CHAPTER XIV

SOCIAL AND LOCAL GROUPING

PRELIMINARY

I PROPOSE, in discussing social and local grouping, to adopt the defined terminology suggested on p. 144 of the fourth edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (London, 1912), as, though I do not know to what extent this has been accepted by ethnologists generally, it suits my present purpose. As here defined, social groupings fall into two classes; in the one, people are bound together by ties of kinship, either real or fictitious, including the family in the European sense, or larger groupings of relatives; in the other they are bound by a tie of some other kind, such as the common possession of a totem, or common descent from some mythical or historical ancestor; sometimes groupings intermediate between the two classes may be found. Local groupings are dependent on the common habitation of a house, hamlet, village or district. Sometimes the social and local groups coincide, as when a totemic clan occupies a village or hamlet of its own.

There are a few matters to be considered, as affecting Polynesia generally, as to which I will say a word or two before entering into the consideration of the grouping.

The reference to *fictitious* kinship must be borne in mind in connection with Polynesia. The subject of adoption cannot be discussed here; but I may say that a child, and, indeed, an adult, belonging to one social group, might be adopted into another group, and thereupon become, speaking generally, an actual member of that group—just as much, or almost so, as he or she would have been if his or her claim to membership were based upon blood relationship. Then, again, I think that if a male of one social group married a female of another, and she came to live with him and his people, she was commonly regarded as being in a way, and to a certain extent, a member of his and their group, or as belonging to it in a sense; though they did not lose sight of her different origin. As regards what is spoken of as *real* kinship, I must say in advance that, whilst systems of matrilineal descent of blood, or traces of them and of exogamy are found in some of the islands, succession to the name or title

of a social group was mainly patrilineal; and therefore the distinction between maternal and paternal relationship does not appear to have been nearly so closely recognized as it would be among people with more archaic social systems, and a true brother and sister relationship between the children of a father of one social group by wives of different groups would commonly be recognized.

The actual investigation of the systems of grouping is rendered difficult by the intermixtures, sometimes extensive, which had taken place between the social groups, both great and small, and which sometimes make it hard to show that the occupants of a given geographical area were, or had been, a social group, although there is reason for believing that this was so. The children and later descendants of a marriage between persons of two different groups might live and become established in the home of either the male or the female ancestor; and, whilst they would, I think, commonly be regarded as belonging to the social group among which they lived, and which would have, as it were, absorbed them—especially so, perhaps, if it was the group of the male ancestor, even though their rank of blood might be regarded as derived from their female ancestor—this was not necessarily so; and it was sometimes a matter of uncertainty and arrangement whether the children of a marriage should be regarded as belonging to the group of their father or that of their mother, and often, I think, they were recognized as belonging to both groups, and this dual connection would, or might be, handed down to their descendants. It follows that a family—a term which might often include a large body of people—might be treated as belonging to a group other than that with whom they were living; and the recognition of this fact might well militate against the recognition of what was fundamentally a social system of grouping. So also in the case of an adopted person, whilst he was a member of the group into which he had been adopted, I do not think that he necessarily lost his right of membership of his group of origin. I draw attention to these sources of confusion—there are, I think, other sources also—to illustrate the difficulty, and perhaps often the impossibility, of demonstrating systems of social grouping in cases where apparently it prevailed substantially.

The subject of clans (I am using this term without reference to the question of exogamy) obviously enters into that of social

and local grouping, as indeed a clan is a social group; but I have decided, as a matter of convenience, to deal with the two subjects separately, confining myself for the present to the mere question of grouping, and dealing separately in later chapters with one or two matters which are commonly recognized as being attributes or ideas or practices of clans. Then, again, there are the subjects of matrilineal descent, exogamy, totemism, and special relationship matters, the powers, privileges and duties of chiefs and heads of groups, the council meeting or parliament, and succession and inheritance, the investigation of each of which may from time to time throw light upon the question of grouping; indeed there is hardly a subject dealing with the social and political systems of Polynesia which does not touch it directly or indirectly. It is obvious therefore that, as it is out of the question to deal with all these matters here, the present discussion can only be general and incomplete. I will begin it with considering the grouping in Samoa.

SAMOA

We have seen that each of the three main divisions of Upolu was a distinct self-governing area, as also was the Manu'an group of islands; that inside these larger areas, and in the islands of Savai'i and Tutuila there were a number of self-governing districts; whilst these were divided into self-governing village districts, which again were subdivided into self-governing villages composed of domestic family households; and we have to ascertain, so far as may be possible, whether the tie which bound together the people of these various areas, great and small, was, in the main, social or local. In quoting several authorities with reference to the matter we cannot be sure that the meanings of the terms districts, villages, etc., used by them are necessarily identical with those used by me, or indeed that they all use them with the same meanings.

