

Gada

Three Approaches to the Study of African Society

By Asmarom Legesse

Gada is a highly innovative study which explores the meaning of asymmetric dialectics in human society. It demonstrates that structural models, such as those analyzed by Lévi-Strauss, and empirical processes, such as those studied by American cultural anthropologists, are perpetually at odds with each other. So long as anthropology examines only one or the other reality, its conclusions remain partial, if not illusory.

Legesse interprets these approaches inductively. He isolates each method's domain by applying it to a rich body of field data on the Gada System—the central institution of the Galla of Ethiopia. Structurally, this institution is a closed system which admits no change. Empirically, it is one of the most unstable and dynamic institutions on record. Computer simulation was successfully employed to show how the contradiction between social structure and demography generated change and how the combined social-demographic system underwent orderly transformation for several centuries. Per-

haps for the first time in the history of anthropology the development of a complex institution has been reproduced experimentally.

The third approach, social drama analysis, was used to explore how the society reinterpreted its models in time of crisis and how it invented ambiguous compromise solutions that temporarily resolved the deeper contradictions.

Legesse shows how these approaches can become powerful instruments of research. However, in his thought-provoking postscript, he criticizes the looser varieties of evolutionary anthropology which have no method and feed upon the Westerner's desire to see his civilization as the pinnacle of all human achievements.

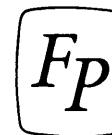
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A. L.

Part I

Description

INTRODUCTION

I have studied the Borana of Ethiopia because their central institution, the Gada System, contains complex and seemingly anomalous features that are a major challenge to social science. In the course of trying to understand the problems their social structure poses, it became necessary to make use of three analytical procedures developed within the framework of three disparate intellectual traditions of anthropology. The study was not originally intended to be a comparative evaluation of the social scientist's analytical procedures. It became necessary to carry out such an evaluation as the gathering and interpretation of data progressed.

When an African social scientist attempts to study an African culture with the help of research instruments developed by Western scholars, philosophical issues come to the fore that deserve serious attention. The fact that social science developed almost entirely in the West makes its claim of universality subject to question. To the extent that the analytical tools of anthropology and sociology are independent of the cultural environment in which they emerged we should not hesitate to use them in African studies. But are they, in fact, independent?

I have attempted to carry out the analysis of Borana society with the aid of the existing tools of social science. However unsatisfactory the tradition of social science might be, on moral and ideological grounds, we cannot afford to reject its analytical tools or its empirical findings. It is for this reason that I have chosen to direct this study toward methodological problems and the nature of sociological data. In most other respects African social science must go back to first principles and develop a body of sociological theories that are not inimical to our existence and to our fundamental aspirations.

When we use several analytical tools successively in the examination of a single problem, we find ourselves in a position where we can delineate the premises and logical boundaries of each method more sharply than the advocates of the method are prepared to do. We must also go beyond this preliminary objective and attempt to isolate each method from the spurious body of culture-bound beliefs historically associated with it. This goal cannot be achieved in a single study; rather, it must claim the efforts of generations of African students of culture.

So far as method is concerned, then, what does the academic marketplace have to offer? First and foremost, the concept of structure must claim our attention. One of the most important theoretical issues this book raises concerns the nature of social structure and its relationship to history. The most rigorous and productive definition of social structure has been furnished by Claude Lévi-Strauss. The reader should be aware that this is the only sense in which the concept is used in the present investigation. The looser conceptualizations of structure will be referred to as "social organization" or "social relations." Structure refers solely to those aspects of the social fabric having demonstrably systemic properties. The mechanical model the anthropologist devises to explain these properties is a derivative of the cognitive categories and relational concepts furnished by the society under investigation.

In the words of Lévi-Strauss a structural model must meet with several requirements. First, the structure

... is made up of several elements none of which can undergo change without effecting changes in all other elements.

In the second place, for any model there should be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type.

In the third place, the above properties make it possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications.

And, last, the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the observed facts. [1]

In the present investigation an attempt is being made to meet these four criteria of structural analysis. Furthermore, I have sought to expand the method in two ways:

1. The analysis is carried out under the constraint (not accepted by Lévi-Strauss) that the mechanical model must agree in detail with the unconscious native model elicited from informants.

2. The analysis of structure is not limited to a single point in history (synchronic). The model generates the systematic transformation of social institutions in time (diachronic).

What is the basis for claiming that these two steps constitute innovations in structural analysis?

First of all, Lévi-Strauss has applied his method almost exclusively to the study of synchronic transformation and has tended to see diachronic change as a form of disorder. [2] He has demonstrated how several unconscious native models of contemporaneous societies can be analyzed as permutations of each other. The

[1] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, chap. 15.

[2] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, chap. 4.

present investigation demonstrates that the same kind of order exists in the transformation of the same structure over time. It is doubtful that Lévi-Strauss would, in principle, object to this kind of analysis, because he himself has given us incidental evidence showing the presence of such order in history. [3]

Secondly, my contribution lies in my attempt to demonstrate that the structural model of the anthropologist and the unconscious native model itself must be in complete agreement. Lévi-Strauss has from time to time suggested that the two models may sometimes be in disagreement. [4] I maintain that, in the absence of pronounced social conflict and as long as we use the same kind of data as our native mentors, there is no room for disagreement; and should any inconsistencies arise, it is *our* model which must be judged defective, not theirs. Only if this constraint is imposed on structural analysis can the model become empirically testable.

The method of structural analysis is extremely valuable, but it has a limited domain in that it uses only one type of data. Rather than eliciting information directly from the representatives of the community, if we collected quantitative-observational data on human and animal demography and on ecological relations and fed this information into the structural model, we would uncover long-term processes of change that the unconscious native model largely discounts. These processes are inaccessible to structural analysis: the data are alien to native thought, and structural models based on native thought have no strategy for incorporating such data into the analysis. Demographic variability is one of the many different types of variability American ethnologists have examined with great skill in an effort to study contemporary equilibrium systems [5] and the modification of these systems under the influence of history. [6] Unfortunately, the ethnologist does not devote enough attention to unconscious structures, and his attempt to analyze change becomes either atomistic or unsystematic.

My purpose is to combine these two methods by analyzing change *after* carrying out a rigorous analysis of synchronic structures (see chapters 5 and 6). I, therefore, part company with standard culture-historical studies in one specific sense: I subordinate the analysis of change to the analysis of structure.

Finally, the modification and combination of these two methods are not sufficient for an adequate understanding of living communities. Whereas *unconscious* structure and the environing system of variables interact to generate long-term processes of change, living communities also attempt *consciously* to manipulate their culture for short-term gains. This is most likely to happen in situations of marked social conflict that must somehow be regulated or resolved. Under such circumstances men who normally operate on a univocal symbolic plane exhibit remarkable versatility in interpreting and reinterpreting their institutional charters. They produce a complex and often paradoxical exegesis of their collective

[3] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, pp. 44-46, 34-35.

[4] Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, pp. 229-31.

[5] An excellent recent example of this type of analysis is Roy A. Rappaport's *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People*.

[6] George Peter Murdock, *Social Structure*.

symbols. They resort to ambiguous forms of communication and invoke alternate models of the social and moral order (see chapter 8).

British social anthropology has given us a wealth of data on this aspect of social life. Unfortunately, the adherents of this intellectual tradition tend to go beyond the logical boundaries of their analytical domain and claim (a) that conflict and ambiguity are pervasive in human society,[7] (b) that the systematic cognitive models of society are not important,[8] (c) that culture history is a figment of the anthropologist's imagination. [9]

The present study therefore deviates from this intellectual tradition in two critical respects: (1) I attempt to isolate the sociological condition (i.e., conflict) under which the ambiguity of communication and the plurality of native models become prevalent; (2) I subordinate the study of *conflict-and-ambiguity* to the univocal analysis of *structure-and-change* and interpret the former as the temporally restricted variant of the latter; (3) I maintain that ambiguity is most clearly observable in the functioning of social groups and in the distribution of scarce resources, rather than in the structure of institutions.

This, in short, is the nature of my contribution. My use of these analytical procedures is not purely additive. Rather, my purpose is to examine the powers and limitations of each method and to explore the regions that lie "between" the three domains. The types of data these methods call for are in direct interaction with each other. The fact that the adherents of structuralism, cultural anthropology, and social anthropology have tended to see their respective procedures as mutually exclusive approaches has given rise to highly distorted images of social systems and has prevented the three schools of thought from developing tools for the study of the *relationship* between their respective domains.

As an African social scientist, I have deliberately avoided an excessive identification with any one school of thought. I have chosen, instead, to maintain a certain degree of intellectual distance from each tradition for the purpose of rethinking the philosophical foundations of social science and raising questions about the properties of the scientific method as opposed to those aspects of anthropology and sociology that are mere reflections of the historic and cultural conditions that spurred their development.

The Ethnographic and Historical Context

These momentous issues will be examined not in a speculative void but rather within the context of a living social system. The concrete object of our study is the Borana branch of the Oromo or Galla people of Ethiopia. They belong to the Cushitic language subfamily which extends over most of northeastern Africa (see

[7] Max Gluckman, *The Judicial Process among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia*, pp. 405-6.
[8] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, pp. 189-90.
[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 50-51.

Figure 1-1). Nearly all the Oromo (variously estimated at eight to ten million people) speak closely related dialects of the same language - Gallinña. They all share a common cultural heritage. In the historic annals of the peoples of Africa the Oromo hold a special position in that they are among the most expansive societies on record. Their rapid spread over present-day Ethiopia and Kenya is comparable in

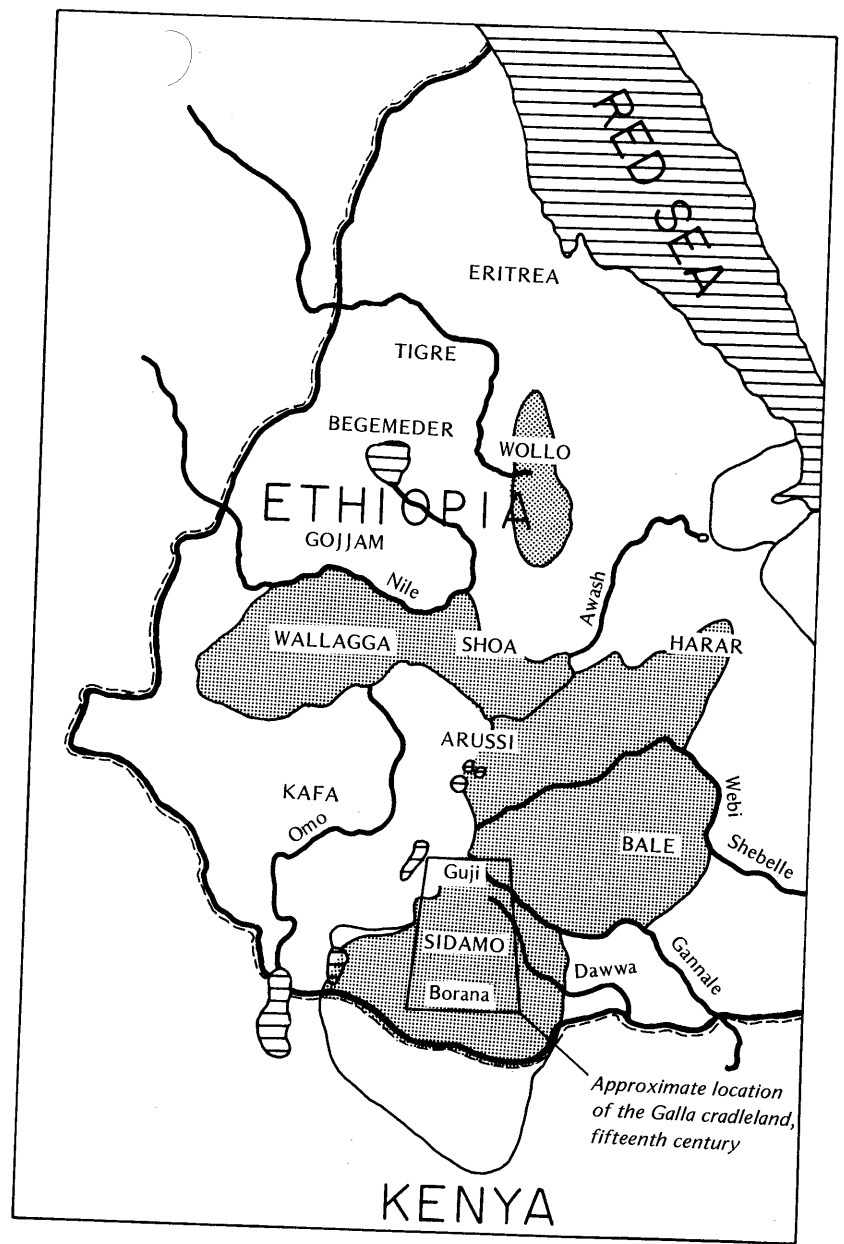


Figure 1-1. Distribution of the Gallinña-speaking Ethiopian Community

magnitude to the conquests of the Fulani of West Africa and the Nguni of southern Africa. The Oromo exodus is a function of a massive growth in population that occurred during the sixteenth century. Behind this great spread of their society there lies an institution – the Gada System – which was at once the basis of their military conquests and which set limits on its demographic antecedents. This is the institution to which the present investigation is dedicated.

The Gada System is a system of classes (*huba*) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political, and ritual responsibilities. Each gada class remains in power during a specific term (*gada*) which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony. Before assuming a position of leadership, the gada class is required to wage war against a community that none of their ancestors had raided. This particular war is known as *butta* and is waged on schedule every eight years. It is this event that was most directly connected with the pulsating frontier of their dominions in the sixteenth century leading toward the conquest of nearly half of Ethiopia's land surface.

There is some historical evidence that in the sixteenth century one system of gada classes governed over a major part of the Gallinña-speaking community. [10] Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the major divisions of the society drifted apart, each evolving slightly different versions of the same institution. Only in the far north (Wollo province) and in the southwest (Kafa province) did they develop monarchies that are radically different from the traditional socio-political system. At the same time, the centrality of the Gada System in their social life declined and gada activities were progressively transformed into rituals of revitalization. When the exodus was at its peak in the sixteenth century, there were several kingdoms in central and southern Ethiopia that fell under Galla domination. These were the kingdoms of Bale, Fattagar, Hadia, and Dawaro. Today there is little evidence that these societies ever existed. All of them were apparently absorbed by the Galla. We should, of course, assume that in the course of being absorbed they in turn had an influence on Galla culture, because encounters of this magnitude are almost always dual in character.

There are hardly any island cultures *within* the conquered territories. Only a few communities that came within their sphere of influence remained culturally autonomous. Even endogamous castes developed an intimate symbiotic relationship with the Oromo, and in Borana they seem to have developed their own version of the Gada System. The only real island cultures are to be found on the actual islands in the rift valley lakes. The Oromo are not known for their navigational abilities. Hence, the islands often contain remnants of societies antedating the Oromo expansion, whereas the area around the lakes is thoroughly transformed.

The Oromo had penetrated far into Gojjam, Begemeder, and Tigre as early as the seventeenth century. [11] In all probability this population was absorbed by the Amharic- and Tigrinña-speaking populations. That such a process probably did take

[10] Bahrey, "History of the Galla," in *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646*, translated and edited by C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford.

[11] Francesco Beguinot, *La Cronaca Abbreviata D'Abissinia*, pp. 43-52.

place is strongly suggested by the fact that Oromo personal names frequently appear in the genealogical records of Christian parishes. The question therefore arises as to how and to what extent the cultures of Northwest Ethiopia, which are normally thought of as the core of the ancient Christian empire, were in fact shaped under the influence of Oromo society. There are, to date, no balanced analyses of the relative significance of these two fountains of Ethiopian culture, one heavily influenced by oriental civilizations and the other emerging directly out of the African background. [12]

Borana and the Traditional Oromo Social System

It is significant that the area usually recognized as the cradleland of Oromo culture by most of the Gallinña-speaking Ethiopians is in the general area of present-day Guji and Northern Boranaland. [13] The Borana themselves point to an area north-east of their present territory as the place where they originated. Both the oral traditions and historical documents indicate that the Guji-Borana region was roughly the area from which the Oromo launched their massive invasion in the sixteenth century.

The expansion of the Oromo population into the central highlands of Ethiopia was associated with a rapid process of cultural incorporation. The Oromo seemed to assimilate the conquered populations as frequently as they were absorbed by them. In this process the Gallinña-speaking region of central Ethiopia developed into a veritable cultural corridor. It opened up extensive cultural exchanges between societies which would have otherwise remained isolated and atomistic.

Because of this critical role of the Galla in Ethiopia's culture history, it becomes essential for us to try to understand their traditional institutions. These institutions have been preserved among the southernmost pastoral populations – the Borana and the Guji. The fact that these groups did not leave their original territory has, in all probability, contributed to the conservation of their institutions.

In many parts of the Gallinña-speaking areas of central Ethiopia, I was informed that the Borana are the most senior segment of Oromo society. It seems that this was one reason why pilgrims from Wallagga and Shoa travelled across half of Ethiopia to go to Boranaland to take part in the anointment (*muda*) of Borana

[12] This remarkable process of cultural exchange deserves full-length investigation because of its far-reaching implications for the emergence of a shared national culture. The process cannot be reduced to a simplistic picture in which Gallinña speakers become Amhara, or Amharic speakers become Galla. It is, rather, a very complex situation in which many cultural vectors are interacting to produce a resultant that is fundamentally new. Any attempt to analyze the national culture by reference to any one of the traditional cultures, as Levine does, is an attempt to describe the whole by reference to one of its parts and, as such, it is a misrepresentation of the emerging reality (Donald N. Levine, *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*).

[13] Herbert S. Lewis, "The Origins of Galla and Somali," pp. 27-46.

ritual leaders. Many such pilgrims have remained in Borana and have furnished me with an account of their pilgrimage. [14]

Cerulli has also recorded that similar pilgrimages took place from the eastern provinces (Arussi and Bale) into the area he calls "Abba Muda," located on the west banks of the Gannale river. Consequently, it has become common practice to refer to Abba Muda as the Oromo cradleland. This, however, is misleading, because Abba Muda is merely a common name of the Kallu, the ritual leader of Borana, and not the name of any locality. The term *muda*, when used by itself, is the name of the ceremony that is celebrated once every eight years in honor of the Kallu. The actual place where the ceremony is held is at the shrine of Oda, in Borana territory, a short distance to the west of the Gannale River. The location of this shrine corresponds closely to the information reported by Cerulli. [15]

The special significance of this ceremony lies in the fact that it is the point at which the two great institutions of the Oromo intersect, namely, the moiety system and the Gada System. As will be explained later (in chapter 3) all gada ceremonies are performed by gada leaders for gada classes. What is special about the *muda* ceremony is that it is one of the rare instances when the hereditary leaders of the kinship system (Kallu) and the elected leaders of the Gada System (Abba Gada) come to the same ceremonial grounds to participate in the same event. It is one of the critical foci of the Oromo polity. This is probably why the ceremony has retained its symbolic significance even for the Oromo who are no longer under the regime of the Gada System.

There are other factors suggesting that Borana holds a special place in the Oromo social system. Frequently the term "Borana" occurs among many of the agricultural Oromo as the name of the senior division of their kinship organization. Earlier writers assumed that the term refers to the western division of the Gallinna-speaking community. [16] However, there is evidence indicating that the name occurs in various parts of the eastern as well as the western regions. [17] The appropriate interpretation seems to be that "Borana" is not the designation of any

[14] They made the expedition on foot, seeking the assistance of friendly communities as they traveled. The trip took one to two months and was apparently an extremely arduous undertaking. So long as they exhibited the pilgrim's regalia — of which the most important was the forked walking stick — most communities gave them food and shelter. Upon arriving in Borana, they took part in the *muda* ceremony and offered their presents to one of the ritual leaders of Borana and received his blessings. Such pilgrimages were apparently common in the nineteenth century but have declined in recent decades. The practice gives strong indication that the agricultural Oromo considered Borana as their cradleland and the source of ritual power.

[15] Enrico Cerulli, *Somalia*, pp. 131, 133.

[16] Thus Huntingford (*The Galla of Ethiopia*, p. 11) states that "these names refer roughly to the eastern Galla (Baraytuma) and western Galla (Borana)." He makes this claim on the basis of the following evidence: Bruce, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 236; D'Abbadie, *Geographie de l'Ethiopie*, pp. 307, 311; De Salviac, *Les Galla*, pp. 31-32.

[17] In Beguinot's *Chronaca Abbreviata* the divisions of Galla society called Borana appear in Damot (p. 37), Gojjam (p. 43) in the western region, as well as Zwai (p. 36) in the eastern region.

one continuous territory but the name of an ancient moiety that has since become fragmented and localized in both regions. In traditional Oromo society territory was of little consequence. It is rather the mobile, dispersed groups (gada classes and kinship units) that served as the basis of their social organization.

This interpretation is fully consistent with a sixteenth-century manuscript written by an Ethiopian monk named Bahrey. In his "History of the Galla" Bahrey states that the society was made up of two divisions known as Borana and Baretuma. [18] He proceeds to give numerous subdivisions of each. At no point does he suggest, however, that moieties or their subdivisions were localized in specific regions. He discusses, further, how the leaders of the warrior classes who led the northward migration of the Oromo were sometimes Borana and sometimes Baretuma. [19]

It is indeed most interesting to discover that present-day Borana society is also based on a similar dual organization. The Borana have two moieties known as Sabbo and Gona. These moieties are completely dispersed throughout Borana territory. Representatives of each moiety are elected into gada office in equal numbers, and the top position of leadership — the office of the Abba Gada — is held sometimes by one and sometimes by the other moiety.

There is a direct and thoroughly instructive parallelism between the contemporary social organization of the Borana and the organization of the Oromo as a whole in the sixteenth century.

These are some of the historical and structural reasons why Borana were selected as the best representative of the Gallinna-speaking people of Ethiopia. Both the historical record and the somewhat modified institutions of the agricultural communities can be understood best if we take the present Borana socio-political system as a reasonably close approximation of the parent system. Of course it can only be an approximation, because Borana too has undergone an internal process of structural change. However, in the case of the Borana we have adequate understanding of the nature of this change and can therefore make intelligent inferences about the historical antecedents. All other Oromo communities outside of Borana, including the neighboring Guji, show evidence of externally instigated social change associated with a variety of reactive ritual complexes. They are therefore less useful in helping us to explain the nature of traditional Oromo society.

Fieldwork

I began my research into Galla culture in 1960. One year was devoted to surveying the available literature concerning age-sets in eastern Africa and the Gada System in Ethiopia. The literature on the Ethiopian societies was in Italian, French, and

[18] Bahrey, "History," chap. 4.

[19] *Ibid.*, chap. 11.

German. In studying this descriptive material I concentrated on the Gallinña-speaking peoples, principally the Tulama of Shoa province. On the basis of this survey of representative societies from all eastern Africa, it was possible to develop a structural typology of age-set systems and more generally of systems of temporal differentiation of human society. The study led to the formulation of a hypothetical account of how the Gada System *might* work. [20]

I returned to Ethiopia in 1961 and carried out a preliminary field survey. In view of the many poorly understood changes that Oromo society has undergone, the selection of the most useful site for fieldwork – useful from a structural as well as historical standpoint – required a considerable amount of preliminary exploration. While teaching at the Haile Selassie I University, I visited every major part of Ethiopia in which Gallinña was spoken extensively. I also visited the northern regions in which Gallinña is no longer spoken, having been supplanted by Amharic. I talked to the most knowledgeable informants I could find in the provinces of Tigre, Wollo, Shoa, Wallagga, Kafa, Arussi, [21] Sidamo, and Harar. This survey yielded uneven but historically valuable data that will be published at a later stage. My purpose was to do a field study of the Gada System, and I found evidence of gada rituals in all parts of the Gallinña-speaking community except the Rayya of Tigre province. However, in none of these regions did the Gada System operate as a full-fledged political system. I therefore redirected my surveying activities toward the pastoral populations in the south, namely the Arsi, [22] Guji, and Borana. I gathered a reasonably large body of data on Guji and Arsi concerning their gada and kinship systems.

The information furnished by the Arsi on the Gada System was lacking in substance. Gada officers were known, but it was not clear when or where the next transfer of power would take place. Informants did not know their own gada class affiliation. It became apparent after several weeks of groping, that the Arsi could not yield the desired quality of data. I was not interested in reminiscing about old socio-political systems but rather in observing a living institution in action.

The choice finally was between Guji and Borana. Both appeared equally viable sites for intensive fieldwork. Borana in particular promised to be an ideal site. Here the Gada System was fully operative. It touched the life of every man, woman, and child to an extent that exceeded my highest expectations. Their oral traditions proved to be rich and highly systematic. The techniques of time reckoning promised to be one of the most sophisticated systems devised by man. It was an excellent laboratory in which I could examine the foundations of an extraordinary social system. I therefore proceeded to learn the language of the Borana – as much as I could – and to immerse myself in the culture with the hope of surfacing, some day, with some insights into the nature of human society and its vicissitudes. I spent two years among the Borana, living in their camps, interviewing by day and

[20] Asmarom Legesse, "Class Systems Based on Time."

[21] The term Arussi is the designation of one of the thirteen provinces (technically, governorates-general).

[22] The term Arsi refers to one of the major divisions of Galla society.

transcribing taped interviews at night, taking camp censuses and market surveys, observing and recording most of the gada ceremonies and playing a marginal role in some of the ceremonial activities.

I began full-time fieldwork in July, 1962. The first two weeks were spent in intensive interviewing with a few select informants. This was followed by the main phase of fieldwork consisting of daily interviews concerning the organization of the Gada System and secondarily also dealing with the kinship and age-set systems. Over a period of two years I interviewed people from all the gada grades and most of the clans and age-sets. I developed a very close working relationship with a few knowledgeable men and women who possessed specialized knowledge of the Gada System.

Census taking was intermittent but spread out over a major part of the two-year period. Both census taking and interviewing were interrupted in the summer of 1963 to permit the observation of as many gada transition rites as possible. The ceremonies were performed in different parts of Borana over a period of about six weeks. This period also overlapped with the time when the storm was gathering over the election of gada leaders. I did much running back and forth at this time. In some cases, I sent student assistants to help with the observation and recording of the rites. In one case – the fatherhood ceremony – I could not get any observational data at all and had to depend on retrospective reports by the participants. [23] Part of the daily record on the election (chapter 8) was compiled by assistants so as to enable me to observe the critical phases of most of the other transition rites.

Throughout the two years of fieldwork, fragmentary data was collected concerning time reckoning and oral history. I made intensive interviews on these topics only during the last two to three months. Part of this time was spent in Addis Ababa with Arero Rammata, the Borana historian and man of learning who helped me carry out the analysis of time and history (chapter 7).

The analysis and interpretation of the field data was carried out over a period of seven years. It is much more difficult to be accurate about the actual amount of time spent in this latter phase of the project because I have no dated records comparable to the fieldwork records.

Boranalnd and Its Environs

The Borana live in a rather inaccessible part of Sidamo province and occupy a relatively arid region along the border of Kenya. Most of them are in Ethiopian territory, although some Borana speakers also occupy a significant portion of the

[23] After this book was submitted for publication, I returned to Borana in June 1971 and made a cinematographic record of all the transition rites which were previously recorded in 1963, as well as the fatherhood ceremony. The description of these rites (chapter 3) is therefore based on observational data. The only transition ceremony which was not observed is the handover ceremony. It was performed in 1968, four years after the completion of fieldwork.

Table 1-1. Fieldwork

Period	Activity	Amount of Time in Months	Total
1960	Library survey	12.0	15.5
1961	Field survey	3.5	
1962-64	Fieldwork		16.0
July 1962 -	Checking the hypothetical model	0.5	
-	Interviews on Gada System, age-sets, and kinship	8.0	
-	Census	2.0	
-	Transition rites (observation and participation)	1.0	
-	Election (observation and daily interviews)		
-	Census	2.0	
-	Time-reckoning system	1.5	
-	Chronology and history	1.0	
August 1964 -			

Note: Vertical lines represent the distribution of time devoted to each aspect of fieldwork (solid lines = continuous; dotted lines = intermittent). An estimate of the total amount of time spent in each phase of the research appears in the right-hand columns. Excluding the preliminary field survey a total of sixteen months were spent in the field. The remaining eight months of fieldwork time were spent traveling in different parts of Borana, learning the Borana language, taking Borana patients to hospitals, recuperating from malaria, helping with the procurement of supplies for ceremonies, hunting (to supplement the normal diet of sour milk), recovering from fieldwork, and entertaining Borana friends.

northernmost provinces in Kenya. Because all the major ritual and political activities of the Borana take place around a complex of shrines located in Ethiopia, the Kenyan Borana cross into Ethiopian territory periodically. Furthermore, the Kenyan Borana have in varying degrees abandoned their traditional way of life under the influence of Islam and the colonial experience. [24] For these reasons the data were gathered entirely on the Ethiopian side.

[24] P. T. W. Baxter, *Social Organization of the Galla of Northern Kenya*. This study is based on information gathered by the author among the Borana of Kenya. It would be instructive to compare Baxter's findings with those reported here. Such a comparison would be valuable only if the two ethnographies being compared were totally independent bodies of data. With this in mind I have not consulted Baxter's thesis and do not intend to do so until this book is published.

Introduction

Table 1-2. Analysis

Period	Activity	Amount of Time in Months	Total
1964-71	Analysis of data		19.5
1964	Preliminary structural analysis	2.0	
1965	Simulation	1.5	
1966	Case of Adi Dida (Election)	2.0	
1968	Correlational analysis	1.0	
1969	Calendar and chronology	3.0	
1968-71	Final writing up	10.0	
	Total		19.5

The population of Borana has not always been restricted to its present territory. There is some indication that it extended over the regions presently occupied by the Somali and to a lesser extent by the Guji. A major part of the area between Negelli and Dolo, now peopled by Somali nomads, was Borana territory during the first decade of the present century. [25] It is however a mistake to think that the Somali displaced the Borana because of the superiority of their military organization. From a military standpoint there seems to have been little difference between them. Indeed, neither community today is bent on conquest, although there is extensive and persistent cattle raiding between them. The process of displacement seems to be largely ecological in nature. Whenever there is a drought, the cattle-herding Borana are forced to move in a generally westerly direction, and

[25] As recently as 1910, when an Italo-Ethiopian commission headed by Dejjazmach Nadew and Carlo Citerni examined the Ethio-Somali border, the Borana and the Wata were living on both sides of the Gannale river. See Carlo Citerni, *Ai Confini Meridionali dell'Etiochia*, map 4. Furthermore, Citerni came across some burial grounds that the Somali described as having once been built by the Galla. These are located at the foot of Mount Rare, east of the present Somali border (p. 137). This evidence, in conjunction with the numerous Galla place names occurring in this region such as *malka* Cirratti, *malka* Jubo and *el* Wak (*malka* = Galla "ford," *el* or *ela* = Galla "well") strongly indicate that the Borana covered much of eastern Sidamo until 1910 and were well within present-day Somaliland in the nineteenth century. This does not mean, however, that the horn of Africa is the cradleland of the Galla - as earlier writers such as Aymler, Huntingford and Lewis believed - but rather constitutes one particular stage in the complex movements of the Galla population. See L. Aymler "The Country between the Juba River and Lake Rudolf," pp. 289-97; G. W. B. Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia, the Kingdoms of Kaffa and Janjero*, pp. 19, 22; I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy: A Study of Pastoralism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa*, pp. 23-26.

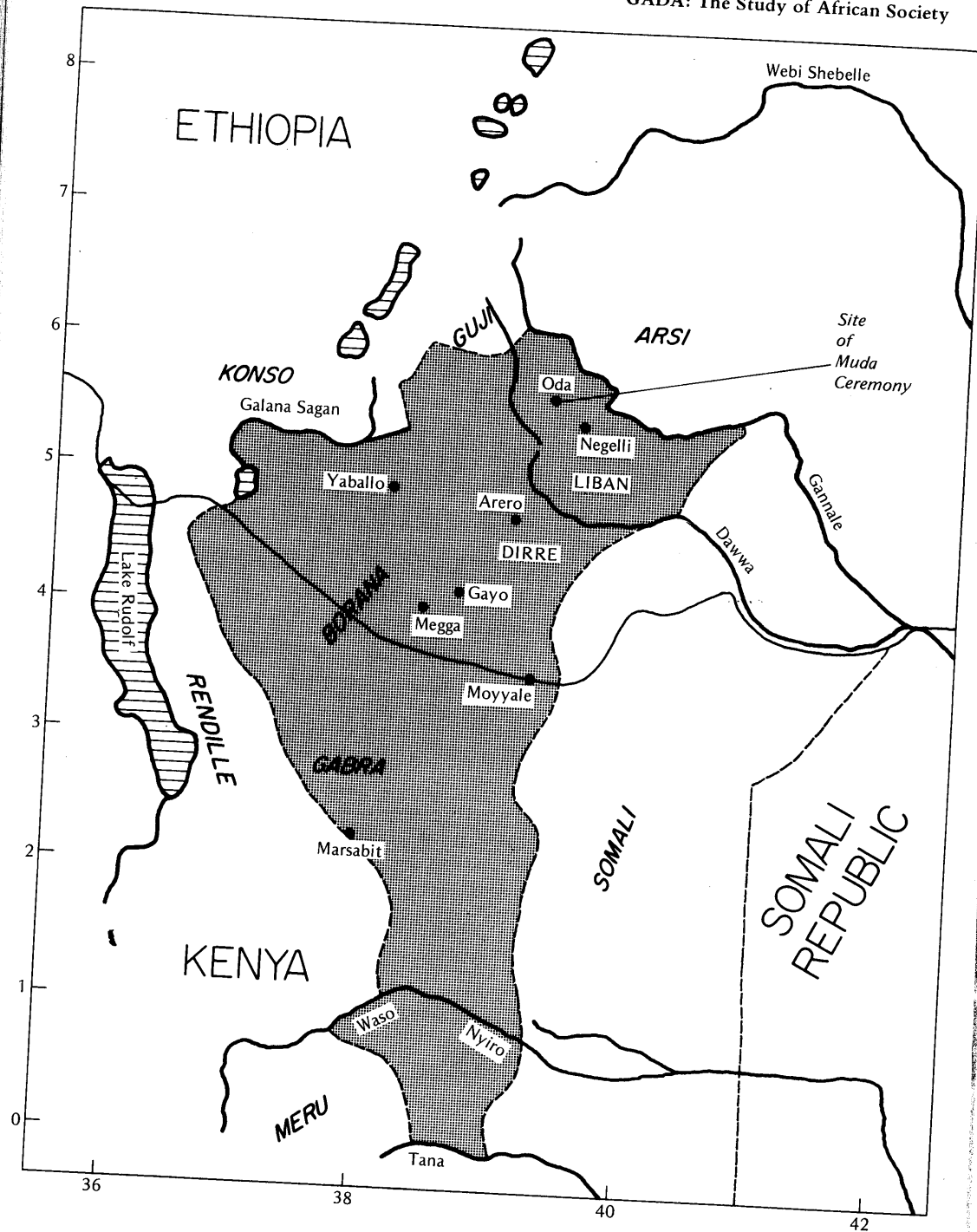


Figure 1-2. Boranaland

the camel- and goat-herding Somali move into the abandoned territory. Somali livestock can survive on the very pastures Borana consider inadequate for their cattle. After one or two seasons have elapsed, the Borana find it virtually impossible to return to their former grazing grounds, because the land is, by Borana standards, perpetually overgrazed. This is the basis of the slow population movement. It is a relentless process over which the two societies have little control.

The Ethiopian provincial administration has, on occasion, attempted to mitigate the friction between Borana and Somali by delineating their respective territories. One provincial governor attempted to use the Negelli-Moyyale road as the arbitrary boundary line. He required Borana not to cross the road and not to try to retrieve their lost grazing grounds. The Somali were also prohibited from crossing the road and making further incursions into Boranaland. Each community was allowed to capture livestock found on the wrong side of the road. The district administration then disposed of the captured livestock as it saw fit. Despite many problems of enforcement, the procedure was apparently effective in limiting the population movement.

The southward movement of the Borana is attested to by the fact that their most important shrines are today located in the extreme northern region, along the Guji border, and sometimes well within Guji-occupied territory. [26] Again, this movement of populations probably has an ecological base. The Guji, who are principally cattle herders, have taken to cultivating as a supplement to their pastoral activities. With this diversification of their economy, they can now exploit a wider ecological niche than can the pure pastoralists. The Borana are still completely dedicated to nomadism and cattle herding. They have nothing but contempt for those who stoop to till the soil.

[26] Further evidence of this southward movement is furnished by Maud, who visited the Borana-Guji border in 1902 and found Borana communities in the area of Darar, about thirty miles north of the present border. Philip Maud, "Explorations in the Southern Border of Abyssinia."

CHAPTER 2

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND KINSHIP: SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Borana kinship is the principal aspect of the social system we need to examine in order to analyze the Gada System in its sociological context. Domestic life, family organization, and the structure of seasonal camps are also important background factors. Our object in the present chapter is not to analyze kinship data but merely to identify, describe, and give examples of the principal operative social units. Families, camps, and clans all become involved in the Gada System, and some aspects of the structure of the institution are directly linked with the structure of these social units.

The Borana family is not very different from the general sub-Saharan African pattern. It contains many features, such as polygyny and mother-child households, which are characteristic of a major part of the African continent. Ideally, the family contains one adult male, several wives, and an unlimited number of children. Most ordinary men, however, settle for only one wife and an average of about two children. The Borana woman wants children more than anything else in the world, and yet many demographic and institutional limitations prevent her from having as many children as she would like. It is, therefore, not surprising that a major part of Borana religion consists of fertility rituals designed to help her bring forth many children. Childbearing and the fear of childlessness are realities that play a disproportionately large role in the spiritual life of the Borana.

All human societies have some form of marriage, but the nature of marriage institutions shows the most surprising variations from one society to another. Borana is no exception; it has some very unusual characteristics. Perhaps the most remarkable fact about Borana marriage is the fact that it is indissoluble. There are no institutional procedures for the permanent separation of husband and wife and for the division of the family estate between them. Marriage is for life, in theory and in practice. At the same time, Borana make it easy for married couples to maintain legitimate extramarital sexual relationships. The idea that a marriage could break up because the couple are sexually incompatible does not make any sense at all to the Borana. One gets married for the purpose of raising children and for the

purpose of maintaining the continuity of one's line. Sexual gratification is an entirely separate matter.

It is very common, therefore, to find married women who have lovers. The relationship between lovers is a reasonably open matter. It is a relationship that may last for long periods of time. Often it becomes a more or less permanent union in which case we should think of it as a secondary form of marriage rather than a variety of extramarital relationship. The practice was known in eighteenth-century Italy and the technical name for it, *cicisbean marriage*, originally derives from Italian. The man who keeps a married woman or a widow is referred to as a *cicisbeo*. The Borana have no term for the male lover. It is the woman who keeps a lover that is designated by the special term — *garayyu*.

There is an obvious relationship between the stability of Borana families and the provisions which the culture makes for *cicisbean* relationships. Some of the friction that threatens to break up the family in urban situations seems to be dissipated in the Borana case. This is not intended to mean that there are no tensions in Borana family life. The tensions that do appear are of a very different nature. These factors will be discussed later.

There are many different kinds of forces that contribute to the stability of the family. In Borana, as in other parts of Africa, functional differentiation is a vital dimension of the domestic order. In most African societies, the sexes have developed separate domains of control and have consequently become mutually interdependent in terms of economic, political, and ritual activities. In principle this has the same kind of structural implication as occupational differentiation of society at large. Its effect is to create strong bonds of mutual interdependence that tend to make sentimental attachments less crucial for the preservation of the group.

The Borana family is differentiated along several axes. Among these axes perhaps the most important are husband—wife, wife—co-wife, parent—child, parent—youth, youth—child, child—co-mother. Each of these dimensions entails differences in political, economic, or ritual activities, rights, and responsibilities. In most of these cases there are cultural mechanisms that make the dissolution of the bond very difficult. There are social structures that limit the exploitation of one member of the diadic pair by the other. There are specific mechanisms that strengthen the bonds when the degree of functional differentiation and interdependence is inadequate. All these factors add up to a picture that reveals the fundamental strengths of African family life. Only two major bonds appear to be beset by conflict: the relationship between co-wives and the relationship between the oldest son and his younger brothers.

We first examine relationships between the sexes and in particular the marital bond. Men are in control of military and political activities. Only men can engage in warfare. Only men take part in the elections of leaders of camps or of age-sets and gada classes. Men lead and participate in ritual activities. However, ritual is not an exclusively masculine domain: there are several rituals performed for women. In these and a few other instances women do take an important part. Women are actively excluded from age-sets. They are therefore heavily dependent on men for

most political-ritual services and for all activities connected with the defense of Borana camps, wells, herds, and shrines.

By contrast, in the domestic scene women have *de facto* control over the most important resources. Perhaps their single most important prerogative is their exclusive right and duty to build huts. Only married women are allowed to do so. Consequently, unmarried men must depend on them for shelter unless they are especially fond of the great outdoors. We might easily mistake this practice as one more mark of feminine servility. It is only when we realize the severe social handicaps of the man without a wife that the functional dependence of men on women becomes evident. It is considered quite shameful for a Borana man to be caught thatching his hut. He is responsible for building kraals, but he is rigorously excluded from the major aspects of hut construction. So critical is this restriction that it makes the domestic life of unattached bachelors quite awkward. Such men must attach themselves to other families or go off into the bush with their herd of cattle away from the camps and wells. Life away from the camps is known as *fora* and involves sleeping outdoors, with no shelter other than a slight windscreen the single man himself has hastily put together.

The responsibilities of men and women also deviate in other respects. The above discussion suggests that the kraal is the masculine domain and the hut is the feminine domain. [1] There is an elaborate ritual symbolism associated with these domains. Women not only build huts; they also own them and are largely in control of the activities that go on inside them. This includes the preparation and distribution of food, sleeping arrangements, sex, and entertainment. Their prerogatives in all these activities are by no means exclusive. Indeed, on a formal level Borana will say that the *abba warra* (male head of family) or *abba mana* (male head of household) is in charge of all domestic activities, but this is an empty norm with little relevance to the daily lives of men and their wives. It is interesting to note that Borana have no term meaning "female head of family," although they do have a term *hati mana*, which means "female head of household," or more accurately, "mother of the house." The underlying model is one of a polygynous family headed by a man and divided into households headed by women.

The important activities that go on in the masculine outdoors are ritual (*jila*) and meetings (*cora*). The meetings are usually held under a large tree in the vicinity of the camp. Women are not barred from attending these outdoor meetings. If they do attend, they appear as witnesses rather than as participants. Often the *cora* is held indoors, especially at night or in bad weather. In that case the men are still in control but women participate much more actively. Indeed, the indoor meeting usually becomes very informal and is frequently interrupted by husband-wife exchanges about domestic problems or about the substance of the discussions. Wherever the meetings are held, women can always make their feelings known

[1] This is also symbolized more broadly as an indoor-feminine and outdoor-masculine dichotomy. Hence, in many Borana rituals the isolation of celebrants is associated with symbolic role reversal, *i.e.*, the men who are temporarily restricted indoors are said to have a variety of feminine attributes.

about the subject of the deliberations indirectly. They sing work songs (*karrile*) that are intended to lighten the burden of their chores. These work songs often contain some pointed commentary on some infelicitous expression heard in the men's meetings or a direct criticism of some unjust or unwise decision the men are contemplating.

Men must make decisions concerning ritual and all the economic activities associated with the performance of rites. They discuss the place and time of rituals, what food supplies are needed for the sustenance of celebrants, what animals are needed for sacrifice, who should contribute the livestock, and how they should perform the numerous steps of the rite. Although these decisions are made by men, they are often done in consultation with women. The removal of food supplies or livestock from the homestead might cause unnecessary hardships in the family: the consent of the female household head is, therefore, essential.

