

In sum, given the perishable nature of serving and cooking vessels (and the ubiquity of the traditional earth oven, or umu), as well as the widespread redistribution of feasting foods, it will undoubtedly be more difficult for future archaeologists to obtain as many details as they would like about contemporary Futunan feasting. However, the main features should be discernable. In the future, we clearly need to investigate household inventories and focus more on food preparation vessels and animal remains associated with households. We expect the widespread redistribution of animal remains to blur feasting patterning, especially since feasting appears to be organized on a kindred level which rotates between households, rather than on a household level, but we hope that some patterning will still be evident.

We were fortunate to be able to visit Alofi Island where Futunans go to garden on a regular basis, but which is not permanently inhabited (although previously was reported to have had a population of 1,800--Burrows 1936:15), has no roads or vehicles, and has no electrical grid. Nevertheless, people maintain houses on Alofi, forming villages even with a church and a traditional *fono* complex of structures at which there is an annual feast for all members of the village and guests. Pigs roam freely around and are raised by house owners. This village provides important insights into traditional architecture, settlement pattern, and refuse disposal behavior. Modern industrial food packaging and serving make it particularly easy to monitor refuse disposal behavior which we presume has not changed significantly on Alofi from times when food refuse was all organic. In conformity with the above observations, we observed a band of refuse accumulated typically in the brush or forest behind each structure (the “toft” zone) beginning about 5-10 meters from the structure and extending about 5-10 meters into the

bush. We were told that if structures had been closer to the beach, refuse could have been thrown onto the beach as well (the intertidal zone still being used for defecating--Frimigacci 1990:14). It was interesting to note a number of pig remains, especially mandibles, associated with the toft zones of many houses, as might be expected from our observations on Futuna. Some houses clearly had more, but we were not able to determine why as no residents were present during our visits. There were also notable occurrence of pig bones among the shoreline trees, where women and children might be expected to consume feasting foods, or where dogs or pigs could have dragged them. We also made a quick tally of refuse types associated with the *fono* structures (1 used for the men's kava rituals, and 2 used by women and children for eating, although these may have also served as residences). The results (Table 4), clearly show unusual feasting related items associated with the men's structure, especially beer, plastic plates and forks, and frozen chicken wrappers--although curiously the most pig remains were associated with one of the women's eating structures). The refuse around the men's *fono* contrasts with the grab-sample of items recorded for strictly domestic structures (Table 4). This provides some confidence that major feasting structures can be identified archaeologically solely on the basis of their refuse characteristics.

We hope to return to Futuna to verify these and the other tentative interpretations and conclusions advanced in this report. We thank everyone who has helped us to understand the traditional socioeconomic and feasting structure of Futunan society.

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Table 1: List of Informants

Name	Position
Sokotaua Filipino	Elder of community?
Leaua Fakamalino	
Dakala	Employee of library on Futuna
Falakiko Gnata	Association culturel
Setefano Takaniko	Saatula – Director of Association culturel
Antonio Takasi	Professor of Futunan culture
Ikasa Alefeletau	Association culturel
Antonio Falematagnia	Head of Kutuga in Malae
Lelevai Petelo	
Tomasi Vehikite	Translator/Secretary for King of kingdom
Mitiriko Atuvase	Tomasi’s Father-in-law
Takala	At Leava
Father Lafaele Tevaga	Priest at the mission in Ono, Alo Kingdom
Frederic Dentand	Service d’Economie Rural
Phillipe Huneau	RFO
Maria Tafili	
Guy and Jo Guennou	Instructors

***Father Tevaga is also referenced to as “LT” in the text

Table 2: Futunan Feasting Functions by Social Group

A: Traditional (to 1940) Feasting Functions

		FUNCTION					
		Between Groups		Within Groups			
Sponsoring Social Unit		Alliance Creation & Maintenance	Promotion (for wealthy & elite)	Investment	Solidarity	Socioeconomic & Political Support	Tribute
Paramount Chief & Council (Royal Feasts)		Royal Feasts				Inauguration Feasts	Work Feasts First Fruits Feasts Calamity & Propitiation Feasts
Village Chiefs / Villagers		Village Feasts War & Victory Feasts	Village Feasts War & Victory Feasts		First Fruits Feasts Council Feasts War & Victory Feasts	Village Feasts Council Feasts Inauguration Feasts	Village Feasts?
Kutuga		Marriage Feasts (for elites)	Birth Feasts Circumcision Feasts Tattooing Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Circumcision Feasts Tattooing Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Circumcision Feasts Tattooing Feasts Curing Feasts? Funeral Feasts		
Kaiga		Marriage Feasts	Birth Feasts Circumcision Feasts Tattooing Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Circumcision Feasts Tattooing Feasts Funeral Feasts			
Individuals		Friendship Feasts					

B: Contemporary Feasting Functions

Sponsoring Social Unit	Alliance Maintenance	Promotion	Socioeconomic & Political Support	Solidarity	Investment
Paramount Chief					
Village Chiefs & Villagers	Village Feasts	Village Feasts	Village Feasts Office-Taking Feasts	Fono -Kava Feasts	
Kutuga	Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Confirmation Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Confirmation Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts			Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Confirmation Feasts
Kaiga	Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Confirmation Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts		Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Marriage Feasts Funeral Feasts	Birth Feasts Communion Feasts Confirmation Feasts

Table 3: Prestige Objects

1) Traditional:

Colored Feathers (O'Reilly 1962:64; Rozier 1963:96)
Tamed Birds (O'Reilly 1962:63,64)
Whale ivory ornaments (Burrows 1936:65)
Bark cloth art "Siapo"
Kava mixing bowls (tonoa)
Shells & shell jewelry (esp. Ovulus—Burrows 1936:65)
Necklaces (Froment et al. n.d.)
Colored clothes (i.e. worn around waist like skirt or hung)
Mats (given at feasts--several varieties, including some very fine & valuable)
Fans (Viala 1919:247)
Serving bowls
Cash
Canoes
Large wood bowls (koumets)

2) Foods:

Pigs
Sea Turtles (Kirch 1994:267)
Coconut oil and cream
Kava (plant, serving bowls, etc)
Alcohol
Taro
Yams
Fai Kai
Coconut crabs
Various Fish

3) Other:

Taro land
Houses and number of?
Tumeric (Kirch 1994:269)
Smoked fish (in notes from Kirch)
Given items at feasts – pigs, chickens, fish, turtles, taro, yams, sharks, rays, manioc, coconuts, breadfruits
(Viala 1919:247)
tattoos for women (Viala 1919:250)
Churches

4) Modern Additions:

Cars
Tv's
Western clothing and shoes
Cigarettes
Imported foods
Silver Rings

Table 4: Alofi

Industrial Refuse		Household	Fale Fono
	Beer cans	4	2
	Pop cans	10	3
	Plastic bottles	6	2
	Plastic chicken wrappers	1	6
	Chip wrappers	3	1
	Meat tins	13	2
	Metal roofing	2	1
	Rusted tin	2	6
	Cigarette packages	3	0
	Juice containers	1	0
	Styrofoam	2	0
	Plastic plates	0	9
	Batteries	0	3
	Plastic spoon	13	
Pig remains*	Mandible	3	0
	Maxilla	4	0
	Other	2	2

*A large number of pig remains were found with some houses