Stuebel says that each family had its *matai* or head, with whom the family name had always been connected; and that a large family had *puiainga* or divisions, standing by themselves, each of which had its *matai*, whilst over the whole family stood the *matai sili* or superior head. He refers to the varying extent in different villages of the power and rule of a *matai sili*; but says that the government of the *tumua*, or chief town of the district was set over all. In the immediate context he speaks of

Aleipata, Safotulafai, Leulumoenga, Lufilufi and others as villages[1]. It is clear from this last reference that his "village" is, or includes, what I am calling a "village district"—indeed Aleipata is, as we have seen, included by Krämer in what I am calling districts.

According to von Bülow, each Samoan village consisted of several village divisions or *fuaiala*, each of which was composed of families connected with each other through relationship, the occurrences of war, and a consequent common necessity for protection, or through other contingencies. Each family was governed by the head of the family, *i.e.* the bearer of the family name, but he discussed matters beforehand with the members of the family. The *fuaiala* was governed by the *matai* or head of one of the families belonging to it, who, however, could only make regulations in agreement with its other *matai*. The village was governed by the heads of the collective *fuaiala*, who, however, yielded precedence in their councils to an appointed member, who owed his post either to election, or in some cases to tradition[2].

Krämer says that in Samoa the family was the basis of the state and one might therefore call Samoa a "family state." Every increase in the family, either through marriage or adoption, but particularly through birth, was greeted with joy, especially in the case of the families of the more powerful chiefs, which thereby attained greater power[3]. The general name for a family was *ainga*, and its head, who bore the family name, was called *matai*. If the family was very large it was divided up into sub-families, which were called *ituainga* or *puiainga*[4]. In that case the head of the parent family was called *matai sili* (principal head of the family), to distinguish him from the *matai* of the branches, who were all under the *matai sili*[5]. Krämer frequently speaks of a family in some village, village district, or district of Samoa as being *ainga* of one of the big families, thereby meaning that it was a branch of it; and he sometimes refers to one of these local families as being *ainga* to more than one great family, thereby meaning that it was a branch of each of them, a situation which would, of course, be extremely common.

[1] Stuebel, p. 107.
[2] Von Bülow, *Globus*, vol. LXXXIII, p. 375.
[3] *S.I.* vol. I, p. 31.
[4] In Pratt's dictionary the meaning of *itu* is said to be *side*; so we may perhaps regard an *ituainga* as a side branch of the parent trunk. Pratt applies the term *puiainga* to a family living under the same roof.
[5] Krämer, *S.I.* vol. I, p. 476.

According to a translation in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* of Schultz's account of the matter, the Samoan race was divided, like a clan, into *ainga* or families, which again were split up into groups or branches. If a family spread into several villages, the total of the members in one village was called *fuaifale*. Within the same village the larger branches were called *ituainga* and the smaller *puiainga*, whilst by the term *faletama* was understood all the children of one pair of parents (*i.e.* full brothers and sisters). At the head of every branch stood the *matai*, or head of the family. One of these was the chief, or *matai sili* of the whole clan. Every *matai* had a name —*ingoa*, *suafa*—which was handed down from generation to generation. The *matai* of the family branches were either subservient to the rule (*pule*) of the *matai sili*, or had their own *pule*. This depended upon their origin, which varied in different families, and was generally to be traced back to the decree of the founder of the family, or some other ancestor[1].

Ella explains the social organization of Samoa as follows. "The several tribes were constituted by the families, who were lineal descendants of the original possessors of the country, probably conquerors of an earlier race, who were extinct or driven out before them. These tribes were at first pure and distinct; but in course of time some amalgamated, and others were divided by certain families separating from their respective tribes, and forming distinct tribes under the elders or leaders of the secession. This latter change occasionally arose from family quarrels, but chiefly through emigration to found settlements in other parts of the country. These emigrants retained their fealty to the head chief of the original tribe, and were governed by him in time of war, or in any important movement; in other respects they were independent, and under the control of their own appointed head"[2].

The difference of terminology used by these writers, and the uncertainty as to whether they all mean the same thing by the same term, even if used by each of them with precision, and the further doubt arising from the fact that (except in the case of Ella) we are only dealing with translations from the original German, make it impossible to co-ordinate the accounts with any confidence that we are doing so correctly. The following tabulated statements, however, represent what seems to me to be the probable comparative explanation.

[1] *J.P.S.* vol. xx, p. 43. [2] Ella, *A.A.A.S.* vol. IV, p. 629. Cf. vol. VI, p. 596.