The more important reason for consultation between men and their wives is not economic but intellectual. Borana ritual is complex and spans the entire life cycle. Each stage of the life cycle brings a different complex of rituals into force. The man who has accumulated knowledge of ritual procedure commands considerable respect. Similarly, knowledge of gada history is essential for political activity. A considerable amount of ritual and historical knowledge is invoked in the course of the men's daily deliberations. Such knowledge is generally possessed by men who serve as ritual experts and advisors to the councils. It is difficult to get a man to admit that gifted women also accumulate a mass of peripherally acquired but vital information. Men feel awkward about getting such information from women, but they are all ears when the information is volunteered. If a woman is consulted directly, the question will, if possible, be phrased in such a way that it seems to refer to cases rather than norms. While the wife is working indoors, the husband shouts from the meeting ground: "Did we go to [the shrine of] Nura before we built my *galma* or after?" The question was about a specific instance, but the required information was, in fact, about the proper order in which the *galma* and *dannisa* ceremonies should be performed.

There is evidence suggesting that women sometimes excel their husbands in knowledge of ritual, history, and genealogy. This creates a kind of dependence of husband upon wife that we might easily ignore under the false impression that men exercise exclusive control over the activities that are supposed to be their domain. [2] We should remember that intellectual ability tends to set limits on the extent to which male-female, husband-wife roles can be segregated.

The division of labor between men and women extends into the manufacture of all household products and tools. Women make milk containers and leather costumes. They prepare food and fetch water. In these activities and in the more arduous construction of huts the women are assisted by unmarried adolescent girls, younger girls who have not reached puberty, and uninitiated boys.

[2] The philosophy of male dominance has recently been elevated to the status of dogma in Lionel Tiger's *Men in Groups*.

Men build kraals and fences. They carve all wooden utensils and tools. They build dams and excavate wells. In the dry season they have the responsibility of taking the herds to distant pastures in the vicinity of the Dawwa and Gannale rivers. This work (*fora*) is done by three age groups: young men and adolescents assisted sometimes by younger boys. In most cases, however, preadolescents are not required to go on *fora*. They stay home and look after the milk cows and horses at the camp.

Watering cattle is certainly the most arduous single task of the Borana herdsman. All the adult and young adult members of the family give a helping hand. Drawing water with buckets from very deep wells for several hours at a time is a job that only the fittest can withstand. Consequently, there is extensive cooperation between families and camps. Groups who do not have an adequate work force must necessarily depend on other families.

Women occasionally assist their husbands and brothers in drawing water. Their presence is generally regarded as a good work incentive for the men. The main reason they go to the wells, however, is not to water cattle but rather to fetch water needed for use in the camps. The wells are usually located a few miles away from the camp site. The women make trips to the well every two or three days and much more frequently on ceremonial occasions.

In the camp it is the women who usually milk cattle. Young boys assist them by bringing out the calves from their enclosure to allow them to suck at the cow's udders momentarily and then restraining them while the adults do the milking. The entire procedure can be utterly frustrating for the boys in the six-to-twelve age bracket because the calves tend to overpower them. It is a tough battle that has to be waged every morning and constitutes perhaps the most important single basis for developing, in childhood, the sense of self-reliance so essential for the herdsman.

Except for a few cases where people of different ages or different sexes participate in the same task, there are powerful taboos serving to keep the roles distinct. It is, for instance, an insult to suggest that a man build a hut, fetch water, cook food, or look after calves. Such role reversals would be seen as intolerable except in the context of ritual. *The effect of these taboos is to make men dependent on their wives, sisters, mistresses, and children for vital services.* I stress this dependence because this is a facet of family life that is so often ignored. In the Borana family most roles are complementary. The underlying pattern of interdependence is based on the relatively clear segregation of roles. Far from being a mark of women's or children's servility, role differentiation ensures an equitable distribution of rights and duties. In short, age and sex categories are an important feature of Borana domestic organization. The division of labor coupled with taboos against role reversal gives rise to a complex of complementary relationships that together constitute a powerful integrative mechanism. This is an important reason for the extreme stability of Borana family life.

Daughters have a peculiar position. They are not structural units within the family but rather bonds between families. The marriage of a daughter is a collective concern of the family as a whole, especially the male members whose prospects of

marriage or remarriage often depend on the number of bridewealth cattle brought in by the out-marrying girls. The exchange of women between families and also between lineages is the structural basis of the wider kinship system. This is probably why girls remain structurally marginal throughout their formative years, because they are destined to play a most important role later in the development of interfamilial networks. As such, they hold a marginal position in family structure even after they are married and have had children. *This fact may allow us to explain why femininity is symbolically associated with liminality (marginality) in so many aspects of Borana ritual life.*

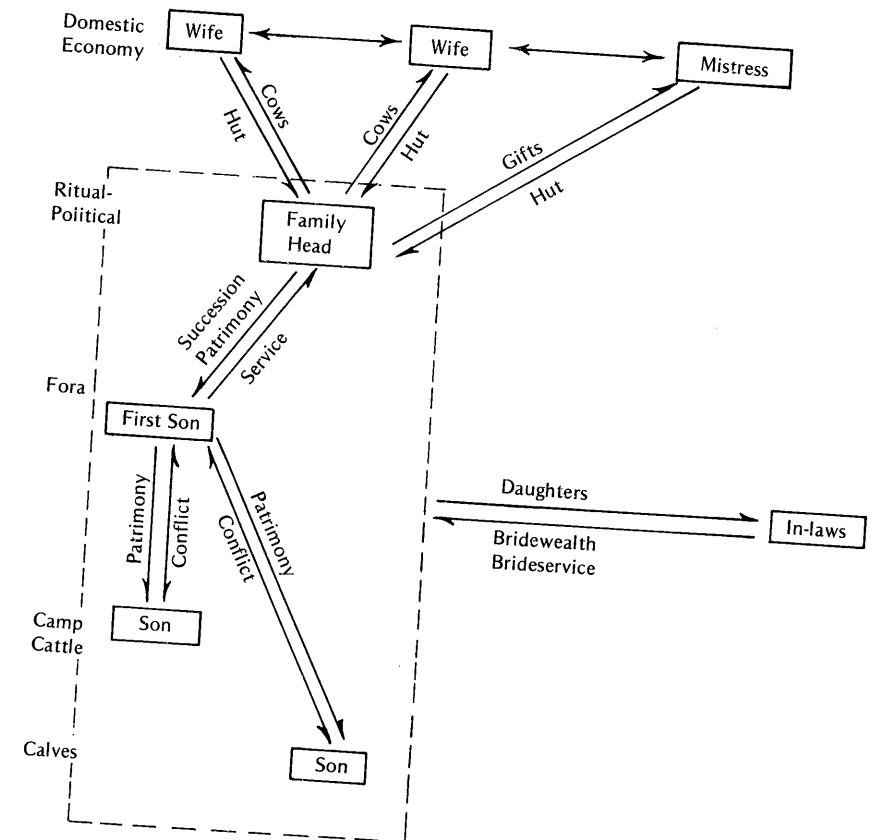


Figure 2-1. The Polygynous Household. This diagram is a summary representation of the most salient patterns of interpersonal relationships, indicating whether the bond consists primarily of exchange or conflict. This does not mean that conflict does not break out between exchanging partners nor does it mean that the relationships that are dominated by conflict cannot, from time to time, be transformed into a bond of exchange. In every exchange relationship (\rightleftharpoons), the partners have a difference service or property to offer: There is mutual interdependence between them. Only the relationship between co-wives is symmetrical and conflict-based (\longleftrightarrow). Even that bond, however, is sometimes transformed into a relationship of exchange when extreme disparity in age or ability between the wives gives rise to some measure of functional differentiation.

Wives are always strangers in their own families. They belong to "the other moiety" – the moiety the male members of the family refer to as *sodda* (in-laws). Women are never fully identified with the family. This becomes especially apparent when it is dramatized in ritual. In initiation rites, for instance, getting the mother to play the role of an in-law *vis-à-vis* her own sons is a way of breaking the maternal apron strings. It also exposes how Borana conceptualize the family as a group of males surrounded by a "border" or alien or alienable females through whom they are linked with other families and descent groups. The enduring marginality of women should not be confused with lack of integration. The unexpected structural principle that Victor Turner recently demonstrated is that people who become marginalized by virtue of their transitional status (liminality) play a vital role in the integration and revitalization of the social system. [3] The opposition of male and female roles or of husband and wife roles is part of a much wider system of opposition between structure and liminal groups. The fact that the female roles are poorly differentiated, whereas male roles are highly structured, strongly suggests that women are the liminal component of the family system. It is this lack of differentiation that prevents the development of formal structure among females comparable to that binding the men together. The role of women as "mediators" (bonds) is the basis of their symbolic liminality and of the relatively amorphous relationships between them.

There are three categories of adult women in Borana families: senior wives, junior wives, and mistresses. As often happens in sub-Saharan Africa, the relationship between co-wives is tense. Sometimes co-wives are kept in separate camps in order to avoid hostilities between them. Occasionally the tension gives way to a more cooperative relationship when a mature mistress of the household head assumes a genuinely maternal position toward the young wives. Sometimes the oldest wife is old enough to hold a similar position toward her youngest co-wives. Although competition for the husband's affection and favors is always a potential source of familial strife, it is minimized as a result of the peculiar age structure of the Borana polygynous and cicisbean households.

The senior wife enjoys many privileges. In general she gets more cows than her juniors. However, the distribution of cows among the wives is not done strictly according to seniority. If a junior wife has many more children than her seniors, she will be given more milk cows. If the family herd is away on *fora*, only some of the milk cows are allotted to wives in this manner. However, when the herd is in the camp during the rainy seasons, the wives have access to all the milk cows. When a cow gives birth, the wife who "owns" it, milks it. This milk supply then becomes the principal source of food for her household. In general, the more milk the household has, the greater is the prestige of the wife. The number of very young calves tied around the family hearth for warmth is the most visible measure of feminine prestige. The number of cattle the husband has allocated to his wives is not common knowledge among the camp members. They can easily get a fair idea

[3] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*.

of the numbers involved judging by the number of milk cows the wife has available to her at any one time. Husbands are reluctant to make the distribution of the family herds known. That would expose the *sub-rosa* favoritism that governs the relationship of the polygynist to his wives.

Mistresses are not included in the distribution of the family herd. Instead, they are given one or two cows as outright gifts. In theory, it is forbidden to give a mistress more milk cows than the wives. In practice, an able mistress may control a significant part of the family estate. This is especially true when the wife or wives are childless and the mistress is fertile.

Fertility is the crucial factor in Borana family structure. It is the principal reason for the most extreme forms of hostility and strife between co-wives. Ideally the senior wife will have given her husband his first children, and it is hoped, some of the children are males. If this is not the case, strife appears inevitable. The seniority and prestige of the first wife are in jeopardy if she has no sons. Until she has given birth to the *angafa* (the first-born-son and heir) her position remains insecure. Her husband will, if he can afford to do so, try to get a second wife. If he does, the relationship between the two wives is likely to be highly explosive. In one such family I inquired of a younger wife if she was fond of her childless co-wife. She said, "She hates me, because I mothered the *angafa*. My son, not hers, will inherit the herd. She will never forget that." By way of explanation she added that they lived three hours walking time apart and that God would not have peace of mind if they lived any closer to each other.

Among the sons the *angafa* holds a critical position. He inherits the family patrimony. If he has any talent, he is also likely to succeed his father to any ritual or political offices or privileges. Within the family he has the authority to redistribute the cattle he inherited among his younger brothers as he sees fit. This gives the first-born son considerable power: after the death of the father, the son decides whether his brothers are going to marry, when they will marry, how many cattle will be made available for their bridewealth payments. Often a greedy *angafa* allows his younger brothers to remain unmarried despite the fact that the patrimony is large enough to allow all the sons to acquire wives. He may add insult to injury by marrying a second wife before his brothers have married their first. Younger brothers faced with such a problem will usually try to get the lineage to influence the *angafa*. If that fails, they are likely to leave the paternal camp and find a job on the periphery of the urban communities herding the cattle of the townspeople.

The rule of primogeniture is one of the few points in which an authoritarian principle intrudes into an egalitarian social system. The rule is a major source of tension in Borana family life and it affects the structural core of the patrilineal descent group: it has the effect of scattering brothers and breaking up the joint families that brothers are expected to set up after their marriage. The friction between brothers about the division of the patrimony is so great that it continues to affect their relationships long after the herd has been divided.

The relationship of the first-born son and the father is a special case. In addition

to the transfer of the patrimony there is a mystical bond between the two men which makes their relationship ritual as well as economic in character. Some political offices *tend* to pass from father to first son. In Borana thought this is not a prescriptive rule but rather a corollary of the mystical bond: people expect the blessings they received when the father was in control to recur when the son assumes the same position. For that reason they allow an office to remain in the same male line (passing from father to first son) until the fortunes of the lineage and its ritual attributes fail to satisfy the needs of the community. Very often an office passes to a different line because the *angafa* is incompetent. The father depends on his son to maintain the continuity of the lineage history and of the family herds. The son depends on his father for bridewealth cattle and his patrimony. The first son is in an exceedingly privileged position and will usually take great care not to jeopardize that position.

Among all the sons the first-born is the only one who is likely to remain attached to his parents after marriage. The family herd is transmitted to him over the years. He receives a substantial part of the herd at marriage and the rest in later years as the father becomes progressively older and more willing to relinquish his power, authority, and property.

The data on Borana family life indicate that the nuclear family is very stable and that the bonds that would permit the development of all other forms of the family (polygynous, extended, joint) are very weak. We would therefore expect extended and joint families to break up into the component nuclear families because the relationships between father and younger sons, oldest brother and younger brothers are fraught with tension. Even the bond between the father and his first son may have its problems. The father occasionally makes the process of transmitting the family herd a slow and frustrating one. On the whole, however, the privileges of the first son are too great for him to want to break away from the parental household even if the patrimony is not forthcoming as early as he would wish.

Before closing our discussion of Borana families it is necessary to consider briefly one variant type having an important function in the kinship system: the *cicisbean* family. As indicated earlier, a married woman can become attached to a lover without in any way disrupting her marriage. She does so with the knowledge and blessing of her husband. Her *cicisbe* can be a married man or he may be single or possibly even a widower. His marital status is largely irrelevant. He comes to her hut from time to time and stays with her. On the nights when he is visiting he leaves his clothes on top of a basket that is kept in the rear part of the hut, and his spear is planted at the entrance of the hut. These are the cues that will let the husband know that the *cicisbe* is visiting. If the husband is a polygynist, the visit of the *cicisbe* need not disturb his daily routines. However, if he has only one wife, he must go away somewhere on a visit, possibly to the hut of a mistress. That in turn presupposes that there are polygynists in the community who are from time to time willing to part with some of their wives. In this instance we can clearly see the interdependence between *cicisbeism* and polygyny: they are mutually reinforcing institutions.

It is also possible for a married man or a widower to ask a widow or "divorcee" to come and live with him. In such a case the woman would normally build her own hut in the man's camp, and if he is married she would build close to the other wives, assuming of course that the women can remain on reasonably congenial terms with one another. Such a mistress may become a permanent member of the family.

Cicisbeism is sometimes a strategy for getting more children. If a man is unable to have children by his first or second wife, he may take a mistress. According to custom the children of his mistress are not his. They belong to the woman's husband even after the husband has died. So long as the married woman continues to bear children, she is tied to the lineage that acquired her in exchange for bridewealth; the fact that her husband is dead does not alter that basic premise. The loophole to this very stringent rule is to be found in the practice of *cicisbean* unions. The widow or the wife who has deserted her husband and who formally becomes the mistress (*garayyu*) of another man can give up her children for adoption, and the adoptive mothers can be her own childless co-wives. This ingenious technique of "beating the system" allows Borana to make *cicisbean* unions viable and productive while at the same time maintaining the fiction of the indissolubility of the marriage bond. This strategy also allows the childless wife to acquire a son and heir who is the biological offspring of her husband. The family diagrammed in Figure 2-2, which we might call the *cicisbean-adoptive family*, is in fact a rather rare phenomenon. It occurred only three times among all the families I investigated, and it did not occur at all in the censuses. Nevertheless, it is of special interest to us because it illustrates the complex ways in which a society can manipulate its prescriptive rules in order to meet needs that would otherwise remain thwarted. In Borana thought the need for children is a supreme motive, and the *cicisbean-adoptive* family is one way of getting around the problem of childlessness.

Could the childless family not simply adopt a son without going through this devious process? Could not the husband marry a second wife and hope that she will be fertile? Both adoption and polygyny are common responses to the lack of children. However, the polygynous family with adoptive children is not nearly so well-integrated as the strange family type described here. It is the only type of "polygynous" household in which "co-wives" are held together by a vital bond: the exchange of one or more sons between the childless wife and the mistress makes the roles of the two women complementary rather than competitive. The needs of one are fulfilled with the help of the other. The advantage of this arrangement for the

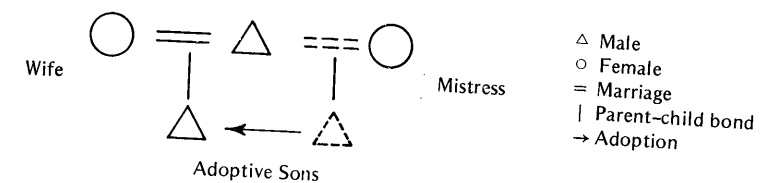


Figure 2-2. The Cicisbean-Adoptive Family

wife is quite evident, but what are the benefits for the mistress? She is, after all, losing sons.

When the mistress gives up one of her younger sons, she improves his prospects dramatically. Instead of acquiring a small fragment of the family estate in his natal household, the boy becomes the "first-born-son" and heir in the adoptive family. The exchange of sons therefore indirectly puts the mistress in a very strong economic position and stabilizes her status in the organization of the larger *cicisbean* complex.

The more common type of *cicisbean* union is contracted by men who do have sons but who take a mistress for reasons other than the desire to have many children. Borana women marry at such an early age that for the first few years of their married life they do not have much of a household. They lack the social skills needed to entertain guests. The huts they build are slipshod and uncomfortable. For many weeks after the band moves to a new camp their huts remain only partly thatched, leaving their household goods, their families, and guests exposed to the elements. We could go on compiling a long list of gripes Borana men have about their young and inexperienced wives. By contrast, mistresses, who are usually mature women in their thirties, join the young families partly for the purpose of socializing the young wives and partly to share the kinds of skills needed to make the life of a nomadic family tolerable.

The main reason for the *cicisbean* union appears to be sex. Because marriage is contracted for economic as well as political reasons, the relationship between husband and wife tends to be distant and respectful. Public display of affection between spouses is extremely rare. At the same time, however, Borana openly idolize their mistresses and sing about them in public. In particular, young men are often seen petting and kissing their lovers in market places and in public dances. There is, thus, a dualism governing the sexual behavior of Borana men toward the two classes of women. It is, however, a dualism that is very different from the corresponding dualism in the West because the Borana do not consider the relationship of a man and his mistress to be an illicit relationship. In other words, the dualism is not moral but rather sentimental. The sex partner and the marriage partner can be thought of as two different kinds of women, and there are legitimate institutional mechanisms that permit both kinds of relationship.

The Marriage Process

In Borana marriage negotiations, it is not communities but rather descent groups that are involved. On the whole, only the immediate patrilineal kinsmen are consulted in the course of the negotiations and in the payment of bridewealth. Borana marriage does not give rise to the mobilization of entire lineages as is often the case in other parts of Africa. The lineage will intervene only in cases where clan or lineage taboos concerning exogamy or the time of marriage rites are violated. In most cases the negotiation is restricted entirely to the parents and brothers of the

bride and groom, with paternal uncles on both sides exercising considerable moral influence.

The form of marriage we are discussing applies only to virgin brides. The first wife is expected to be a virgin, whereas subsequent wives may or may not be, depending on the type of marriage involved. These types of marriage, which include the *leviratic* and *cicisbean* varieties, will be described later. At present we are concerned with the ideal type in which both spouses are marrying for the first time.

The youth in his late teens or more often in his early twenties will express his interest in a particular girl by taking a present of tobacco and coffee to her family. The amount he takes is not important. It may be as much as a dollar's worth or as little as ten cent's worth. The parents never turn down the present but the fact that they have accepted the present is no indication that they are interested in him. On the occasion of his next visit the young man comes accompanied by elders and brings more presents consisting of tobacco and coffee as well as a small amount of *cat*. The latter is a plant that grows wild in Borana and acts as a stimulant when eaten. It plays an important role in Borana ritual life.

For a whole year the boy keeps coming back with presents and sometime during the first year he is likely to get some indication whether the girl and her family are interested in him. It is possible that some of the men in the family, especially the younger men, will let him know what his prospects are. In general, however, a considerable amount of ambiguity is allowed, and the boy may have to rely on subtle cues of approval or disapproval to plan his future course of action. Very often he gets conflicting cues from different members of the family.

The girl is usually not involved in these "negotiations." She becomes involved only if she dislikes the man who is asking for her hand in marriage. She can voice her objection. This happens very frequently because the men are aware of the political and economic advantages the marriage may offer, whereas the girl's interest may be more in the reputation of the man as a lover, hunter, warrior, or provider. In any case there can be no marriage without the girl's consent.

If the suitor decides that his prospects are fair, he will continue to try to persuade the girl and her kinsmen. He will continue his visits. Each time he will bring the usual gift items. Occasionally he may go beyond the minimal gifts and may present the family with some items of clothing or small livestock. This second class of presents should not be accepted by the family unless they think the suitor has good prospects. Of course, they can be wrong in their estimation of the girl's strength of feelings and may have misled the suitor into thinking that he has some prospects when in fact he has none. The suitor will also escalate his visiting and gift-giving because he feels that the family are merely being difficult with the hope of exacting more material benefits. There is ample room for misunderstanding.

Whether or not the ambiguity is maintained for a few months or a few years depends on numerous factors such as the interests of the girl, of her parents, of her brothers, of the suitor, and the prestige and wealth of the two families. If the girl's family is poor, for instance, her marriage may have decisive implications for her brothers' marriage prospects. The more bridewealth she brings, the greater the

likelihood that they will have enough bridewealth cattle to pay for their own marriages. Thus, wealth is a decisive factor, but it is not the only factor. Men evaluate the prestige and history of a whole lineage before giving away their daughters. History becomes an issue in this as well as in many other areas of Borana life because the Borana believe that a man's attributes are determined by his mystical antecedents. A man descended from a great warrior will become a good warrior. If such a man becomes a suitor, it is neither his wealth nor his personal achievements that are considered, but rather his genealogy and family history.

At some point in the marriage negotiation process, the relationship of the suitor and the family changes. It becomes unambiguous and assumes a distinctly ritual character. This second phase of the marriage process begins when the suitor is instructed to bring a companion on his next visit. He comes accompanied by a young boy who belongs to his clan and his gada class. If the suitor cannot find a boy of his gada, he is allowed to bring a member of an allied gada class (*kadaddu*). The two boys come to the camp at dawn, when the cattle are returning to their kraals. The boys enter the settlement amidst the cattle. The girl's mother formally acknowledges the arrival of the suitor by spreading skins on the floor of the hut. These must be the skins of animals that have been slaughtered properly, not those that died accidental deaths. A cow with a full udder is milked, and the fresh milk is presented to the visitors after the father has had a taste.

The men of the family and the visitors sit on the skins in the outer (public) half of the hut. The boy then approaches his future father-in-law and presents him with coffee. He unties one bag of coffee beans and gives some to the father. This is presented with both hands and is received in like manner. Three times the coffee is thus presented to the father, and what remains after this formal exchange is given unceremoniously to the mother.

The boy then unties another bag of coffee and hands some of it to the father. This too is repeated three times, and the coffee that is left over is given to the mother. All the coffee is then placed inside a milk container (*okole*). The mother prepares the coffee, and at the same time the suitor makes the critical request of the father. He says, "Father, give me your daughter!" to which the man counters "Ardiki dagetti!" (I am hearing this for the first time). This exchange is repeated four times. The boy then asks the same question of the mother, who gives the same answer. He addresses his prospective brothers-in-law as *sodda* (in-laws) and asks them the same question. Each one of them answers as he sees fit: he may say "I have given her to you" or "I am hearing of this for the first time."

Although these answers may reflect the true feelings of the brothers, they no longer have an influence on the outcome of the negotiations. The question has already been resolved in the family, and at this stage the participation of the brothers is purely symbolic. As soon as the family allows the suitor to go into the second (formal) phase of the negotiations, the girl and her family have, in fact, given their consent, whatever the position of any individual member of the family might have been while the negotiations were going on. It is the interests of the girl's

brothers that are most often compromised in the process of reconciling conflicting interests.

In the joint family household headed by the oldest brother after the death of the father, it is of course the brothers of the prospective bride who have the decisive voice in the marriage negotiations. Even in this case, however, the first-born son is likely to assume the dominant position previously held by the father and make the final decision about the marriage, often with little regard to the sentiments and interests of his brothers. In theory, the brothers are expected to make a collective decision and to act only with the consent of the sister whom they are about to give away.

Although the rest of the ritual follows a predetermined course, it is performed as if the father did not understand what his prospective son-in-law is after. When the father is satisfied with the perseverance and generosity of his future son-in-law, he responds to the boy's usual request by saying, "We have given her to you, take her." The boy is then free to stay with his in-laws or to spend the night in a neighboring camp. He returns to his in-laws a few days later to make his final request. He says "*Fuḍa natolche*" (fix the time of taking for me). They consult with time-reckoning experts about the months that are appropriate for giving away a daughter. The month is fixed, and the boy returns to his camp. He comes back in the appointed month and asks the girl's family "*Ayyana natolche!*" (fix the date for me). Again, they consult the experts and announce the date.

The boy returns on the appropriate date. He spends the night in the camp. The next day he goes into the hut of his mother-in-law. He throws eight coffee beans near the hearth. The family picks up seven of these beans. The sons milk the cows, and the fresh milk is mixed with the beans. The father, the mother, the son-in-law, and his young companion eat one of the beans each.

Again he spends the night in the camp. On the following day each parent gives the blessing:

Take her in peace,
Do not let my daughter go hungry,
Clothe her,
Take good care of her,
Go in peace.

Bride and groom then leave the parental home. In most cases they establish residence in the same camp as the girl's family. Numerous taboos therefore go into force at this stage barring the mother from sharing food with her newly married daughter. The mother is prohibited from eating anything her son-in-law has tasted. The exception to this rule is coffee. This is the only item of food mother and son-in-law can share.

The day after the blessing the couple move into their own hut, taking two jugs (*ciço*) of milk with them. During that day and the following night, the bride's mother must remain within her own hut at all times. If she does not, she endangers the marriage of her daughter. Borana say that the reason why Christian marriages so often end in divorce is because the mother spends her time singing and feasting with

her in-laws. "After such careless mixing of family and in-laws on the very day of the taking of the bride, what can you expect but trouble?"

The marriage process does not come to an end with the taking of the bride. It now enters its third and final stage. The marriage remains a tentative bond between the two families until such time as all bridewealth obligations are settled. The taboo barring the mother-in-law from the new household remains in force for one year. Borana say that the period has been considerably abbreviated in recent times. On the day the taboo is lifted, the mother receives the part of the bridewealth payment that is her due. The couple bring her a cow. As she is sitting inside the hut waiting for them, they tie the cow with a cord, force the cord through the thatching of the hut, and hand the end of it to her. They also bring her some milk to which they have added salt and gum resin (*kumbi*). She drinks this while she is holding the cord. Borana explain that this is done so that she will learn to forget her loss of a daughter.

The animal thus given to the mother is hers and cannot be taken away from her. Like the *hannura* cattle given to children on the occasion of their naming ceremony, the cow - known as *anuna* - is the exclusive property of the mother. When her husband dies, she is free to dispose of the cow and her calves as she pleases. Usually she passes them on to her favorite sons. In addition to the *anuna*, the groom also pays the bride's family three head of cattle: one cow and two bulls. These are always given to the father, and it is assumed that he can dispose of them as he sees fit. Beyond these animals, which are an essential part of the ritual of marriage, the groom may give his in-laws any number of stock "out of love," and he usually does. How much more he gives them is a function of the silent bargaining that went on before marriage.

The relatively small size of bridewealth payments in Borana, compared with other East African pastoralists, suggests that it may not play as crucial a role in the establishment of inter-familial networks. Among societies such as the Nuer where twenty-five or more cattle may be paid, marriage becomes an occasion for restructuring the domestic economy and creating an elaborate affinal network. [4]

Camp Structure and Residence

The Borana camp is an unstable grouping of families who have settled together for the duration of a season. It is an elusive cluster of families who share a camp site for two or three months. Borana have a generic term, *olla*, which refers to all temporary residential groupings of families. The group always recognizes the most senior married man, excluding the very aged, as the head of the camp (the *abba olla*).

We can illustrate the basic characteristics of Borana camps by describing one particular group observed in three different seasons in 1963-64. This was the Dida camp, which is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2-3. The diagram is an

[4] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*, pp. 74-89.

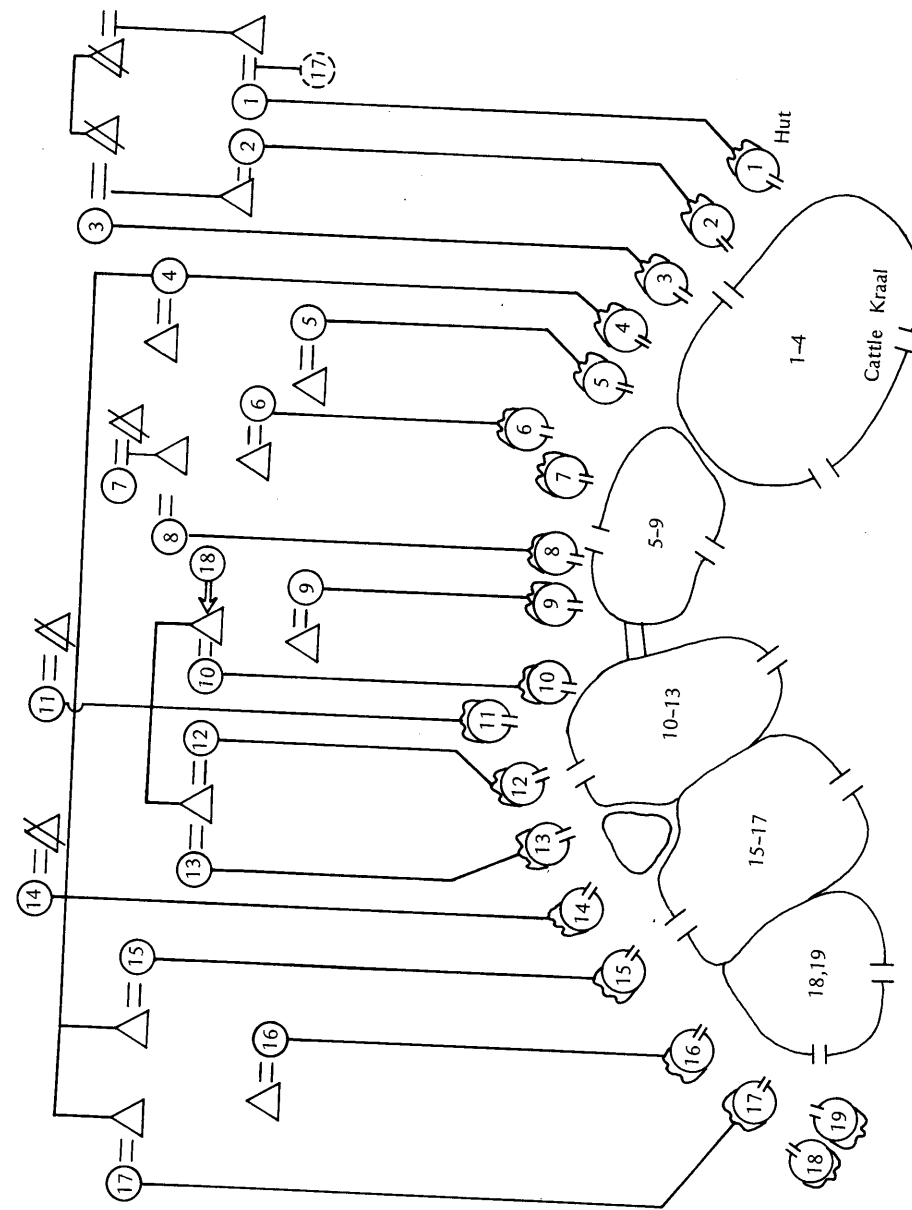


Figure 2-3. Genealogy and Map of the Dida Camp (June 1963)

attempt to juxtapose the territorial and genealogical structure of the group. On this diagram each family is identified by reference to the number assigned to the most senior female. Thus, the family of the camp headman is number 3 and encompasses three different households (3, 1, 2). Only married couples are included in the genealogy; only married women who own huts are numbered.

The Borana camp is as likely to contain kinsmen as it is to bring together families who have no discernible genealogical connections to one another. Thus, in the Dida camp there were eight kin groups who were unrelated to one another. Two of these (3, 14) were connected by an affinal link (number 17). Five families (5, 6, 7, 9, 16) were drifters who were in the camp for one season only and whose subsequent movements were of little concern to the others. The remaining families were somewhat more stable. They tended to remain in the same region and to settle together as one camp every few years when ecological conditions permitted the formation of large camps. If we look at the camp population over a period of about three years, it would be difficult to find individuals in it who had not lived apart for at least one year.

When they do live together, kinsmen *tend* to build their huts next to each other. There were two exceptions to this in the Dida camp. The married daughter of the headman (number 17) lived with her husband at the other end of the settlement. Similarly, one extended family was broken up into two sections of the settlement (14, 15, 17/4). Except for these two cases all the other kinsmen lived next door to each other. The nuclear families (5, 6, 7, 9, 16) who had no genealogical ties with each other or with the extended families were intercalated into the camp in such a way that they usually fell between the huts of kinsmen. This is the same kind of procedure as that employed in watering the herds of strangers at the clan wells. The clansmen water their livestock by seniority, in three-day cycles. When strangers are allowed to share the water, they are not placed at the end of the queue but rather they are staggered into it, so that a stranger/kinsman alternation is obtained. The same principle is employed in camp structure to prevent strangers from becoming marginalized.

I have adequate census and genealogical data at hand to examine the pattern of residence in Borana camps and statistically to establish the generality of each pattern. However, such an analysis would not be consistent with the purpose of this investigation. I shall therefore present only illustrative material that suggests the broad characteristics of the residential groups.

The most frequent types of families appearing in the camps are nuclear and joint households. The joint households consist of brothers who have continued to live together, or have come together, after marriage. This is usually a temporary arrangement that endures while the younger brothers are waiting for the division of the family estate. The brother-sister joint household is quite frequent although not as common as the brother-brother household. Nevertheless, its incidence suggests that patrilineal descent is neither the exclusive nor the dominant structural feature bringing kinsmen together in the camp. In the *olla* Dida of June 1963, there were three fraternal joint families and one brother-sister configuration. However, a year later the same camp contained five brother-sister households.

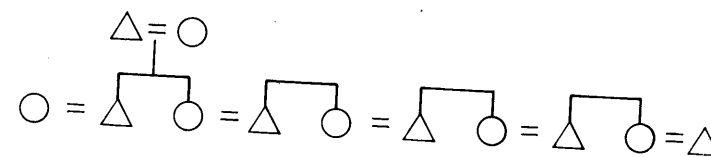


Figure 2.4. Bilateral Joint Family Chains

The most remarkable feature of this structure was the way the sibling link between married brothers and sisters gave rise to a chain of families such as the one represented in Figure 2.4. This unusual pattern – unusual in the ethnographic literature but not in Borana – might have been called “sibling-local residence” if anthropology were to invent a name for it. The bond between brother and sister seems to be an important factor in the organization of Borana camps. It indicates that what little tendency there is toward patrilocal residence is offset by these bilateral joint family chains.

Extended families are also observed occasionally. A father, his wives, and one or more married children sometimes live together for a few seasons. This is especially likely to happen when clan rituals are approaching. It is also likely to happen when the family estate is sizeable and the father is not required by gada regulations to hand over his livestock to his sons because both father and son are in the retired grades. First-born sons who are due to inherit a major part of the family estate sometimes live with the parental family for many years. Younger sons, on the other hand, are likely to drift away soon after marriage, with whatever livestock they have acquired, and seek their fortunes elsewhere. In the Dida camp of June 1963, which was observed during the dry season, there were no married sons living with their fathers. One married son who would normally have been in the camp had left for the river valleys with the family herd because he had no younger brothers who could take on that responsibility, as they would be expected to do. In any case, the absence of the young adult generation is not unusual. Regardless of the seasonal variations, the incidence of extended family households is very low. The only type of vertical extension of the family that is common results from the fact that there are many widows who continue to live with their children after the death of their husbands.

There were three extended families in the Dida camp (7, 11, 14) that were “headed” by widows. Borana wives are so much younger than their husbands that they very frequently outlive them. The widow may be inherited by one of her husband’s brothers. If not, she continues to live with her married or unmarried children. If they are married, she is essentially seen as their dependent. If they are single, mother and children are dependent on each other because only a married woman (or a widow) can build a hut. With her, the children can have a home. Without her, they must either marry or find access to the home of a married kinsman. Both these alternatives are often closed because of practical difficulties. A widower and his unmarried children are not a viable family unit because none of them can build; a widow and her son can be and often are a perfectly viable unit.

When a widowed mother lives with her children, she is neither the head nor the

center of the family. The oldest male has jural authority even if the youthfulness of the "senior male" sometimes makes this legal fiction rather implausible. He is senior to his mother in all ceremonial and political matters. [5]

The fact that I have discussed the pattern of residence in the camp only in terms of genealogical and affinal ties gives the impression that kinship is a dominant factor. In fact, there are no genealogical bonds that cannot be severed effectively by moving to one or another part of Borana territory. The individual Borana has a wide range of choices. His friendship networks and his gada or age-set loyalties are probably as important determinants as his genealogical ties.

There are great variations in the size and physical layout of the camp. The actual size of the camps observed over a two-year period ranged from a tiny camp consisting of two nuclear family households to very large ceremonial complexes consisting of several hundred huts.

The particular configuration of huts in Figure 2-1 is seen most often in the central areas of Borana far removed from the Somali or Guji borders and from potential cattle raiders. The open hemicycle in which only the kraals are fenced and the huts are left defenseless indicates that the danger of cattle raids is considered to be slight at that particular place and time. In situations where cattle raiding is rife, the configuration changes so that the huts form a closed circle inside the settlement and the kraals are built around them. Each kraal is fenced, as is the entire settlement.

On ceremonial occasions the camp is much larger, and its structure is more complex than it is under normal circumstances. In the ceremonial camp the living space is greater in proportion to the space set aside for livestock. Only a few milk cows are kept in the camp site. The kraals are fewer but not necessarily smaller. Sometimes only one kraal with numerous entrances is built for the entire settlement. This is indicative of the increased communality that occurs when the neighbors have come together for purposes of performing clan or gada rituals.

The main factor adding to the complexity of the ceremonial camp is the presence of gada leaders, moiety leaders, and their respective assemblies. When gada leaders are present, the settlement is differentiated into two or more circular camps representing the major subdivisions of the gada assembly. Again the entire settlement or the component camps will be elaborately fortified with two concentric fences if there is danger of war or cattle raids.

Whether the settlement has come together for ceremonial reasons or not, whether there is peace or war, rain or drought, there is one organizational feature that is always present in camp structure. All the huts tend to be ordered by seniority. The most senior man builds first on the extreme left-hand side (looking outward from inside the huts) and if the arrangement is circular, the most senior

[5] In reporting census data, informants were very reluctant to give the names of the widow before the senior son and criticised my attempt to follow the age hierarchy as a violation of Borana ideas of seniority. Borana rarely report names at random. They enumerate by seniority. Hence the name of the widow was always reported after the enumeration of the married children was completed.

man builds first. The others build in declining order of seniority so that highest and lowest individuals will be next-door neighbors when the circle closes. Here, as in many other instances, we find that seniority is not the basis for the construction of pyramidal hierarchies, nor is it a method of legitimizing extreme inequalities, but it is rather a device for establishing the order of precedence. All activities that must be carried out in sequence follow that order.

The fact that this order is reflected in the residential pattern ensures that people have a relatively unambiguous understanding of the ordering of the household heads. The ordinary Borana does not have to work through all the steps leading up to the determination of the relative seniority of individuals each time he as a scarce resource to be distributed. The layout of the camp serves as a rough guide.

Kinship

Borana kinship exhibits many characteristics that are well-documented in sub-Saharan Africa. It is a system in which descent is reckoned only through male links. The men and women thus descended from a common ancestor constitute a corporate group, in that they share many collective rights and obligations.

This pattern of organization is radically different from the *bilateral* organization of northern Ethiopia. In the northwest the family estate, including land, passes through male as well as female links. It passes from the maternal as well as the paternal sides, to sons as well as daughters. In southern Ethiopia, however, the estate passes from father to son and is collectively controlled by the men of the lineage. The lineage as a whole is an enduring corporate group for which there are no parallels in most parts of northwest Ethiopia. Whereas northerners are free to establish political and economic ties with any community to which they are genealogically related, southerners are born into one and only one descent group, and they remain in it throughout their lives. The northern pattern allows people to activate the descent links they find most advantageous, whereas the southern pattern gives the individual no choice at all regarding his kinship ties.

These two patterns have far-reaching implications for economic development potential, attitudes toward collective or individual ownership of property, conception of legal responsibility, and reactions toward individualistic behavior. A comparison of the collectivistic type of political behavior represented in this study with the highly individualistic patterns of political behavior studied by Donald Levine and Allan Hoben in northwest Ethiopia would be most instructive. [6] However, such a comparative analysis must be postponed until a later stage.

In Borana the collectivity (lineage) is an enduring group that is structurally distinct. The Borana lineage is not as close-knit as it is in many other African societies. This is partly due to the fact that the members of the lineage do not all

[6] Levine, *Wax and Gold*; and Allan Hoben, *The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam-Amhara Social Organization*.

live together. Indeed, there is a tendency for them to be widely dispersed and to move continually from one nomadic band to another. Nevertheless, they always remain a discrete group because the members share common interests in natural resources, which they own collectively, and they have common political representation for which they compete periodically.

The most commonly invoked lineages are six to ten generations deep. This group of kinsmen has considerable influence on the life of the individual member, on his behavior and thought. His lineage has fairly effective ways of reaching him, wherever he is in Boranaland. They come to his rescue in times of crisis. They can coerce him to fulfill his obligations to the kin group, to his peer group, and to his gada class. Many of his privileges, his rights, his duties, his seniority position, and his social identity are imbedded in the lineage.

Borana identify the largest kinship units as *gosa*. The term is actually a general designation for kin groups of any genealogical depth. When Borana ask "*Gosi mal?*" they are asking the most general question that will locate an individual in the kinship system. In addition to using the concept of *gosa* in this ubiquitous sense, they also use it to refer to the three highest categories of the system. Thus, the above question may be answered in terms of moiety, submoiety, or clan affiliation. These are the macro-categories of the kinship order. Beyond that, an inquiry about the individual's *mana* (house) *balbala* (door) and *warra* (family) usually yields three lower-order categories. Borana are very inconsistent in their use of these four concepts. A lineage referred to as a "house" by one informant will be identified as a "door" by another. Similarly, the term *warra* may refer to a nuclear family or to an entire descent group.

In attempting to identify a stranger, Borana proceed from the largest to the smallest categories. To ensure that the stranger will not start by reporting at a level so specific that it cannot be placed in the moiety-clan system, they will ask him to say if he is Sabbo or Gona, identifying the two moieties by name. Having established the stranger's moiety affiliation, they will proceed with *gosa*, *mana* and *balbala* and expect to get progressively more specific information. Beyond the level of *balbala*, the question of *warra* affiliation is usually not asked directly. The inquirer simply proceeds to check off his own network of friends, acquaintances, in-laws, and kinsmen against those of the stranger until the two networks link up and the stranger "makes sense." The procedure is remarkably fast. A Borana inquirer rarely needs more than about six questions to identify a total stranger quite accurately.

Any Borana who is asked these questions feels obligated to give a truthful answer. The idea of withholding or falsifying such information is, for most Borana, inconceivable. This open communication pattern seems to characterize interpersonal relationships generally and is not restricted to individuals exchanging kinship information.

Borana will enumerate a large number of lineal ancestors when asked to do so. Most of these ancestors appear mainly in private genealogies. They are not part of the record of the larger kin groups. The classification in Table 2-1 incorporates

Table 2-1. Categories of Kinship

Borana Categories	Corresponding Levels of the Kinship System
<i>gosa</i>	moiety
	submoiety
<i>mana</i> (house)	clan
	lineage
<i>balbala</i> (door)	minor lineage
<i>warra</i> (family)	minimal lineage
	extended or joint family
<i>ibidda</i> (hearth)	nuclear family
	mother-child household

these genealogies only up to the level of the lineage, so that the name of a lineage is sometimes the name of an ancestor who appears in the genealogies. In most cases the lineage names have nothing to do with the names of founding fathers, and the connection between the lineal ancestors of the living members and the identity of the lineages is quite obscure. Most of the lineages and certainly all the higher categories (clans, submoieties, moieties) appear to lack any kind of genealogical basis.

The highest division of the Borana social system are the two halves of the society known as Sabbo and Gona. Technically, this type of dual organization is referred to as a system of moieties, a word deriving from the French *moietie* (half). The members of one moiety can marry only into the opposite moiety. In other words, these primary divisions of the society are exogamous. Furthermore, a man of the Sabbo moiety must avoid all forms of sexual intimacy with Sabbo women because they are all said to be his "sisters." The women of the other moiety, on the other hand, are legitimate sex objects to whom the man refers collectively as his in-laws (*sodda*).

Exogamy, then, is one of the defining characteristics of the moiety system. A second feature is that the two divisions are approximately equal in numerical strength. A random sample of demographic data collected in different parts of Borana country shows that the proportion is 51 per cent Sabbo and 49 per cent Gona. The third feature of the moieties is that they are completely intermingled throughout Borana territory. There is no area that can be said to belong to one or the other group. The male population of most Borana camps contains people of both moieties. Only the smallest camps consisting of a group of married brothers are likely to contain members of only one moiety, and even in this situation the wives are members of the opposite moiety.

Finally, the fourth characteristic of the moieties is that the primary divisions stand in opposition to each other. Borana make conscious effort to try to represent both moieties in forming a council for any purpose, even in the deliberation of

intra-moiety problems. The source of social justice in Borana is the perpetual balance in the power delegated to the two primary divisions at all levels of the social system. So critical is this concept of balanced opposition that Borana asked Emperor Menelik, at the turn of the century, to duplicate Borana representation in provincial administration at all levels of the administrative hierarchy. Hence, government-appointed Borana officials (*balabbat*) are today paired off in provinces, districts, and subdistricts of the Governorate-General of Sidamo. Nothing can be accomplished unless representatives of both moieties are present and participate in the transmission of administrative directives.

Table 2-2. Subdivisions of Borana moieties

Moiety	Submoiety	Clan	Lineage
Sabbo	Digalu	Gobbu:	Nurtu, Titti, Udumtu, Walajji, Daddo
		Emmajji:	
	Karrayyu	Dayyu	Ƙallicha: Berre, Godi, Didimtu, Mante, Danƙa, Hiyyeyye, Sibū, Salalu, Bukko, Gambura, Dano-Wale
			Bokkicba: Gagurtu, Junno, Libano, Wate, Walabu, Jarru, Wayyu, Maye, Umuri, Holle, Gaddu, Obole, Mulata, Kula-Kurme, Badi
		Basu	Bido: Itu, Nonno, Rasa, Kojeja, Koḍdelle Gollo: Sunƙanna, Abbole, Hajeji, Siba, Konsota, Uchota, Ƙurrota, Wamaji, Kollitu
Matṭarri	Bokkicba: Ƙallicha:	Metta, Gadulla, Doranni, Maṅkata Karara, Kuku, Garjeda	
Gona	Fullelle	Daççitu	electors
		Maççitu	
Haroressa	Hawaṭṭu	Karçabdu	electors
		Warri Jidda	
		Dambitu	
		Nonitu	
		Maliyyu	
		Arsi	

We have here a case in which a feature of the traditional social structure was incorporated into the administrative organization. So far as traditional Borana are concerned, the moiety organization continues to be one of the most important repositories of political and ritual authority. From a political standpoint, the distribution of power in the smallest as well as the largest communities cannot be understood without reference to Sabbo and Gona.

Below the level of the moieties the next category is the submoiety. There are three of these in Sabbo and two in Gona. Curiously, however, the submoieties of Gona are frequently left out in kinship reckoning. Individuals rarely identify themselves as Haroressa or Fullelle. Instead, they use lower-order categories. This is why Borana say that "the Sabbo are three and the Gona are a multitude." (Sabbo *saden*, Gona *gumi*). When they say that, they are in fact comparing the three submoieties of Sabbo and the fourteen clans of Gona. There are many such asymmetries that seem symbolically to polarize this dual organization.

Although they may be left out in kinship reckoning, the Haroressa and Fullelle subdivisions are in fact very important from a political standpoint. They have permanent collective representation in the senior gada council.

The remarkable fact that should be noted from the outset is that Borana political activity operates at the highest levels of their social system. Indeed, the relationship between the moieties overshadows all other relationships, and it is the most important dimension of kinship serving as the basis for the political alignment of individuals. In contrast to segmentary societies such as the Somali, for whom the most meaningful political unit is the smallest bloodwealth paying group, the Borana seem consistently to "think big" and relate to each other by reference to the largest units of the kinship system.

Socially, the fact that the moieties are exogamous means that a man must immediately identify a woman's moiety affiliation before he can decide how to greet her. Having determined whether she is his "sister" or his "in-law," he can then modify his behavior appropriately and avoid social blunders. Social or sexual intimacies between a man and a woman who then turn out to be "brother and sister" is a minor catastrophe. In this and in many other respects moieties are a pervasive reality in Borana life.

The principle of balanced opposition is also reflected in the activities or age-sets and gada classes. [7] In all gada councils there must be the same number of men

[7] This is quite different from the type of balanced opposition described by E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*; I. M. Lewis, *A Pastoral Democracy*; Laura Bohannan, "Political Aspects of Tiv Social Organization," pp. 33-36; and Paul Bohannan, *Tiv Farm and Settlement*. The massing effect analyzed by these investigators in which larger and larger segments of the kinship and territorial systems become involved in conflict depending on the structural distance that separates the segments was not at all apparent in the Borana social system. The Borana place much greater emphasis on conflict between cross-cutting classes such as those analyzed by Victor W. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*.

Table 2-3. Representation of Submoieties in Gada Councils

	Sabbo			Gona	
	Digalu	Karrayyu	Maṭṭarri	Haroressa	Fullelle
Jilo Aga	1	1	1	2	1
Gobba Bule	1	1	1	2	1
Jaldessa Liban	1	1	1	1	2
Maḍa Galma	1	1	1	2	1
Guyyo Boru	1	1	1	1	2
Aga Adi	1	1	1	2	1
Bule Dabbasa	1	1	1	1	2
Arero Gedo	1	1	1	2	1
Liban Kuse	1	1	1	2	1
Boru Maḍa	1	1	1	1	2

from the two moieties. This is a prescriptive rule, and there are hardly any deviations from it. [8]

If we look at the submoieties, on the other hand, the situation is somewhat more complicated. Because there are three submoieties in Sabbo and only two submoieties in Gona, there is no simple prescriptive rule that can equitably distribute the six offices among them. A pattern does emerge, however, if we look at the empirical data. Table 2-3 is a tabulation of the six senior gada councilors who are invested into office every eight years. It covers a period of eighty years. The names listed vertically are the names of the men who headed each council.

There is a pattern of alternation that seems to characterize the representation of the Haroressa and the Fullelle. I was quite unable to uncover any conscious rules governing this pattern. Nevertheless, it seems that in the long run there are about as many councilors who come from one as from the other submoiety.

Thus, there is balanced opposition between Haroressa and Fullelle and between Sabbo and Gona. The moieties and occasionally the submoieties are reflected in major ritual and political conflict. Furthermore, *there is a higher degree of ritualized conflict and a greater sense of collective identity within Gona than there is within Sabbo. This may well be a function of the triadic versus the diadic organization of the submoieties.*

[8] There is also a pattern of alliance and mutual assistance that operates across moieties. This is a bond between specific lineages or clans that is known as *sunsuma*. When two clans or lineages are *sunsuma* to each other, they are expected to treat each other with special deference. An individual is free to use the wells of his *sunsuma* partners. When he visits their camps, they readily give him food and shelter and, within reason, anything else that he might need. *Sunsuma* swear in each other's names, avoid conflict, and use deferential language.

The *sunsuma* bond does not involve any rules of preferential marriage. However, when the suitor belongs to an allied descent group, there is an informal understanding that his request will be viewed as part of a wider network of obligations. This sometimes facilitates marriage exchanges. The allied clans are neither required nor expected to exchange wives. Indeed, such exchanges would sometimes be impossible if the *sunsuma* clans are members of the same moiety. Such alliances within one moiety are rather infrequent, but they are not prohibited.

There are three areas in Borana social life in which kin groups play a role. Such groups appear in the performance of ritual, in the regulation of water resources, and in the election of political leaders.

First of all, Borana ritual is sometimes a direct concern of kin groups. In particular, life-crisis ceremonies, such as certain types of birth and marriage rites, are at times performed by kinsmen. On the other hand, most of the ceremonies of the Gada System are performed by gada classes rather than kin groups. Even in these ceremonies, however, clans are sometimes given formal recognition, and the celebrants are grouped into clan or submoiety groups on the ceremonial grounds. In the sphere of ritual the moieties and the submoieties of Gona assume a prominent position. The lower-order categories appear to be much less significant.

Second, an important corporate activity of clans and lineages is the digging, maintenance, and regulation of wells and other sources of water. Boranaland is quite arid, especially during the long dry seasons that intervene between the short (March-April) and long (September-October) rainy seasons. Consequently, water supplies become progressively more scarce as the dry season progresses. At the height of the dry season most of the man-made dams and all the smaller wells dry up, and great numbers of cattle are concentrated around a few large well complexes. The pastures all around these wells become completely overgrazed so that in the late dry season cattle have to travel great distances between camp sites, wells, and pastures. Most Borana send a major part of their herds to the river valleys for the duration of the dry season and sometimes for much longer periods. They keep only a few milk cows near the well complexes. From time to time shepherds take the cows that have stopped lactating and replace them with other milk cows. By this strategy the families have a perpetual supply of food without the burden of herding and watering great numbers of livestock in overgrazed and overcrowded territories.

The strange attraction of Borana to the well complexes is difficult to explain. Borana could, presumably, live by the rivers where the pastures are plentiful and the supply of water practically unlimited. If they did, the taxing job of digging and maintaining wells and dams and the arduous work of watering cattle every three days would be entirely unnecessary. Why, then, do Borana avoid the river valleys and spend the dry season crowded near the wells?

It appears that the wells have become the center of social activity and an emotionally charged focus of Borana society. Borana say that home is the well, not the hut. If ever Borana can be said to have a sense of territorially based community (neighborhood), it occurs during the time of hardship when clansmen or the members of a lineage come together to spend the dry season near the wells of their ancestors.

The third area in which moieties are prominent is the election of gada councilors. The leaders of the moieties and clans are directly involved in the recruitment process. The men who have the responsibility and the power to organize the election of gada leaders are the heads of the two moieties. These are the two men known as *Ḳallu*, whom we have mentioned on several occasions above.

In addition to this political responsibility the *Ḳallu* also have other areas of competence largely concerning ritual. The domain of the *Ḳallu* is principally the domain of the sacred.

The *Ḳallu*: Ritual Leaders of the Moieties

The *Ḳallu* are the most senior men in the kinship system. All major conflict between clans may be taken to them for adjudication. Their villages are the spiritual centers around which political debate is organized. Their principal power lies in their right to elect the political (*gada*) leaders who govern Borana for eight-year periods. In a later chapter we will examine how the two *Ḳallu* and their respective assemblies exercise their power in concrete situations.

At this point it would be misleading to give a long list of the rights and responsibilities of the *Ḳallu*. It would be more instructive to examine the symbolic and psychological environment in which they live and work. Borana say that the *Ḳallu* are kings (*moti*). If we were to take this statement at face value we would be left with the false impression that we have identified the apex of the power pyramid. As such we would expect the *Ḳallu* to be treated by their subjects with awe and reverence. The surprising fact, however, is that Borana have a highly skeptical attitude toward them, toward the myths that legitimize their position, toward authority figures, and toward supernatural phenomena generally.

Several ethnographic facts lead me to believe that the Oromo conception of authority is not as awesome as it is among their monarchic neighbors to the north and west. Neither God, nor the *Ḳallu*, nor the *Abba Gada* are conceptualized in the language of pious dependence that is pervasive in monarchic cultures.

On one occasion I was observing a large number of adult celebrants taking part in the annual *dibayyu* ceremony — a fertility rite that lasted several days. The *Abba Gada*, his councilors, and his deputies were seated in the ritual enclosure, their bodies wrapped in a shawl under which they wore nothing, their heads clean shaven and anointed. They chanted all day and their bodies swayed back and forth in a rocking motion. An old Borana who was observing the rituals with me said in a contemplative mood "People sometimes behave like children!" This was a most astonishing comment especially because the man who made it was a ritual adviser to the celebrants.

It appears that this attitude toward ritual and toward ritual leaders is not peculiar to Borana. It is reflected in the descriptive literature on other Gallinña speaking groups. The following vignette recorded by Enrico Cerulli among the Shoan Galla is a good illustration of the attitude we are considering. The passage was obtained from a community in the vicinity of Addis Ababa that had been in contact with Christian traditions and had incorporated biblical characters into its folk literature.

In the whole world there are three misfortunes. Of these one is wealth, when it is great and increases. The second is the wife. The third is God,

who created us. Great wealth is the first misfortune. If money increases the king will say, "I will seize it for myself in some way." . . . The second misfortune is thy wife. She falls in love with a valiant warrior, and then, if this warrior loves her, he kills thee, marries her, and flees away to another country. The third misfortune is God, who has created us. He has created us one white, one red, one black as coal. Our father in the beginning was Adam; our mother Eve; we are all brothers. If he had made us all of the same aspect, we should not have killed one another, we should not have sold one another, we should not have destroyed one another. As God created us in the beginning, we should have loved one another, if we had all looked alike. [9]

Seen through Galla culture, God is a kindly figure, not the angry and vindictive God of Judeo-Christian tradition. This helps us to explain the contradictory attitudes Borana have toward the *Ḳallu* institution. The fact that the authority of the *Ḳallu* is of divine origin and the fact that the office of the *Ḳallu* usually passes down in more or less strict hereditary succession seem to contradict the generally egalitarian recruitment procedures employed throughout the socio-political system. Hence, Borana are very ambivalent about the *Ḳallu*. They waver between sometimes describing them as the "kings" (*moti*) and at other times scornfully referring to them as messengers (*makkala*) of the *gada* councilors. Often Borana laugh at the fact that the *Ḳallu* are like women, for they cannot bear arms nor can they defend themselves against wild animals. They must always depend on others for protection from enemies and cattle raiders. Borana express little reverence toward the *Ḳallu* or, for that matter, toward any leaders.

Perhaps the most remarkable statement my Borana mentors ever made was made by Guyyo *Ḳotto*, a famous Borana historian. His statement had to do with the origin of the *Ḳallu*. I had asked him, "Where did the *Ḳallu* come from in the very beginning?"

G. K.: Do you mean how was he first born?

A. L.: Yes, I do mean that.

G. K.: We do not know.

A. L.: You must have some idea.

G. K.: We thought you wanted to know about custom (*ada*) and law (*sera*), but now you are asking us to tell you stories.

A. L.: Is there anything wrong with stories?

G. K.: The people of old used to tell lies; if you want to hear lies, we will tell you.

With this surprising introductory remark, Guyyo *Ḳotto* proceeded to tell me about the supernatural aura surrounding the origin of the *Ḳallu* institution and the birth and death of the individual *Ḳallu*.

The *Ḳallu* of the *Oditu* was born of man, *i.e.*, of human parentage, but the *Ḳallu* of the *Karrayyu*, we do not know where he came from: we just literally found him. The *Oditu* say *Obsan Ḳalloman* (he who has the ability-patience becomes *Ḳallu*). The way the *Ḳallu* of the *Oditu* came into being is thus:

[9] Enrico Cerulli, "The Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia," pp. 190-91.

Borana clans were once caught in a very bad drought (*bona*). The gada classes (*warra arbora*) told the people to wait in their respective camps. They told them that *muda* will come (*i.e.*, that the gada classes would come to bring them assistance) and that they should not go away in search of water and pastures, leaving the shrines unprotected. The Oditu put their scouts (*doya*) all around the shrine and waited. All the people waited. The people waited and waited. They did not know whom the gada were going to anoint (*i.e.*, give gifts to), and so all the clans sat and waited. After many weeks passed, most of the clans began to leave. Only the Daççitu and the Oditu remained. In the end even the Daççitu left. When the *muda* arrived, they found only the Oditu at the shrine. They alone withstood the hunger and thirst. One man among them was therefore anointed *Ḳallu*. That is why the Oditu say *Obsan Kalloman*. That means that those who have the ability to withstand hardships can become *Ḳallu*.

The *Ḳallu* of the Karrayyu, on the other hand, was simply found on the ground wrapped in cloth (*rufa*). Nobody knows if he had human parents. A Wata, a member of the Sakuyye Gedo clan, found him. The Wata also saw that a girl was sitting beside him. She was a member of the Matṭarri clan, the Metta lineage. The Wata told people that he had seen such children. The Karrayyu came to see them. They took them home. When they came of age, the boy and the girl married each other. They became the first *Ḳallu* and the first *Ḳallitti* of the Sabbo. To this day the *Ḳallu* of the Karrayyu can take his *Ḳallitti* only from the Matṭarri-Metta clan.

Not only the emergence of the *Ḳallu*, but also their birth, marriage, and death contain some rather unusual features and indicate the supernatural attributes associated with the office. The *Ḳallu* is the only child his mother is allowed to raise. If she brings forth daughters, they are given up for adoption. Not all the wives of the *Ḳallu* can become the mothers of future *Ḳallu*. Only one of the wives, the *Ḳallitti*, has the right to mother the future ritual leader. She holds a very special position in Borana society. Frequently families who have political aspirations give her their daughters. The house of the *Ḳallitti* is always attended by a few adolescent girls who offer her their services and help to keep her busy household going.

Borana believe that the *Ḳallitti* never has any sexual relationships with her own husband, the *Ḳallu*. Instead, she is allowed to keep some anonymous lovers. In a literal sense, then, it may be true to say that the *Ḳallu* is the "child of Borana." This is similar to the ideas associated with concepts of leadership in many other cultures. All societies run into the problem of the leader becoming too closely associated with the particular segment of society he happens to come from. If he is to command the loyalty of all, he must be dissociated from his particular ties. He must be elevated above the particularisms of the social structure. [10] In the Borana case this is accomplished partly by dissociating him from his clan and conceptualizing him as the "child of Borana." The strategy is quite analogous to the virgin birth of Christ that transforms him from the son of a Jewish carpenter into the universal figure, the "son of Man."

The ritualization of the office of the *Ḳallu* is necessary in order to universalize

[10] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology and Other Essays*, pp. 205-7.

him beyond the limits of his specific clan and lineage affiliation. At the same time, however, the *Ḳallu* always comes from a specific major lineage, in a specific clan in each moiety. That is the paradox that is resolved, inadequately, by the charismatic, extra-moral, extra-structural genesis of his authority.

The *Ḳallu* of the Sabbo comes from the Dayyu clan of the Karrayyu submoiety, and the *Ḳallu* of the Gona comes from the Oditu clan of the Fullele submoiety. The office cannot pass to any other clans although it has been known to pass from one lineage to another within these clans. In addition to the two senior *Ḳallu* who represent the moieties, there are three junior and fairly unimportant *Ḳallu* who come from the Karara, Kukku, and Garjeda lineages of the *Ḳallicha* clan of the Matṭarri submoiety. Occasionally, there is a stalemate between the moiety leaders in which case the junior *Ḳallu* are asked to mediate between the factions in conflict. Beyond this, they seem to have no significant role in the principal pan-Borana institutions. Unless indicated otherwise, the term *Ḳallu* refers exclusively to moiety leaders in this investigation, not to the junior *Ḳallu*s of the Matṭarri.

The clan affiliation of the *Ḳallitti* is also specified by custom. The wives of the *Ḳallu* Karrayyu can come only from Matṭarri-Metta, and the *Ḳallitti* of the Oditu can be a member only of the Digalu-Emmaji. Thus the *Ḳallu* of the Karrayyu is the only Borana who is allowed, or rather required, to violate Borana rules of exogamy. He alone marries a woman who is, by normal standards, his "sister." This too is part of the extra-moral universalizing procedure by which the ritual leader is dissociated from the social structure.

Despite the many taboos, licences, and charismatic ideas that seem to be associated with the office of the *Ḳallu*, these ideas do not have any obvious influence on his day-to-day activities. The supernatural attributes are invoked only occasionally. This is perhaps due to the authoritarian implications of charismatic authority that Borana are reluctant to acknowledge. In the course of the most important ritual and political deliberations, the *Ḳallu* makes every effort not to stand out too conspicuously. There is little that physically distinguishes him from other men. Even his long hair is hidden in a turban, which is indistinguishable from the kind of turbans worn by other members of his gada class. [11]

Ḳallu and Gada

The *Ḳallu* institution is complex and highly instructive. It plays a central role in the traditional socio-political system. It has survived until the present time throughout

[11] It is interesting to note that the Ethiopian government has given the *Ḳallu*s some rather distinguished military titles, such as Fitawrari and Dajjazmach. The shiny black silk cape decorated with gold filigree, which is known as *kabba* in Amharic, was also given to them along with the titles. However, they rarely use either the titles or the capes. In Borana culture, the symbols of authority are not meant to be displayed. Rather, they are intended to be kept discreetly out of sight.

most of the Gallĩña-speaking Ethiopian community. Indeed, it has gone beyond to become incorporated into the ritual life of Amharic-speaking communities in the form of the so-called *Kalicha* rituals. As such, the institution deserves far greater attention than I can devote to it at present. More data on this institution will be presented elsewhere. In the present investigation I concentrate strictly on those aspects of the institution that impinge directly on the Gada System. In this regard, the most important activities of the *Ḳallu* linking up with the Gada System are first, the *muda* ceremony, performed by the gada class in power to honor the *Ḳallu* and, second, the *lallaba* ceremony, in which the *Ḳallu* organizes and oversees the election of gada leaders. *Muda* will be described briefly in the next chapter, and the recruitment of gada leaders will be discussed at length in chapter 8. Here I shall give only a few introductory remarks about the responsibility of the *Ḳallu* as the head of the council of electors.

The critical fact about the *Ḳallu* is that he is said to have the ultimate authority to elect, in conjunction with the council of his lineage, all the principal heads of the Borana political system. I shall refer to these leaders by the generic term *gada councilors* for the time being. Later I shall indicate the many offices subsumed under this category. Each gada class recruits six senior gada councilors as the class reaches a certain stage of its development. Three of these councilors must come from one moiety and three from the other.

Every eight years the *Ḳallu* are confronted with many candidates seeking office. Furthermore, a large number of people who are not seeking office, but who wish to express their support of one or another candidate, also come to the *Ḳallu* villages. With the assistance of his clan and others, the *Ḳallu* hosts all the clan delegations for a period of about two months. All these delegations must be housed and fed. For this purpose Borana bring presents to the *Ḳallu*, usually in the form of livestock to be sacrificed for the occasion. The meat is distributed daily among the visitors.

Although the Borana say that the election of gada councilors is done largely on the basis of merit, it is quite clear that the political forces that influence the council of electors are numerous. Their procedure cannot be reduced to a few simple criteria of recruitment. Personality plays a major role in the process. Friendship networks linking the prospective candidates and their lineages, and the electors and their lineages, are activated for the occasion. There are many kinds of affinal, political, and economic ties that openly or covertly influence the deliberation of the council of electors. There is considerable ambiguity as to what the criteria of recruitment are. This, in part, is what gives the electors some leeway to exercise their judgment and to make proper responses to the pressures from different clan delegations.

Another important factor that seems to affect the thinking of the council of electors is the genealogical background of the prospective candidates. It is not really the merits of the young candidates that is the issue but rather the accumulated merits of the entire lineage. The young men who have outstanding ancestors have much better prospects of winning political office. Borana say that in recent times new factors have also come into the picture. The wealth of the candidate has begun

to play an increasingly large role, albeit surreptitiously, in the process of election. They admit this with a considerable degree of moral indignation. In the words of one informant: "Our *ada* (custom) has been destroyed. Nowadays it is done by giving bribes to the *Ḳallu* of the Oditu and the Karrayyu. In the old days we had warriors; nowadays we have "bribers." That much we have learned from the people of the city."

Borana believe that the *Ḳallu* have not always held the power of electing gada councilors. They frequently say that in the past it was the gada councilors themselves who elected their successors. The councilors are said to have received the clan delegations, listened to the self-adulating speeches of the candidates' fathers, and decided who the gada leaders should be. Because there is perpetual friction between gada leaders and moiety leaders, it is very difficult to determine whether the above statements about the gada electing their own successors is a feature of the continuing debate or whether it is a historical fact.

GADA GRADES:
AN OUTLINE OF THE LIFE CYCLE

The Gada System is an institution that represents an extreme development of a type of social structure known to anthropologists as *age-sets*. Extreme forms are often very instructive in the social sciences because they expose in an exaggerated way simple facts about human society that we take totally for granted and that, consequently, we do not comprehend. The Gada System is an institution that appears so exaggerated that it is readily dismissed by laymen and scholars alike as a sociological anomaly. Anomalous though it may be, it is one of the most astonishing and instructive turns the evolution of human society has taken.

Historically, the Gada System probably started out as a system of age-sets. Today it is organized along radically different lines: it is a system of *temporal differentiation* of society having little to do with age. Real age-sets are organized in such a way that people who are approximately the same age share collective military, economic, political, or ritual responsibilities. The members are initiated into the adult society at the same time and perform a variety of rites of passage, or transition rites, together as they approach each new stage of the life cycle. It is as though the men who graduated together from all the colleges in a particular country became a permanent corporate body charged with the most important responsibilities of social and political leadership and with the obligation of transmitting such responsibilities to younger groups in periodic handover ceremonies. This type of social organization is widespread in eastern Africa and occurs among such well-known societies as the Kikuyu, the Masai, and the Nuer. Among the Galla of Ethiopia the institution has reached a most remarkable level of complexity. There are few institutions in the world that afford us as rich a sociological context for the study of the relationship between time and human society as does the case of the Borana Galla. Here we find a society that is stratified into two distinct but cross-cutting systems of peer-group structures. One is a system in which the members of each class are recruited strictly on the basis of chronological age. The other is a system in which the members are recruited equally strictly on the basis of genealogical generations. The first has nothing to do with genealogical ties. The second has little to do with age. Both types of social groups

are formed every eight years. Both sets of groups pass from one stage of development to the next every eight years. All Borana males have a position in both systems.

Why the same people need to have two separate systems of temporal differentiation with the same time depth (eight years) is an enigma that baffles the social scientist who encounters the institution for the first time. It looks like a highly redundant social system. In a sense, much of this book is dedicated to explicating this enigma, and it would be pointless to give a capsule presentation of the institutions at this stage. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize, at the risk of sounding as redundant as the system itself, that the Borana age-sets known as *hariyya* are recruited on the basis of age, whereas the gada classes known as *luba* are recruited on the basis of genealogical generations.

The English language and the Western world generally, confuses the concept of age and the concept of generation. The generation is presumed to be a group of age peers. This is one of the most enduring fallacies in Western culture and, by extension, in the social sciences. The generation, when defined in genealogical terms, can never be an age-group. The grandsons of two brothers are genealogically members of the same generation. However, the difference in age between the youngest and the oldest members of the group of grandsons could be as much as forty or fifty years. That is hardly an age-group.

To begin our exposition it is necessary to make a distinction between gada classes and gada grades, in much the same sense that earlier anthropologists distinguished between age-sets and age-grades. The set or class is the group of people who share the same status and who perform their rites of passage together, whereas the grades are the stages of development through which the groups pass. The former pair of concepts refer to the collectivity, the latter refers to a conceptual scheme that defines the kind of activities, rights, and duties the groups assume successively throughout their active careers.

The society is divided into a very large number of gada classes. These are classes that move through the hypothetical life cycle as a collectivity. At each stage of development the class holds a different set of corporate responsibilities, including the responsibility of offering political and military leadership to the society as a whole for a limited period of time during their careers. They also have the obligation to transmit their authority to another class in a formal handover ceremony. So far, there is nothing in the organization of gada classes that distinguishes them from age-sets.

There is, however, one rule that makes them sharply different. The basic rule of the Gada System is that *the newly born infant boy always enters the system of grades exactly forty years behind the father, regardless of the age of the father. Father and son are five grades apart at all times.* Children continue to be born into the gada class throughout most of its development. Consequently, the gada class incorporates within its ranks people of vastly different ages. The grade in which a Borana male begins his gada career depends entirely on the grade attained by the father at the time the child is born. The child need not enter the gada cycle at the

"beginning." In this regard there is no parallel between age-sets and gada classes. The first stage through which all age-sets pass is the stage of uninitiated childhood. By contrast, an infant may be admitted into advanced gada grades at birth. The infant joins men, sometimes very old men, who are members of his genealogical generation. When the stranger witnesses extremely young children dressed in adult ceremonial costumes, taking part in ritual and social deliberations and being treated as equals by adults, one cannot help expressing surprise. Borana, however, view it as a perfectly natural state of affairs.

We begin our description of the Gada System with a simple outline of the grades. We will follow the class as it goes through its many stages of metamorphosis. Each grade has a distinctive name. We will use roman numerals after the names of the grades as a mnemonic device to help the reader quickly determine the position in the total gada cycle of the grade referred to. It is important to stress, however, that the numbers impose on the system a degree of linearity and a quantitative characteristic that it does not possess. It is only the *qualitative distinctions* between the grades that constitute the organizational basis of the Gada System.

Grade I: Dabballe

The first grade is named *dabballe* (I). It is a grade always occupied by a class of people sharing a common identity by virtue of the fact that they are all the sons of the gada class who are in power as leaders of Borana society as a whole. This relativistic definition, which establishes the social identity of one class in terms of another class (which is yet to be described), is the only definition true to Borana cyclical thought. It is also a definition that allows us to begin our description of a cycle having no beginning.

The *dabballe* stand out in Borana society because of their striking hair-style, known as *guduru*. Unlike many other boys of the same age, the *dabballe* grow their hair long, usually at shoulder length, and decorate it with cowry shells. The style is typically feminine and is, in fact, identical with the hairstyle of a class of women whom the *dabballe* call their "grandmothers." Throughout the time that the boys remain in this grade, they refrain from cutting their hair. Instead, it is anointed with butter from time to time.

The boys are not only made to look like girls; they are also categorically identified with them. Borana always address them as "girls" (*intal*) when they want to attract their attention. If strangers use the masculine pronoun in talking to them or about them, they are quickly corrected. The boys either go naked, or they wrap a large shawl around themselves. They are not allowed to wear pants. This is another decidedly feminine characteristic.

Aside from biology, there is little that distinguishes them from girls. Nevertheless, Borana attitude toward them is strikingly different from their usual attitude toward girls or toward other boys. They go to great lengths to protect them from harm. They are always ready to give them love and attention. They consider the

boys to be among the principal mediators between man and God. The boys themselves are not an object of worship. However, unfortunate men and women do come to them because they believe that through them they will find relief from their misfortunes. Childless people and people whose livestock have died out or become barren will approach a *dabballe* and, placing their hands on the boy's head, they pledge to return and annoint "her" if their prayer for children or cattle is answered. This means that if they do have children and if their cattle multiply, they will come back with gifts.

The ritual elevation of the *dabballe* is manifested in a variety of ways. Borana very rarely punish their children physically. They seem to be able to discipline them by means of verbal admonitions, threats, and withholding subtler psychological rewards to which the children are accustomed. In the case of the *dabballe*, however, the parent is prohibited by custom from ever punishing them physically. Not only do people refrain from striking the *dabballe*, but even other children who take refuge in the home of such children will be spared by their parents. The very act of touching the person of a *dabballe* when in danger guarantees safety. It seems clear that these "girls" are invested with powers and attributes similar to those of the *Kallu* and other liminal persons.

The mother of the *dabballe* also enjoys a variety of privileges. She wears two times as many copper hairpieces (*gulma*) as she has sons in that grade. These simple tubular pieces of copper are worn conspicuously at the back of the head from the time the son is born until the time he undergoes his first rite of passage. Throughout this time the mother has a special position in Borana society. Women respect her and allow her to enjoy many privileges. The most significant of these privileges is the fact that she does not have to stand in the long queues that form frequently at wells during the dry season. She is allowed to go to the head of a line. But even more important than this practical advantage is the fact that Borana maintain a special ritual attitude toward her. Like her son, she too is seen as a ritual intermediary. Childless men and women come to her to seek her blessing. This is especially likely to happen when she goes to visit another camp or when she meets with total strangers. If she is visiting, her hosts are required to give her shelter and food. In addition to these common courtesies, they are also expected to give her one head of livestock when she leaves their home. This may be a cow or, more commonly at present, a sheep or goat. Apparently the custom of treating the mother of the *dabballe* so lavishly is a thing of the past, and people tend to give her much smaller gifts today. Nevertheless, the traditionally prescribed attitude of generosity toward her still prevails. In response to these gifts she always gives the same blessing: "*Dabballe dali*," or "may you give birth to a *dabballe*." From these ritual attitudes and the material privileges accorded the mother of the *dabballe*, it becomes evident why her position is envied by other women. Childless women have been known to adopt boys for the purpose of becoming mothers of *dabballe*.

Parents try to protect their *dabballe* children by giving them unattractive and derogatory nicknames. Symbolically, the names are like drab or colorless dress: they are presumed to be less likely to attract the attention of potential ill-wishers.

They are like the protective coloration of weak animals who live under the shadow of predators. Aside from these nicknames, the boys have no personal names. They are all sometimes referred to as Jaldessa, a common name meaning "ape."

The mothers of the *dabballe* are not supposed to rear their own sons. They are expected to give them to an endogamous community of hunters known as Wata, who temporarily serve as the surrogate parents. These people assist the Borana in several ritual activities and, as a result, they are protected from Borana. Their ritual position also gives them immunity from the enemies of the Borana. Wata communities do not enter into the cattle-raiding network of southern Ethiopia. Consequently, their camps are a haven for the *dabballe*.

The practice of having the *dabballe* reared by the Wata seems to be declining today. Many Borana have now begun to raise their own *dabballe* sons, many still continue to seek out surrogate parents for them. In either case, the attitude of adults toward these children remains highly protective. The *dabballe* is expected to remain in or near the hut with the women at all times. If the mother must leave the camp, the child is entrusted to co-wives or neighbors.

It is important to stress one vital fact at this stage, although it cannot be explained adequately until the description of the first five gada grades is completed. *The dabballe have no sisters.* All their sisters have either been abandoned to die soon after birth or they have been given up for adoption. Their sisters are raised only after the boys have entered the *gamme* grade (II).

Grade II: Junior Gamme

The transition ceremony by which the sons pass from the *dabballe* into the *gamme* grade is performed at the shrine of Nura, near the town of Negelli. I observed the ceremony in the summer of 1963. In preparation for the ceremony the fathers of the *dabballe* migrated from all the principal regions of Borana to the areas of the shrine. All the families with *dabballe* children built special ceremonial huts (*galma*). The women of each camp cooperated in building and thatching the huts. The whole area was green, fresh, and free from the mud and flies that make old settlements almost unbearable for the men and their herds. Major Borana ceremonies are almost always held in new settlements. Moving from one territory to another and building new huts and cattle kraals require a large investment of energy on the part of men and women. The reason for the frequent changes of camp sites is in part ecological and in part ritual. Borana have special ceremonial grounds for every major transition rite and for many minor intra-grade ceremonies. On the whole, the fact that the men engaged in gada ritual change camp sites more frequently than the average pastoral nomad indicates that their extensive movements cannot be explained in ecological terms alone.

The entire procedure of selecting camp sites, transporting goods, and building ceremonial huts has a most salutary effect on Borana camps. There is considerable cooperation in every phase of this complex undertaking. The people engaged in

*gada rituals are often strangers to each other, and participating in a familiar economic activity before attempting to engage in an unfamiliar ritual activity probably has an important heuristic value. It also facilitates the work of gada leaders in their effort to attract as many members of their class as possible, to persuade them to attend the ceremony and to contribute food, drinks, and labor. Mobilizing a diffuse gada class to perform a ceremony is an extremely difficult task. The preliminary cooperative activities, the singing and feasting make the task somewhat easier.

For the *dabballe-gamme* transition rite I witnessed, the class succeeded in bringing together some eighty families. This is, of course, a small fraction of the total population of the gada class. When asked why such a small number attended and how they would reconcile this fact with earlier statements to the effect that all members of a gada class are required to attend transition rites, they said that every member was in fact present. They pointed out that there is a place in the shrine of Nura where twigs of a sacred tree sent by those members who were unable to come were kept. Thus the absent members were symbolically present. I was not allowed to count the twigs. There were probably no more than two hundred in the bundle.

The actual ceremony consisted of two segments — the hair shaving rite and the giving of names. The shaving procedure was simple and unceremonious. Each father took his son or sons into the ceremonial hut. The mother poured water and milk into the wooden bowl. The mixture was used to keep the hair wet during the operation. Using a blade especially made for the occasion by Konso artisans, the father shaved all the son's hair. This was done by order of seniority when more than one son was involved, the oldest being shaved first. The sons then sheepishly left their huts somewhat embarrassed by the exposure, using their small shawls to cover their heads, a gesture that left their bodies fully exposed. It was an altogether awkward performance and a source of much amusement for the adults. The same day the sons, their mothers and fathers went to the shrine (*kallicha* Nura). The leader of the fathers' class, the Abba Gada, waited for the celebrants at the shrine. Each father approached the leader and asked him to name his son. The name, which was selected by the parents, was blessed. Childless women prayed under the tree-shrine and made their pledges. All the celebrants then returned to the settlement.

The immediate changes in the initiates were both linguistic and behavioral. "Girls" became "boys." Any slips back to the older habit of addressing the boys as girls were quickly corrected. The derogatory nicknames were also abandoned. Instead, parents and their friends called the boys by their new and very masculine proper names. Not only the initiates but also their fathers and mothers acquired new forms of address after the ceremony. They were addressed as "father of Guyyo," or "mother of Guyyo" by reference to the name of their oldest son. The terminology clearly shifts the focus of attention from one generation to another. People say and behave as if their friends or kinsmen, the fathers of the *dabballe*, had just acquired sons although the sons had been around for years. Gada fiction says that the boys are not boys until they are initiated, so that the ceremony does in fact represent the "birth of sons."

The boys are the focus of attention during and after the ceremony. People constantly talk about them and about the meaning of the names they have just acquired. In particular, when the name given to the boy was the name of an ancestor, as is often the case, the transition rite becomes an occasion for recounting family lore. The name is often a symbol of lineage tradition the son is expected to uphold. This burden falls principally on the shoulders of the oldest son. He is the vital link between successive generations in a lineage. Indeed, the naming ceremony of the oldest son and that of the other sons are quite different. The former is called *gubbisa* and cannot be celebrated without the sacrifice of a steer. The latter is known as *moggasa*; it is a much simpler event not requiring cattle sacrifice. At best, small livestock may be offered.

In general, however, the status elevation experienced by every initiate cannot fail to make a deep impression on his behavior and attitudes. A society that ensures that all individuals are from time to time made the focus of community-wide attention and an object of celebration has a powerful instrument of socialization.

In addition to the terminological and behavioral changes, the child also experiences a shift in the locus of his activities. He moves out of the domain of the hut and into the domain of the kraal. This shift parallels the transformation of his sex identity because in the Borana cognitive map of the camp, the hut is decidedly feminine territory, whereas the kraal and the bush are components of the male world. Until the naming ceremony, the boy is reprimanded for wandering off too far from the hut. He is expected to remain within the mother's hearing range at all times. After the ceremony he is urged to go out and help his father to build and maintain the kraal. If he spends too much time in the hut, he is ridiculed by the women and by his peers. In most cases the sons are quite happy to go off visiting neighboring camps some distance from the maternal households and free from the ministrations of the ever-present mothers.

The principal responsibility the boy assumes after his rite of passage is the responsibility of looking after the small livestock and horses of the family. Borana graze their calves and horses in the immediate vicinity of the camp. For the younger boys this is quite a difficult task. The transition rite therefore signals the end of the privileged and extremely sheltered life the *dabballe* enjoyed and the beginning of the relatively harsh life that is the lot of the young cattleman.

The initiate is now a member of the junior *gamme* grade (*gamme didikko*), and he begins to grow a new hairstyle to represent his new status. The *gamme* hairstyle looks like the tonsure of Franciscan monks. The head is shaved in the middle, and the rest is allowed to grow long, treated with butter and curled. Throughout the eight year period of the junior *gamme* grade, the initiates have no ritual or political obligations. Their economic activities are conducted by them as individuals and as informal groups of friends and kinsmen rather than as a gada class. Outside of their cattle herding obligations, the *gamme* lead a relatively unrestricted life.

As yet the peer group is not formally organized into an age-set. Nevertheless, the boys who had their transition rite at the same time tend to form more or less stable informal groups and spend much of their time helping each other in their

cattle-herding chores and singing songs of love and war. Sometimes their songs celebrate their mischief, their conquests, and the beauty of their favorite animals. At other times, they ridicule the behavior of the older *gamme*, their immediate seniors.

Grade III: Senior Gamme

The senior *gamme* grade (*gamme gugurdo*) opens without any formal promotion ceremony. The boys mark their passage into the grade with a slight change in hairstyle: the shaven part of the hair is smaller than in the previous grade. This transition is simultaneous with all the other rites of passage, such as the naming ceremony we have already discussed and several other rites to be discussed below. There is no question of confusing the junior and senior *gamme* despite the similarity of their hairstyle and the lack of a formal transition rite. The two groups are the sons of two distinct gada classes. At the time of my fieldwork the junior *gamme* were called "the sons of Maḍa," and the senior *gamme* were called the "sons of Guyyo." They were named after Maḍa Galma and Guyyo Boru, who were the leaders or Abba Gada of the seventh and eighth gada classes respectively.

The oldest boys in the class are permitted to go on war parties, cattle raids, and hunting expeditions with older gada classes. Today, wars with neighboring Somali and Galla groups are not very frequent although cattle raids still are. The fact that the district administration has imposed a restriction on such activities has made Borana informants quite defensive about discussing the topic. It is clear that a great deal of cattle raiding has gone underground without diminishing significantly in frequency or extent. Cattle raids are reported on the Guji and Somali borders at least once every month. These raids are a source of passionate interest for the adolescent *gamme*. The few among them who successfully capture Guji or Somali cattle are well on their way to becoming heroes among their peers and in the eyes of their mistresses and their future wives.