My terminology (to be used as a basis for comparison)

1. Domestic household.
2. Village.
3. Village district, containing several villages.
4. District, containing several village districts.

Stuebel

1. Not specifically referred to. (Perhaps included in 2.)
2. *Puiainga* or divisions of a large family, with their *matai*.
3. The whole of that family (occupying a village) with its *matai sili*.
4. District, with its *tumua*, or chief town (he evidently uses the term *tumua* as applicable to any governmental village).

Von Bülow

1. Family, with its head.
2. *Fuaiala* or village division, composed of connected families, with the head of one of those families as its *matai*.
3. Village, governed by heads of collective *fuaiala*, one of whom had precedence.
4. Not mentioned.

Krämer

1. Not specifically referred to. (Perhaps included in 2.)
2. *Ituainga* or *puiainga* (branch of large *ainga* or family), with its *matai*.
3. The whole of that *ainga*, with its *matai sili*.
4. Not mentioned.

Schultz

1. Not specifically referred to. (Perhaps included in 2.)
2. *Ituainga* or *puiainga*, branch of the *ainga* or family with its *matai*.
3. The whole *ainga* or family, occupying the entire village, called *fuaifale* (but itself perhaps a branch of a still larger family), with its *matai sili*.
4. That larger family spread over several villages.

These tabulated statements are merely intended to co-ordinate, so far as possible, the particulars given by the several writers; but I will now tabulate my conception, based partly on those particulars, and partly upon other matters that have already appeared and will appear hereafter, of the general socio-political structure of these self-governing areas, admitting, however, that, so far as its social character is concerned, my construction of the matter must only be regarded broadly, and subject to qualifications. I think that the entire system was in the main, and looking at it in this way, one of what I may call graduated social, local, self-government; and adopting my own terminology, I describe it, as I understand it, *broadly* as follows. References to relationship of course include both real and fictitious kinship.

1. The smallest unit was the domestic family household governed by one of its members, who was its official head, the

bearer of the name of the family, in consultation more or less with other members.

2. The village was a collection of related domestic families, forming a consanguine family. Its affairs were managed by the village *fono* (council meeting), the persons taking part in which were the official heads—owners of the names—of the constituent domestic families. At the head of this *fono* was the official head of one of these domestic families, who would also be the official head—owner of the name—of the consanguine family which constituted the village.

3. The village district was a collection of related villages, and may, perhaps, be regarded as an enlarged consanguine family. Its affairs were managed by the *fono* of the village district. The persons taking part in this were, apparently, the official heads of the constituent domestic families of the constituent villages. Only one of these would, however, be entitled to speak on behalf of each village, this one being, as I gather, commonly, though apparently not necessarily, the official head of the village. At the head of this *fono* was the official head of one of these villages, who would also be the official head—owner of the name—of the enlarged consanguine family which constituted the village district.

4. The district was a collection of related village districts. Its affairs were managed by the *fono* of the district. The persons taking part in this were, apparently, the official heads of the constituent villages of the constituent village districts. Only one of these would, however, be entitled to speak on behalf of each village district, this one being, as I gather, commonly, though apparently not necessarily, the official head of the village district. At the head of this *fono* was the official head of one of these village districts, who would also be the official head—owner of the name—of the social group which constituted the district.

As regards my references to the *fono*, though the representative characters of the people entitled to take part in them and of those entitled to speak is undoubted, it must be understood that the evidence concerning the regulations as to the specific people who might do this is not exact, and it is possible that the regulations themselves were neither exact nor universal. I am only stating here, for the purpose of illustrating the general social relationship between the various political areas, small and large, what appears to have been, broadly

speaking, the practice at Samoan *fono*[1]. It must be understood, as regards actual speaking, that chiefs would commonly do this, not personally, but by the mouths of their official orators.

Concerning the social character of the relationship between the people of these closely-neighbouring areas, I draw attention to some of the statements of the writers whom I have quoted. It is, I think, pretty clear that Stuebel regards the relationship as social. So does Krämer. So also does Schultz—indeed he refers to the common ancestor. So too does Ella, though he refers to amalgamations of distinct "tribes." Von Bülow refers to the connection between the families composing a *fuaiala* as having been that of relationship, or based upon war and the consequent need for protection, or on other contingencies. Ella's reference to amalgamation is probably based mainly upon the consequences following intermarriages between members of different groups, whose children and descendants might belong to both groups; but von Bülow's reference to connections based on war and the consequent need for protection touches another subject, and perhaps Ella does so also to a certain extent. Schultz says that a family or branch thereof could be placed either by compulsion or by freewill under the power (*pule*) of an unrelated family. The first case was the result of war, by which one of the parties was subjugated. The other took place when one family put itself under the protection of another from fear of subjugation, and he illustrates this by the case of a *matai*, who was pursued by the revenge of an enemy, and would take refuge with another, and so save his life. He had, however, to hand over his name and *pule* to his protector, who would return the name, but keep the *pule*, and the family which thus forfeited its independence was thenceforth regarded as the property of its protectors[2]. Von Bülow's reference to other contingencies is perhaps based upon the fact that kinship between members of a social group might be what the *Notes and Queries*' definition calls "fictitious," including relationship through adoption and matrimonial matters. I think, however, this question of war and protection may be regarded as incidental and not fundamental, and that, so far at all events as these local areas are concerned, the effect of the general evidence up to this point has been to indicate that the grouping in Samoa was fundamentally and mainly of a social character.