With the decline in intertribal wars, another source of excitement has come to assume a progressively larger role in the life of Borana adolescents. They call it *fora*. It is the time when young men take the family herds into the untamed river valleys. Borana is rich in wild life, and no part of the country is better endowed than the Dawwa and Gannale basins. Herds of elephants, some lions and cheetahs, large numbers of antelopes, and a great many varieties of snakes are found in the area. Armed with nothing more than his spear and a container (*ciço*) in which to carry his daily supply of milk, the boy takes his herd into the valley and roams up and down the territory for several months at a time in search of good pastures. Often the *fora* boys do not return to their families for as long as two or three years, and when they finally do come back they bring stories of their confrontations with great and fearful beasts, stories to which their younger brothers listen with great admiration. Many of these stories are adolescent fantasy, and many are very real. Some of the boys get killed while trying to hunt big game or defending their cattle from

predators. Others die of snakebite, malaria, or Somali snipers. Those who return bear the scars of their harsh life, and the occasional death of an age-mate adds an awesome aura of authenticity to their stories. The boys come back after this experience considerably more mature than when they left their parental camps. The impact of *fora* on the behavior of the *gamme* is probably no less significant than the effect of the most dramatic initiation ceremonies. As in the case of the *dabballe-gamme* transition rite, however, the subtle, community-wide behavior processes triggered by the *fora* experience probably have a deeper and more lasting effect than the event itself. An entire community changes its attitudes toward the individual in response to his *fora* achievements. If he has, for instance, captured Somali cattle in raids or killed big game on his *fora* trips, the youth will be celebrated by his age-mates. He will have a much easier time in marriage negotiations, and after he is married his wife will regularly display his trophies. The moral pressure exerted by their prospective brides is the motive that, more than anything else, drives Borana youths to withstand the dangers of war and the hardships of *fora*.

Fora fulfills a vital need in Borana society. It redistributes the cattle population against the background of pastures and water resources without disturbing the nomadic-ceremonial pattern of movement of the bands. It should be remembered that the movement of large bands and their complete herds along a ceremonially prescribed course would have a devastating effect on pastures and water resources, because too many cattle would be concentrated in a small territory for very long periods of time. With the *fora* arrangement, the bands keep only a few milk cows and are therefore free to form very large ceremonial camps. The rest of the herd remains in lowland areas that are not ideal for human settlement but that have an ample water supply (river) and plentiful pastures.

Fora occurs in that part of the life cycle (adolescence) when maximum disengagement from all structural relationships seems to have a salutary effect. The *fora* experience is extremely well-suited to meet that need.

Age-sets

Grade III also marks the beginning of an important subsidiary institution that Borana call *hariyya*. This is a group of people born in the same eight-year period; they are an age-set. It is important to note that the *hariyya* system is different from the Gada System. The two institutions parallel each other. The difference between these institutions is a central problem that we will examine from many different angles. At this stage we simply observe that the Gada System harbors within itself a full-blown system of age-sets and that the age-sets and gada classes are formally incorporated at the same time toward the end of the third grade and the beginning of the fourth.

In grade II we came across informal age-sets consisting of local peer groups who help each other in herding small livestock and horses. At the beginning of grade III the small clusters of age-mates begin to celebrate the ceremonies of *hariyya cuch*.

Every year a local group of age-mates mobilizes under the leadership of an enterprising youth. This happens at the beginning of each summer, which in Borana is the time of rains and the time of plenty. Many of the *fora* youths return to their bands before the ceremonies start. Some of these youths bring their herds with them, others leave them in the care of age-mates or brothers.

The *hariyya cuch* ceremonies begin when a band of young men starts to wander from one camp to another demanding that their parents give them feasts. They attract the attention of other age-mates, and their numbers swell. A point is reached when the adult population can no longer ignore them. They go from house to house and from camp to camp visiting any area where they have age-mates. They send a messenger ahead of time to the mother of the age-mate they are about to visit so that she will prepare a feast. They approach the camp singing, and they are always welcomed and offered coffee and milk. They sing and dance. Then they take their newly "recruited" age-mate and move on to the next camp. They cover two or three camps each day, and the process goes on for about two weeks. Toward the end of the ceremony the band of youths becomes so large and voluble that it tends to overpower the camp population and overtax their food resources. The whole procedure is repeated annually over a period of five years in the senior *gamme* grade (III).

During the last three years of grade III, the *gamme* themselves (*i.e.*, the gada class rather than the age-set) go through a ceremony that closely resembles the *hariyya cuch*. Again local groups mobilize and go around from camp to camp singing, feasting and collecting members of their class. The ceremony is called *wal'argi* (to see each other) in the first year and *nachisa* (feast) in the last two years. A major feature of the latter ceremony, which sets it apart from any of the age-set celebrations, is the fact that all the *luba*-fathers of the celebrants are expected to sacrifice cattle in order to feed and entertain the visiting *luba* mates of their sons. According to one old-man, about 400 head of cattle are sacrificed in a single season. I have witnessed several dozen cattle being sacrificed in one season in the immediate vicinity of Arero, and the above estimate does not sound too exorbitant for the Arero region as a whole. All the meat is distributed daily among the members of the gada class.

An important feature of the *nachisa* celebrations is that the boys allow themselves a great deal of linguistic and behavioral license. Their songs now contain much sexual imagery and some pointed commentary on the mistresses of their peers and of older gada classes. Their behavior is rowdy and involves a rather vicious pecking order among the boys of different classes. The celebrants are constantly harassed by their seniors, and they in turn harass their juniors. They can, for instance, beat their juniors, make them fetch water (a woman's job), and ride on their backs. On one occasion I witnessed, they made a group of young boys hop like frogs on all fours from one end of the camp to the other. Adults watched the performance, and they were more or less equally divided in their reactions. Some found it immensely amusing, and others reprimanded the older boys.

The effect of the *hariyya cuch*, *wal'argi* and *nachisa* ceremonies, covering the

entire eight-year period, is to make the members of the senior *gamme* (and the age-set associated with them) acutely aware of the society-wide significance of their class and peer group. At the end of these many feasts and expeditions, the individual becomes closely identified with the members of his grade. Sometime during the eight-year period, leaders of local age-sets emerge spontaneously without any formal election procedures. The local age-set (sixteen to twenty-four years old) is thereafter named informally after its local leader. In time the name of one of these leaders wins out, and the entire age-set is thus named after him. At the end of grade III the age-set elects two separate councils, one for the eastern region of Borana (Liban) and one for the west (Dirre). Thus the age-set has a single name that is known throughout Boranaland, but it is represented by two regional councils that exercise what little authority they have over the age-mates in their respective regions. Traditionally, they exercised authority mainly in cattle raids and wars — their job was to recruit and organize warriors from among the gada classes and age-sets.

Table 3-1. Age-sets in 1963

Name of Age-sets	Age
1. <i>Wakor</i> Duba	12–19
2. <i>Darar</i> Godana	20–27
3. <i>Dambal</i> Bule	28–35
4. <i>Wakor</i> Liban	36–43
5. <i>Dambal</i> Arero	44–51
6. <i>Wakor</i> Sora	52–59
7. <i>Dambal</i> Taddacha	60–67
8. <i>Wakor</i> Dida	68–75
9. <i>Udan</i> Bukko	76–83
10. <i>Wakor</i> Mallu	84–91

Table 3-1 lists all the age-sets represented by living members at the time of my fieldwork in 1963. The ages are the ideal limits. See chapter 4 for actual age data. The names *wakor*, *darara*, and so on are the generic designations of age-sets. They recur in each generation but not in a strictly cyclical manner. The names Duba, Godana, and so on are the proper names of the leaders.

At any given time two or three age-sets are likely to be involved in wars or cattle raids. The third and fourth are the warrior groups parallel to the *cusa* (IV) and *raba* (V) grades. Age-sets two and five in Table 3-1 are also frequently involved, but their role is usually marginal. It is important to stress that age-sets persist throughout the natural life cycle and that membership in them is for life. I shall discuss age-sets again as we come to the stages of the life cycle when their role becomes prominent.

Grade IV: Cusa, Junior Warriors

The transition from the third to the fourth gada grade is one of the most important events of the Gada system. At this point the gada class and the age-set come into being as formal corporate groups. Leaders are elected for both groups. The name of the most senior man in each group becomes the name of the group as a whole. *The two groups then become cross-linked, cross-cutting, structural units that operate as complementary institutions so long as they are both represented by living members.*

(I have already briefly described the recruitment of age-set leaders in the above section.) The election of gada councilors takes place at the same time as the transition rite of the class from grade III to grade IV. (The election process (*lallaba*) will be discussed in chapter 8. In this chapter I shall discuss only the transition rite (*godiyya*) and add the reminder that the separation of the two processes is entirely an artifact of our analytical procedures and not inherent in the social structure.)

(The *gamme-cusa* transition rite takes place at the shrine of Taddacha Dera in the vicinity of Arero. In much the same way that the naming ceremony requires a major effort on the part of the gada leaders to mobilize the class, the present ceremony also necessitates large-scale movement of the nomadic population. At the time of my investigation, about four hundred families came from every region of Boranaland, including a few families who came from the Northern Frontier District of Kenya. One family made the trip in three successive years, camping in several intermediate sites on the way to the ceremonial grounds.

Over a period of one month seven different camps developed. One camp served as the central meeting place for all the celebrants. This was the camp of Guyyo Boru, the Abba Gada of the class whose sons were to be initiated. All the camps were located within the valley of Dera but not in the immediate vicinity of the shrine. At first they settled along a wide perimeter, large enough to permit adequate spacing of camps. [1] As the date of the ceremony approached, the camps moved in closer toward the shrine. The families dismantled their huts and used part of the frame to build the ceremonial huts (*galma*). These latter huts were large enough to allow the families to entertain many more well-wishers and visitors than could be accommodated in a normal hut.

While the construction was in progress, the initiates came to the camps with white and red cloth they had purchased in the Arero market. The cloth was to be used for a ceremonial flag. It was presented to the leader or Abba Gada of the fathers of the initiates. An enclosure was built near the camp of the Abba Gada,

[1] This is the pattern followed in all important ceremonies. The object is to allow them to graze their calves and horses in the area near the camps for a few weeks until the completion of the ceremony. In other words, the preliminary camp site, which is specifically known as *laf dawa*, is located some distance away from gada shrines with a view to preserving pastures in times of great concentration of population and livestock. The effective way of redistributing the cattle population is *fora*. However, even the few milk cows, calves, and draught animals that are brought to the ceremonial grounds can cause overgrazing unless the location of camps around ceremonial grounds is regulated.

and the traditional red and white flag known as *bakḳala fajji* was hoisted. The boys sang their age-set songs (*tunne*) and the songs of gada passage (*mokke*). The fathers and mothers then stood facing each other around the flag, and the fathers sang songs of praise to their wives. The fathers went out as a group to a nearby tree shrine and came back with branches of a sacred tree (*miessa*). The branches were placed at the entrance of the enclosure. The mothers brought out wooden bowls filled with milk and water. The father washed the head of his son with the mixture and shaved off all the hair. Each family sacrificed one steer. The hide was cut into strips and was given to each celebrant to wear as a kind of bracelet. The boy was also given a bead (*imu*), which he would wear as part of a necklace for the rest of his life.

At this stage in the ceremony all the boys in the class, including infants, were required to wear trousers. The older boys had been wearing trousers throughout their adolescent years. Dressed like adults, the boys left their maternal huts and assembled at the site of the shrine. For the first time they had come together as a gada class. They assembled for the purpose of building a large enclosure to serve as their isolation camp. The diagram shown in Figure 3-1, which is self-explanatory, represents the camp (*galma ciccida*) and the principal sections of it. Each boy received one lactating cow and its calf as an outright gift from his father. The boys took their cattle and went into the ceremonial camp, to remain there in near-total isolation.

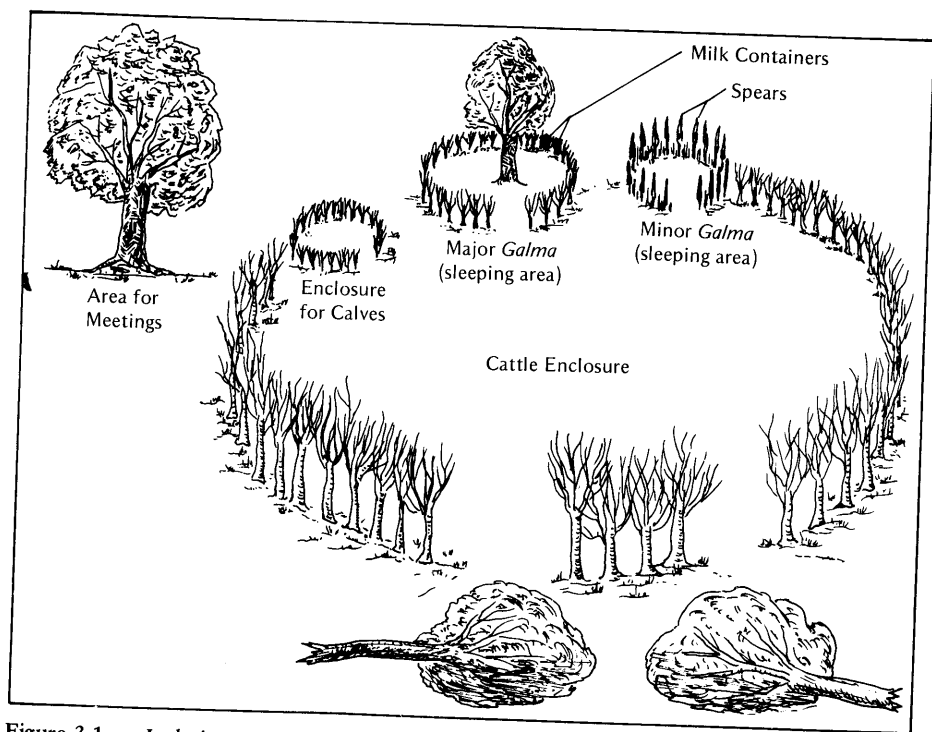


Figure 3-1. Isolation Camp (Galma Ciccida)

Up to this point, the ceremony had taken nine days, and the period of isolation was an additional four days. In this latter period the boys' mothers brought them milk two times a day. However, the mothers were not allowed to talk to any of the boys. Instead, each woman called out the name of her sons' clan as she approached the camp. All the boys of that clan, including her sons, took the food and shared it between themselves. This is one of several indications that in gada ceremonies parents and children relate to each other as members of clans, gada classes, and age-sets, not as individual members of a family.

On the fourteenth day of the ceremony the *cusa* emerged from their isolation camp wearing adult ceremonial costumes and carrying whips (*lichu*) to which they had attached a small scepter (*bokku*). They returned their cattle temporarily to the parent herds and participated in the feasting for another four days. At that point, they went into isolation again — this time not in the enclosure but in their mothers' huts. The rear section of the hut (*dibu*) was curtained off, and the boy spent all his time in it. At the end of the four-day period he appeared again, and this time his emergence was described as *ulma bati*, the same phrase that is used to describe the emergence of a woman after forty days of post-partum isolation.

The transition rite thus came to an end and the *cusa* proceeded with the *lallaba* ceremony, the grand event in which the "election results" were announced to the assembled representatives of all Borana clans. The candidates themselves did not know the outcome of their campaign until about a week before the *lallaba* ceremony. They were given only a few days' notice to prepare for the celebrations.

Six boys were elected. These young men were invested in the *lallaba* ceremony as senior councilors (*adula*). As leaders of the gada class they were all said to have the same *mura* ("cutting-edge"): in spite of the fact that they were ordered by seniority, they were a community of equals and shared the same amount of decision-making power. This is the Borana version of "government by committee." The highest office is that of the Abba Gada *arbora*. He is described as the *adula fite*, or the apical councilor (*fite* = apex, pinnacle, top). The next two seniority positions are held by the councilors known as Abba Gada *kontoma*. These two officers always come from two specific clans from the two submoieties of the Gona moiety. The three most senior officers of the council are collectively known as *gada saden* (the gada triumvirate). The remaining three councilors are simply *adula*.

Table 3-2. The Senior Council

Seniority	Clan	Terminological Distinctions		
1	ϕ	Abba Gada	<i>arbora</i>	<i>adula</i>
2	Hawattu	Abba Gada	<i>kontoma</i>	<i>adula</i>
3	Konnitu	Abba Gada	<i>kontoma</i>	<i>adula</i>
4	ϕ	ϕ	ϕ	<i>adula</i>
5	ϕ	ϕ	ϕ	<i>adula</i>
6	ϕ	ϕ	ϕ	<i>adula</i>

hayyu (senior councilors). All six officers, along with many others to be recruited later, bear the generic designation of *hayyu* (councilor).

The investiture of these six men is the act by which all the boys who are in the *cusa* grade became a *luba* or gada class. The group has informally been a *luba* since the birth of its oldest members twenty-four years earlier. However, it is only with the election and investiture of its leaders that the group becomes institutionalized. It is now a corporate group with corporate rights and corporate obligations. The *adula* council is the representative body through which the *luba* lives, acts, and worships vicariously. If these six men are attacked by Somali raiders, the class will say "we have been attacked." If they perform heroic acts in war or hunting, the class will celebrate its collective accomplishments. If they live to a mature old age, the class will claim preferential treatment by the deity. If the *godiyya* cattle of the councilors multiply rapidly, the class will boast of its propitiatory potential. There is, in short, a very deep sense of personal identification between the members of the class and their *adula* council. It is this process that cuts into familial relationships and allows the young men to develop a new social identity independent of kinship ties.

The most significant event signaling the incorporation and separate identity of the class is the establishment of the core band, the capital "city" of their class. All the six *adula* councilors are required to live and nomadize together from now until the group subdivides sixteen years later. At that stage the gada triumvirate establishes three separate bands (one called *olla arbora* and the other two called *olla kontoma*). Each band must continue to operate as an indivisible community for another thirteen years. In other words, for a total period of twenty-nine years, the leaders and all their assistants live as one (or three) communities and their settlement(s) serve as the mobile capital of the entire gada class. Throughout this period *no decision can be made and no ritual performed without the participation and consent of all the councilors*. Should a councilor be absent when an important activity is scheduled, the activity must be suspended until the missing councilor can be summoned. The penalty for thus disrupting the collective obligations of the *adula* council may be as much as one head of livestock, approximately two per cent of the total properties of the poorest councilors.

The principal nomadic movements of the core band are prescribed by custom so that at any given time the members of the gada class who are scattered throughout Boranaland have a fair idea of the whereabouts of the core band and can join it whenever they wish. On ceremonial occasions they know the approximate location of the leaders. The class as a whole is expected to assist the core band in the performance of ritual, political, and economic obligations. Although the core band starts out as a simple cluster of about a dozen huts, it grows in size and complexity over the years.

The *adula* councilors are assisted by a group of volunteers known as *jallaba*. These men are selected jointly by clan leaders and by the *adula* councilors to perform basic services in the core band. They accompany the councilors in their nomadic movements. They run errands for them. They serve as their body-guards.

They serve as deputy councilors especially in dealing with clan leaders and moiety leaders. Above all, however, their job is to look after the cattle of the councilors. It would be quite impossible for the councilors to attend as many meetings and to perform as many rituals as they do without relief from the time-consuming chores of the pastoral nomad.

Having thus established the core band and having entrusted the business of the class to the councilors, the *cusa* and their parents return to their home territory or to whatever region their nomadic movements take them. Traditionally, the *cusa* were the junior warriors of Borana society. They took an important part in cattle raids and wars under the leadership and supervision of the two gada classes above them. Normally, they formed one of the three divisions (*çibra*) making up the standard war party. As such, they were definitely under the authority of the leaders of the senior warrior class. However, they were also free to initiate "punitive" expeditions against Guji or Somali.

The *cusa* (IV) spend much of their time assisting their fathers with pastoral chores — other than herding — and engage in the merrier chore of mistress hunting. The oldest members of the class have already initiated the long process of marriage negotiations that will culminate in their marriage at the end of the *cusa* grade. We have seen the details of the marriage process in the introductory chapter. The process is, on the whole, applicable to the *cusa* except for one major difference. Those boys in the *cusa* grade who "beg for virgin brides" *within their own gada class* have a much easier time because, in such a case, Borana say that the girl's father cannot turn down the request. The marriage negotiation process will be much abridged in these special cases. The other boys who are "begging for brides" outside of the gada class are subject to all the problems to which suitors are exposed, and there is no guarantee that they will have brides when their class is ready to perform its collective marriage ceremony.

Grade V: Raba, Senior Warriors

The *raba* grade is a very important stage in the life cycle of the youths whose complex careers we have been following up to this point. Not all Borana men are part of the cycle as we have described it here. However, the principle by which some are included and some are excluded cannot be explained here because to do so would require an understanding of the structural history of the Gada System as a whole.

Those men who are in the gada cycle and who are of the appropriate age when they reach the *raba* grade are expected to marry. By "appropriate age" I mean those who are in their twenties or early thirties. The marriage of these men constitutes a *rite de passage* for all the members of the class. The men who marry in the transition rite enjoy a variety of advantages, not the least important of which is the shortening of the marriage negotiation process.

Whether or not a man can marry depends on several factors. Perhaps the most

important factor is whether his father is able and willing to part with the requisite number of bridewealth cattle. The fact that all his sons reach *raba* (V) grade simultaneously makes it difficult for the father to do so. If he can, he will allow his oldest son to marry at the *cusa-raba* transition; and he will expect the other sons to wait until a later stage when the family herd has, once again, reached its normal size. In spite of the fact that bridewealth payment in Borana is small compared with other pastoral peoples, fathers feel that the marriage of each son cuts deeply into the family estate. They say that if three or four sons were to marry simultaneously, the bridewealth payments would leave the parental household destitute. Only the wealthiest families can withstand an upset of this magnitude.

Some of the younger sons who cannot marry at the transition rite along with their *luba* mates are therefore deeply disappointed. Borana rarely express overt hostility toward the few injustices that are built into their social system. On the occasion of the marriage ceremony, however, men said that they would give up *gada* and become cattle traders rather than wait indefinitely for a dubious patrimony and an uncertain marriage.

When they are thinking on a purely normative plane, Borana informants will say that the members of the class must marry when they become *raba*. It is eminently clear, however, that very few of them can. Indeed, even first-born sons (*angafa*) who come from well-to-do families have difficulties terminating the protracted marriage negotiation process early enough to allow them to marry "on schedule" with their class. Too many contingencies are involved.

The marriage ceremony (*sirba dokisu*) I witnessed was a rather simple affair. The prospective grooms and their friends came from different parts of Borana country and settled near the shrine of Guto, a month before the date of the ceremony. The prospective brides and their families also moved from different regions into the general area of the shrine. The date of the ceremony was set for the month of *Waçabajji*. Two elders who had gone through the ceremony themselves in previous decades were present throughout the month advising the men about procedural detail. This is the first major event of the *gada* cycle in which the members of the class perform the entire ritual without direct supervision from their fathers.

On the eve of the ceremony the men spent the night outdoors. The following morning they returned to camp singing, carrying branches of the Guto tree-shrine and blowing a horn that is used on very rare ceremonial occasions. The celebrants returned to their huts, and the men of their camp took their brides to them. Unlike the normal marriages that were described in chapter 2, the "taking of the brides" in this ceremony does not involve any negotiations. All differences between wife-givers and wife-takers are resolved beforehand. For several days after the ceremony the celebrants sang and took part in each other's meat feasts. Small livestock were sacrificed for the occasion, and a fermented honey drink was prepared and liberally served to all visitors.

The most surprising feature of the ceremony was the great disparity in age between the grooms and their brides. Most of the brides were about thirteen or fourteen years old. The youngest of the councilors married a ten-year-old. When

asked why he selected a girl who had not yet reached puberty, he said that the marriage was a mere formality and that she would stay with her mother until she comes of age. The other men were planning to set up independent households immediately with the assistance of their in-laws and of the *jallaba*, their assistants.

The members of the *raba* grade are expected to marry in the ceremony but the officers of the *raba* are required to do so. What provisions does Borana culture make for the officer who is unable to find a wife? Borana say that any member of the *adula* council or any one of the ritual experts or deputy councilors who is unable to get a wife through the normal process of interlineage negotiation is "allowed to pick a wife then and there." Since all the men in the 1963 transition rite had completed the negotiations beforehand, I had no opportunity to observe this abbreviated version of Borana marriage. I am told that the councilor simply declares his choice, and neither the girl nor her family is allowed to turn him down.

Few men participated in the *raba* marriage ceremony. All six *adula* councilors and the same number of assistants (*jallaba*) were married. Data collected subsequently in other parts of Boranaland indicate that many other *raba* were also married in the same month.

The expectation that men should marry at the beginning of the *raba* grade may have some influence on Borana demography and on the Gada System as a whole. I shall evaluate both problems later with the help of census data. The other side of that rule is of much greater significance: the prohibition of marriage *before* the class has reached the thirty-second year of the grade system. This rule is rigidly enforced and constitutes one of the critical invariables of the institution. As such, it is an important dimension of the structure of the Gada System.

Viewed in isolation and without regard to the rest of the social system, the rule appears quite unrealistic, if not unworkable. It is only in the larger context that the rule begins to make sense. For all practical purposes the *cusa* and *raba* are "married" throughout most of their adolescent and young adult years despite the fact that they have no wives and cannot have children. We are referring to the preponderance of *cicisbean* unions in Borana society. The *cusa*, who are barred from marriage, and the *raba*, who usually cannot marry for a variety of nonprescriptive reasons, are allowed to keep mistresses. Their mistresses can be only married women; virgins are taboo. The *cicisbean* liaison is established with the implicit and sometimes explicit consent of the husband.

Most *raba* have one or two mistresses in different camps. Some have none. The number of *cicisbean* unions depends largely on the social skills and prestige of the men and on the personal preferences of the men as well as women involved. One of the most colorful folk heroes of Borana is a young man with a sizable band of female admirers who are ready to evict their husbands whenever he appears on the scene. He, in turn, celebrates *all* his mistresses by singing about them in rhyming couplets far more tender than anything their husbands could produce. The best form of entertainment that I was able to offer my informants in the course of fieldwork was a tape-recording of these songs. The songs will be published later along with textual analyses of Borana folk literature.

Cicisbeism (and the associated oral literature) is a general phenomenon in Borana society. It is the privilege of every youth, every adult, every married woman, and every widow – subject, of course, to kinship limitations. Cicisbeism has much wider significance than the specific implications we are considering here. Nevertheless, *the premarital sex rules for men and the extramarital sex rules for women clearly support the structure of the Gada System and make its most unrealistic rules workable.*

The Gada Assembly in the Raba Grade

As indicated earlier, the core band of the gada class was formed at the beginning of the *cusa* grade (IV). At that stage it consisted of six councilors and their deputies, the *jallaba*. This assembly is still the focus of the gada class at the present stage (grade V). Except for minor changes to be discussed presently, the basic structure of the group remains the same.

The major change is that some of the councilors may have died or they may have been removed from office (*bukkiisu*). Both these eventualities are sufficiently common for us to consider them part of the normal growth of the core band. In the days when Borana were more or less perpetually at war the neighboring societies, such as the Arsi, Guji, and Somali, the death of some *adula* councilors during the first two decades after their election was virtually unavoidable. As leaders of the gada class, they were expected to play a prominent role in warfare. One of the striking features of gada history is the remarkably high percentage of *adula* who were elected but did not live until their class assumed power (grade VI). Of course some of these men also died of natural causes, but that alone cannot explain the very high incidence of premature deaths among gada leaders.

Many of the present *adula* councilors in Borana were elected to serve as substitutes for deceased councilors. Others were elected to take the place of those who were “uprooted” because of incompetence. The elders of Borana clans and the leaders of the two moieties (Kallu councils) jointly retain the authority to remove any *adula* councilor who fails to meet his numerous ritual-political responsibilities.

Another minor change in the composition of the core band is the appointment of new deputy councilors, or *jallaba*. At this point in the gada grade system, the second set of deputy councilors is appointed by the Abba Gada of the class. The selection of the *jallaba* is done by the *adula* council in consultation with the elders of the relevant Borana clans. Each clan is asked to present its volunteers, and the clan elders discuss the candidates with a representative of the council. The consultation is usually done by the member of the council who belongs to the clan in question or one that is closely related to it. He, or his deputy, and the clan elders usually make the decision, which the council then approves.

During the early part of the *raba* grade, another facet of the recruitment of assistants becomes apparent. In addition to the *jallaba*, who hold a relatively honored position because they have volunteered for service, there is a second class of assistants who are conscripted into service. They are known as *torbi* – an

interesting sociological category people apply to others but never to themselves. Any young man, irrespective of his gada class affiliation, may be asked by his clan to serve. Most Borana men do, at one time or another in their lives, offer their services for limited periods of time. The deputy councilors put considerable moral pressure on any man who refuses to serve. If that fails, they can and do forcibly take the conscript away from his camp. This is accomplished by going to his camp, taking away his possessions, his livestock, his wife, and his children. He follows.

To sum up: at this stage of its development the core band consists of six senior councilors (*adula*), about the same number of deputy councilors (*jallaba*), and an unspecified number of conscripts (*torbi*). In addition to these three classes of men, two ritual officiants are now attached to the *adula* council. These are known as *bokku* and *tufa ya'a*. In each gada class, each moiety has its own *bokku* and *tufa*. Unlike most of the gada councilors, these four offices are hereditary and pass down by patrilineal succession. The officers have the job of leading the class in ritual, each man being charged with the responsibility of initiating a different set of rites, blessing sacrificial animals, making propitiatory offerings. *All offenses committed against them or their clans must be acknowledged and reparations paid before they permit rituals to be opened.* The *bokku* is the most senior ritual leader and takes precedence over the Abba Gada himself in all ritual activities. In all other spheres he is under the authority of the Abba Gada and of the *adula* council as a whole.

This completes the roster of gada officers. It is evident that the core band has already developed some characteristics of a functionally differentiated bureaucracy. The size of the band is now about thirty to forty huts under normal circumstances and much larger than that on ceremonial occasions. The term *olla arbora* is still used to refer to the original cluster of huts, the part of the camp consisting of the families of the *adula* councilors. The larger camp, as it is presently constituted, is known as the *ya'a*. I shall call this larger complex the “gada assembly” or simply “the assembly.”

Figure 3-2 represents Borana “bureaucratic” terminology and the corresponding English glosses I have used. The lines separating the categories represent differences in patterns of recruitment. The reader should keep in mind that whenever I use English glosses they are intended to stand for the corresponding Borana concepts and categories. The glosses have a restricted semantic content, narrower than their

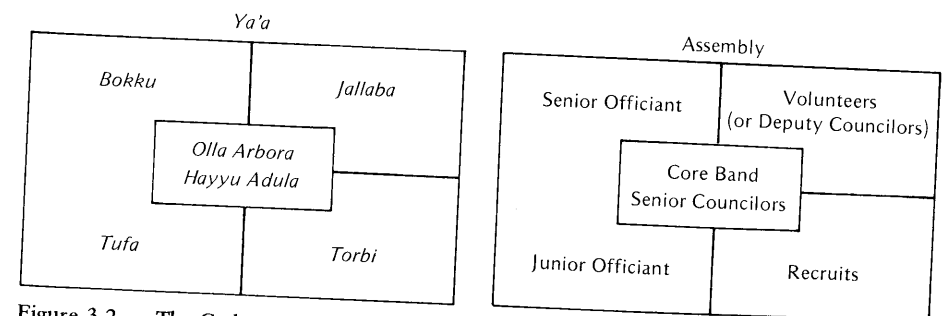


Figure 3-2. The Gada Assembly: Terminology

dictionary definition. Any hierarchical (authoritarian) associations the words "expert," "senior," "deputy," "councilor," "assistant," and "conscript," might evoke in the mind of English-speaking readers is irrelevant to our analysis. The Borana concepts are not hierarchical. One must imagine a rankless pattern of functional differentiation to understand the nature of the gada assembly.

So much for the emergent structure of gada leadership. I shall now go back to the examination of the progress of the class through the gada grades.

Throughout the first eight years of the *raba* grade, the men are without children. Although they are allowed to marry in the thirty-second year of the grade system, they cannot raise their children until the fortieth year. Any child born to the wives of the *raba* during that period is known as *gata* and must be abandoned to the elements.

For the *raba* and their wives, infanticide is practiced because it is a sacred duty from which, they feel, there is no escape. It is a duty that violates their most deeply felt desire for children. The mothers would gladly ignore the rule and raise their children. However, they fear the stigma that attaches to the *gata* child. Borana reactions toward the thought of raising a *gata* child are not unlike the deep moral reactions they have toward thoughts about the violation of incest rules. They are reluctant even to consider the consequences of such actions.

Dannisa: the Fatherhood Ceremony

The *dannisa* ceremony took place at the shrine of Doyyo, a few miles east of Negelli, the district capital of eastern Borana. In preparation for this ceremony the *adula* council broke up for the first time since its formation sixteen years earlier. Each councilor joined other members of his class belonging to the same clan as himself. Each group of celebrants consisted of the members of a set of "related" clans. The principal groups were Hawattu-Konnitu, Digalu-Mattarri, and the Jillitu cluster. The three groups set up separate camps at specified sites around the shrine.

From the day they settled at the ceremonial grounds (*arda jila*) the men were under a regime of taboos for a period of seven days. Behavior that was permissible or tolerable in daily life was now prohibited. One such prohibition was against any kind of expression of pain – verbal, facial, or gestural. If anything happened to the *raba* that caused him pain, he was supposed to remain unmoved. If a thorn pierced his foot, he was required not to flinch. Another taboo applied to cattle herding. The men and their assistants were prohibited from looking after their cattle. During the initial seven-day period the men remained in their huts while their wives set the cattle free every morning. As they did so, they said to the cattle, "Go well, graze well, and return in peace." The cattle thus released tended to follow their daily routine at the pastures and came back to their kraals at sunset without any human guidance. The Borana claimed that it was God (*Waḳa*) who guided them to and from the pastures. We have no hard evidence showing that He did not.

During the taboo period all the men put away their spears – the ultimate

symbols of masculinity and warriorhood. When the men first came to the camp site, they brought their spears along. After constructing the windscreens and kraals, they deposited their spears in a single pile outside the camp. For seven days, the men were required to remain in a state of ritual purity. They must not kill. They must not bring harm to animals or to their fellow men. They must totally avoid obscene language.

They were required to use a rudimentary ritual argot. Such words as *lon* (cattle), *warana* (spear), and *billa* (knife), were avoided completely and were replaced by argot vocabulary: *mada*, *sulluda*, and *daya* respectively. In theory the argot was supposed to be understood only by the initiates. However, it appeared to be easily understood by people who had not yet reached the grade and those who are not even in the Gada System, such as women. The importance of the argot was not, as is commonly assumed, to serve as an effective communications barrier between the initiated and uninitiated. It seems, rather, to have served the purpose of symbolically segregating ritual domains.

The taboo period was in part devoted to the construction of a very large ceremonial hut (*galma*) that was built in the name of the leader of the class – the Abba Gada. The procedure was the same as in the other ceremonies discussed above. When the construction was completed, three old men were brought into the camp. These men, known as *jarsi galma* (old men of the ceremonial hut), remained with the *raba* until the completion of the ceremony. They were the "first-born sons" of the Digalu, Karrayyu, and Maliyyu clans. They stayed inside the ceremonial hut and were not allowed to move about the camp. Each man was given a basket (*ciḳo*) full of sour milk. The *raba* made sure that the old men were well fed. To this end they sacrificed a steer and kept a fresh supply of boiled meat in the ceremonial hut. Other *raba* had the duty of keeping the milk containers filled to capacity at all times.

On the eleventh day cattle were sacrificed. Each *raba* made an offering of a steer. The hide of the animal was cut into strips and distributed among the men who took part in the feast. The strips were worn on the wrist as symbols of ritual participation. This completed the first phase of the ceremony.

The *raba* now underwent ritual changes suggesting that they had momentarily switched sex roles. Except for the large toga-like cloth draped around their bodies they wore nothing. Dressed in this fashion, like women and uninitiated children, the *adula* councilors went to the shrine every day and sang the standard songs of transition rites (*mokke*). Every day the three old men (*jarsi galma*) led them to the shrine and back. When they were not engaged in singing, the *raba* councilors sat under the tree shrine (*ḳallicha Doyyo*) and prayed. Borana said that they were "begging the *ḳallicha*." When asked what the "begging" was all about, they responded. "The *adula* do not say anything; they beg the *ḳallicha* with their hearts." This mental dialogue with the deity was carried out in a seated position while holding a jug of sour milk. Between prayers the *raba* occasionally talked to each other about other matters, never about the substance of their prayers. During these hours of silent meditation, they abstained from taking any food or drink. Nor

were they allowed to rise to their feet for *any* reason whatsoever. Even the call of nature had to be ignored, suppressed, or otherwise managed.

While the councilors were engaged in prayer, the other members of the class went out of the camp and got branches of the sacred *dannisa* tree. They came back singing (*lemmayo*), and as they approached the camp the *adula* councilors who were waiting for them turned their faces away to the east. Leaders and followers now seemed to be ritually estranged from each other. They could not talk; they could not behold each others' faces. They maintained this ritual attitude for a short while. The men then proceeded to the camp, and the councilors followed. All the celebrants sat momentarily in front of the branch (*butume*) that guards the approach to the kraal. They gave a small branch of *dannisa* to every *raba* who had stayed in the camp while they were away. As they distributed the branches, they said, "Here is the *dannisa*, please accept it!" and the men responded, "*Dannisa* of Doyyo, you who kept us when the *raba* were away, give us peace!"

The *adula* councilors, who had been carrying their milk containers all day, now tasted the milk for the first time and passed it on to the other men. All the men returned to their huts. They fashioned the *dannisa* branches into ceremonial staffs. They anointed their staffs with butter saying "*Dannisa* of Doyyo, give us peace!" This brought the second phase of the ceremony to an end.

The following day all the men gathered inside the principal camp of the Abba Gada. They sang the songs of passage for two days. From there they proceeded to the shrine of Dambi *banti* armed with their new ceremonial staffs. At the same time all their wives went to the well to fetch water. The men spent the night at the shrine. Their ritual leader, the *bokku*, arose early in the morning and cut off a small tuft of hair from the head of each *raba*. This marked the place on the head where the distinctive patch (*banti*) would be shaved later. The men then sacrificed a bull and took the meat into their huts. Again they went out into the kraal and shaved the hair properly. (The hairstyle is the same as in the preceding *gamme* and *cusa* grades except that the shaven part becomes progressively smaller.) The shaving ceremony was followed by four days of singing and feasting.

At this point an important event took place that made the reason for the earlier separation of the *raba* class into clans quite evident. The reorganization along kinship lines was necessary for the mock-marriage making up the final phase of the ceremony. Each *raba* returned his wife to her own moiety. She was said to go back to "her father." However, this is only the language of ritual: the actual fathers of the women were not in the camp. Instead, each woman was "given back" to a *raba* who was a member of her moiety and who played the role of her father for the duration of the ceremony. No sexual relationships were allowed during this period. The "fathers" and "daughters" were required to behave like real parents and children.

The moieties then proceeded to exchange their "daughters." Each man went to the family of his prospective bride with a gift of *çat*. As he presented the *çat* he asked for the girl in marriage. The "father" pretended never to have heard of the

suitor before, and the two men went through an abbreviated version of the marriage negotiation. Finally the "father" gave in, and the man took his bride back to his own hut. The ceremony ended with cattle sacrifice, singing, and meat feasts.

The *dannisa* ceremony brings to a conclusion forty years of development of the gada class. Seen from one vantage point, the ceremony is the dividing line between the two halves of the hypothetical life cycle. From another vantage point it is nothing more than an intra-grade ceremony of the *raba* grade. Unlike all the other grades, the *raba* grade lasts thirteen years, not the usual eight years. Borana do make a distinction between the first eight years and the last five years of this grade. They use any one of three different pairs of terms to make the distinction. The terminology has confused many writers, and it might be useful to spell it out clearly (see Table 3-3).

Table 3-3. Subdivisions of the Raba Grade

First Eight Years (Va)	Last Five Years (Vb)
<i>raba didikka</i> (Junior)	<i>Raba gugurda</i> (Senior)
<i>raba didikka</i>	<i>raba dori</i>
<i>raba</i>	<i>dori</i>

The main significance of this subdivision of the grade is that the junior *raba* (Va) are not allowed to have any children whereas the senior *raba* (Vb) can have sons but not daughters. Furthermore, the senior *raba* (Vb) who are allowed to have sons are not normally responsible for the upbringing of their own sons. Instead they hand them over to Wata families. Custom requires that the children of the junior *raba* and the daughters of the senior *raba* be abandoned to die. This custom is still in force, although Borana are very reluctant to admit it. My principal evidence for maintaining that the custom continues today is partly demographic (see chapter 5) and partly observational. Many wives of *raba* warriors whom I knew were pregnant during my two years of fieldwork but none of them raised their children. In the course of interviews many older women also reported that they had one or more pregnancies during the time that their husbands were in the *raba* grade but none of their surviving sons were old enough to have been born during that period. The secrecy that surrounds this custom is so extreme that it was impossible to gather detailed information on it. Nevertheless, the combination of the observational and statistical evidence leaves no doubt that Borana still practice infanticide.

The practical significance of infanticide is that it facilitates warfare. The Borana social system is so organized that the man must first demonstrate his capacity to wage war before he is allowed to become a father. Furthermore, it is obvious that if the warriors were to have many children their mobility would have been severely

curtailed. This was probably the function of infanticide in past centuries when warfare was a dominant aspect of Borana social life.

Traditional Warfare

The oldest form of warfare among the Borana – and probably among the Oromo as a whole – was known as *butta*. The reports I obtained from old Borana informants who have taken part in *butta* suggest that it occurred toward the end of the junior *raba* grade (Va). However, since two or even three classes may take part in the *butta* campaign the ethnographer may locate the event at one of three points on the gada cycle (i.e., the end of grade IV, grade Va, or grade VI). Another source of confusion is that informants tend to describe *butta* as an ordinary gada ceremony and unless we are persistent in our inquiry there is no reason why we should suspect that there is anything special about it. My evidence indicates that in past centuries the *butta* “ceremony” was not merely another meat feast or transition rite. It was the main occasion for the great wars and campaigns of the Galla and as such it has a great significance for our understanding of Ethiopian history.

Butta was the occasion on which the gada class was expected to go out into enemy territory and to bring back the spoils of war. It was the time when the warriors sought to punish those who raided the camps of their fathers and their ancestors. It was the time when young men sought to build up their prestige as warriors and, thereby, improve their prospects for marriage and political office.

In earlier centuries, the *butta* wars probably played a critical role in the evolution of the Oromo polity. The vast expansion of the Galla in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must be understood, in part, as a function of the structural requirements of the Gada System. Under normal circumstances the *butta* wars were nothing more than large cattle raids. In times of rapid population expansion, however, they turned into large-scale campaigns. [2]

Butta wars were highly ritualized. They were not the work of enterprising warriors but a developmental stage in the growth of the gada class. Much of the rivalry between classes had to do with success or failure in the *butta* ceremony. The

[2] In his “History of the Galla,” Bahrey states that “the Galla give themselves a name at the time when they are circumcised . . . and they attack a country which none of their predecessors have attacked.” He associates these events with the gada ceremony known as *dula gutu*. I have inquired about this matter at length in Borana to establish whether or not there is an association between warfare and the *dula gutu*. The Borana have emphatically denied the existence of any such association at present or in the past. In their thought, the ceremony is entirely peaceful in spite of its name (*dula* = “war”). It is, rather, the *butta* ceremony that they associate most directly with war and with the same kind of function that Bahrey attributes to the *dula gutu*. The function of the two ceremonies may, of course, have changed over the centuries, or Bahrey might have misread the meaning of the ceremony as a result of the etymological suggestion evoked by the word *dula*. In either case it is clear that Bahrey sees the periodic northward expansion of the Galla as being in part connected with gada ceremonial requirements. In this restricted sense, my data is consistent with Bahrey’s.

outcome of *butta* affected the prospects of the leaders’ lineages to win new political offices. My own study of the gada chronology (chapter 6) shows how the accomplishments of a gada class affects its successors for a depth of eight generations. It is very difficult to appreciate the great importance that present-day Borana attaches to *butta* without fully realizing Borana concepts of historical causality.

The *butta* ceremony was led by a man known as the *abba korma*. He was selected specifically to serve as the ritual leader in this ceremony; as soon as his task ended, he returned to his normal status of ordinary citizen. A bull (*korma*) was selected by the men to play the central role in the *butta* rite. The bull was consecrated in the manner usually employed when preparing livestock for sacrifice (*harirracha*). He was then fed and cared for by the *abba korma*. Throughout the ceremony the *abba korma* was assisted by the age-sets, especially those in the twenty-four to thirty-two and thirty-two to forty age brackets. These age-sets were charged with the responsibility of bringing the supply of water and grass needed for the sacred bull. The object was to keep the bull well fed and well watered at all times.

Meantime, the *abba korma* acquired ostrich feathers that he wore as his distinctive insignia in the course of the expedition. His function was to guide the bull at the head of the two lines of warriors. The two groups of warriors were the oldest members of the junior *raba* class (Va) and the age-set corresponding to the oldest members of the *cusa* class (IV). The gada (VI) also sometimes took part in the campaign. When the warriors reached the target territory, the *abba korma* stealthily approached one of the enemy kraals and released the sacred bull among the cattle. A territorial fight broke out between the dominant bull of the kraal and the sacred bull. If the Borana bull won, the warriors proceeded with the campaign confident that the mystical influence of the bull was on their side. If the bull was driven out of the kraal, the warriors returned to their camps empty-handed, convinced that if they attempted a raid they would be wiped out by the enemy.

This is the bare outline Borana give of their traditional form of warfare. Seen against this background, the *butta* appears to be a duel organized by mutual consent between rival camps. Indeed it is difficult to see how the warriors could organize the whole procedure without loudly announcing their arrival to the enemy. This and other factors give the impression that the description of the old form of warfare is an idealized version of the actual events.

I have not witnessed a *butta* war and I cannot therefore vouch for the accuracy of the above report. Nor is it easy to establish with any degree of confidence whether or not such wars take place today. There is some indication that Borana do organize a minor *butta* raid every eight years. The district administration knows about this and they threaten to punish the Borana if they go ahead. Despite the threat, it appears that the class performs its rite on some occasions. People are killed in the process. The administration then imposes fines on the camps in the region where the raid took place. The

funds to cover the ritual "expenses" and pays the fine on behalf of "Borana." Both the *butta* rite and the administrative antidote seem to be equally ritualized. [3]

Contemporary Warfare: The Role of Age-Sets and Gada Classes

Butta wars were a ritual requirement and were governed by many rules and taboos. The ordinary "wars" of today are not so scheduled and stylized. They are, rather, triggered by ecological pressures and take the form of reciprocal cattle raiding between the Borana and other pastoral populations.

There is perpetual friction among Borana, Guji, Arsi, and Somali concerning pastures, water resources, and livestock. Along all the borders of Borana — except the Konso border — there is continual cattle raiding that sometimes builds up into large-scale fighting. The Gada System is in part a military organization that furnishes leadership in offensive and retaliatory wars. Usually it is gada leaders who are most directly concerned with organizing such wars. The Abba Gada and his assembly act in concert with those men of their *luba* who are also their age-mates in mobilizing as many warriors as they can. As indicated earlier, the age-set and gada class are cross-cutting categories. The intersection between the two has a distinctive name: *barbara*. The Abba Gada himself normally belongs to the oldest age-set within his gada class. The men described as his *barbara* have a special position by virtue of their dual affiliation with the age-set and gada class of the Abba Gada. They are the vital bond between two types of sociological categories. They are the core group on whom the Abba Gada depends to maintain his ties with the wider age-set.

Figure 3-3 shows how the *barbara* group serves as the structural factor to keep the age-set system keyed to the Gada System as an important subsidiary institution. In 1962 the age-set that was twenty-eight to thirty-five years old was keyed to the warrior class (*raba*). The Abba Gada of the *raba*, Gobba Bule, could always call upon his *barbara* to mobilize the Dambal Bule age-set as a whole for offensive war.

The Abba Gada in power can also do the same. He can call upon his *barbara* to mobilize his age-set. Judging from the oral-historical record it seems that the *raba* (V) initiate wars more often than the gada (VI). Whichever class takes the initiative, however, three or four age-sets may be involved in the actual fighting.

Each age-regiment constitutes a *çibra*, or fighting unit. If there are enough men to form more than one unit in an age-set, then the subdivisions of the age-set are known as *çibra* or regiments and make up the fighting units. This group acts as a

[3] It is likely that the district administration will, in the future, take harsher measures. However, when Borana as a whole believes that the *butta* is a ritual obligation, it is difficult to imagine how the district administration could pin the blame on a few individuals. Hence, the uneasy truce between the administration and the gada classes is likely to endure for some time and both will probably go on believing that they have made adequate effort to meet their respective obligations. This is but one of the many cultural frontiers where national and customary laws are in direct conflict, and there is no simple procedure for resolving the contradiction.

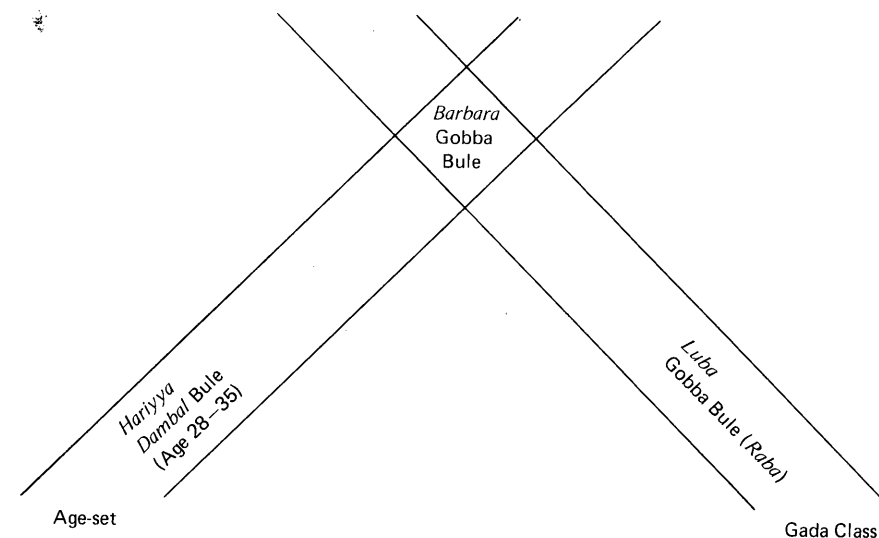


Figure 3-3. The Barbara Group

unit not only in battle but also in the collection of supplies for the campaign, in the election of regimental leaders (*abba çibra*), in the recruitment of scouts (*doya*), and in the distribution of booty. All the age-sets come together to elect the campaign leader (*abba dula*).

The following description is an eyewitness account of one of the biggest encounters between Guji and Borana in recent history (1946). It is known as the Oditu war because settlements of the Oditu clan and of their *çallu* suffered the heaviest losses. The Abba Gada in power, Guyyo Boru, was at the time too far away to be personally involved in the campaign. His *barbara* and the leaders of the *wakor* Sora age-set took the initiative in assembling the warriors. The Abba Gada and his assembly had for several months been in the northeast (Liban) engaged in the performance of gada transition rites. The Guji threat was building up in the west-central region, in the vicinity of Arero. Guji nomadic bands had penetrated far into Boranaland and had, with impunity, settled not very far from the *çallu* village. The age-set leaders felt they had to act. They sent word to the Abba Gada and waited until their messengers returned with the blessings of the gada leaders before launching the campaign.

The principal *barbara* groups and age-sets involved were *wakor* Sora and *dambal* Arero. These were assisted by one older and one younger age-sets. [4] The nature and degree of involvement of these latter groups is not very clear.

The account of the campaign also reveals the great contrast in structure between the offensive and defensive phases. In Borana thought, offensive wars are highly organized, whereas defensive wars are said to have "neither...or law." When

[4] The fighting age-sets are somewhat old in this... take place just before their transition ceremony, i.e., toward... d.

Table 3-4. Groups Involved in Oditu War, Waged in the Second Year of the Gada of Guyyo Boru, 1946

Intersect Category	Age-sets	Age in 1946
Barbara of Aga Adi	Dambal Ṭaddacha	43-50
Barbara of Guyyo Boru	Wakor Sora	35-42
Barbara of Maḍa Galma	Dambal Arero	27-34
Barbara of Jaldessa Liban	Wakor Liban	19-26

the Guji or Somali attack a Borana camp, the community is expected to fend for itself and to secure whatever assistance it can get from neighboring bands. There is no formal leadership in such wars.

- Q. Did you take part in the Oditu War?
 A. We do not like to talk about that.
- Q. I know, but if you tell me only about the wars which you won, how can I write a truthful history of Borana?
 A. It is the Guji who started the war. We told Dajjazmach Takkala [district governor] to restrain the Guji, but he said that we ourselves should assemble our warriors and punish the *shifta* (outlaws). And so we captured some of them, killed a few, and punished some others. They came five *çibra* strong, took away our cattle, and killed our children. It was war.
- It is our age-set, the *barbara* of Guyyo Boru, which came together to see what we could do about the Guji menace. We sent messages to all Borana asking them to help. The people sent us one *çibra*, and the people of Dirre sent four *çibra*. We were two hundred rifles and many, many spears. *Wakor* Sora [the speaker's age-set] had most of the rifles; the other age-sets had mostly spears.
- Q. Did you take cattle with you, like a *fora*?
 A. No women, no children, no old men, no cattle. All we had with us was our *çiço* full of sour milk. It is only the fighting age-sets that took food along. The younger boys who joined us at the last moment had neither food, nor spears, nor leaders.
- Q. What do they do?
 A. They learn.
- Q. How long can a warrior live on a *çiço* of sour milk?
 A. A week, maybe longer, if it is a large *çiço*. Anyway, we sang all day in Allona. Each age-set sang separately. After all the warriors had told us about their exploits, we selected the *abba dula* and four *abba çibra*.
- Q. Who was the *abba dula* [war leader]?
 A. Hukka Dida.
- Q. Why was he selected?
 A. He sang the most moving songs of all. He had been in many wars. He showed us his scars. The man who became *abba çibra* of *dambal* Arero was also a brave man. He had been to the big war as a young man. He told us how he captured rifles and hand grenades from the Italians. "The Italians killed my brother," he said, "and I set out to

avenge him. I followed them for weeks, camping each night near them, just far enough so that their scout could not see me. I killed two of them, one with a spear and the others with a dagger. This rifle was taken from them; it is the blood-price of my brother." But *our* war songs were much better than this. The songs of *dambal* Arero did not excite us - their eyes did not shine and their bodies did not quiver as they sang. When the singing was over, we selected the double-seven (*toban-lama*) and sent them ahead in the Guji-occupied lands.

- Q. Who are the double-seven?
 A. *Doya* (scouts). We selected fourteen *doya*, seven from our age-set and seven from *dambal* Arero. They went ahead of us as we traveled toward the country of the Guji. When we reached Lagawal, we stopped and a wise old man named Arero Rammata came to give us counsel. He came in great haste from Liban, because we had sent for him. He brought us word from Guyyo Boru [the Abba Gada], giving us permission to go ahead with the war.
- Q. What did Arero Rammata say to you?
 A. He is a great man. He said to us "Fie upon you! Children of Dirre! Stay home and tend your calves; there are no warriors among you. The men of Liban have routed the Italians and plundered their camps. You buy your rifles from the marketplace. You use them to chase women about and kill *tarri* [dik-dik, a very small species of antelope]. The sons of Liban fight only with captured rifles. You are a disgrace to Borana. I have seen thirteen wars and this is my fourteenth. I have never seen Borana flee. I shall have no faith in you until you have proven yourselves worthy of such faith."
- Q. What did the warriors say?
 A. They were inflamed. Their singing thundered. We began to walk to the country of the Guji. We walked all night, and we waited for the scouts at the appointed place. The scouts of *dambal* Arero did not come back in time, but our scouts were there. They told us the location of the Guji camps and the size of their herds. At daybreak the next morning we descended upon them. Most of them heard us coming and they fled. Some of them died fighting. We captured two kraals [of cattle]. The other *çibras* brought back three kraals. We all gathered at the same place where we had met with the scouts before. There the cattle were divided up among all the warriors, and we went back to our country.
- After this war, Borana was on the lookout for the Guji. We knew they were coming. Men were selected from each camp to stand guard when the cattle were grazing, and others were chosen to guard the settlements. The women brought them food each day. They brought them sour milk, and they killed sheep for them. In those days all our guards (*salfa*) had rifles, and bullets were plentiful. We even had hand grenades that were left buried by the Italians.
- We received news that the Guji had started to move in great numbers. Balambaras Tafarra [a *balabbat*] warriors of the Oditu and took them to a place where they did this to prevent the Guji from advancing to our settlement. When we reached Daka Arba, we found that a group of seven men had crossed our path. We ex-

they led us to an abandoned settlement [ona]. We found out that somebody had recently eaten the corn growing [wild] there. We said, "At a time like this when the country is so plentiful, what Borana would go into an abandoned settlement to eat corn?" We knew that they were Guji scouts.

Q. How could you tell?

A. We can tell. We followed the footsteps. They led us toward Allona. The Guji were camping in Allona. It is a very mountainous place, and there are many wells there. We knew that the Guji were resting and having a meat feast because the vultures were hovering overhead.

Balambaras Taffarra gave his horse to a messenger and told him to ride out to the settlement of the Kallu and alert the people. "Tell them to send their women and children away," he said. "Let every man who can carry a spear come forward and join us; shout the message from the hilltops!" After the messenger left we waited all night for the Guji to come out. At daybreak the vultures were still hovering. Toward noon the vultures settled down; the Guji had broken camp and started to move into Borana. Soon they appeared, hundreds and hundreds of them. There was nothing we could do but watch.

We started to walk toward the settlement of the Kallu, but the Guji got there before we did. The Kallu was still consulting with some sixty riflemen who had assembled in his settlement from the neighboring camps when the Guji descended upon them. They came like locusts. They came from every direction. They devoured everything in sight. Six camps were wiped out. The Kallu was shot dead. The heavens became dark.

This episode is remembered as one of the worst defeats the Borana ever suffered in the hands of the Guji. During the months following the war, the Borana were in the course of organizing a retaliatory expedition when the provincial governor, Ras Adefrisew, intervened. He placed troops along the Guji-Borana border and temporarily suppressed all further fighting.

The most successful war waged by the Borana in recent times is known as the War of Maḍa. It is named after the Abba Gada, Maḍa Galma, because he himself brought the warriors together and personally led the campaign. Borana speak very highly of his capacity as a warrior. He is physically a very impressive man, having a very strong body, a black face, and perpetually blood-shot eyes. He is a living legend, and Borana youths cite his striking appearance as proof of his prowess. However, it seems that living legends do not make very good historians. My attempt to get an account of the campaign from him was quite unsuccessful. He produced only the barest statistics of the war. He said that he had several hundred warriors with him, including about four hundred riflemen and "innumerable spears." He led his own age set and two younger age-sets into battle – about ten *çibra* in all. The campaign was against the Marrehan Somali, who had been advancing rapidly into Liban. He raided several bands and brought back a "multitude of camels" and other livestock. Each one of his warriors received between ten and twenty head of livestock at the distribution.

This cryptic account is not very instructive. Nevertheless, the essential

characteristics of Borana warfare are apparent. In both wars the age-sets played an important role. The regimental leaders were selected for the duration of each campaign. The age-set and gada class, and their respective leaders, may and often do take part in the performance of military obligations.

Of all the gada classes the one that is most frequently given credit for waging the most important wars in Borana history is *raba* (V). However, the gada (VI) can also wage war and sometimes take part in wars initiated by their juniors.

GRADE VI: Gada, The Stage of Political and Ritual Leadership

The term *gada* cannot be given a univocal interpretation. It stands for several related ideas. It is, first of all, the concept standing for the whole way of life that is the subject of our study. More specifically, however, it refers to any period of eight years during which a class stays in power. The sense in which we use the word in this section is yet another sense: it refers to a specific grade (VI) through which every class passes. When used in this sense, the word will be followed by the Roman numeral "VI" indicating that the word stands for the grade rather than a period of history or the institution as a whole. When used with the arabic numeral, the word refers to the class of people who are in power.

Table 3-5. Gada Terminology

Term Used in Description	Definition of Term	Borana Term
Gada System	The Institution	gada
A (gada) grade	Any one of the grades	(no term)
The gada grade (VI)	The sixth grade	gada
A (gada) class	Any one of the classes	luba
The gada class (6)	The sixth class	komicha, gada
Gada period	A period of history during which a gada class was in power	gada

The gada grade (VI) is the most important stage in the development of a class. The class performs some critical services and rituals at this stage. Only its role in warfare appears to diminish, by comparison, with the two preceding grades.

The passage into the gada grade (VI) is known as *balli walirrafudu* (the exchange of scepters). The *balli* or "scepter" represents ritual-political authority. We label this ceremony the "takeover ceremony," when referring to the incoming class and distinguish it from the "handover ceremony," which refers to the outgoing class. The Borana phrase represents both events as a single act of "exchange." The difference in terminology is symptomatic of the fact that our description "strings out" events that in Borana thought are not serially ordered.

The takeover occurs in the month of *gurrandala* in the forty-fifth year of the gada grade system. It is performed at the shrine of Nura in the eastern corner of Boranaland. In 1960 the takeover was delayed because Jaldessa Liban, who was

then the Abba Gada of the *raba*, kept the outgoing class waiting for three months. Borana consider this a most reprehensible failure of gada leadership. It was also a rather unusual event because the incoming class, in their eagerness to assume control, generally tend to hasten rather than delay the ceremony. The delay in takeover is one of several reasons why Borana is overtly dissatisfied and very critical of the gada assembly and of the Abba Gada himself. It is not merely his habitual procrastination that is a source of concern. The delay has caused people to doubt the efficacy of the propitiatory rites.

One major source of doubt is the fact that Jaldessa Liban did not take over at the shrine of Nura, as custom requires. The outgoing class became so impatient that they went to his camp and performed the handover ceremony. It turned out that there is also a taboo against retaining the scepter of authority longer than the prescribed eight years. This seems to account for the impatience of the outgoing class. The following description of the rite was obtained from both Abba Gada (Jaldessa Liban and Maḍa Galma) and represents an approximation to the ideal pattern of transferring gada authority. Aside from the above departures, the rest of the ceremony was performed as expected.

According to custom the two Abba Gada and their respective assemblies (*ya'a*) are required to camp adjacent to each other several weeks before the ceremony. The month as well as the day of the ceremony is prescribed. The incoming Abba Gada opens the ceremony by going out into the fields in search of ostrich feathers. Throughout most of eastern Africa ostrich feathers are regularly used as the insignia of political authority. The Abba Gada is expected to chase an ostrich on foot until it drops some feathers. "It always does, it is custom." These feathers then serve as the distinctive insignia of the three Abba Gada in the course of the power transfer rites. The members of the class remain indoors. They keep all livestock and children with them, inside the huts. They decorate the hut of the Abba Gada with ostrich feathers so that it stands out above all the other huts. The *raba* then go to the camp of the outgoing class under the leadership of their *bokku* and Abba Gada. All the gada await in their own camp. All the people and livestock in the camp are also kept indoors, completely outside the field of vision of the approaching *raba*. For any person to behold the faces of these transitional creatures is believed to be a fatal violation of taboo. The *raba* leaders announce their approach by blowing a brass ceremonial horn. (The instrument is used only in this and in the earlier *cusa* marriage ceremony). They send seven assistants (*torban balli*) in ahead. These men are received by the gada. The Abba Gada of the *raba* then approaches the outgoing Abba Gada, and they exchange milk and blessings. The *raba* go back to their own camp. They are now the new gada, being in power as the leaders of Borana as whole. They celebrate their investiture by sacrificing a bull. For a period of four days after the sacrifice they remain in isolation — a state described as *ulmaya* or "post-partum retreat" — and this constitutes the transitional state they cross to open a new gada period, a new phase of history.

This, in short, is the ceremony by which the gada class assumes ritual-political power of Boranaland. It is the investiture of the Abba Gada and of the *adula*

council as leaders of all Borana society. This investiture should be distinguished from their earlier investiture (*lallaba*) in the twenty-fourth year because the latter was purely a class event. In other words, the councilors are first elected and invested as leaders of their class and only when they reach the gada (VI) grade do they come to power as the heads of the whole system of classes. The period of history that begins when they take over and that ends when they cede to another class will always be known as *their gada*. Specifically, the period will be named after the Abba Gada. Here are some examples:

Gada Maḍa Galma	1952-60
Gada Jaldessa Liban	1960-68
Gada Gobba Bule	1968-76
Gada Jilo Aga	1976-84
Gada Boru Guyyo	1984-92

The strongest indication that the class is "in power" is the fact that it imparts its name and its ritual attributes to the period of history when it was gada (VI).

Soon after their investiture the *adula* council and their assistants go to Guto and set up camp. They wait in this camp for the arrival of a new group of officers. These men are called *garba hayyu* or "junior councilors," and are elected by the outgoing class just before the power transfer rite. The outgoing Abba Gada proclaims (*lallaba*) their names to a crowd assembled at Bobilla. He releases them from his assembly with the statement:

Goro ya'a isini kenne!
(I grant you the $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{right} \\ \text{duty} \end{array} \right\}$ of assembly!)

Goro has a specific meaning. It means the right to take part in a gada assembly and also the duty to be present in all its principal activities. The word *ya'a* (assembly) is thus redundant. The newly elected junior councilors follow their ritual officiant, the *wayyu*, to the camp of the incoming Abba Gada. There they perform a rite of incorporation that seems clearly to symbolize the assimilation of very different kinds of social entities: they perform a rite (*cuma waltinaku*) in which the senior and junior councilors mix the undigested food from the stomachs of two sacrificial animals they have just killed. After the investiture of the junior council one final change in the structure of the gada assembly occurs when the gada triumvirate breaks up. As mentioned earlier the three top councilors in the senior council are all known as Abba Gada. The most senior man is referred to as Abba Gada *arbora* and the other two are Abba Gada *kontoma*. The latter are distinguished from each other by reference to their clan or submoiety affiliation. They belong to the Hawattu and Konnitu clans. It is worth remembering that the two submoieties that establish their own gada assemblies are both from the Gona moiety. The Sabbo moiety have no special assembly. The separation of the submoiety leaders (*kontoma*) occurs when each *kontoma* asks the Abba Gada *arbora* to give him the right of assembly.

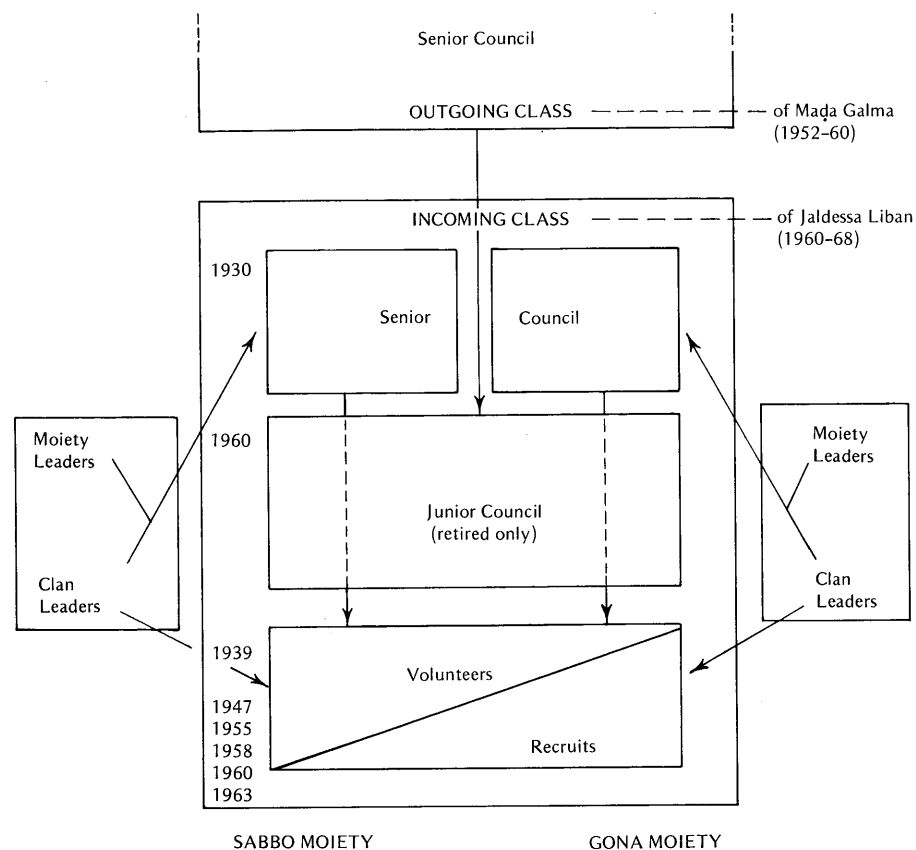


Figure 3-4. The Composition and Recruitment of the Principal Gada Assembly. The chart represents the assembly as it is constituted at the beginning of the gada grade (VI). The arrows indicate the groups that are involved most directly in the recruitment of each class of officers. The dates represent the years in which each class of officers was recruited. The recruitment of assistants is a continuous process because assistants frequently drop out from service and must be replaced; and, at the same time, the assumption of progressively broader responsibilities by the councilors creates an increasingly greater need for assistants. The last group of *jallaba* "volunteers" was proclaimed after the takeover ceremony.

The Abba Gada grants this right. The Abba Gada Konnitu then goes to a place called Dambi near the town of Megga, and the Abba Gada Hawattu goes to Suruppa, near Yaballo. They are joined by a group of senior (*meddicha*) and junior (*garba*) submoiety councilors whom they helped to recruit in consultation with clan leaders. The *meddicha* councilors are members of any Borana clan, whereas the junior councilors always belong to the same clan as the *kontoma* Abba Gada himself. With the election, investiture, and incorporation of the junior council and the separation of the submoiety assemblies, the evolution of Gada "bureaucracy" is complete.

The organization of these assemblies is much like that of the principal gada

assembly. They perform the same cycle of rites at the same time but on different ceremonial grounds. The gada triumvirate are required to avoid each others' paths and shrines throughout the first part of the gada period. It is only when the gada assembly goes to Liban for the *oda* ceremony in the fifth year that the three assemblies come together.

On some critical occasions such as *oda* or *gumi* Gayo, the normal relationship between the three assemblies is modified. Aside from this, the basic organization of each assembly and of the total system of assemblies remains essentially the same throughout their eight-year term of office.

After establishing how Borana have gone to great lengths to create and maintain an elaborate officialdom, we run into difficulties when we try to examine the functional tasks it fulfills. What are the responsibilities of the gada assembly and of the constituent councils? Do they govern? Are they responsible for the economic welfare of their people? Do they protect Borana from enemies and from internal wars? Are they responsible for the spiritual welfare of their people?

Borana are deeply concerned with the equitable distribution of power and privilege which they try to ensure by maintaining elaborate recruitment and "uprooting" procedures. However, they have little inclination to parcel out specific tasks to individual officers or particular councils in the manner of bureaucratic organizations. Hence, the "Who does what, when?" type of question repeatedly proves unproductive and violates the Borana conception of gada leadership. The assembly has little internal differentiation in terms of functional tasks. Like parliamentarians in the Western world, the members of the assembly are tied to the structure of their constituencies, but in terms of their activities they must be *universal men* ready to contemplate any area of social life that is brought before them. In short, gada leadership is a variety of parliamentary government as opposed to bureaucratic government.

From a functional standpoint, it is more productive to consider the collective duties of the assembly rather than its internal differentiation. The assembly as a whole is charged with the responsibility of resolving major crises between descent groups, clans or camps. The fact that they travel through all the major sections of Borana territory during their term of office means that they have far greater access to local groups than do the moiety leaders (*Kallu*). The manifest purpose of their travel is to perform ritual. However, every ritual that they performed in 1963 and 1971 was either preceded or interrupted by a crisis. To resolve these crises they engaged in long and highly politicized debates. Where ritual ends and politics begins is not easy to determine.

The majority of these crises had to do with the misuse of pastures, the grazing of livestock in the vicinity of camps or shrines, conflict over the use of wells and ponds and occasionally domestic crises. One of the most interesting issues that the assembly dealt with was a crisis triggered by an adolescent age-set fight. Members of the same age-set who were about to be initiated in the summer of 1971 broke up into moiety factions and raided each other's settlements. The entire complex of camps subsequently became embroiled in the conflict. The interesting fact about

this episode was the fact that the authority of the Abba Gada was challenged by one of the factions and before the age-set hostilities could be resolved the assembly had to vindicate the Abba Gada. In the course of a marathon debate that lasted about thirty hours, the assembly established that the Abba Gada has divine powers and that he is God, "the god that gives one refuge because one cannot reach the God of the heavens."

The debate has been recorded verbatim and will be analysed in a separate study. At this point we need only consider the fact that the language employed by the assembly to justify the authority of the Abba Gada is a latent element of Borana culture that surfaces only in crisis situations. As indicated earlier, Borana take their myths and ritual symbols lightly and do not need to invoke them in their daily lives. However, the very myths which they laugh at in peacetime are invoked with maximum gravity in times of social conflict. So conceived, myth and ritual symbols are the media of argument which delimit the furthest antipodes of political discourse.

In peacetime the Abba Gada is a common herdsman who makes every effort not to stand out from the crowd. In language and comportment he is virtually indistinguishable from the rest of the assembly. In times of crisis, however, his role is defined in a language so extreme that it does not seem to be part of the normal language of the Borana. Throughout the age-set debate, the Abba Gada had very little to say. Having reinstated him in his divine locus the assembly as a whole proceeded to discuss the issues until they reached consensus. It is as if the Abba Gada's momentarily exalted position barred him from actively influencing the deliberations of the assembly. This is the perpetual paradox of divinized leadership.

In the course of pre-ritual and intra-ritual crises the gada assembly may resolve any type of conflict be it ritual, political, moral, legal or economic in character.

Beyond the resolution of conflict, the assembly also has the obligation to contribute to the economic well-being of Borana. They must mobilize workers to help maintain the principal well complexes which are so essential for Borana pastoral life. Perhaps the most impressive undertaking of the gada class in recent years was carried out by the class of Jaldessa Liban. The Abba Gada himself was deeply involved in the project, and his success in this particular undertaking surprised Borana because it was quite inconsistent with his reputation as a weak and ineffectual leader. As a young boy, Jaldessa learned from the elders of his clan (*jarsi gosa*) that there was a deep well in Web that had been originally excavated by one of his renowned ancestors: it was named El Morowwa, after Morowwa Abbayye, the eighth patrilineal ancestor of Jaldessa. The well had fallen into disuse at some stage in history and gradually became completely covered with earth. Jaldessa decided to re-excavate it. To do this job he had to mobilize his clan (Galantu) and his assembly. Understandably, he describes the effort as a gargantuan feat requiring many months of planning with gada councilors and clan leaders.

Contrary to the expectations of most of his critics, Jaldessa succeeded in getting all the major lineages of his clan to contribute large quantities of food and labor. He himself contributed twenty head of cattle. The assistants (*makkala*) in his assembly

made up the backbone of the work party. The project took seven months. In the course of that time several hundred men took part in the project, the majority of them working only a few days at a time at two or three different stages of the project. The Abba Gada estimated that 280 cattle were sacrificed in the course of the seven months to feed the workmen. Nine out of ten of these cattle were contributed by his clan (Galantu). This meant that the clan will collectively own the well and that Jaldessa Liban and his descendants will always be the fathers of the well (*abba ela*). At the same time, however, other clans that made smaller contributions will be recognized as having special rights. They will always be given easy access to the well.

Upon the completion of the well, the gada class itself derived no discernible material benefits. The project did, nevertheless, contribute substantially to the prestige of the class and will, no doubt, be used as potent ammunition in future political campaigns. The Abba Gada is already building up the kind of prestige which will serve him well when he begins to campaign for his son.

It is not surprising to see an Abba Gada expending so much effort and personal resources in the excavation of a well. The well complexes of Borana are, in fact, a central feature of their collective life. Indeed, the critical link between gada leadership and the clans appears to be the well, or rather the man who is known as the owner or father of the well (*abba ela*). Normally, the Abba Gada and the *abba ela* are different officers. The fact that Jaldessa Liban held both offices was merely coincidental. The more usual situation is that the Abba Gada in power solicits the cooperation and assistance of numerous *abba ela* in an effort to get maximum participation of the clans in gada activity. Whenever the need arises, the Abba Gada uses the well officer as an intermediary in pursuing offenders who are unwilling to submit to the authority of the gada councils. According to one district governor, the gada councils can punish criminals by barring them completely from using any of the clan-owned wells in Borana. The governor believed that such a penalty would be as severe in its consequences as the death penalty that a government court might impose. I have not recorded many cases in which this kind of measure was taken by a gada council. On the whole, the threat of withholding water resources is a sufficient deterrent against potential violation of customary law. Borana are loathe to punish. Instead, they ensure compliance with rules by exerting moral pressure.

The excavation of a well under the leadership of an Abba Gada is as much an economic activity as it is a ritual act with far-reaching historical implications. All subsequent classes cyclically linked to the class of Jaldessa Liban will be positively affected by the fact that he "made Borana fertile." At the same time, his success in carrying out the project was predicated upon cyclical historical antecedents. The Abba Gada (Morowwa Abbayye) who, many generations earlier, excavated the well is said to be acting through his descendants to renew the productivity of the Borana. It is within this larger philosophical framework that we must try to understand the motivation of the Abba Gada in embarking on such a large project and evaluate the potential impact of this work on Borana collective expectations.

In Borana thought, the founder of the well and the present Abba Gada are one

and the same historical personality. They are parts of the same social entity that endures through time, beyond the natural life cycle of individuals. Here, then, is another reason why my linear account of gada grades imposes inevitable distortions on the institution: I have conceptualized events that are simultaneous or the same as separate events that are ordered sequentially.

I return to the sequential account of gada events. The number of rituals in the gada grades is extremely large, and it would not be consistent with the purpose of this book to attempt to describe all of them. I select mainly those rites having important structural implications for discussion and give only the barest outline of the remaining rites. One particular complex of rites is performed annually throughout the gada period. *Each year the gada assembly celebrates one or more of its members.* For every individual councilor a ceremonial hut is constructed by the wives of all the councilors and of their assistants. The community then sacrifices livestock in his name and keeps a meat feast going for a few days. This is an impressive Borana strategy for integrating individuals into social groups: it is a strategy that, in all probability, is at least as effective as the more dramatic or painful collective rites of passage in bringing about an enduring identification of the individual with the group.

In addition to the round of celebrations of councilors distributed over the entire gada period, the class is required to perform four major ceremonies in the fourth and fifth years of the period. These ceremonies are named *ginda*, *gumi Gayo*, *oda*, and *muda*. I have selected *gumi Gayo* and *muda* for discussion because they have a direct effect on social structure: there is a discernible and radical change in the structural relationship between the units of the kinship system, between the components of the gada system as well as in the relationship between the two systems.

On the ceremonial schedule shown in Table 3-6, there are two aspects needing further explanation. First, the *gumi Gayo* ceremony occurs in the fourth year of the gada period, but it is a ceremony that concerns all Borana, not merely the class in power. It recurs several times in the life-cycle of the individuals who are part of the gada cycle. The *raba* and all the four *yuba* classes are expected to attend. I describe the ceremony in conjunction with the *yuba* grades mainly because it plays a relatively large role in the life of the classes in semi-retirement. It is important to stress, however, that *gumi Gayo* is a pan-Borana event.

The second point is that the phrase "all transitions" in the chart refers to the rites of passage (*dabballe-gamme*, *gamme-cusa* and *cusa-raba*) which we have already discussed and the other transition rites to be discussed below (*yuba-gada moji*, *gada moji-jarsa*). It is important to realize that all these transitions are simultaneous and that they do not occur in the same year as the takeover and handover ceremonies. Instead, the general transition rites take place in the third year of the gada period. It is quite difficult for ethnographers to get this point across a language barrier partly because of the fact that Borana are not very kind toward dim-witted strangers who cannot understand such a simple idea as overlapping eight-year

Table 3-6. Ceremonial Schedule of a Gada Period

Ceremony	Year of Gada Period (Borana Calendar)	Place of Ceremony	Year (Gregorian Calendar)	Actual Month (Gregorian Calendar)	Ideal Month (Borana Calendar)
Takeover (<i>balli</i>)	1	Nura	1960		Gurrandala
Rite of incorporation (<i>cuma</i>)	2	Ejersa Gurtura	1961-62	June 1963	Obora gudda
Ear piercing and circumcision	3	Throughout Northern Borana	1963	Summer 1963	Birra
All transitions (except handover)					Waçabajji
Ginda	4	Galana Sagan River	1963-64		Waçabajji
<i>Gumi Gayo</i>	4	Gayo Well	1964	December 1966	Obora gudda
Oda	5	Oda, near Neghelli	1964-65		Obora gudda
Muda	5	Oda			Obora gudda
Return to Dirre	6				Obora gudda
Reddimessa	7	Liban	1965-66		
Proclamation of junior council	8		1966		
Handover (<i>balli</i>)	8	Nura			Bufa
			1968		Gurrandala

periods and partly because they are not always clear themselves which eight-year period they are talking about – the period between transitions or the period between power transfer ceremonies. It is the latter and not the former that is usually employed in discussions of historical phenomena.

At the time of the general transition rites, in the third year of any gada period, we find Borana undergoing a basic structural mutation as each class changes grades. At that time the gada (6) are involved indirectly because their sons, the *dabballe*, are having their naming ceremony. However, the gada (6) themselves are not merely marking time: they, too, undergo a change in the middle of their grade when they are circumcised and have their ears pierced.

During the period of my investigation, circumcision was performed on June 25, 1963. Ideally, the ceremony should have been performed six months earlier. However, the ceremony had to be postponed because the gada council was at odds with the district governor. It was performed in the shrine of Ejersa Gurura, near Nura. [5] A cow was sacrificed. The gada then picked up the thorns of the *dagamsa* tree and used them to pierce their ears. The men also pierced the ears of their wives and of their assistants. Only the assistants who were members of their class were involved in this aspect of the ceremony. The entire assembly then moved to the ceremonial grounds at Nura and set up camp. The gada removed the thorns serving as temporary earrings while the wound healed and put on regular earrings.

Before the circumcision, the womenfolk left the camp and the men took baths in their huts. The operation was performed by anyone who had the skill. The only men who had to be circumcised by experts were the three Abba Gada. The Wata (caste of hunters) were charged with this responsibility "because no Borana is allowed to spill the blood of an Abba Gada." Like any other midtwentieth century man would, the gada then applied penicillin powder to the cut! For a month after the ceremony the circumcised men remained indoors and ate specially prepared foods.

In the fifth year of the gada period the class goes once again to the eastern district (Liban) to perform the *muda* ceremony. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this ceremony apparently attracted numerous celebrants from other parts of the Galla-speaking areas outside of Borana. Men came to Borana from faraway places like Shoa and Wallagga (in central Ethiopia) to anoint the *Kallu*. Some of these men have remained in Borana, and they still tell the story of their original pilgrimage into Boranaland.

[5] The word "to circumcise" is *lubomu*. This word is etymologically related to *luba* or "gada class." To circumcise is "to make *luba*." This suggests that the formation of a gada class was associated with the circumcision of its members. However, the event takes place at such a late stage in the development of the gada class that the meaning is obscured. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Bahrey defined *luba* as "those who were circumcised together." It is possible that in the days of Bahrey, circumcision was the act by which the class became a corporate group, corresponding perhaps to the proclamation of the *adula* (*lallaba*) today. As it now stands, circumcision does not appear to have that function at all, but rather seems to serve as a structural link between the fathers and the initiation of the sons.

Muda means "to anoint," and anointment symbolizes gift giving. The ceremony is the occasion when the gada class in power makes an offering to the ritual leaders of the moieties, the *Kallu* of the Oditu and the *Karrayyu*. Each clan is assigned a place at the ceremonial grounds. The clans take turns going to the *Kallu* camps, presenting their gifts, and making their pledges. The following is an example of the formal language employed in the *muda* exchange:

CELEBRANT

Korma Adioti si mude.

I anoint you with this bull Adio.

Ado korm dira ta'e

That I may become brave among men

Yo korma goromsa hora

That I may become rich with bulls and heifers

Yo rada jibicha hora

That I may be rich with cows and calves

Ado ilman intal hora

That I may be rich with sons and daughters

Ado sodda Galalcha ta'a

That I may become an in-law of the Galalcha

Ado galma amna dula gerara

That I may return from wars to sing the war chant

Bara kana korma si mude

In this era I have anointed you with a bull.

Bara dura goromsan si dur dura

In the next era I will come back with a cow

KALLU

Ta'a!

Become!

Hora!

Be rich!

Hora!

Be rich!

Hora!

Be rich!

Ta'a!

Become!

Dur duri!

May you come back!

In the last part of the ceremony the *Kallu* puts on a lion skin mask and releases the snakes he has brought along for the occasion. One *Kallu* (*Gona*) uses puff adders, and the other *Kallu* uses cobras, both very poisonous. The celebrants are required not to kill these species during the ceremonies, because they are symbolic representations of the *Kallu* himself. After the completion of the ceremony, the *Kallu* return to their permanent settlements in central and western Borana considerably richer than they were before their "anointment." Except in this ceremony, in which they are the specific object of celebration, the *Kallu* generally do not take part in the rituals of the gada class, there being taboos preventing them from doing so.

End of Gada (VI)

At the end of the gada period, the *adula* council selects about ten men, the same number from each moiety. These councilors are generally selected from among the volunteers who served the assembly at some stage during the preceding three decades. None of these men is a member of the class in power. They all belong to the retired (*yuba*) classes. They will serve as the junior council in the next gada period with the senior council of a different class. The selection of the junior

councilors is the last major duty of the gada class before it hands over power to the *raba* (5). The handover itself is identical to the takeover ceremony described at the beginning of the gada period, the only difference being the fact that the people who were takers are now givers.

GRADES VII, VIII, IX, X: Yuba, The Stage of Partial Retirement

Yuba is a large category. Like the *gamme* (II, III) category mentioned earlier *yuba* subsumes more than one class. The *yuba* stage covers twenty-seven years. It covers the part of the hypothetical life-cycle ranging from the fifty-third to eightieth year. Borana do not label each one of the four stages occupied by the *yuba* classes. However, they do distinguish these stages in the same sense that they distinguish the *gamme* grades or the two subgrades of *raba* (V). The men in these grades have no doubt about their position in the grade system, partly because they belong to one of a series of named classes and partly because their positions are keyed to those of their sons. The sons have a course of development much more clearly demarcated with transition rites. If the sons perform a transition rite at a time when the *yuba* fathers have no rite of passage, the position of the latter is defined by reference to the former. They will be identified as the fathers of senior *gamme* or *cusa*. More simply, they are identified as the "class of X," by reference to the name of their retired Abba Gada; and it is quite easy for Borana to place the class names into a mental map of the entire system of contemporary classes. We know that they have such a map because they can juggle the categories along several dimensions and very often come out with a perfect alignment of the classes.

The *yuba* stage is not entirely undifferentiated. In the second year of each grade, the class takes part in the assembly of Gayo, in which all clans and many classes are represented. Thus, the number of times that the class has gone to the Gayo assembly becomes one way of determining the position of the class. *Yuba* are "retired" and they retain "advisory authority." This is how the *yuba* are most frequently characterized in the old descriptive literature on the Galla. They are in fact semi-retired; and to the extent that they take an important part in the *gumi* Gayo deliberations, they do indeed have "advisory authority." However, it is also true that they may be required to serve directly in the assembly of the gada class in power as assistants. The older men among them may also be asked to serve as certain categories of ritual experts (*jarsi cosi*, *jarsi cobaca*). These offices can be held only by people who have already participated in the up-coming ceremonies of the class. Consequently, the men can only be members of the retired (*yuba* and *jarsa*) classes.