[1] We shall see, amongst other things, that those who took part in a *fono* sometimes included *related* people living outside the area.

[2] Schultz, *J.P.S.* vol. xx, pp. 44 *sq.* Cf. von Bülow, *Globus*, vol. LXXXIII, p. 374.

It is clear from the information given by Krämer concerning the distribution in different parts of Samoa of the well-known families that one village of a village district might be the home of one of these families or a branch of it, whilst another was the home of another family or a branch of it. There was therefore a certain amount of local family intermixture which might seem at first sight to point to local grouping. I do not, however, believe for a moment that separate families, or sections of them, acting independently of each other, had plumped themselves down in the same local area, or that one had done so in the area of the other, as such an act would be at variance with Samoan ideas, and would probably give rise to fighting. My conception of the usual explanation of the matter is that the villages of a given village district were originally occupied by family *A*; that a member of an outside family *B*, afterwards, as the result of intermarriage with a member of family *A*, established a sub-family in the village district; and that this sub-family and its descendants were ultimately the occupiers of a newly-formed village of the village district. This sub-family and its descendants would be in a sense an *ainga* or branch, not only of the family from which they had sprung, but also of the family in whose village district they were living, the connecting tie with the latter being one of actual kinship, based on the marriage of which they were descendants, though the main relationship would probably be that with the family of the male ancestor. They were thus, as it were, incorporated with and formed, in a greater or less degree, part of the original family of the village district. This seems to me to be the most reasonable and probable explanation of the matter[1]. I have, however, tried to put this explanation to a test by an investigation of some of the extensive and detailed family information provided by Krämer, more especially in his genealogical trees and in his particulars as to the ceremonious "greetings" offered to distinguished persons entitled to take part in the *fono*, or parliaments, of the various areas, great and small, and his explanatory notes on those greetings, and his notes with reference to the villages; this being material from which it is possible to dig out a good deal of useful comparative information. In a general way it may be said that the genealogical trees and the greetings given by

[1] The object of such a marriage would sometimes, as we shall see hereafter, be the desire of family *B* to secure the support of family *A* in case of war; and this is perhaps another subject which von Bülow has in mind in referring to war.

Krämer indicate that the spreading of branches of a family to places distant from its main seat appears to have come about usually through marriages of members of the main line with women belonging to the distant village districts; and it is the son by such a marriage who seems usually to have been regarded as the founder of the new branch. This would lead one to expect that in village districts where there were two or more families of chiefs these families would be more or less actually related to each other, or—supposing the new-comer married a woman of a minor family living under the protection of a great chief—would be regarded as related according to native ideas. A comparative investigation of Krämer's information and his comments on it seems to make it clear that geographical combinations for governmental purposes also of apparently separate families, occupying villages of the same village districts, were due, not to a system of local grouping, but to definite social relationships between them. Some specific examples of this will be found in later pages.

Any social group would naturally have its central home, which might or might not be its original or ancestral home, but which would probably be the place of residence of the head of the group, the bearer of its title or name. As the group expanded numerically, it would spread geographically, and the natural course, if the group were not hedged in, as it were, by other groups, would be for this spreading to be effected by the formation of branch groups, collected round the central group in an enlarged home belonging to all of them. This, however, would not necessarily be so. There might not be the necessary space; some internal dispute might bring about a migration of a member of the group with his immediate relations to a new home in another part of Samoa; the marriage of a member of the group with a spouse in another part of Samoa might lead to the foundation of a branch group geographically separated from the central home; a member of the group might from mere restlessness and wish for change, or for some other reason, migrate elsewhere. Changes and developments of this character undoubtedly occurred, and evidently had done so during a very long period; and we thus have material for examining, as regards specific groups, the social relationship between the parent group and its branches under the two conditions of geographical proximity and separation.

I will begin the matter by considering the three great divisions