The fact that a class has gone into semi-retirement does not mean that the members are thereby relieved from gada service. If a man has not served in previous assemblies, the class in power may still require him to serve. Unless a gada councilor expressly declares him a *yuba*, he will always remain liable for service. The

following statement by a junior councilor shows quite clearly this aspect of the relationship of the *yuba* to the class in power.

When I ask a man to come along, he must. It does not matter if his fathers or brothers had served previous assemblies [*ya'a*]. He must serve when I ask him to do so. We cannot take excuses. People always say, "I have no one to look after my cattle." If that is the case, then I will ask him to give *kato* [tribute] to our assembly. If he gives a cow or a steer, he will not be asked to serve during our term [*gada*]. Of course, another class [*luba*] may ask him to serve. He is still not free. If he is really helpless, sick, or poor, then I may declare him retired [*yubomu* = to make *yuba*]. Once he is declared *yuba*, he will not be asked to serve in our gada or any other. If he is rich and does not want to serve, I would demand a large tribute from him and he will still be liable to another *luba*. If he is recalcitrant about paying the tribute, I can send my assistants [*makkala*] and have him brought here."

Given this relationship between gada and *yuba*, it is misleading to think of the latter as purely retired or advisory classes. People in the *yuba* grades can be asked to serve so long as they have not been individually declared *yuba* by the assembly in power. Similarly, they exert direct influence on gada government not so much as advisors but rather through their direct participation in the assembly of the multitudes held every eight years. In that vast assembly the *yuba* play a dominant role as individual participants and through their council representatives. The surviving *adula* councilors of these semi-retired classes enjoy the same kind of power in the assembly of the multitudes as does the gada class in power.

Gumi Gayo, the Assembly of the Multitudes

The pan-Borana meeting at the well of Gayo is an event that brings together almost every important leader. The most recent meeting was attended by all the living Abba Gadas, except the two youngest ones who had not yet been invested into office. Also present at the meeting was the Kallu of the Gona moiety, several *balabbats* from both moieties, many age-set councilors, and a large number of clan elders and gada councilors. Between five and six hundred men took part daily. On eight successive days these men sat near a tree shrine (*taddacha gumi*) in the environs of the Gayo well.

Gumi Gayo is by far the most inclusive event in Borana political life. They think of it as the assembly with the highest degree of political authority. To impress this idea upon strangers Borana say, "What the *gumi* decides cannot be reversed by any other assembly." It is interesting to learn that this body, which holds the ultimate authority, is neither the gada assembly nor the Kallu councils. It is, rather, the assembled representatives of the entire society in conjunction with any individual who has the initiative to come to the ceremonial grounds. In their idiom it is *gumi* (the multitude) which sits in judgement. In theory any individual has a right to attend, to take full part in the deliberations, and to bring any matter to the attention of the *gumi*.

The most recent *gumi* Gayo was held December 19, 1966, two years after I had completed fieldwork and two years later than the ideal date of the ceremony. Fortunately, the proceedings were observed and recorded by an assistant, Tari Jarso. The essential features of his report are summarized below.

Several Abba Gada took turns in serving as leaders of the meetings (*abba cora*). The principal restriction on their leadership was that whenever conflict was discussed which in one way or another concerned the presiding Abba Gada, he was replaced by another Abba Gada. The Abba Gada in power, Jaldessa Liban, presided over most of the meetings and gave the blessings at the beginning of all the meetings. On the last and most important day of the meetings all the Abba Gada were removed from the role of leading the deliberations.

The first day of the meeting was taken up with greetings, formalities and blessings. On this day, as on every other, Jaldessa Liban asked all the participants to face west and blessed them in the following words:

Praise be to God
Who has brought us to Gayo,
May we fulfill his laws in peace,
May we hand over to Gobba Bule,
Peace to the land,
Peace to the multitudes,
Peace to the multitudes of Gayo,
Let there be peace in our deliberation,
Let there be nothing but rain and peace.

The celebrants then returned to their camps to complete the construction of fences and kraals.

On the second day the Abba Gada expressed great dissatisfaction about participants who were dragging their feet. He exhorted the *gumi* to make haste because he feared the cattle his councilors must slaughter to feed the *gumi* could not last indefinitely. The meeting should not be allowed to drag on longer than necessary.

The *gumi* then heard four cases of conflict. Three of these were dismissed on the grounds that they were not sufficiently important to be discussed by the *gumi*, and were turned over to mediators. The fourth was the case of an *abba ela* (controller of wells) of the Mattarri submoiety who barred members of his own clan from using the well. He claimed that they failed to produce the food supply needed for workers to maintain and repair the well. On the other hand, the men in question claimed that they had been allowed the use of the well only grudgingly and that the repair of the well was initiated without their knowledge. The two sides of the argument were discussed at length, and the *gumi* decided that the *abba ela*'s action was justified. Nevertheless, elders were assigned to mediate between them.

On the third day the Abba Gada and his councilors reprimanded several clans for failing to produce assistants for the gada assembly. Each clan was then urged

individually to give the councilors who represented them in the gada assembly a certain number of assistants (*makkala*).

The fourth day was devoted to divination. A *raga* (diviner) was asked to address the *gumi*, and he made the following prediction concerning the remaining years of the gada period.

The small wars that are now breaking out all over Borana will continue until the *galma gutu* [the ceremony that celebrates the top *garba* councilor]. Thereafter there will be peace during the last years of the gada of Jaldessa Liban.

Of the four [sic] remaining years of this gada, the first two years will be a time of hunger and thereafter there will be rain and plenty. [Note: the diviner speaks as if the *gumi* Gayo conference had not been postponed from the fourth to the sixth year of the gada period.]

All Borana will be peaceful except at two places. A great war will be waged in the vicinity of Moyyale. War will also break out in the vicinity of Arero.

These wars will be like the Oditu wars [in which the settlement of the Kallu was devastated and the Kallu himself was killed.]

The diviner then turned to the councilors of the class in power and promised them a bull as a signal of the coming wars. Informants later explained, "When the bull gives an indication, war is sure to follow: the sign of the bull does not fail."

The fifth day was devoted to a discussion of the deteriorating relationship of two submoiety: the Digalu and the Mattarri. The speakers said that in former times, these were like one clan. They assisted each other, shared water resources, exchanged ceremonial supplies (*kato*) and assistants (*makkala*). Much of the day was then taken up with exhortations by clan elders and gada leaders urging the submoiety to resume their normal relations, to cooperate in the use of wells and in ceremonial activities.

On the sixth day an event of the greatest significance took place in the assembly. A *balabbat* and clan elder named Grazmach Racha Halaxe had been instructed previously to conduct a meeting in the vicinity of Moyyale in order to look into the recent developments in the relationship of Borana with the Somali and with the Rendille. He reported that, on the basis of the meeting, he had two recommendations he wished to submit to the *gumi* for deliberation.

The Rendille are brothers of Borana; they should henceforth be called "Borana" and be accorded all the privileges a Borana enjoys.

All Borana and all brothers of Borana must henceforth refrain from wearing the loincloth. Any man who is found wearing such clothing shall be treated like a Somali.

The *gumi* discussed these recommendations at length and made them laws (*sera*) of Borana.

On the sixth day the *gumi* heard a message from *dajjazmach* Guyyo Anna (the aging *balabbat* of the Gona moiety whose son, Jaldessa Anna, led the opposition

against the house of the Kallu in the election of 1963). The message indicated that the old man was grieved to see the moiety leadership fragmented and the Kallu lineage destroyed. The *gumi* selected seven different Abba Gada and a brilliant young *adula* councilor in the *raba* grade to mediate between the two factions.

On the eighth and final day Jaldessa Liban Jaldessa took the leading position in the meetings. This was the only meeting which was not led by an Abba Gada. Jaldessa introduced what seemed to be the twelve cardinal laws of Borana. As he recited each law, gada and clan leaders made impassioned speeches about the decline of custom and careless violation of the law. The speakers elaborated on the meaning of each law. At the end of the discussion the *abba cora* (leader of the meeting) repeated the law as rephrased by the *gumi*, and the assembly expressed its approval. [6]

[1. Prerogatives of Councilors]

As the councilors [*hayyu*] and their assistants [*makkala*] travel from place to place, their hosts must know that their authority extends over all Borana. Councilors have the right to make use of wells in any part of land whether the well belongs to the Sabbo or the Gona.

[2. Prerogatives of Messengers]

Next in precedence to the councilors is his messenger [*wayyu*]. He too can water his cattle anywhere.

[3. Law of Kallu Seniority]

To the Kallu all Borana owes respect. He may water his cattle wherever he chooses. He may use water that has already been drawn into the watering troughs [i.e., he can require others to water his herds].

[4. Law of Abba Gada Seniority]

The Abba Gada takes precedence over all others. He is the father of Borana.

[5. Law of the Bovine Symbol]

The cattle of the Abba Gada, the Kallu, the *hayyu* and the *wayyu* must be respected as if their owners were standing among them. Such respect is due to the cattle even when they are on *fora* [away from camps, in river valleys].

[6. Law of the Equestrian Symbol]

The horse of the messenger [*wayyu*] must also be accorded respect. He too is a messenger of the gada. Wherever the horse arrives, bringing with him the news of the *ya'a* [gada assembly] he must be given water, even such water as has been drawn into the trough. Such is *ada*, for the horseman does not travel to attend to his own interests but in the service of the *raba-gada*. Any Borana who leaves such a horse unprotected outside his kraal offends the gada, he offends the *raba*. Such a man shall be punished.

[6] Earlier records state that among the central Galla all the laws of the land were abolished in the great assembly, and each law was then reinterpreted and reinstated (Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle Frontiere del Kaffa*, p. 528).

[7. Law against Sale of Water]

Any Borana who sells water to another Borana shall be banished from the land. All his ties with the people shall be severed.

[8. Law of Ritual Ablution]

On the occasion of the ginda ceremony, the gada must go to the Galana Sagan [river] to bathe. Should that cause them undue hardships and if they choose to remain in their homes, then they must bathe in total privacy.

[9. Law of Ceremonial Support]

On the occasion of the *dula gutu* ceremony the gada are in need of horses. In preparation for this ceremony Borana must fatten their horses and give them to the councilors. When the gada return after the completion of *dula gutu*, the horses will be returned to their owners.

[10. Law of Recruitment]

Every councilor [*hayyu*] has the authority to recruit a sufficient number of assistants. The man who has been recalled by his clan and his councilor must join the gada assembly (*ya'a*). If necessary the councilor has the authority to drive his cattle away and force him to follow. The councilor has such power [*mura*] only within his own clan.

[11. Law of Feminine Modesty]

Women have taken to wearing cloth so thin as to leave them virtually nude. Henceforth, they must wear *gorfo* [ceremonial leather dress] at all times. Should a woman be improperly dressed, the husband is responsible and shall be punished.

[12. Law of Bridewealth]

If a man gives presents to the family of his prospective wife and they refuse to give him their daughter, all presents must be returned. This does not concern gifts that have been sacrificed together such as food, cat and coffee, but rather such gifts as clothing, horses and cattle.

Upon completion of the deliberations the leader of the meeting asked, "Would there be anything but peace if we said 'these are our laws?'" and the *gumi* responded "Peace!"

In these data we have evidence, perhaps for the first time in the study of preliterate societies, of a deliberate attempt to rethink and modify customary law. Whether or not we call this "legislative activity," is immaterial. In part the meeting was dedicated to introducing new rules believed to be binding on all Borana. To that extent the activities of the *gumi* Gayo can be described as legislative. What is important, however, is not what we call it but rather how the Borana themselves conceptualize it. When asked what the purpose of this great meeting is, Borana say that it is *dubbi ada* (custom-talk) or *dubbi sera* (law-talk).

The fact that custom and law are things that need to be thought about and talked about throws considerable doubt on the rather gratuitous assumption by

men like Robert Redfield that preliterate societies have a nonreflective attitude toward their culture. Borana spend much of their time thinking about their culture. They make a deliberate attempt to modify their customs and, if necessary, introduce new laws. It is important to stress, however, that their deliberations concern laws regulating the distribution of resources rather than the structure of society.

The two outstanding innovations in customary law introduced by the assembly at Gayo were the rules concerning the Borana relationship with neighboring societies. The Somali are, of course, an enduring enemy of the Borana and have, throughout the present century, slowly displaced Borana cattlemen and driven them west and south. As a result of the current Ethio-Somali wars, the endemic conflict between Borana cattlemen and Somali camelmens have become intensified and legitimized. District governors can now reward Borana for the patriotic role they are playing in the defense of the nation.

The new rule introduced by the *gumi* must therefore be understood within this larger context. The prohibition of the use of Somali-style loincloths is a symbolic statement declaring open war against their traditional enemy. In all probability the greatest impact of the rule will be on the marginal Borana who have become partially assimilated by the Somali and the bilingual Somali who have become assimilated into Borana society; these groups must now take an unambiguous position, and they have been given a way of symbolically expressing their loyalty to one or the other society.

The other problem considered by the *gumi* is the relationship of Borana with friendly neighboring societies. In addition to the bilingual Somali, there are groups such as Konso and Wata who play important roles in gada ritual and are therefore immune from attacks and cattle raids. Between these two groups, *i.e.*, those structurally tied to Borana society and those definitely ambiguous, there is a third category represented in the *gumi* deliberations by the Rendille. These are societies that speak dialects closely related to Borana and have a generally tense relationship with them tempered by periodic rapprochement during dry seasons and in market places. The rule introduced by the assembly states that Rendille are henceforth Borana. This appears to be a rather explicit declaration of alliance.

Aside from these two changes in customary law, it seems that the remaining rules are nothing more than a restatement of laws and customs that are generally recognized. Probably they are restated because it is felt that there is inadequate compliance with the rules. Normally, Borana do not tire of criticizing moiety, clan, and gada leadership for failing to uphold tradition, nor do the leaders tire of criticizing Borana for abandoning it. Hence, the collective restatement of some rules is as much a heuristic device as it is an occasion for rethinking tradition. [7]

[7] *Leaders who attended the gumi Gayo conference*: Jaldessa Liban, Abba Gada (1960-68); Maḍa Galma, Abba Gada (1952-60); Guyyo Boru, Abba Gada (1944-52); Taḍote Adi, substitute Abba Gada (1936-44); Guyyo Boru Lallo, Abba Gada *Kontoma* of the Hawaṭṭu clan, served in the assembly of Maḍa Galma; Borbor Jilo, Abba Gada *Kontoma* of the Konnitu clan, served in the assembly of Jaldessa

Comment on the Yuba Grades

Gumi Gayo is an event in which classes 5 through 10 are involved. All the *raba*, the *gada*, and the *yuba* take part in the conference. In addition to this event there is one major ritualized transition within the *yuba* stage. This occurs at the juncture of the grades VIII and IX when the election of gada leaders takes place. The *yuba* themselves do not have a transition rite in the proper sense. They are, nevertheless, the principal protagonists in the election campaigns. They campaign on behalf of their sons, but it is their own reputations and achievements that are the critical factors, not the sons'. The fathers are responsible for assembling all the celebrants, conducting the negotiations with the council of electors (*Kallu* council), supervising the initiation of their sons, and raising all sacrificial animals needed for the rite.

The transition rite of the *gamme*, which is also a vital hurdle for their *yuba* fathers, has already been described; the election campaigns will be discussed in a later chapter. We mention the ceremonies at this point only to indicate the major sequence of events which dot the long trajectory followed by the gada class.

At the end of grade IX (third *yuba*) there is no formal rite of passage for the fathers, nor are the fathers directly involved in the transition rite of their sons. At this stage the sons are performing their marriage ceremony. In the course of the development of the *gada* class it seems that at this stage there are no ritual bonds holding fathers and sons together. For a period of eight years when the sons are in the junior *raba* grade and the fathers are in the final *yuba* grade, the generations live apart and nomadize in different regions — the sons in ceremonially prescribed territories and the fathers in any region where they have access to water and pastures. If such separation causes undue hardships to families, the requirement is often ignored. The sons remain with their aging parents and assist them with their pastoral chores.

GRADE XI: Gada Mojji, The Terminal Sacred Grade

The eleventh and final stage of the Gada System is a very distinctive part of the theoretical life cycle. For the benefit of Christians the *gada mojji* describe themselves as "monks," and the analogy is not farfetched. Like the monastic orders of the Christian world, they lead a ritually elevated existence constrained by a very large complex of taboos. Their transition into the final grade is a formal ritual. Like the power transfer ceremony of their sons (*balli walirrafudu*), it is conceptualized as a rite involving an exchange between two classes rather than the passage of a single

Liban; Jaldessa Guyyo, *Kallu* of Karra, Maṭṭarri clan; Boru Tutto, elder brother of the young *Kallu* of Oditu, Gona moiety; Arero Irbi, *meḍḍicha* councilor in the assembly of Guyyo Boru, campaigned and won *adula* for his son in the 1963 election; Jaldessa Liban Jaldessa, councilor (assembly unknown); Gobba Bule, Abba Gada-elect (1968-1976), head of the senior warriors. A large number of councilors were present whose names could not be obtained by Tapf Jarsö.

class across an imaginary hurdle of the life-cycle. What is exchanged, however, is not the insignia of authority but, rather, incense representing the sacred state. The transition rite itself is known as the rite of incense exchange (*kumbi walirrafudu*). In this as in many of the preceding stages the symbolic and ritual bonding of the generations stands out as the most fundamental structural dimension of the Gada System.

Taking the *gada moji* grade as our point of reference it is important to indicate clearly the classes involved in the rite of passage. The men who are leaving the *gada moji* grade are the fathers of the *gada* (6), the class in power. The men who are entering the grade are the fathers of the *raba* (5), the senior warriors. At the time of the rite all four classes camp in the vicinity of the shrine of Nura, near the town of Negelli. The *gada* are directly involved in the transition rite of their fathers, but the *raba* have no direct ritual functions. It is nevertheless the responsibility of the *gada* and the *raba* to assemble a sufficiently large number of their fathers' classes to permit the performance of the transfer rite. Because of the numerous ritual restrictions to which the *gada moji* are subjected, their sons have considerable difficulty persuading them to take part in the ceremony and to enter the sacred grade.

In 1963, the ceremony which I observed was attended by twenty-two *gada moji* and several hundred celebrants. Similar ceremonies were held at several other ceremonial grounds. The *gada moji* arrived three or four weeks before the date of the ceremony and built a semi-circular camp of large ceremonial huts known as *galma*. The transition rite was opened by the outgoing class of *gada moji*. These men, who were about to go into final retirement, surprisingly celebrated the event by marrying off one of their members. The man who married on this occasion was carefully selected by the *gada moji* and by their sons, the *gada* (6). The latter carried most of the responsibility of organizing the proceedings and raising the supplies needed to feed and entertain the celebrants. They were also charged with the responsibility of selecting the bride, negotiating with her father and securing his consent. However, their job was rather simple because custom requires that the girl's father give his consent without delay or hesitation. "The request of the *luba* is law."

The marriage ceremony of the *gada moji* warrior, which is known as *fuḍu gessitti*, consisted of a formal transfer of the bride from her family to the outgoing class (11). However, the obligation which the *gada moji* and their sons, the *gada* (7), considered most burdensome was the fact that they had to supply vast quantities of white cloth needed for the rite. The cloth was spread out from the ceremonial hut of the bride's family to the ceremonial hut of the *gada moji* warrior, a distance of about 150 yards. Enough cloth was spread out so that the bride's feet would not come into contact with the bare earth as she walked from one hut to the other.

Six middle-aged men, all *gada moji*, accompanied the sobbing thirteen-year-old girl across two kraals and over the long cloth-covered path. They presented her to the groom. All the cloth used in the ceremony was bridewealth payment made by

the *gada* (6) to the girl's father and to her family. There was enough cloth to last them for a lifetime. The bride's father concluded the ceremony by distributing among the celebrants a special gum resin that symbolizes the sacred state of the *gada moji*.

All the outgoing *gada moji* retired to their ceremonial huts. They remained indoors while their sons, the *gada* (6) sacrificed livestock in the kraal. The sons then approached the hut of each *gada moji* warrior and announced their arrival saying "Father, speak! We hear you!" In response, the *gada moji* gave an account of a lifetime of martial exploits. Borana consider this event a nostalgic and emotionally moving experience for the sons and for their fathers – the retired warriors.

It turned out that the man whom they had selected to marry the *gessitti* was by far the most accomplished warrior. In his martial recitation he boasted of having killed ten Italian soldiers and officers and an assortment of Somali warriors. Just after he completed the recitation I expressed some skepticism about this extravagant claim, and he promptly produced some rather unusual credentials: a document from the East African Military Record Office indicating that he was decorated three times for his service in the Kenya African Rifles. He demanded that I read the document aloud so that all the celebrants could hear "what the paper had to say."

Name: Ahmed Boru [8]
 Tribe: Boran
 District: Moyale
 Regt/Corps: E.A.A.S.C.
 Enlisted on: 12 Nov., (19)40
 Discharged on: 22 May, (19)42
 Reason for discharge: service no longer required
 Military conduct: good
 Trade qualifications: trained soldier
 Medals: Africa Star
 1939-45 Star
 War Medal 1939-45
 Seal: East African Military Record Office
 Issued on: 29 July, 1961 [as a replacement for the
 original document which had been destroyed.]
 Signed: Officer in charge of records
 [signature illegible]

I had unwittingly cast doubt on the veracity of a Borana warrior and apparently one does not do that except when there is good reason for it and the ritual context provides an opportunity for listeners to do so. Over the years one learns that Borana are an orderly people. They are intolerant of people who treat historical and social facts lightly. Even when they give their martial recitations, they are expected to be explicit and truthful. Unlike the war songs (*shillela*) of their neighbors to the

[8] It is worth noting that in this document the name of the warrior appears as Ahmed Boru indicating that he had, at some stage, become a Muslim. His name in the ceremony was Galma Boru, a standard Borana name.

north, their recitations are a record of military accomplishment not fantasies of grandiose schemes and aspirations. Listeners do indeed ask for witnesses and evidence. The warriors are therefore careful not to make claims they cannot substantiate. The entire performance is an emotionally upsetting experience in which they relive violent moments in their gada career.

After Galma Boru – the warrior who married the *gessitti* – completed his martial recitation, all the old warriors began telling their *luba* sons of their own military exploits. In each instance, the gada (6) performed the preliminary ritual before approaching the home of the *gada moji* (11). A few women from the warrior's clan and moiety led the procession. They entered the hut first followed by the *torban* (seven assistants) representing the *luba* sons. As they walked in, they found the hut filled with anxious relatives, friends, and neighbors who had come to witness this critical moment in the life of the warrior.

The *torban* walked through the middle of the crowd shouting “*Jila beka! Jila beka!*” (Know the rites!). They walked to the rear of the hut where the *madala* was placed. This is a very large container filled with sour milk and tied to the poles. According to custom, how securely the container is tied indicates how distinguished the warrior is. Hence, the men with long records of accomplishments fastened the containers elaborately with long ropes that radiated to every part of the rear section of the huts, whereas the men who “had nothing” (*ka wama hinkabu*) did not tie them at all but simply left them leaning against the wall. Custom requires that the *torban* complete untying the knots during the time that the warriors are giving their recitations. It is understood that both they and the warriors must hasten or retard their part of the rite so as to complete their respective activities at the same time. The warriors should not “understate” or “overstate” their achievements in tying the *madala*.

Even more than the *madala*, however, it is the manner in which the hut is decorated that lets the celebrants know what to expect from the warrior. In the celebrations of 1963 nearly all the huts of the warriors were decorated. The decoration usually consisted of paintings hung on the outside of the hut on either side of the door. Figures of wild animals or human enemies that the *gada moji* had killed in his younger days were painted on strips of leather and displayed. The figures included representations of rhinoceri, elephants, giraffes, and human enemies. The approaching celebrants, therefore, had fairly unambiguous cues to let them know whether the warrior had anything to recite, even before they began their inquisition.

For those who had nothing to recite, the ritual was a deeply humiliating experience. Even if the warrior had declared his failure by not decorating his hut and not tying the *madala*, the ritual could not be omitted. The *luba* sons came to him and relentlessly demanded to hear about his deeds of valor. They shouted, “Father, speak, we are listening!” They went through the motions of untying the *madala*, commanding the warrior to say what he had to say and be brief about it, while he and his crestfallen wives sat in silence hoping that the rite would be short and painless. The tragedy was witnessed only by a few commiserating kinsmen.

The situation was quite different in the case of the distinguished warriors. During the preliminary ritual, when the *luba* sons were singing and dancing outside, a great deal of agitation had already started inside the hut. The place was completely packed with people. Kinsmen of the warrior went into a trance-like state and had to be restrained by the visitors. Wives behaved as if they were possessed. [9] Their bodies shook violently. They gnashed their teeth so loudly that the nerve-racking sound was audible to the silent crowd assembled around the hut. Sons of the warrior were overcome with emotion and broke out of the ritual alignment. They went into an explosive, incoherent recitation of their own deeds.

As they came to each warrior, the *torban* forced their way into the hut shouting admonitions to the celebrants for their disorderly behavior. Order was gradually restored. The crowd inside and outside the hut remained completely silent throughout the recitation. Only the peers of the warrior interrupted him to challenge the truthfulness of his statements, and the wives and sons of the warriors cut in from time to time to remind him of exploits he failed to mention. Despite the highly emotional context in which they took place, the actual recitations were in most cases given at a very slow, deliberate pace with long silences interrupting the delivery.

Wakor!
Lams Dida,
Jillitu dina,
Jillitun homa inḍettu,
(Jillitu) (never) (flee)
Annan haḡasu inḡettu,
(Anna) (there) (do not approach)
Dula Maḡa,
(war) (Maḡa)

Dirs Tarri,
(husband) (Tarri)
Dula Maḡa,
(war) (Maḡa)
Galti takkan shan.
(booty) (once) (five)
Halo base,
(vengeance) (I brought)
Ṭiyyon gayyase,
(Ṭiyyo) (I repeated)
Wakor!
Karra tenna bae,
(kraal) (ours) (I emerged)
Ḍaka Boatti dule,

Wakor!
Mate of Dida,
The brave Jillitu,
The Jillitu never flee,

The Anna never think of it,

In the war of Maḡa,
[Maḡa Galma, Abba Gada,
1952-60]
I, husband of Tarri,

In the war of Maḡa,

In one single sweep, I brought in five head
of livestock.
I have avenged

And I avenged again by capturing Ṭiyyo,

Wakor!
I left our kraal,

I fought at Ḍaka Boa,

[9] One of the women was so completely out of control that the ceremony had to be postponed by about thirty minutes. She was the only woman who was described as having been possessed by the *ayyana*. Men and women were holding her firmly to prevent her from hurting herself and others. After a long struggle, the possessing spirit was brought under control, and she returned to her previous position in the ritual alignment.

Wayami ilman Bidu,
(ochre) (sons) (Bidu)
Saffartichi ka areda lagata,
(Somali) (who) (beard) (grows)
(trims)
Nama Batti lagatu,
(man) (carcass) (abandons)
Abban tumata,
(father) (hand-to-hand combat)
(owner)
Intalti kabicha
(girl) (captive)
Wakor! Lams Dida.
Kotten ta sankallo debitu.
(hooves) (which backward) (flips)

Wasotti dannaban,
Ta mata boçatti,
Isi mata boçani,
Ana mata borçani
Wakor! Lams Dida.
Abba Sora, Dirs Tarri,
Kokkobla Sarba,
Jillitun homa inçettu,
Annan hagasu inçettu.
(the Anna) (there) (do not approach)

In plain English, unencumbered by bovine symbolism, the warrior was claiming to have killed one Somali enemy, captured six head of livestock, killed a rhinoceros, and an elephant. The crowd was moved with his delivery. It was poetically flawless. None of his claims was challenged by his peers.

Other warriors were frequently interrupted by their skeptical audience. They embellished their recitation with long formulas praising their lineages, clans, mothers, and sons, but they had no accomplishments of any significance. Of such warriors, the *torban* said, "He has nothing but cattle to his name." Cattle raids are commonplace and do not command the attention of the celebrants. Nor can one speak of having killed the kind of animals Borana do not respect, such as lions and leopards. These "fearsome" creatures, which so often serve as the symbols of warriorhood in other cultures, are regarded as overgrown cats in Borana thought.

Perhaps the worst confrontation between a warrior and his peers occurred when one of them made a very vague claim in the middle of a halting and uninspiring delivery. He said:

Janjamtun simantu, Nama kudani lama, Harressa kara, Anatti ijese.	Guji adults, twelve men, In the first rush, It is I who killed.
--	--

An angry age mate responded "Ratu, kijibdu! Nama kudani lama mukatti si hidani?" (You fool, you liar! Did someone tie them to a tree for you, all twelve of

On the red earth of the sons of Bidu,

A Somali with a full grown beard,

A man who does not eat what others
have killed.
I killed the man in hand-to-hand
combat.

I captured the woman,

Wakor! Mate of Dida.
I killed a rhinoceros. [Literally:
I killed the animal that flips its
hooves backwards as it runs.]
In Waso, I killed an elephant,
With a bashed-in head,
Its head was bashed,
My head was anointed.
Wakor! Mate of Dida.
Father of Sora, husband of Tarri,
The laughing [son of] Sarba,
The Jillitu never flee,
The Anna do not think of it.

them? In the midst of the laughter the warrior explained that he had killed one man, not twelve.

And so it went, one warrior after another, twenty-two men in all. The celebration started at sunrise and was not completed when the sun set. During the following days all the celebrants moved to a new ceremonial shrine (*Haro Hardoti*) to perform the final exchange of gum resin. This was a simple ceremony. The outgoing class gave their blessings to the incoming class. The former unwrapped the resin they had kept with them for years and handed it to the new *gada moji*. The latter then returned to their camp singing a rain song (*roban si gale*). The outgoing class shaved their elaborately decorated hair and went into final retirement while the incoming class tied the *kallacha* headgear on their foreheads and entered the sacred state.

Henceforth, the new *gada moji* cannot carry arms; they cannot kill any living creatures; they are required to use a ritual argot. People seek their blessing, and wherever they go they are given food and shelter. Men and women come to them for refuge from misfortunes, enemies, or angry kinsmen. They make pledges to the *gada moji* and promise to anoint them if their hopes and wishes are fulfilled. At the end of its long career, the *gada* class has once again become the mediator between man and the deity, between life and its mystical antecedents.

A Note on the Degree of Participation in Gada Rituals

Borana regulate not the time when an individual should take part in life crisis ceremonies but rather the time before which the individual may not perform the rite of passage. The requirement to perform a rite at a given time is enforced only on the leaders. The leaders are required to perform marriage, the fatherhood ceremony, circumcision, the proclamation of *adula*, participation in the incorporation of their sons' *gada* class, and the final entry into the sacred grade. The rest of the class is expected to but not required to join the leaders. If individuals fail to do so, they can usually perform the transition rites either individually or with another class. Thus, a man who is in the last year of the *cusa* grade (IV) is expected to marry in the ceremony. In actual fact, there is no pressure for him to marry in the ceremony, and he can do so whenever he is able to raise the bridewealth cattle needed for marriage, find the right mate, and secure the consent of her family. For most men, these are the factors that determine the time of marriage. However, the prohibition against the individual marrying *before* the class leaders have married is rigorously enforced. When we say in our discussion of *gada* grades that the "gada class married or performed some other transition rite at such and such a stage of the *gada* cycle," we are using the language of corporate groups. After the leaders have married, the class as a whole is said to be "married" whatever the individual marital status of the members might be.

Borana do not feel that they have the same kind of obligation to take part in all *gada* transition rites. Some are considered critical; others are treated as optional.

There is, for example, considerable pressure on individuals and families to take part in the first two transition rites. The pressure is largely moral. It is, nonetheless, effective. Parents go to great lengths to take their children to the *dabballe* and *gamme* shaving ceremonies in the eighth and twenty-fourth years of the gada cycle.

In contrast to the early grades, participation in the rites of passage of the latest grades (*gada moiji*) are not at all mandatory. Those who do take part in the onerous duties of the sacred grade are celebrated, but those who do not are permitted to become *gada moiji* when they are ready. They can do so at some later stage by taking part in the incense takeover ceremony of some other class. In general, Borana make every effort to become *gada moiji* before getting too old. Death without having taken part in the sacred grade is regarded as a distinct misfortune. Thus the fact that an individual is a *gada moiji* does not necessarily mean that he belongs to the eleventh class. He usually does, but sometimes he might be a member of any one of the retired classes (*jarsa*) who missed the ceremony when his class performed the incense handover because he was too young and joined another class as old age approached. In all the middle grades (III to VIII) the individual unable to attend the ceremony is allowed to perform the ceremony either individually or with a local group, preferably at the same time as the leaders of his class; but if that is not possible, at a later stage. There is no provision, in most cases, for the individual to perform a transition rite with a class other than his own. Marriage thus becomes a private ceremony if it is not performed in cycle, and it might take place considerably later than the transition rite. Circumcision, on the other hand, is performed at about the same time as the leaders even if it is carried out individually away from the ceremonial grounds.

The incorporation of the age-sets toward the end of the third grade is perhaps one of the best attended Borana ceremonies. It is very likely that the great majority of Borana youths take part in this rite in two principal regional divisions (Dirre and Liban) although the youths who live in the remotest regions of Boranaland probably perform the rite locally. Because the rite is performed over a period of several years, the problem of coordination with the age-set leaders is not crucial. Whenever the rites begin, the information is slowly disseminated to all regions, and most youths will have taken part in these ceremonies by the time the two core groups elect their leaders at the centrally located ceremonial grounds. The question of what happens to the youth who is not initiated into an age-set is rather meaningless. He becomes a member of an age-set by virtue of his age, not because he is initiated into one. For a Borana youth to claim that he does not have age-set affiliation is as meaningless as if someone in our urban communities claimed that he does not have any marital status. Membership in these status groups is automatic. It is appropriate to ask why the initiation of the age-sets is so much better attended than any of the transition rites of the Gada System? Quite possibly this may be owing to the fact that an age-set consists of coevals, and the group is a more "natural" association of individuals than a gada class could ever hope to be. Furthermore, adolescence is a time when young men are powerfully drawn toward peer groups. A cross-cultural survey I made shows that age-grading may cover the

whole life cycle, or it may be restricted to just one stage of the life cycle; in either case there seem to be hardly any cases of age-grading that do not include the period of adolescence. In short, adolescence seems to be the stage in the life cycle when age-sets and other comparable peer-group structures seem to fulfill some vital, possibly universal, human need. [10]

In the case of Borana, there is an additional demographic reason why the age-set initiation is better attended than any of the gada ceremonies. This is because the youngest age-sets contain a much larger proportion of the population than any one gada class. The third age-set, for example, contains twice as large a segment of the total population than the third gada class, (see chapter 5, Figure 5-4). It is not possible, therefore, to get an adequate understanding of the degree of participation in transition rites by reference to the absolute number of celebrants.

An even more critical fact limiting the comprehensiveness of my observations is the fact that many transition rites are performed at several ceremonial grounds. There is always one principal shrine for the leaders of the gada class and several alternate shrines for those who live too far from the ceremonial center. The *gada moiji* ceremony, for instance, was held at Nura, in the northeastern district. This is where the Abba Gada in power and his entire assembly celebrated the final retirement of their fathers. But there were six other shrines distributed throughout Boranaland where the ceremony was also performed — complete with the shaving rites, gum resin exchange, and martial recitations.

It was not possible to observe the rites held in the alternate shrines. Even the observation of all the principal ceremonies was a difficult undertaking. Some of the settlements around the secondary shrines were observed, however, and aerial photographs were taken after the completion of the ceremonial season. These observations suggest that in most of the transition rites discussed above (grades I/II, III/IV, Va/Vb, IX/X and X/XI) the report of the number of participants must be multiplied by at least a factor of five to get a fair estimate of the magnitude of Borana rituals.

Some Thoughts on the Social and Psychological Properties of the Gada System

So far, this account has outlined the major features of the formal life cycle. It is a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, record of the activities and transitions that demarcate the life of those individuals who began their careers in the first grade.

Why does a society go to such great lengths to differentiate and demarcate the human life cycle? In Borana, as in other societies, the passage of time has no subjective meaning unless it is punctuated with transitional phenomena, whether it

[10] Asmarom Legesse, "Age-Sets and Premarital Sex: A Controlled Cross-Cultural Test." The information analyzed in this paper was drawn from the Human Relations Area Files and represents a world-wide sample of societies.

is the chiming of the clock, periodic saturnalias, rites of passage, or graduation ceremonies. Time, thus differentiated, is the basis of Borana social structure. The resulting sociological model incorporates age-sets, genealogical generations, stages of the life cycle, and general divisions of time and history. In Western thought, the life cycle (which is clearly bracketed by birth and death), time (which is well demarcated with mechanical devices), and history (which is also mechanically recorded by chroniclers) are reasonably discrete phenomena. To Borana, these are merely facets of one and the same reality: gada. The concept is so inclusive that the reality it encompasses must be analyzed along several parameters.

At this stage, I shall do no more than offer some thoughts about its familial and generational implications and attempt to relate it to human life cycles in general. The temporal and historical implications will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters.

Socialization in the Context of the Gada System

From the standpoint of the development of behavior a few properties of the Gada System stand out. As the individual passes from one stage to the next, he changes hair style and changes behavior. Both he and those who come into contact with him assume a different kind of social attitude each time that the individual goes through a rite of passage.

The transition from the first to the second grade is one of the most disjunctive points in the gada cycle. The child may have spent his first few years in the care of surrogate parents. Or he may have grown up in his mother's household. In either case, he is seen as being symbolically outside of the secular social system. His reentry into the community is effected by means of the naming ceremony. This reentry involves a change in sex identity, a change in sex roles, and movement away from the intimate ties he had developed with his mother or with his surrogate parents.

The passage from the second to the third grade involves no ritual. Only the hairstyle is changed. This most inconsequential of changes does, nonetheless, have far-reaching consequences. The boy is treated by other children and by adults as a member of a gada class with *fora* prerogatives. Whether or not he does go on *fora* is in fact dependent on his age. If he does not get a chance to go to the river valleys and share the adventures of the *fora* boys, he can still bask in their reflected glory. When he does participate in *fora*, his life is transformed radically. He stays away from his parents for extended periods and leads a very harsh life. He returns from *fora* with the kind of confidence and sense of personal autonomy that can never be achieved within the context of the family.

In the course of the third grade, the boy becomes an acknowledged member of a gada class and an age-set. In the course of the protracted feasting (*nachisa*) and visitation (*wal'argi*) rituals, that occur over a period of several years, he gets to know his peers and experiences that sense of collective identity that can develop only within the framework of peer-group structures. The feasting and visiting

season comes to a climax with the election of two sets of leaders (for the age-set and for the gada class). The names of the leaders become part of the social identity of the individual member.

I shall consider only these three stages of the life cycle, grades I to III, and for the moment ignore the remaining grades. What is the meaning of the three stages and what particular properties do they have that make them effective ways of socializing children into adult roles? How do these properties fit in with Borana values, Borana conceptions of authority, and of individual and group identity?

Anthropologists have devoted much effort to the analysis of initiation rites. The theorists have most often looked at the ritual experience itself in order to determine how it influences the development of the initiate. Thus, John Whiting has used the severity of the initiation experience as a measure and tried to relate this factor to the resolution of the sex identity crisis that so often surfaces during adolescence. Frank Young, on the other hand, examines the dramatic quality of initiations and finds that this drama is in fact associated with the incidence of exclusive male organizations. [11] The ensuing debates between the two investigators have been very instructive. Nevertheless, it is true that both had one thing in common — their failure to look at the transformation of behavior that occurs *after* the initiation experience itself.

Borana rites of passage are extremely effective despite the fact that there is nothing severe or dramatic about them. They are mechanical performances completely lacking in ceremonial drama and have little shock value. Surprisingly, however, both the transformation of sex identity and the absorption of the individual into exclusive male organizations are prominent factors. These are, as predicted by Whiting and Young, two of the most important functions of the rituals. I suspect, however, that both theorists are wrong in assuming that it is the ritual itself that brings about the behavioral transformation.

From what source, then, do the rites derive their efficacy? I believe that their impact lies in the fact that they give the initiate and his entire community a signal to go into a new phase, a phase in which a large number of social relationships of the initiate and of the adults who relate to each other by reference to the initiate are modified. To effect these changes, it is not necessary to go through elaborate rituals that are either severe or dramatic. So long as some *event* has taken place and perceivable cues have been introduced into the field, a *process* of socialization is initiated that continues during the following months and years. It is not the event, but the process, that is the basic cause of behavioral change. By the same token, it is not the peculiarities of the event but the salience of the associated cues that should serve as the critical index for measuring the effectiveness of transition rites.

Borana rites of passage are nothing more than signals. Their message is to indicate that a child who has gone through the naming ceremony is no longer

[11] John W. M. Whiting, *et al.*, "The Function of Male Initiation Ceremonies at Puberty"; and Frank Young, "The Function of Male Initiation Ceremonies: A Cross-Cultural Test of an Alternate Hypothesis."

dabballe. He has a proper name. He owns livestock. He is male. Once these cues are introduced, his social environment begins to respond to him in a novel fashion, rewarding him for his masculinity, his daring, his hunting prowess, his handling of livestock, his skill in the construction of fences, the beauty of his mistresses, his ability to deliver beautiful love songs and plausible "war chants." In short he is subjected to a lengthy and systematic "behavior therapy" and every Borana who comes into contact with him contributes to his achievement of adult status. This is socialization on an extensive scale. The influences are small and incremental. [12]

The Segregation of Generations

An institution that regulates and organizes the life cycle can serve as a conceptual framework within which individuals learn to assume different kinds of responsibilities and to experiment with new social roles. The individual must always have the support of the community as he enters a new phase of life. It seems evident that these transitions and the associated psychological rewards cannot develop if the family is allowed to exert an excessive and protracted influence on its immature members. Children may, and often do, shy away from the assumption of adult roles. If this problem is further complicated by overt or covert jealousies between the generations, the maturation of children can be severely hampered. Under such circumstances, alternate socializers, who are not tangled up in emotional vicious circles with the children, can fulfill a vital need.

It is, I believe, in response to such universal human needs that Borana have institutionalized the generational order governing their central institution. The most rigid rule of the Gada System is the segregation of genealogical generations into opposite sectors of the cycle. Fathers and sons are not only separated; there is always a "mock battle" between them. Borana does indeed have jealous fathers, but the damage they can do is sharply constrained by a double system of peer group structures (age-sets and gada classes) and by institutionalized conflict between them. I shall consider generation conflict at a later stage. Before we can understand the nature of the conflict, however, it is necessary to identify the inequities of Borana family life that are the background factors.

[12] By extension the identity confusion that occurs in societies lacking transition rites, and the associated changes in roles, results from the fact that neither the individual nor his community has commonly understood signals. The society can, therefore, neither reward nor discourage the individual for behaving in a manner appropriate or inappropriate for his age and his station in the social system. Such a society deprives itself of one of the most critical instruments of socialization. Even if the rewards are there, they cannot be *consistent* in the absence of a system of cues. Viewed in this context, the very forceful way in which long hair has come to symbolize youth in the Western world makes ample sense. It ushers in a new era in which socialization is no longer the exclusive prerogative of parents and of institutional surrogates. It is, rather, a situation in which peer groups have acquired more influence on the individual than parents and institutions combined. In short, it broadens the field within which the socialization process occurs, and makes the behavioral responses to age-status far more consistent and effective than they were during the era of "progressive" education.

One of the major sources of strife in Borana families is the fact that there are no hard and fast rules for the transmission of the family estate from generation to generation. There are a great many adult Borana who never got the opportunity to marry and to become independent household heads. A jealous father who is not willing to give up part of his estate so as to allow his children to marry can effectively prevent them from becoming adults, regardless of their age. The father may continue to marry younger and younger brides and deprive his aging children of bridewealth cattle. After his death, the first-born son may step into his shoes and treat his younger brothers in the same fashion. This undoubtedly is one of the worst inequities apparent in Borana family structure.

This is a manifest source of strife between fathers and sons, first sons and younger sons. It also has latent implications for other personal relationships within the family. Just as the father is a potential threat to the maturation of the sons, so too are the sons a threat to the polygynous dominions of their father. The polygynous family contains wives of such disparate ages that the sons of the first wife are often the same age or older than their youngest co-mothers. The Borana male continues to marry younger and younger wives even after he has ceased to be a viable husband. Under these circumstances, keeping the generations straight and the incest rules in force becomes more difficult than it is in monogamous families. The danger of incestuous liaisons between the sons and the wives of the same man is therefore quite real. The universal human fear of incest becomes especially acute because it is re-inforced by the inequities of Borana family structure. [13]

The generational structure of the Gada System is probably a response to these basic fears and it is in this context that the rules of sexual behavior reflected in the gada cycle can begin to make sense. The principal restriction on sexual liaisons and on marriage in the Gada System is this: a man or a youth has access to all gada classes except those of his father and his son. He is prohibited from having sexual intercourse with the married sisters of any member of the paternal or filial classes. Nor can he marry into these classes.

The rule might, at first sight, appear irrelevant to the problem of incest since the husband and wife need not be members of the same gada class. In other words, the sexual taboo against the father's class leaves the sons' relationships with their young co-mothers unregulated. However, this is not true to Borana thought. When a woman marries outside the *luba* of her brothers (*i.e.*, outside "her own" *luba*) she is said to belong to two gada classes — her own and her husband's. Consequently, a woman who is asked to give her gada class affiliation will first identify her brothers' *luba*. She is then asked for her "other *luba*" and she gives her husband's. The formula employed is *luba kam?* (what class?), followed by *tan ho?* (and the other?). One of the best ways to offend a Borana male is to ask him for his "other *luba*," thus casting doubt on his masculinity. Only women can straddle the rigid social

[13] A similar explanation was advanced by Monica Wilson in her study of Nyakyusa age-villages. The age disparity between wives is so great in Borana, that the explanation is probably more appropriate to Borana than it is to Nyakyusa (Monica Wilson, *Good Company: A Study of Nyakyusa Age-Villages*, pp. 159-62).

boundaries of the *luba*. [14] Given this factor of the dual identity of women, it is clear that the taboo against sexual relationships with the father's gada class does in fact bar the sons from establishing any liaisons with the young, and possibly neglected, co-wives of their father.

It is important to stress that the segregation of the generations works both ways. It gives the young men considerable freedom to establish sexual liaisons with any married women outside the parental gada classes. What little restraining authority is exercised over the behavior of the youths is not assumed by the father. It is mainly the gada peer group and the age-set that regulate the behavior of their individual members.

Authority and Generational Relationships

Borana children do not assume an obsequious attitude toward grown-ups. Adolescents speak up in the most serious adult conferences and are listened to. Children take part in sacred rituals side by side with men who are old enough to be their fathers and grandfathers. I have witnessed with unending fascination many rituals and ceremonies in which eight-year-olds were dancing, praying, and chanting with middle-aged men, without batting an eyelash. They come in full ceremonial costume. They carry full size spears. They force their way through the crowd demanding that they be given a place in the alignment of the celebrants. They struggle to keep pace and to deliver poetically flawless recitations. Nobody seems to mind their presence or their limitations. All that matters is that they are members of the *luba* and therefore peers of the gada councilors.

Borana certainly do not fit the stereotype of age-graded societies portrayed by Radcliffe-Brown. In discussing the function of age-grading in eastern Africa, Radcliffe-Brown says that it is primarily an institutional strategy that helps to uphold the authority of old age and prevent the disruption of the social order by immature generations. In this interpretation, age-graded societies are seen as being typically authoritarian and gerontocratic i.e., governed by the elderly. [15]

The Gada System and the system of age-sets are neither gerontocratic nor authoritarian. Quite the contrary, they are ways of setting limits on the authority

[14] This is also a factor that makes them marginal in the Gada System, just as their birth into one community and their marriage into another, makes them marginal in the kinship system. Like liminal persons who are in the process of transition, they are neither here nor there.

[15] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Introduction" in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, pp. 27-28. Although Radcliffe-Brown also discusses the merging of alternate generations, he does not consider the possibility that the practice might have the effect of curbing, rather than reinforcing, the authoritarianism of the oldest generations. Other writers have followed Radcliffe-Brown's gerontocratic leadership in failing to see the role of age-set systems in redistributing scarce resources such as power, privilege, protein and sex. See for example Paul Spencer, *The Samburu: A Study of Gerontocracy in a Nomadic Tribe*; and John H. Hamer, "Sidamo Generational Class Cycles: A Political Gerontocracy," pp. 50-70.

of the older generations and of distributing privileges more equitably across the generational lines. The *social distance* separating fathers and sons is an integral part of that distributive process.

After the initiation of their sons, fathers begin to behave toward them not as individuals but as members of larger sociological categories. The two men are members of different age-sets. As such, their relationship becomes de-individualized. The son is no longer tied to his father by bonds of personal gratitude. The father is not personally responsible for the behavior of his son. Mothers also learn to behave toward their sons as men who belong to the lineage into which the mothers married. They begin to treat them in the same manner that they would treat their in-laws. It is a respectful relationship. Thus, what started out as an intimate mother-son bond turns into formal estrangement. This is an estrangement that is deliberately cultivated over the years, not an event brought about by a single rite.

The development of social distance between parents and children is an important function of the gada cycle. It weakens individualized bonds and allows the development of a sense of social responsibility.

At the end of the fourth grade, when the class performs its collective marriage ceremony, the social distance between parents and children is at its highest. The marriage is an independent undertaking. It is not preceded by the long process of negotiation that characterizes most marriages. The type of marriage described in chapter 1 does not apply to the young warrior. He has the privilege of asking for a bride from his own gada class. If he does and if the girl consents, there is nothing his parents can do to prevent the marriage. His father has an obligation to part with the requisite number of bridewealth cattle in time for the transition rite; and if he fails, he has the organized *luba* of his sons to reckon with.

Marriage "in cycle," then, neutralizes the influence exercised by the father by virtue of his control of the bridewealth cattle. It is indeed surprising that the marriage ceremony of warriors (*cusa*) is performed in the absence of their fathers. The warriors come to the ceremony accompanied by their *luba* mates and age-mates. Those among them who were not able to find prospective brides in time for the ceremony have the prerogative of selecting their future wives from among the celebrants. Custom requires that the girl and her parents give their immediate consent.

During the *cusa* and the *raba* grades, the warriors lead an independent nomadic existence. They have their own leaders, they organize their own cattle raids and offensive or retaliatory expeditions, they look after their own cattle, and they take part in their own deliberative assemblies. They are a society within a larger society.

The combined effect of all the institutional arrangements designed to keep the generations apart is quite remarkable. The handing over of the *dabballe* to surrogate parents, the *fora* experience of adolescents, the independence of the junior warriors in the selection of their brides, and the autonomy of the warriors throughout the *cusa* and *raba* grades — all these experiences point to a single theme that runs through the entire first half of the life cycle: the theme of generational

estrangement that is the necessary condition for the development of personal autonomy and of collective identities.

The essential fact about this design of the life cycle is that the individual has the full support of his age mates as he confronts each critical transition in his social development. The words of Philip Gulliver – in his discussion of the role of age differentiation in human societies – adequately describe the spirit of peer group structures in Borana. “Wherever a man goes in the course of his nomadic pastoral movement or in traveling, he finds men who are his age-mates, comrades, and supporters. He finds also his seniors and juniors to whom he can fairly easily adjust his attitudes and behavior. He can never become socially isolated.” [16]

Liminality and Generational Relationships

One aspect of the gada life cycle that immediately strikes us as we view the total system of grades is the fact that a certain form of behavior is allowed or required in all the transition rites – behavior not tolerated in the daily lives of Borana men and women. The initiand is constrained by numerous taboos, and at the same time he is allowed to behave in a licentious manner. Second, the beginning and the end of the life cycle, the first and eleventh grades, are different from all the other grades. People in these stages are allowed or required to behave in a manner directly comparable to that of initiands at the time of their transition rituals. [17]

To gain an understanding of these two phenomena, we must view them within the framework of the theory of liminality. ² *ganyjpitinkin*.

In his most recent work, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Victor Turner has given us a remarkably lucid analysis of liminal groups, liminal persons, and liminal states. The “liminar” is an individual who is in limbo because he is passing from one social status to another. As such, he is neither here nor there, or in Turner’s colorful language he is “betwixt and between,” a sociological nonentity. The liminar may also be an individual whose attributes violate the common categories of social classification. An example of such an individual would be a man with feminine characteristics. Another less obvious example would be a woman who gives birth to twins. Such a mother and her children are feared and respected, indeed, elevated to the realm of the supernatural. Only animals have multiple births. The human female who shares the same attribute falls into that ambiguous category that straddles secular categories and is for that very reason elevated to the domain of the supernatural. That is the reason why, in so many African cultures, twins and their mothers are treated as anomalous sociological phenomena. They are frequently lifted out of the social system and treated

[16] Philip H. Gulliver, “Age Differentiation.”

[17] The term “initiand” should be distinguished from “initiate.” The first refers to transitional individuals who are in the course of performing a rite of passage and the second refers to those who have already completed the rite. It is the initiand rather than the initiate who exhibits the ritual constraint and license associated with the liminal state.

¹ *ganyjpitinkin* = *ganyjpitinkin*, in *ganyjpitinkin*, *ganyjpitinkin*

symbolically and behaviorally as if they were outside the society. In that strange position they make up an important part of the sacred force that stands in conceptual opposition to the secular community.

The liminal person is not irrelevant to the structured community surrounding him. On the contrary, he is its conceptual antithesis and therefore very relevant to its continued existence. It is by reference to him that the structured community defines and understands itself. If a group of liminal persons, people who have become marginalized for whatever reason, form a community, they are usually extremely intolerant of rank and role differentiation and of all forms of social structuring. The relationship between them and the rest of the social system can therefore be only of a dialectic nature.

In Borana we find evidence of liminality at many points of the life cycle. In transition rites the initiands go through a period of isolation. During that phase they acquire feminine attributes and are dressed accordingly. They have clean shaven heads which in Borana always symbolizes the absence of grade status. (Only the boys and men who are in the retired grades shave their heads regularly.) While they are in the initiation camp, the boys are allowed to lead a relatively chaotic life for as long as they can tolerate it. Fights between cliques are frequent. The use of obscene language is virtually unrestricted. Making up highly colored songs, in rhyming couplets, about the sexual life of older age-sets and older generations is a major source of entertainment.

Surprisingly, all this licentious behavior is accompanied by a commensurate increase in constraints. The boys may not leave the initiation camp at any time except when they go out for the performance of rituals at the adjoining tree shrine. They may not talk to their parents. They must refer to all objects having ritual function by their sacred rather than common names. They use a rudimentary ritual argot.

In this transition rite and in all the other rites making up the gada cycle, sex roles are reversed, license and taboo simultaneously go into force, and most normal roles are neutralized. The transitional period is set off from the rest of the life cycle and acquires all the major properties of liminality.

The most instructive type of liminal behavior we find in the Gada System, however, is not what occurs in the rites of passage – a fact documented in much greater detail by other ethnographers – but rather the fact that two major stages of the gada cycle have become liminalized *in toto*. The *dabballe* and *gada moji* have characteristics of liminal groups throughout the time that they remain in their respective grades.

Both these classes lack leadership and formal role differentiation. The men in the *gada moji* grade lose whatever special statuses they held in their active careers upon entering the sacred grade. The system of taboos by which they must abide has a further leveling effect on their status differences. Gada officialdom, which reaches a high degree of elaboration in the sixth grade and retains residual responsibilities in the *yuba* grades, is completely eliminated in the *gada moji* grade. The latter has no Abba Gadas, no adula councilors, no *garba* councilors, no *meddicha* councilors, no

ritual leaders, no assistants. The entire complex of councils and offices gives way to common humanity. Ritual leadership is no longer the role of the specialist. Every *gada moji* becomes a ritual intermediary in every household he visits.

Why should the *dabballe* and *gada moji* stages be liminal? Presumably for the same reason that birth and death are treated as transitional states. They are the most radical forms of "status change." More specifically, Borana see the first and last grades as transitional in the "life cycles" of lineages. They conceptualize descent groups as going through the Gada System. The idea may be strange within the individualistic framework of Western thought, but there is nothing strange about it if we see the line of descendants in a lineage as being in some sense a "person." The beginning and end of the gada cycle are transitional states demarcating the large stages in the corporate "life" of the descent group.

The relationship of the liminal grades to the class in power is one of the most interesting features of the Gada System. There is a symbolic polarization of the grandfathers and grandchildren on the one hand and the intervening generation on the other hand. The gada (VI) are structured and "bureaucratic"; they possess secular power. Their sons (*dabballe* I) and their fathers (*gada moji* XI), on the other hand, have the kind of power that ennobles the weak, the humble, the liminal, the structurally inferior but ritually superior persons.

Generation Conflict

Human societies seem to adopt one of two general approaches to generation conflict. One approach, that is prevalent in the Western world, views conflict as an evil which must be eliminated or kept at an absolute minimum. Conflict is a symptom of social pathology and the ideal state is one in which the generations cooperate rather than compete. So asymmetric is the position of generations that the system cannot tolerate either functional differentiation or competition between them. Any conflict between generations is seen as a signal indicating the weakening of family structure and a decline of familial morality. [18]

In contrast to this approach, Africans consider generation conflict as the natural state and intra-familial authoritarianism as a disease. In this regard, Borana is quite representative of the widespread African pattern. Again and again we learn that the father and son are in opposite camps and that grandfather and grandchild are allies. This strategy transforms an inherently asymmetric and authoritarian relationship into a much more egalitarian system. The pattern tends to minimize the inherent inequalities between the generations. [19]

[18] This philosophy is fully elaborated in Lewis S. Feuer's *The Conflict of Generations*. The assumption that generation conflict is destructive is so completely taken for granted by Western social scientists that it is difficult for them to imagine that other alternatives exist.

[19] See, for example, Mary Douglas, "Alternate Generations among the Lele of Kasai"; or Victor W. Turner, "Spatial Separation of Generations in Ndembu Village Structure." The most extreme way of balancing the generations occurs among the Nyakyusa (Wilson, *Good Company*). In this society each generation is organized as a separate community and maintains full control of its economic resources.

In Western societies the middle generation is in control of most political and economic resources, presumably because it is in the prime of life. We are told that the demands of technology are, increasingly, so great that the "immature" generation must remain in training until an inordinately advanced age. At the same time, we are told, the oldest generation is no longer capable of meeting the demands of a technologically advanced society and must, therefore, be relegated to isolation and loneliness in "old peoples' homes." In short, we have a situation in which generations A, B, and C are caught in an authoritarian bind with B holding all the power and A and C generally reduced into a dysfunctional state, unable to engage in any critical economic activities and deprived of any significant role in social life. [20]

In Africa the generations are structurally opposed to each other and functionally differentiated and interdependent. [21] *The middle generation has one kind of authority, and the marginal generations have another kind of authority.* In the case of Borana, we have seen how the old and the young have ritual power whereas the intermediate generation has political authority. Thus, the differentiation of power into two different kinds allows the marginal generations to play a meaningful and important role in the ritual-political system: they are the mediators between man and God and they can, in that capacity, offer a vital service to the class in power and to the society as a whole.

The progressive separation of the generations through the gada cycle is a very important aspect of social structure. The attempt to "add up" the power of two weak generations and balance it against the dominance of the middle generation is also an equally important factor. Given these two structural conditions, the particular type of functional differentiation that a specific society introduces into the generational parameter of the social structure is quite immaterial. But the presence of some kind of functional differentiation appears to be vital.

In the final analysis, the tendency of some Western scholars to explain the differences between "advanced" and "primitive" patterns of generational relationships by reference to levels of technological development is very misleading. The difference lies in the conceptual schemes underlying the social system, not in the extra-systemic factors such as technology. [22]

[20] See for example Peter Townsend's *The Family Life of Old People*.

[21] See for example A. H. Jacobs, "Masai Age-Groups"; P. H. Gulliver, "The Age-Set Organization of the Jie Tribe"; Mary Douglas, "Alternate Generations among the Lele of Kasai"; Victor Turner, "Spatial Separation of Generations in Ndembu Village Structure."

[22] Margaret Mead, *Culture and Commitment*, chap. 2, 3; Kenneth Keniston, *The Uncommitted*, pp. 211-37. It is interesting to note that the latter author found that the alienated youth which he studied — who were extremely hostile toward the parental generation — did, nevertheless, describe the grandparental generation in glowing terms (pp. 90-93). He glosses over this fact because it weakens his thesis of "global estrangement." It is precisely this dynamic of conflict and alliance which is inhibited in the West but fully institutionalized in Africa.

Part II

Analysis

So far, I have presented mainly the ethnographic information concerning the Borana kinship system and the Gada System. Aside from brief interpretative passages on family life, religion, rites of transition, and generational relationships, the analysis has been kept at an absolute minimum. I have tried to let the culture speak for itself.

In the following five chapters, my approach is quite different. I present three analyses that are as much a product of the anthropological models employed as they are a product of the data at hand. These analyses show that Borana institutions are governed by an internal logic, that there are external forces impinging upon their structure, and that the Borana polarize or modify their cultural models to accommodate conflict, ambiguity, or change.

THE GADA PUZZLE:
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The structuralist school of anthropology, under the leadership of Claude Lévi-Strauss, has developed analytical tools of great value for our understanding of unfamiliar institutions. Structuralism is concerned primarily with exposing the system of ideas and the system of norms underlying social institutions. It explores the logical coherence of institutions rather than the sentimental integration of groups. It seeks to infer what the possible consequences might be if social norms were actually followed. To carry out this kind of analysis, the structuralist constructs ideal models of institutions and tries to demonstrate that the model explains all the normative data and any apparent anomalies in the most parsimonious way possible. The structuralist also takes ideal models of his informants into account and tries to discover the grammar governing the relationship between cognitive categories. Hence, an exposition of native terminologies is an important dimension. In both these approaches, statistical-probabilistic data are considered irrelevant. I shall, therefore, attempt to remain true to the structuralist tradition and extend the formal analysis of the Gada System without the use of any kind of frequentative data.

The Gada System does not merely contain a few anomalies. The institution as a whole is an ethnographic puzzle. Numerous writers have speculated about it. Sometimes they have dismissed it as a chaotic institution; at other times they have described it as an unworkable system. It now appears that at least some of the chaos was in the mind of the writers, rather than in the structure of the institution. In the late nineteenth century the Gada System was still a living institution among the northern Galla. At that time a geographer named Antonio Cecchi wrote one of the rarest eyewitness accounts of a gada transition rite. His brief description is one of the few sources of observational data against which we can check the validity of formal analyses. Among the numerous "interpreters" of Galla culture, Enrico Cerulli is the only serious scholar who ever attempted to construct a model for the purpose of explaining the Gada System. He was, however, aware of the fact that he had very little observational data available. His model was based on interview data were obtained from isolated informants who were interviewed in contrast against the reports of other informants from the

Cecchi's report contains one enigmatic statement that is the essence of the gada puzzle. He says that one can "see aged men in their eighties and infants of the tenderest age being circumcised" in the same ceremony. [1] This is an invaluable piece of historical information and raises an interesting question: how is it possible for one gada class to have individuals with such vastly different ages? We assume that Cecchi's statement refers to a gada class because the context is a discussion of gada transition rites. In addition, all the available evidence indicates that the Galla perform circumcision only within the context of gada ritual, except for a special class of people who are outside the gada grade system and are circumcised in privacy. Clearly, Cecchi's statement refers to a "ceremony" which indicates that he is discussing a public gada transition.

The question about the age structure of gada classes raised by the above statement is a key problem. A gada class with an age span of about eighty years is a structural anomaly demanding explanation. I shall refer to it as "Cecchi's dilemma" and attempt to explain it in terms of two alternative models of the Gada System. The first of these models is one that was offered by Enrico Cerulli. [2]

The essential feature of this model is that Cerulli conceptualizes the system of grades as a closed cycle. He then uses this cycle to examine the internal relationships of the different gada to each other in terms of the rules governing inter-generational ties. Cerulli says that there are ten gada. These gada are divided into two equal hemicycles. At any given time one hemicycle is active and the other is inactive. The active hemicycle is differentiated into five grades of which the fifth is always the gada in power. The first three grades are not terminologically differentiated from each other. The fifth grade is differentiated into two subgrades.

Grades in the Active Hemicycle	Names of Grades
I	Dobbolle
II	Dobbolle
III	Dobbolle
IV	Qondala
V	Raba-Gula

There is an internal correspondence between the hemicycles such that the first gada is linked to the sixth, the second is linked to the seventh, the third is linked to the eighth, and so on. Wherever the father is on the ten-grade cycle, the son is in the corresponding gada of the opposite hemicycle. A father can be either in the first or the second hemicycle. The only constraint is that father and son cannot be in the same hemicycle. The implication of this model is that an infant can be born into any one of the ten grades, and *there is no normative limit on the oldest possible age.*

[1] Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle Frontiere del Kaffa*, p. 529.

[2] Cerulli, "Folk-Literature," pp. 167-81.

Figure 4-1 shows Cerulli's closed cycle as he pictured it in 1923 in his *Harvard African Studies* monograph. [3] On each of the lines separating the sectors, Cerulli wrote a pair of mirror-image statements such as the following:

"The sons of those who belong to gada H, belong to gada C."

and vice versa:

"The sons of those who belong to gada C, belong to gada H."

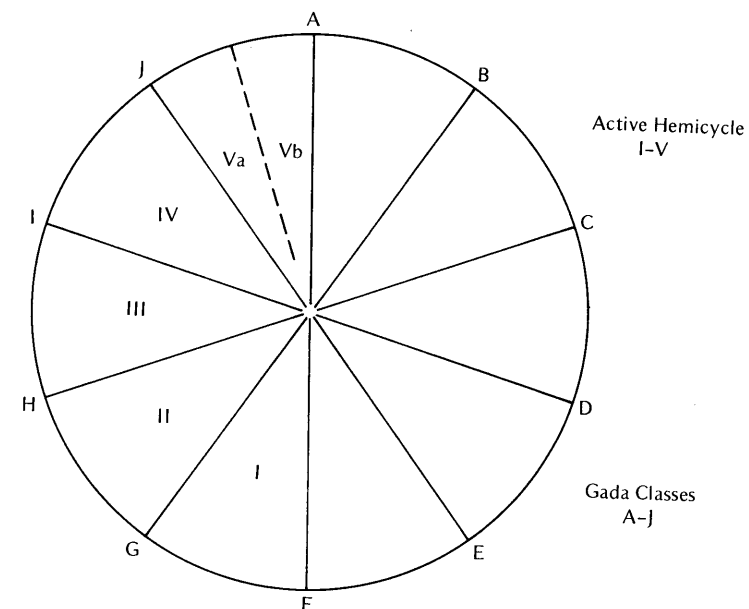


Figure 4-1. Cerulli's Model of the Gada Cycle

The sectors in this model are structurally reversible so that old men and children who are not related to each other could be in one and the same sector. It is also apparent that grandfathers and *their* grandchildren would be in the same sector of the same hemicycle. Thus, the model does offer an explanation for Cecchi's dilemma. I shall refer to this model as the "unrestricted closed cycle" or simply the "closed cycle". It is "unrestricted" because there are no age limitations of any kind in its structure: an individual can be any age and belong to any grade.

Although Cerulli's closed cycle is an adequate answer to Cecchi's dilemma, it raises as many questions as it answers. Cerulli, himself, was fully aware of the fact that his model cannot handle the seemingly contradictory lists of gada that have been given by his predecessors and by contemporary ethnographers. He writes (p. 487), "If instead [of the above model] we follow written sources, this same number of gada can appear very different. D'Abbadie and father Martial say that

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

they are ten. . . Almeida, on the other hand, enumerates only five as do also Cecchi and Tutschek, while Bruce gives a list of seven. For the southern Galla Werner gives two lists of seven *gada*." Cerulli's explanation of this confusing array of ethnographic facts is this:

1. The ten-grade nomenclatures are in some sense "correct" and are to be preferred over the others as the more complete version.

2. The five-gada patterns are also consistent with his model; he explains that the authors have probably enumerated the classes in one hemicycle and neglected to describe the rest.

3. He dismisses the seven-gada cycle as "deficient" and adds that the reason for this deficiency was due to the fact that the writers (Cecchi, Almeida, and Bruce) did not have an adequate understanding of the Gada System. [4]

One of the main problems with Cerulli's analysis is that he does not consistently distinguish between the separate concepts covered by the omnibus concept "gada." He uses the word as vaguely as do the Galla themselves. It is not clear when he intends it to mean grades or classes. The distinction is necessary in order to raise an important question that Cerulli himself does not raise: do the names of classes necessarily have to be the same in number as the names of grades?

I shall first deal with grades as we find them today in Borana. The detailed account of transition rites presented in the preceding chapter has shown that despite the apparently simple symmetry of the gada cycle there are a few traps in it that can easily waylay the transient ethnographer. The "irregularities" relevant to our present discussion concern the unequal length of the different grades. Given these inequalities, it is quite possible to think of the cycle as consisting of seven, ten, or eleven "grades" depending on one's viewpoint. The distinctive names of grades are: (1) *dabballe*, (2) *gamme*, (3) *cusa*, (4) *raba*, (5) *gada*, (6) *yuba*, and (7) *gada mojjii*. From a terminological standpoint, therefore, the Borana have a seven-grade system. However, if we were hastily to assign each grade an eight-year span, we would indeed have a deficient cycle. The fact that the *gamme*, *raba*, and *yuba* grades cover more than one gada period each is what makes it possible for the seven-grade nomenclature to cover the entire cycle.

By analogy it is quite possible that the grade list given by Cecchi for the Shoan Galla (Abbichu) also covers a complete cycle: the terms he offers are: (1) *debele*, (2) *fole*, (3) *condala*, (4) *doroma*, (5) *gadoma*, (6) *luba*, and (7) *buba*. If we compare these with the Borana terminology, it becomes apparent that the term *debele* is the same in the two cases, and *buba* is comparable to the Borana term *yuba*. *Doroma* and *gadoma* are used in both societies, the terms given here being the grammatical variants of the grade names *dori* and *gada*. [5] In Borana *dori* is the name of the second part of the *raba* grade. The terminological correspondence between these widely separated segments of Galla society is remarkable and suggests that the structure of the two systems is much closer than had been

[4] Cerulli, "I Riti della Iniziazione nella Tribu Galla."

[5] The *-oma* ending has the same meaning as the English "-ness." Thus, Cecchi's terms mean "*dori-ness*" and "*gada-ness*."

previously suspected. [6] So far as we can tell on the basis of the brief sketch of gada rituals and structural terminology presented by Cecchi, we have little reason to believe that the system of gada grades of the Shona Galla in the late nineteenth century was structurally very different from the contemporary Borana institution. [7]

On the basis of this correspondence between two geographically disparate segments of Galla society, we strongly suspect that Cerulli's five-grade terminology is incomplete and that the Borana-Shoan pattern represents the older variety. But how do we reconcile the ten-grade and the eleven-grade systems? Why is it that the Borana cycle as I described it exceeds the "normal" cycle by eight years? How important is this departure?

In Borana the beginning and the end of the cycle, the first and eleventh grades, are marginal and they are symbolically equated with each other. This is perhaps the reason why Cerulli thought of the Gada System as a closed cycle. However, the two classes remain quite distinct despite the fact that one is symbolically a replication of the other. The boys in the first grade are, in fact, so marginal that they remained physically outside of the social system, under the care of Wata surrogate parents throughout the first eight years of the cycle. It would, therefore, be quite legitimate to think of the *dabballe* as a pre-grade or as the "uninitiated" stage that is not truly part of the formal life cycle. However, in recent times Borana have started to bring up their own *dabballe* sons instead of temporarily giving them to the Wata. The *dabballe* have therefore become much more of a class. Furthermore, because the boys enter their gada class at birth rather than being initiated into it, it would not be very meaningful to speak of an "uninitiated" class. Structurally, whether we consider the *dabballe* stage as a grade or a pre-grade makes no difference at all to our model, although it would make a critical difference to the Cerulli model. In the closed cycle there is no "room" for more than ten grades.

Finally, there is a philosophical reason why we must include the *dabballe* in the system of gada grades. They are a marginal group, and marginality is an important component in the organization of human society. The inclusion of marginal groups in the analysis of social systems opens up new horizons. *The balanced opposition between structure and marginality, between status-role complexes and liminality is a vital dimension that becomes completely obscured if we choose to look only at "structure" narrowly defined as a system of statuses and roles.* In order to get an understanding of this higher order organization of the Gada System we must examine not only the "bureaucratic" grades such as *raba* and *gada* but also the internally undifferentiated marginal grades of the *dabballe* and the *gada mojjii*.

The structure of gada classes is our second problem and here the solution to

[6] Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia*, p. 11.

[7] However, an important difference in the age structure of the classes seems to have developed because the Shoans lifted the lower limit on childbearing whereas the Borana did not.

the problem is not so obvious. One anomaly that Cerulli completely fails to explain is the fact, presented by Alice Werner, that there are two separate names of gada. One of these is the grade cycle mentioned above, and the other is a cycle of class names. The fact that the class cycle also is made up of seven units cannot be explained in the same way that we explained the grades. We are dealing with a different kind of anomaly.

Werner's class terminology is what Borana call the *makabasa luba*, literally the "proper names of classes." This is a cycle of seven names applied sequentially to all the classes, living or dead. Unlike the grade terminology, there are no variations in the time span covered by each unit. Each name applies to a single class, and the total cycle or rather epicycle covers exactly fifty-six years. It is obvious, therefore, that *the Gada System encompasses within its complex structure not only a cycle and two hemicycles, as Cerulli believed, but also epicycles of intermediate duration.* What Cerulli dismissed as a "confusion" in the older literature is, in fact, a structural feature of great importance which he himself, and subsequent ethnographers, did not understand. [8]

It is indeed curious that so many students of Galla culture failed to appreciate such an important dimension of the Gada System because they believed that the *makabasa* epicycle is "incomplete" (Werner), "deficient" (Cerulli) or "truncated" (Huntingford) despite the fact that these seven-unit nomenclatures had been reported from time to time over a period of three centuries. [9]

One of the most thorough critiques of Cerulli's model was presented by Adolf Jensen, who did extensive field research among the Konso of Southern Ethiopia and wrote a full-length monograph of their social system. The monograph includes a normative analysis of the Konso variant of the Gada System. [10] Jensen was the first to point out that the Gada System, as it is described by Cerulli, is full of contradictions and that the forty-year generation rule is unworkable. [11]

Now we had pointed out that this established forty-year generation gap (*abstand*) does not correspond to natural conditions and that, in this form, the system can never stay in order; that it can under no circumstances reflect a segmentation of the people into age classes — indeed, that it will actually have to cease to exist after a few generations. [12]

Jensen clearly saw through the fundamental structural problem of the Gada System among the Galla largely on the basis of an analogy with the Gada System of the Konso. He made unequivocal prediction that the Galla institution is bound to collapse because the age structure of the classes will change progressively. Nowhere in the works of Cerulli can we find an answer to the problem of stability or the

[8] Cerulli, "Folk-Literature," p. 169.

[9] Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia*, p. 49; Cerulli, "I Riti della Iniziazione nella Tribù Galla," p. 487.

[10] Adolf E. Jensen, *Im Lande des Gada*.

[11] Adolf E. Jensen, "Neuere Notizen über das Gada-System."

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 85, translation mine.

changing age structure of the classes. In a sense, therefore, our analysis begins where the Cerulli-Jensen debate ended. None of the subsequent ethnographers has chosen to grapple with these fundamental structural issues.

In an effort to understand the ideal model of the Gada System, Jensen postulates a lower *and an upper* limit on procreation. [13] He believes that the original institution probably had such limits. Borana and Konso men are not permitted to raise their children before reaching a certain grade. Jensen thinks that circumcision was probably the life crisis that defined the point beyond which child bearing was not allowed. Jensen is, however, unable to determine the point on the gada grade system of the Borana when circumcision is performed and if, in fact, it is connected with the beginning or the end of child bearing. He writes, "According to Zavattari (p. 357) and Giaccardi, among the Borana the men are circumcised at their entry into the age class of gada. These two statements, however, remain unclear for our question insofar as here the circumcision is connected neither with the entry into the gada arrangement (*einrichtung*) nor with the end of the same, but is carried out so to speak in the middle of this period of life (*lebensperiode*) of the man at the transition into another class." [14] This is a vague a statement as possible.

On the basis of general cross-cultural evidence, Jensen believes that there is a general symbolic and mythological link between death and birth, between circumcision and the end of child raising such that men would begin to have children only after they have killed an enemy or an animal, and they would stop raising children after they were circumcised. The Borana data confirm the first set of symbolic correspondences but not the second. [15]

A major problem with Jensen's interpretation is that he does not distinguish between the time when Borana begin to raise sons and the time when they raise daughters. There is a period of eight years during which they raise sons but not daughters. It is therefore not possible to establish a time for the beginning of *zeugungsfähigkeit* (child-bearing ability) in general, as Jensen attempts to do. Nor is it possible to speak of a generalized time for the transitions of the classes (*übergang in eine andere alterklasse*) because all the transitions do not take place at the same time. Grade VI (gada) is later than all the other grades: the passage from *raba* into gada and from gada into *yuba* takes place five years later than the transitions between all the other grades. Thus, what is the beginning or the end of the grades corresponds to a point in time that is in the "middle" of grade VI, and what is the beginning or end of grade VI corresponds to a point in time that is the "middle" of the other grades.

The problem, then, is to determine the temporal alignment of the circumcision ceremony vis-à-vis four, rather than two, events: two kinds of transitions (one

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 90, translation mine.

[15] Adolf E. Jensen, "Das Gada-System der Konso und die Alterklassen-Systeme der Niloten."

general and one special) and two kinds of "childbearing ability" (the time for raising sons and the time for raising daughters). The sequence of these five events and the position of each event on the gada cycle is as follows:

1. The class performs the fatherhood (*dannisa*) ceremony, in the 40th year of the cycle.

2. After this ceremony they begin to raise sons. They continue to abandon daughters. The sons born at this time are given to Wata surrogate parents. The sons are *dabballe*.

3. The class performs the transition ceremony from the *raba* grade (V) into the gada grade (VI) on the 45th year of the cycle. This transition has no implication whatsoever for the men's right to have children. The sons are still in the *dabballe* grade (I).

4. The class is circumcised in the 48th year of the cycle. This coincides with the transition rites of all the grades, except *raba* and gada, and occurs in the middle or, more accurately, in the 5th year of the gada period.

5. They begin to raise daughters after the 48th year of the cycle, and at the same time they take back their sons from the homes of the surrogate parents. From this time on there are no radical irregularities in the pattern of child raising. All children are kept except those who are voluntarily given up for adoption.

So far as the scheduling of life crises is concerned, the above account resolves Jensen's puzzle in unambiguous terms. The question of symbolic correspondences that he raises however, is still unanswered and leads us to think of the form that the Gada System might have taken initially. Jensen is quite right in thinking that there is a linkage between killing and procreation. Borana begin to raise their sons only after the *butta* wars. *Butta*, as we saw, is performed just before the fatherhood ceremony. Let us suppose that Jensen is again right in associating *circumcision* with the *end of child raising*. Might it not be that in its earliest history the Gada System was so organized that raising sons was permitted only between the 40th and 48th years of the gada cycle or between the *dannisa* and circumcision ceremonies? This would fit the ideal model of the Borana life cycle perfectly and would make the gada cycle a flawless *age-grade* system. It is not unreasonable to assume that the system may well have started out in this fashion and that the upper limit of child bearing was quickly abandoned when its devastating implications for the population became evident. Such a system could come into being at a time, say, of a population explosion; but of course it could not endure.

This is conjectural history, and I shall not pursue it further in the absence of supporting evidence. As a structural problem, however, it is of the greatest significance because it points to the structural equivalence of regulating the beginning or the end of the period of child raising. It seems very likely that in some sections of Galla society the lower limit was removed; in other sections the upper limit was removed, and in a third both limitations were removed. I shall explore the structural consequences of each of these three patterns later, not so much for the purpose of demonstrating that this or the other pattern characterizes specific regions, but rather for the purpose of giving the documentary historian a structural and intellectual framework for analyzing some types of historical data that would

otherwise remain totally unintelligible and apparently contradictory.

We now come to the final ingredient of the gada puzzle. How many classes are there in the Gada System? Again, none of the earlier writers asked this deceptively simple question. There is an implicit assumption throughout the literature that the number of classes is about ten, corresponding to the cycle of ten grades. In fact, in Cerulli's model there can be only ten classes and no more. According to this model, if we hold demographic variability constant, the system is in a state of perpetual equilibrium; each pair of opposite classes is as likely to gain newborn members as it is to lose members through death. Hence, so long as we adhere to the closed cycle, there would be no reason to suspect that the number of classes might deviate significantly from the number of grades. If anything, the number could decrease if a pair of opposite classes died out completely, but there is no way in which the number of classes could increase above ten.

That, however, is exactly what has happened in Borana: the number of classes is far in excess of the grades. The most astonishing and totally unexpected fact that came to light in the course of compiling census data is the fact that there are, today, more than twenty gada classes represented by living members. Table 4-1 lists all the living classes that appeared in the census. There is nothing normative about this list. It is simply a list of the classes that turned up in a more or less random sample of about 350 males. It is quite possible that with a larger sample a few more classes might have appeared.

Table 4-1. Components of the Gada System

<i>Epicyclic Names of Classes</i> maḳabasa luba	<i>Linear Names of Classes</i>	<i>Grades</i>	<i>Years Elapsed from Time Class Started Cycle</i>
<i>a Moggisa</i>	1 Ilman Jaldessa	I <i>Dabballe</i>	8
<i>b Sabbaka</i>	2 Ilman Maḳa	II <i>Gamme Jr.</i>	16
<i>c Libasa</i>	3 Ilman Guyyo	III <i>Gamme Sr.</i>	24
<i>d Darara</i>	4 Jilo Aga	IV <i>Cusa</i>	32
<i>e Mardida</i>	5 Gobba Bule	V <i>Raba Jr.</i>	40
<i>f Fullasa</i>	6 Jaldessa Liban	VI <i>Gada</i>	48
<i>g Makula</i>	7 Maḳa Galma	VII <i>First Yuba</i>	56
<i>a Moggisa</i>	8 Guyyo Boru	VIII <i>Second Yuba</i>	64
<i>b Sabbaka</i>	9 Aga Adi	IX <i>Third Yuba</i>	72
<i>c Libasa</i>	10 Bule Dabbasa	X <i>Fourth Yuba</i>	80
<i>d Darara</i>	11 Arero Gedo	XI <i>Gada Mojji</i>	88
<i>e Mardida</i>	12 Liban Kuse		116
<i>f Fullasa</i>	13 Boru Galma		124
<i>g Makula</i>	14 Adi Doyyo		132
<i>a Moggisa</i>	15 Liban Jaldessa		140
<i>b Sabbaka</i>	16 Guyyo Boru Ingule		148
<i>c Libasa</i>	17 Dida Bittata Mammo		156
<i>d Darara</i>	18 Haro Adi		164
<i>e Mardida</i>	19 Doyyo Jilo		172
<i>f Fullasa</i>	20 Jaldessa Guyyo Dabbasa		180

Note: Four different measures are employed here represented by italic letters *a, b, c* (*maḳabasa*), arabic numerals (classes), roman numerals (grades), and italic numerals (years on the cycle). This notation will be maintained throughout the discussion.

The table also contains a list of the seven epicyclic (*makabasa*) names of the classes and the gada grades that the classes occupied at the time of fieldwork (1962-64). The last column is an estimate of the number of years that probably elapsed between the present and the time that the class started its long career at the beginning of the gada cycle. The "present" here means 1963, the second year of fieldwork and the year of the gada transition rites.

I have now presented all the most enigmatic features of the institution and enough data to permit exposition of an alternative model of the Gada System (Figure 4-2). The open cycle, as it is presented here, departs from Cerulli's model in several basic respects.

1. Within the framework of this model the institution retains its structural characteristics regardless of the number of named grades or classes.
2. The cycle is open ended so that the people who have completed the grades do not go back into the early grades but remain separate and distinct classes outside, on the outer fringes of the eleven-grade cycle.
3. The position of father and sons is still in opposite sectors, whereas the position of grandfather and grandson is on the same side but at different levels of the spiral.
4. The model incorporates the staggered arrangement of the grades so that the grade VI begins and ends five years later than the other grades.
5. Finally, the model also incorporates the two marginal grades, *dabballe* and *gada moji*, which are frequently ignored in the literature, especially *gada moji*.

In the organization of the gada cycle, as it is conceptualized here, all the inter-generational rules still apply. The position of a man on the cycle is always five grades ahead of the grade affiliation of his sons. The activities of the "generations" are coupled in such a way that the fatherhood ceremony of the *raba* (5) corresponds to the opening of the *dabballe* (1), their sons; the circumcision of the gada (6) corresponds to the naming ceremony of the *gamme* (2). The campaign of the fathers in class 8 corresponds to the election of the senior council among their sons in class 3. The entry into the final and sacred class 11 corresponds to the accession to fatherhood of their sons, the *raba* (6), and the beginning of the *dabballe* class (1) for their grandsons. The final retirement of the *gada moji* (11) corresponds to the circumcision of their sons, the gada (6), and the naming ceremony of their grandsons, the *dabballe* (1). The activities and transition rites of three generations are thus perpetually bound to each other within the framework of the gada cycle. These coupled transition rites take place at about the same time, on ceremonial grounds located in the same region of Boranaland.

The important feature of this model is the fact that the cycle is closed at one end (I) and open at the other end (XI). [16] This means that boys cannot be born

[16] The situation described by Cecchi can come about only if the cycle is open at both ends. This, in all probability, is what happened among the Shoans and the other northern Galla. As a result of the influence of Islam and Christianity, infanticide was discontinued, but the general rules were maintained. Under these circumstances, the age span of the classes expands very rapidly.

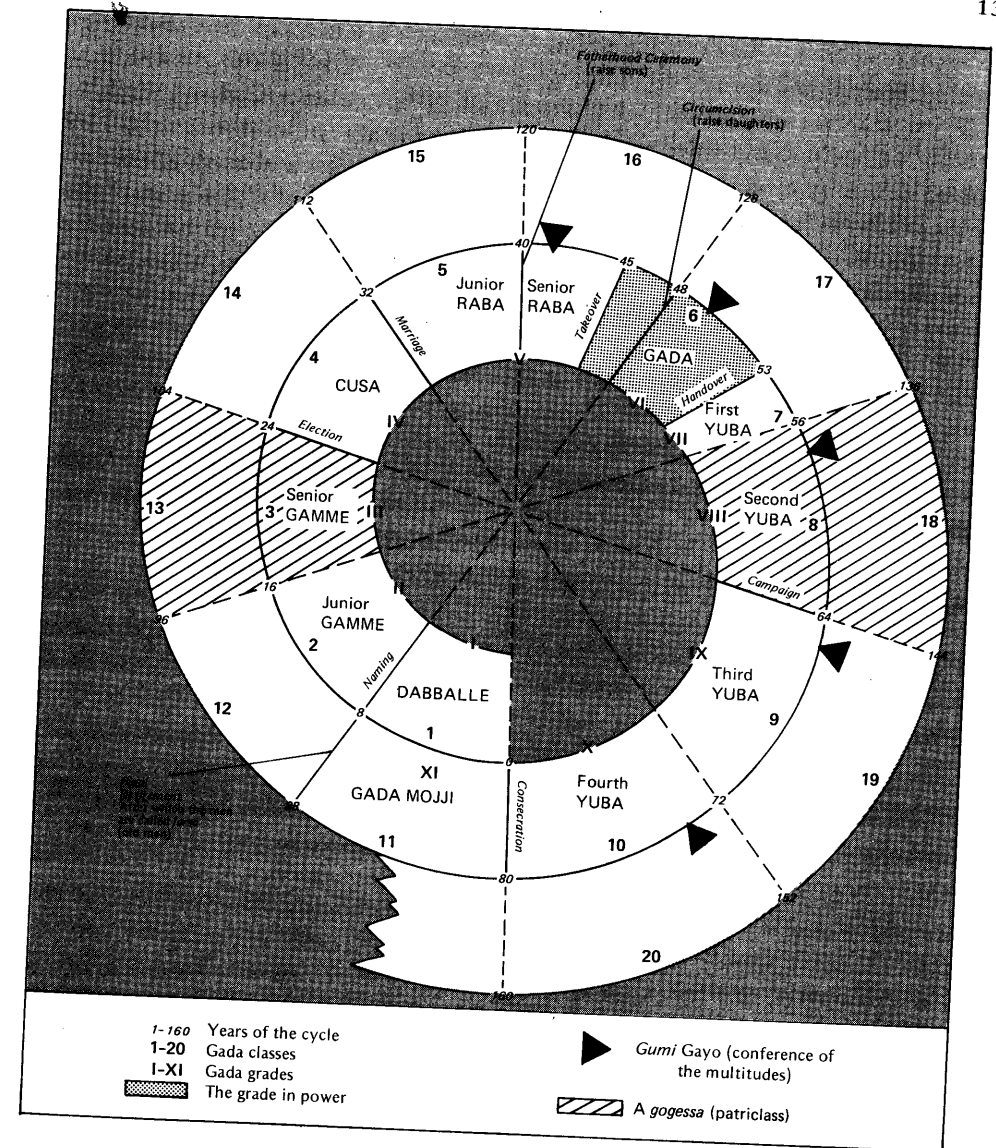


Figure 4-2. The Gada Cycle

into a grade earlier than *dabballe*. It also means that if people live beyond the *gada moji* grade (XI), they do not return into the inner cycle but continue their collective existence as members of a gada class (12) which stands outside of the cycle of grades.

The fact that we adopt this model opens up new horizons in our exploration of the Gada System. It allows us to raise the question of whether or not the spiral can undergo a quantum stretch. It opens up the possibility that the Gada System may be an unstable institution. With this in mind, I shall attempt to explain how

the number of classes has become so large and what it means to say that the classes "live" to the ripe old age of 160 years.

Given the present model, this anomalous distribution of classes follows logically from the basic rules of the Gada System. This can be demonstrated by looking at the descendants of a single individual. The reader is advised to refer to the model of the gada cycle (Figure 4-2) in order to understand all the steps of the demonstration. Please note that two different sets of numbers are used in the description: one set refers to the *age* of the individuals and the other (set in italics) refers to the *position* of the individuals on the gada cycle.

Let us start with an ideal individual who began his gada career at the very beginning of the cycle, year *zero*. He moves through the first four grades stepwise every eight years and, let us assume, he marries at the age of 32 with the rest of his class. Let us say, further, that he has the first son at the age of 40, soon after he has taken part in the fatherhood ceremony (*dannisa*). His son will begin the cycle at the same point that the father entered grade I. In other words, so long as father and son have an age difference of forty years, they will remain in the "proper" grades. However, the father may well continue to have sons long after the 40th year of the cycle. Let us say that he has his last son at the age of 56. At birth, the son enters the *gamme* grade (II) on the 16th year of the cycle and joins his brother in the *same* grade (Note: the fundamental rule is that father and sons must always be 40 years or five grades apart, regardless of the age of the father or of his sons).

Let us call the father *A* and the youngest son *B*. We now follow the infant *B* and ignore his father's progress. *B* will be 40 years old when he reaches the 56th year of the cycle. Let us assume that he continues to have sons until his 56th birthday. He will then be at the 72nd year of the cycle. His last son will, at birth, enter the cycle at the 32nd year. The class to which this son (*C*) belongs has already completed four grades and is now engaged in the marriage ceremony. That means that the infant *C* can be named, and he can be married at any time. These are the two life crisis ceremonies that his class has already performed and that have a personal significance for him. (Note: an individual can perform privately any rite of passage that his gada class has performed before he came of age, or before his birth.) [17]

We now follow the infant *C* who was born into the 32nd year of the cycle. This infant will be 56 years old when he completes the gada cycle. If he has a son (*D*) at that time, the son will become a member of the class in power (gada, VI) at birth. He will be treated as an equal by the other members of his class. His family will pay dues (*kato*) on his behalf. He will be taken to all the critical ceremonies of his class. At this stage the oldest members of his class are 48 years old, and the difference between his age and theirs defines the maximum possible age range of the class. This is the time when the class will be circumcised. It is therefore possible to see adults and infants being circumcised in the same ceremony as suggested in

[17] The only exception is the *gada moiji* rites. These rites cannot be performed privately, and the individual who feels he is too young to enter the sacred grade may perform the ceremony with another class, preferably — but not necessarily — the class of his sons.

the ethnographic accounts of earlier decades. (However, the situation Cecchi describes for the Shoan Galla is not possible, since he states that 80-year-olds and infants were circumcised together. But more about that later.)

We follow the same procedure with the infant *D*. He was born into the 48th year of the cycle. He will be 56 years old when he enters the 14th "grade" of the cycle, which is no grade at all. A son (*E*) born to him at that time will go into semi-retirement (*yuba*) at birth. He will be a member of the class of fathers (8) who are campaigning for their sons. (Note: at the time when the class of Guyyo Boru (8) were campaigning in the summer of 1963, there were in fact many infants in their settlement who had been brought to the ceremony by their parents to take part in the *lallaba* ceremony. Again, the parents had to shoulder the responsibility of ceremonial participation until such time as the child was old enough to walk. Older children did take part in the rituals. They took the matter most seriously and were treated by their aging peers with utmost respect.)

The last man (*E*) in the chain of descendants that we have traced was 56 years old at the end of the 14th stage of the cycle. If he lives to be 80 years old he will enter the 17th "grade" of the gada cycle. Thus, in a period of five generations we have traced the spiral as far as the 17th class. With a few more generations we could reach the 20th. This is probably a greatly speeded up version of what actually happened in the development of the Gada System.

It is worth remembering that if a man has a son when he is in the 20th class, the son enters the 15th class at birth. Such a man, his sons and all his descendants are perpetually retired. They are *ilman jarsa* (the children of the aged). The entire outer cycle, classes 12 through 20, consists of such individuals. [18]

In this illustrative progression through the gada spiral we selected ages 40 and 56 as the beginning and end of child bearing. There is no necessary reason for this. So long as the difference in age between father and son is in excess of 40 years, the cumulative shift in gada grade position continues inexorably from generation to generation. It is, of course possible for any of the men in the above illustration, except the first two, to marry and have children before the age of forty. A lineage that resorts to this strategy generation after generation can go back into the active cycle even if it started out with all its members in the retired classes.

The above analysis leads us to suspect that the Gada System may not be a stable institution. It seems that the classes are becoming progressively more retired. We label this process of incremental retirement of the classes the *gada process*. We cannot be certain that such a process is at work today because the process is, in

[18] This explains the enigmatic fact reported in Enrico Cerulli's *Etiopia Occidentale*, p. 50. He states that there was a category of males known as *sigaba*, who were excluded from the Gada System. He was unable to explain why they were excluded, in spite of the fundamental Galla rule that all males should, by cultural definition, have a place in the Gada System. The *sigaba* are obviously the Shoan equivalent of the *ilman jarsa*. They came to be excluded as a result of centuries of structural transformation that the institution underwent. Crudely stated, their exclusion is the result of the fact that they were born too late. In this regard, the hypothetical reinterpretation of Cerulli's data that I presented in 1963 is substantially correct. See Legesse, "Class Systems Based on Time," pp. 23-24.

principle, reversible. It can be reversed if the majority of the retired population marry and have children at an early age. *Whether or not the gada process is, in fact, balanced against this kind of counterprocess is a question for which we have no answer at this stage of our analysis. It is the kind of question no amount of structural analysis can answer.*

We have, therefore, reached one of the critical boundaries confronting the structuralist method. If we proceed with our examination of the social categories, and relational concepts, as Lévi-Strauss recommends, [19] without contaminating our analysis with statistical data, we are unable to answer the question of the stability of the Gada System. We know that it is possible for the classes to acquire younger and younger members and consequently for the class as a whole to "live" longer and longer, but we cannot determine whether or not the system is, at present, still spinning off men into the outer regions of the spiral or whether it has reached an equilibrium or whether the process has been reversed entirely. All three are *logical possibilities*. We must find out which one of these alternatives is the *probable outcome*.

[19] Lévi-Strauss. *Structural Anthropology*, chap. 15.

CHAPTER 5

SIMULATING THE GADA PROCESS: A GENERATIVE MODEL

The model presented in the preceding chapter explains nearly all the observed characteristics of the Gada System as parsimoniously as possible. This is the first task of a structural model. However, we expect more from our analysis. We expect to be able to explain the probable pattern of transformation the system is undergoing. If we can develop a series of models representing different stages of development of the Gada System, we will elevate the power of our structural analysis to a higher plane. To do this we need data from different parts of the Galliñña-speaking community representing different "permutations" of the Gada System. There are tantalizing bits of evidence that such data may well be forthcoming, evidence suggesting that different Galla groups have allowed the Gada System to develop in divergent but perfectly intelligible patterns of structural transformation. When and if the data are in, it may be possible to write out a *lateral* transformational grammar of the Gada System.

Borana represents a single stage in the development of the institution. What can we do if we must remain within the boundaries of the Borana data? We can attempt to reconstruct the *longitudinal* transformation of the institution representing successive stages of development. To do so, we must go beyond the analytical limits of structuralism and admit into our mental purview the kinds of data that structuralism deliberately ignores.

This chapter is an attempt to establish the hypothetical original structure of the Gada System, to apply all the rules governing the system to a body of empirical data, and to generate the present very unusual structural characteristics of the institution. This will be done with the aid of normative and frequentative data, in contrast to the use of normative data only in the preceding chapter and frequentative data only in the succeeding chapter. The gada cycle has been presented *as if* Borana social life fitted into the native model. We must now consider the developmental implication of the system as modified by demography.

It should become evident to the reader that I am researching research strategies at the same time that I analyze the Gada System. At this stage the methods that appear to be most useful are statistical procedures and structural

analysis. It is necessary to keep these two research strategies quite distinct in order to raise questions about their relative merits as instruments of ethnographic analysis.

The critical methodological question this study raises is this: can the structural method tell us anything that the statistical method cannot? Does statistical analysis add anything to structural analysis? What aspects of the institution become intelligible when viewed through one model, aspects that remain obscure when the institution is viewed through the other model? What is the specific connection between norms and variables, between structure and measure or, in the language of Lévi-Strauss, between "necessity" and "contingency"?

Neither the structuralists, such as Lévi-Strauss, nor the empiricists, such as Murdock and Whiting, has made use of the method of simulation to bridge the gap between their respective strategies. It is, nevertheless, an appropriate instrument for this purpose because it can incorporate two radically different bodies of data into the same analysis without violating their respective properties.

The empirical data that are used in the simulation are largely derived from Borana censuses. Whenever this information is not adequate it will be supplemented with data from other societies. This will be done only to estimate the demographic properties of the presumed parent population from which the present population evolved.

The Parent System

Let us assume that the original institution that gave rise to the Gada System was a simple system of age-sets. This assumption is justified because the ethnographic region of which the Galla are a part exhibits a most remarkable proliferation of age-graded institutions. To the west and to the south, the Galla have been in contact with Bantu-, Nilotic-, and Cushitic-speaking peoples among whom age-sets have a virtually universal distribution. The distribution of age-sets in Africa suggests that it is principally a regional phenomenon: age-sets appear among a large number of contiguous peoples of eastern Africa, and the distribution is not restricted to any one language group.

Whenever we find them in eastern Africa, age-sets are a fairly uncomplicated institution. The complicating factor is usually a generational variable of one kind or another. Generational age-sets are never simple. The generational feature is not unique to the Galla and their immediate neighbors. Many Bantu- and Nilotic-speaking peoples also have generational rules, but these rules are never as specific and rigid as they are among the Cushites. One principal reason for this might have been the fact that the Cushites have fairly precise calendar systems, whereas most of their neighbors to the south do not. It is possible, then, that the Gada System developed out of a common eastern African institution on which the Cushites imposed rigid generational rules: the forty-year generation span of the Galla and the eighteen-year generation span of the Konso are good examples. There

is not a single society in eastern Africa (Nilotic or Bantu) that defines the generation span in such precise terms.

I do not assume that the parent system that gave rise to the Gada System was necessarily generational in its original form. It is quite possible — indeed likely — that the institution was a simple nongenerational age-set system for a major part of its history. At some stage in its development, generation rules were introduced. From that point on the institution became unstable and began to change steadily toward its present course.

We have independent historical evidence suggesting that the institution was probably a system of age-sets during the sixteenth century. In that century, the Galla were sweeping across the rift valley heading north toward Shoa and Wallagga, conquering vast territories. Since their navigational abilities were strictly limited, the Galla avoided the rift valley lakes. Hence, many of the islands within the lakes have become invaluable remnants of the cultures that existed in the rift valley before the Galla invasion. The Ethiopian monk, Bahrey, who probably lived in one of the island monasteries (Lake Abbayya?) wrote a book in the archaic language of the Ethiopian church entitled *Zenahu Lä-Galla* or "History of the Galla." [1] It is believed that Bahrey wrote the book at the beginning of the seventeenth century during the reign of Emperor Susenyos of Ethiopia. We do not know which particular segment of Galla society he derived his data from. At that stage the population was in such a rapid state of flux that he might have learned about several groups, not merely one. It also seems that in the sixteenth century, Galla society as a whole was much more integrated than it is today. For example, the moiety system that we find in Borana (*i.e.*, Sabbo and Gona) had its parallel organization that apparently applied to the entire society. The moieties were then known as Borana and Bareytuma. [2]

Bahrey's account deals with institutions that were probably common to most of the Galla. The moiety system Bahrey describes as a pan-Galla institution survives today only among the Borana. On the other hand, the generational rule (forty years) and the power transfer rule (eight years) that are almost universal among the Galla seem to have been fully in force at the time of Bahrey. In his chronicle we see that the position of father and son is separated by five grades. Bahrey explains that successive classes of warriors invaded northern Ethiopia every eight years. The classes were named Melbah, Mudana, Kilole, Bifole, and Mesle. [3] Bahrey then says, "These five *lubas* which we have mentioned exercised power for a period of forty years: their children were not circumcised. Those who were not circumcised

[1] In Beckingham and Huntingford, *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593-1646*.

[2] The latter term occurs in some Borana rituals such as the fatherhood ceremony. It is an archaic term whose meaning is not known to the performers. The Borana pronounce it "Barettuma" whereas Bahrey's spelling is "Bareytuma." Despite this slight discrepancy, it seems obvious that the two terms refer to the same reality.

[3] These names are not the proper names of gada classes or gada grades but rather correspond to the seven epicyclic names that we find among the Borana. The fact that Borana have only seven whereas Bahrey reports ten implies that the permutations governing the historical chronology were different.

abandoned children, both boys and girls, for such is their custom; but after being circumcised they reared the boys, though the girls were still abandoned for two or three years after they had been circumcised." He describes the *luba* wars, clearly indicating the genealogical links between the gada classes: "After these five lubas had ruled, the sons of Melbah were circumcised and received the name of Harmufa." Bahrey continues with the sons of Mudana, sons of Kilole, and so on. The second cycle of names is Harmufa, Robale, Birmaje, Mulata, and Jabana. [4]

The ideal model Bahrey uses to organize his chronicle clearly parallels the structure of the Gada System: two generations, forty years each, with each generation divided into five classes and each class given one of a series of ten names covering the complete cycle. Bahrey also gives the list of gada grades and the position of marriage, circumcision, and child raising relative to the grades.

Grades	Order of Life Crises
1. Muça	?
2. Elman	?
3. Guarba	marriage abandon children
4. Qondala	circumcision raise sons
5. Luba	raise daughters

There is very little in Bahrey's account that contradicts the structure of the Gada System as we find it today in Borana. Except for terminological differences, the essential structural characteristics are all there. At the same time, however, the vast and highly effective military organization of the Galla, which allowed them to conquer half of what is now Ethiopia, would not have been possible if the age structure of the warrior classes was at that time similar to what it is today in Borana. We must therefore assume that the generational rules, which cause the rapid change in the age structure of the classes, could not have been introduced much before Bahrey, although the earlier nongenerational system might have served as a central Galla institution for a much longer period. An effective military organization is the *sine qua non* condition of the *luba* invasion described by Bahrey.

It is clear that if the age structure of the classes were similar to what it is today, the majority of the "warriors" would have been infants, young children, and adolescents who would have been in no position to carry out the massive *luba* conquests of the sixteenth century. Several references to the warriors in Bahrey's account indicate that they were all young men. Some of them were married, some unmarried, and all of them without children. They corresponded to the oldest age group in the *raba* grade in contemporary Borana society.

In contrast to the situation Bahrey describes, we find that at the end of the

[4] Cerulli ("Folk-Literature," p. 175) states that Bahrey's list is incomplete because he enumerates only nine classes. In fact Bahrey ("History," p. 115) does give the tenth name — Jabana — not in the sequence of classes which he describes, but mentions it as the name of the fathers of the first class — Mudana.

nineteenth century (in Shoa) the age structure had reached an extreme state of systematic distortion. At that stage the disparity in age between the oldest and youngest members was so large that it would have been virtually impossible to mobilize the class for military conquest.

It therefore seems reasonable to postulate that in its early stages (in the sixteenth century and earlier) the Gada System was a system of age-sets; I postulate further that the Galla did not have a double system of age-sets (*hariyya*) and gada classes (*luba*) because the latter consisted of real coevals and there was no need for a second system of age stratification. The *hariyya* system probably developed only after a large build-up in the retired population had depleted the warrior classes and after the age span of the class had expanded considerably.

We find no historical data contradicting this hypothesis. Bahrey makes no mention of *hariyya* (age-sets) and gives no indication of an unusual age distribution. Of course the fact that age-sets (*hariyya*) are not mentioned by Bahrey is no proof that they did not exist. However, when we find that all the early documents dealing with the Galla mention the Gada System and none of them mention the *hariyya* system, then our hypothesis has a reasonably good historical backing. [5]

Demographic Data

The simulation is carried out with the hope of demonstrating that the parent system of age-sets would, over an extended period of time, change into a gada population similar to the one we find today in Borana. *The target population is defined empirically, whereas the parent population is hypothetical.* The characteristics of the target population derive from two censuses compiled by this writer, with the help of assistants, in 1962 and 1963. The information is exclusively from Borana and was carefully checked not to include members of the numerous ethnic groups (Wata, Garri, Gabra, and the like) who live interspersed with the Borana.

Every independent male was asked to give the following data on himself, his wife, his children, and all individuals who are living with him or dependent on him:

- Name of individual
- Age in years
- Age in gada periods
- Age-set affiliation
- Gada class affiliation
- Moiety, clan, lineage affiliation [6]

[5] See in particular Manoel de Almeida, "History of High Ethiopia or Abassia," and F. M. E. Pereira, *Chronica de Susenyos* (Lisbon, 1892). The latter is the chronicle of Emperor Susenyos of Ethiopia who reigned from 1607 to 1632.

[6] The census has many other aspects, but these are the ones we need to consider at the present stage. The Code Sheet for the Borana Market Sample and Camp Census which appears at the beginning of Appendix 1 gives an accurate breakdown of all the information in the demographic record.

The subject was then asked to identify his relationship to other people in the camp or in neighboring camps. This information was obtained for 365 male individuals. [7] To ensure that this sample would be reasonably representative of the whole of Borana society certain precautions were taken. The subjects were selected under a variety of circumstances over a period of two years. One part of the sample was gathered in marketplaces. The principal markets used for this purpose were the Arero, Negelli, and Yaballo markets. These span Borana country from the extreme east to the far west. Other market places such as Megga and Moyyale were also used on occasion.

The second part of the data was collected in a group of bands that normally camp in the plains of Liban to the east of Negelli. An exhaustive census of eight camps was prepared covering the eight items of information given above as well as data on genealogy and residence.

No mechanical randomizing techniques were used in gathering the data in marketplaces. The information was obtained from any independent male who was willing to serve as an informant. This part of the sample is therefore liable to contain some significant distortions. It is, for instance, quite likely that young men were overrepresented in the market sample because they were more readily approachable and because they generally tend to frequent marketplaces, much more than adolescents or older men. Nevertheless, because we asked information of independent males only, we were hopeful that all other individuals, whatever the probability of their appearing in the marketplace, would have an undistorted chance of appearing in our sample through the reports of the independent males. We defined "independent male" as any man not living with a senior man (brother, father, father's brother, in-law and so on) who was married and had his own hut. Men had to either have their own huts or be attached to another person's hut. The main exception was when the young men were on *fora*, in which case we would expect the men whose cattle they were herding to report them as their dependents. It is not clear how consistently we were able to elicit this information.

The camp census was taken in order to offset some of the distortions in the market sample. The same sector of the population likely to be underrepresented in the marketplace was likely to be overrepresented in camps. Young adults were usually away from their camps because they went to ceremonial grounds, hunting expeditions, lowland pastures, or marketplaces. Those who had gone to ceremonial grounds or hunting expeditions were likely to be left out in both the market sample and camp census. However, in this case also the absence of the young men should not make much difference if the independent males in the camps made adequate effort to remember all the men who were dependent on them, whether they were present in the camp or not.

[7] Out of this total, only the data on 349 individuals are considered reliable so far as age is concerned. In some of the subsequent analyses, therefore, the unreliable cases were left out. The total census also included females. This information is not necessary for our present discussion because women are not part of the gada population.

Only ceremonial activity is likely to cause entire households to move to specific regions and shrines in Borana. The major ceremonies are likely to draw together large numbers of people from one or another age-set or gada class, clan, or lineage. This could have been a major source of distortion far greater in its impact than those we mentioned above. For this reason *no sampling was done in camps or marketplaces whenever a major Borana ceremony was being performed in any part of Borana territory*. At the time of the transition rites, for instance, we stopped taking censuses about one month before the major rites took place in the summer of 1963. [8]

Two additional steps were taken to avoid duplication of certain categories of individuals who had a dual affiliation, namely adoptive children and married women living with lovers (*garayyu*). Whenever it was known that a particular child was adopted, he was recorded only in his adoptive family, not in his biological family. This was done because adoptive children are given exactly the same privileges as other children and they become totally incorporated into the family. Women who lived with lovers, on the other hand, were included in the families of the legal husbands because the marriage bond is indissoluble in Borana and the children always belong to their legal father not the biological father.

The complete census appears in code in Appendix 1. To simplify the computation, all the ages of the subjects, collected over a period of two years, have been converted to a single point in time — otherwise the data would not be comparable. The time chosen as the baseline is the end of the transition rites in August 1963. The data concerning the time in the gada period at which the subjects were born are, of course, unchanged. They appear as reported.

The Simulation

If we examine the census population (Figure 5-1), we find that it is distributed as a very broad band showing that the age span of most of the classes is the most striking feature: it is in the order of fifty years. The age span of the oldest classes, on the other hand, is in the order of eighty years. The gaps in the distribution are probably due to the small sample population; with a larger sample the distribution would probably even out. We notice, however, that the age structure of the classes is not entirely random. The gada class does indeed start out its career as an age-group, but it loses this characteristic as it progresses through the grades. Infants continue to be born into the class throughout most of its career. In the successive classes the oldest members are progressively older, but the youngest members are always infants. In each gada class the oldest members cannot be older than a certain fixed age. At the end of any gada period the oldest boys in the first

[8] Only one census was taken at this time. This is the information on the Dida camp discussed in chapter 1. The summer census was necessary for the purpose of examining the seasonal variation in the structure of the camp. These data are not included in any of the statistical analyses executed in this chapter.

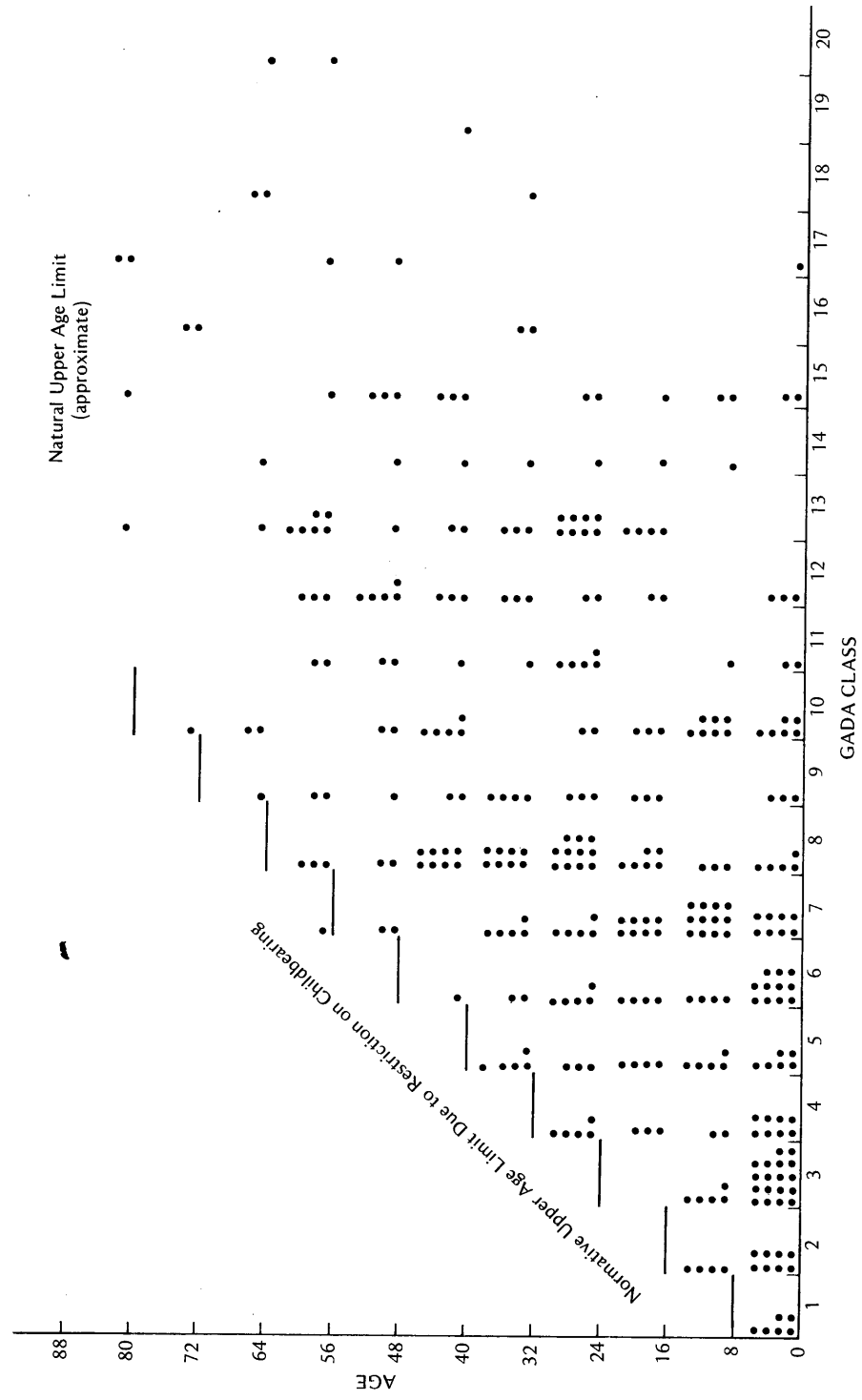


Figure 5-1. Age Structure of Gada Classes. Each dot represents an individual male subject in the census or market sample.

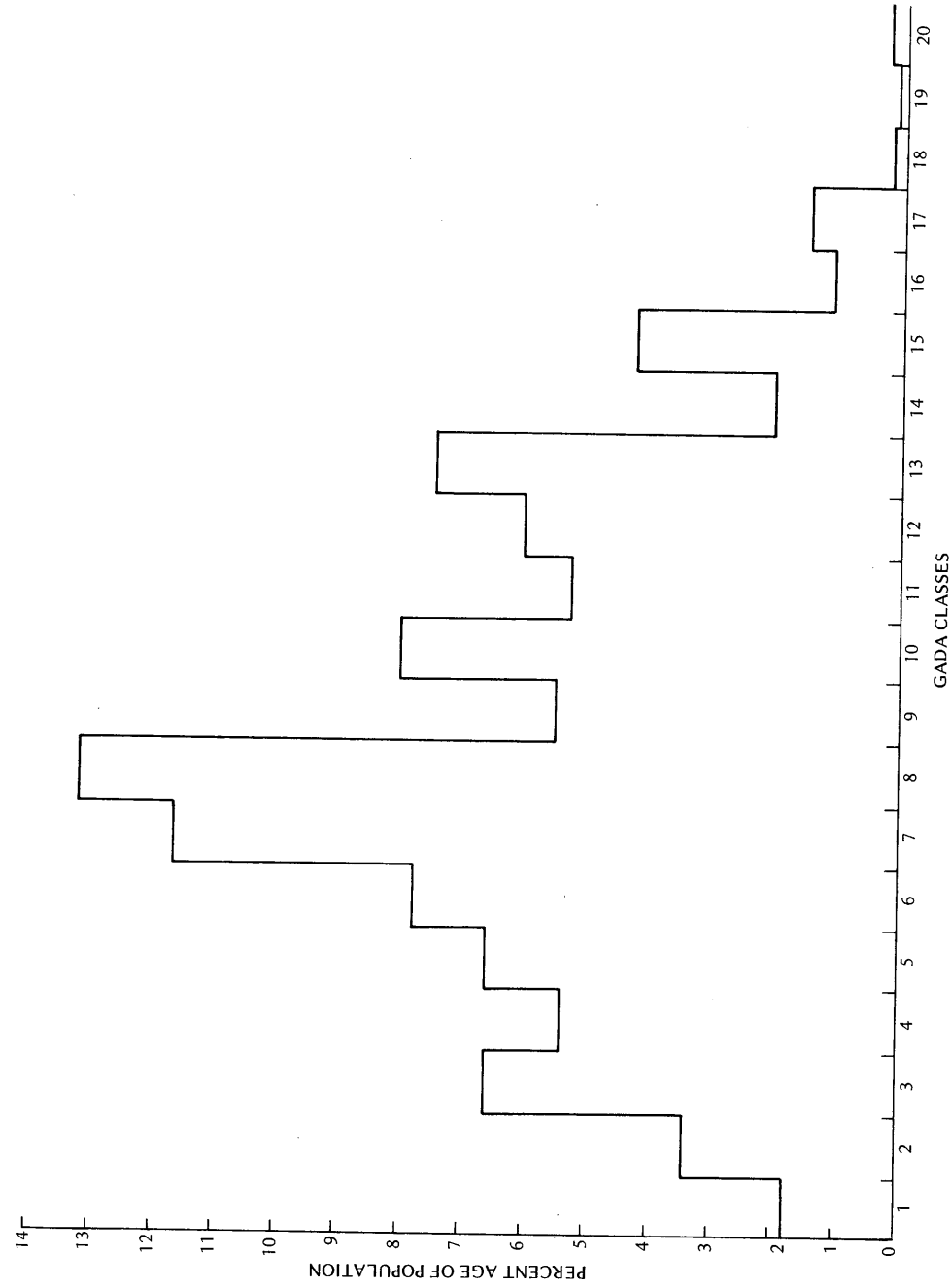


Figure 5-2. Distribution of Males in Gada Classes (Market Sample and Census)

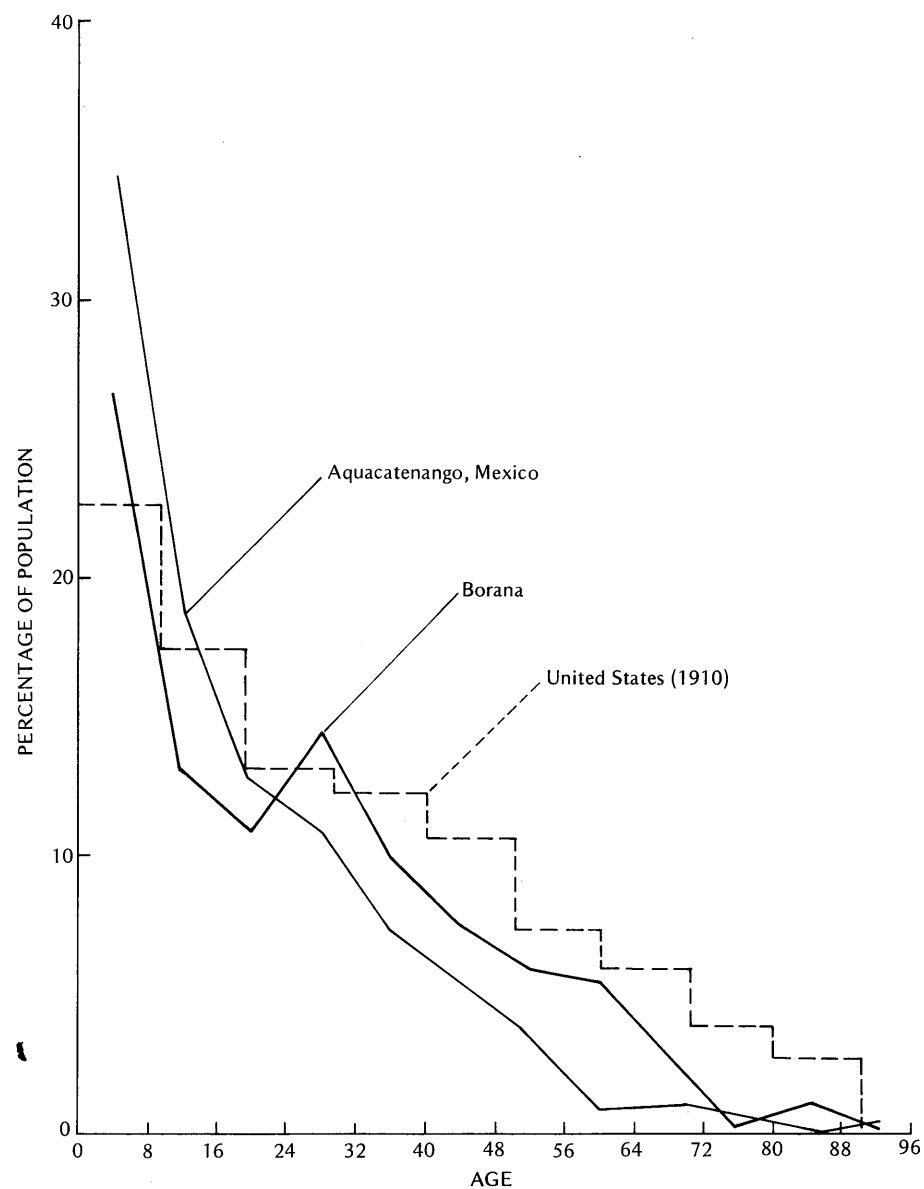


Figure 5-3. Comparative Population Curves (Borana, United States, and Aguacatenango, Mexico)

class are 8 years old, in the second class they are 16, in the third class they are 24, and so on.

To represent the position of any one individual on the gada cycle quantitatively, we might use a "retirement index" consisting of the difference, in gada periods, between the gada grade and age grade affiliation of that individual. Thus an 8-year-old who is in the 30th year of the gada cycle has a retirement index of 30 minus 8 divided by 8, or 2.75. If we compute the average retirement index for the

sample population we find that it is 4.8 which means that, on the average, Borana men are born five grades or so late. [9]

An examination of Figure 5-2 shows that the largest gada classes are in the seventh and eighth grades, whereas the earliest grades are as small as 2 or 3 per cent of the population. This contrasts sharply with the normal age-graded population, in which the first grade contains 25 to 35 per cent of the population, whereas the eighth grade had approximately 7 per cent of the total. The graph Figure 5-2 then shows how radically different the gada population is compared with the age-graded population shown in Figure 5-3.

The first illustration, Figure 5-1, also reveals the unusual age structure of gada classes. Looking at the graph along a horizontal plane we can see that the children under eight years of age are distributed in fourteen different gada classes. In this age-set the extreme case is one retired child in the 17th gada class. It is worth noticing that there are infants in nearly all the classes except the last three. When we look at the age structure of each gada class, *i.e.*, vertically, it becomes apparent that the age span increases stepwise, by eight-year units, until we reach the eleventh gada class. Beyond that, the maximum age levels off.

A most important fact revealed in these data is that there is only one case in which the maximum age limit is exceeded. The oldest man in the seventh grade is more than 56 years old. If his age estimate is correct, he was born *before* his father performed the fatherhood ceremony. According to the rules he should have been abandoned as an infant, but he was not. *The fact that there are no other exceptions in the entire sample indicates that the rule requiring the junior raba (Va) to abandon their children or to give them up for adoption is still in force.* Here we have concrete demographic evidence indicating the degree to which Borana comply with the central rule of the Gada System, *i.e.*, the rule that a man should not raise his children until he has reached the 40th year of the gada cycle. The cultural significance of these data will be discussed later.

Now, several questions might be raised about the Gada System.

1. Can we estimate the time needed for the presumed original age-set population to transform itself into a population with the characteristics given here?
2. How much longer can the system continue before the retirement index becomes so large that the earliest grades will be completely depopulated and Borana will be compelled to make a normative reordering of the system of grades?
3. What kind of an influence would the rules of the Gada System have on the total population?

These questions can be answered by simulating the gada process. Before we can do that, however, it might be useful to review the rules briefly:

1. No man is allowed to have children before reaching the 40th year of the gada cycle.
2. No man is allowed to marry before the 32nd year of the gada cycle.

[9] Italic numerals are used in this discussion to indicate people's position on the gada cycle. Ordinary numbers are used to indicate their chronological age. The distinction will be made whenever there is any possibility of confusion between the two measures.

3. Any child born before the 40th year of the gada cycle is abandoned to die. In some instances he is given up for adoption, usually outside the society.

4. It is impossible to change one's gada class membership except through adoption.

5. All sons enter at birth the gada class opposite that of the father. In other words, the son is always forty years behind the father on the cycle.

6. Only males are involved in the Gada System. Females have peripheral membership in the gada class of their husbands.

7. A man is credited with any children born to his wives. A wife may have sexual relations with any member of her husband's class.

8. Old husbands may solicit more virile lovers for their wives. Consequently males may continue to have children throughout their lives, even in extreme old age.

To carry out the simulation, it is necessary to define the population characteristics of the original age-graded society. For this purpose the Borana population curve (age-set by percentage of population) was compared with other nonliterate societies (Figure 5-3). Ideally the comparison should be made with societies lacking health facilities and living under similar ecological conditions as the Borana. The only nonliterate society without modern health facilities for which accurate census data were available was Aguacatenango, Mexico. [10] The population curves of the two societies are similar. There is only one major irregularity in the Borana curve. This irregularity is of considerable significance because it gives credence to Borana techniques of reckoning time and age. [11]

The two curves were also compared with the population curve of the United States with the object of establishing the range of variation in radically different ecological and technological conditions. Here we find some significant differences: close to 10 per cent of the total population of the nonliterate communities die during the first eight years compared with five per cent during the first ten years in the United States. There are also significant differences in the middle part of the life cycle at which stage a substantial part of the United States population outlive

[10] A. Kimball Romney, *Revised Aguacatenango Household Census*.

[11] This anomaly is not due to any demographic distortion in Borana society but results from the techniques of reckoning age. Most Borana report age in gada periods rather than years. The average individual will say that he was born, say, on the third year of the gada of Aga Adi (1936-44). Since then there have been two gada periods, Guyyo Boru (1944-52) and Maḍa Galma (1952-60). We are now in the third year of the gada of Jaldessa Liban (1960-68). Hence, I am $5 + 8 + 8 + 3 = 24$ years old. This procedure will work so long as there are no irregularities in the duration of the gada periods. The gada of Aga Adi was, however, irregular because it lasted only five years. Aga Adi was supposed to have taken office in 1936; but this was the year of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and the Borana found themselves involved in the most massive war in their history. The transfer of power therefore had to be postponed by three years. The lay population does not make an allowance for this discrepancy. As a result, the population born during the gada of Bule Dabbasa (1929-36) is inflated and those born during the following gada period (Aga Adi, 1936-44) appear to be fewer than they are in reality. Borana time reckoning experts are fully aware of this discrepancy and distinguish the actual and hypothetical gada periods in their discussion of historical events. The gada chronology and the system of time reckoning will be explained in detail in chapter 7.

their opposite numbers in the other two societies: between ages forty and ninety, each United States age group has a five- to ten-year advantage. Surprisingly, all three societies have almost the same percentage surviving beyond age ninety.

Thus, we can see that there are significant differences between the American and nonliterate populations but only small differences between the Borana and Aguacatenango populations. Indeed, the Borana sample, which is considerably smaller than the Aguacatenango census, probably appears more irregular than it is in reality. It is likely that the curve would approximate the Mexican data even more closely if the sample were much larger. I shall use both the Borana and Aguacatenango data to estimate the demographic characteristics of the hypothetical parent population that will serve as the starting point for the simulation experiment.

The following five values will be needed in order to execute the simulation. They are defined as follows:

$N(I,J)$ = number of individuals in gada class I , age-set J .

$M(I,J)$ = number of married men in gada class I , age-set J .

$W(J)$ = probability that an unmarried man in age-set J will marry within the next eight years.

$B(K,I)$ = probability that a married man in gada class I and living at least eight more years produces K sons who will also be alive at the end of the eight years.

$D(J)$ = probability that a man in age-set J will die within the next eight years.

These definitions were used to compute the probability of death, marriage, and childbearing for males at each level of the natural life cycle.

Death Rate (D_j)

The Borana census does not contain specific data on deaths. The death rate was computed as the difference between the number of men in one age-set and the number in the adjacent higher age-set divided by the number of men in the younger one of the two sets. [12]

Using the Mexican data with slight adjustments to smooth the curve, the death rates shown in Table 5.1 were obtained:

Table 5-1. Death Rates

Age	0-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40	41-48	49-56	57-64	65-72	73-80	81-88	89-95
% of Pop.	35	19	13	12	8	6	4	2	1	0	0	0
D_j		.45	.30	.10	.30	.30	.30	.40	.40	.50	.50	1.0

$$[12] D_j = \frac{N_j - (N_{j+1})}{N_j}$$

N_j = number of men in age class j .

Birth Rate (B_k)

The rules governing the Gada System have a significant impact on birth rates. In estimating birth rates, therefore, it is important to take into account all the rules governing cicisbeism, paternity, time of marriage for males, the onset of childbearing, and the length of that part of the life cycle during which males are allowed to raise their children. In this simulation, however, we are interested only in the probability of man "producing" sons, whether or not he has one or more wives, whether he adopts sons or sires them himself, whether his wife lives with him or with her lovers. What we mean by "birth rate," therefore, is not the same as what the demographer normally intends it to mean. Since all these alternatives are open to every married Borana, we expect the value of the birth rates to be approximately the same at each age level ($B_{k,j}$). This is a strange fact resulting from strange institutional arrangements. A man in the sixth age grade is as likely to have sons as a man in the tenth age grade. This is partly due to the practice of continuing to marry young wives even in extreme old age and allowing the wives to keep lovers. It is also partly due to the fact that men at all age levels are free to adopt sons. As a result of these rules, there is no relationship between a man's age and the probability of his producing sons. Whether or not these inferences are valid, for the purpose of this simulation we make the simplifying assumption that birth rates are not dependent on the age of the father.

From the total Borana data we compute the probability of any married man having a given number of sons (K) over a given period of eight years, where K includes only sons who have survived up to the census date (*i.e.*, the end of the gada grades). In other words, the probability we are measuring is the joint probability of any individual male having K sons and the probability of those sons surviving throughout the eight-year period. The values are represented in Table 5-2.

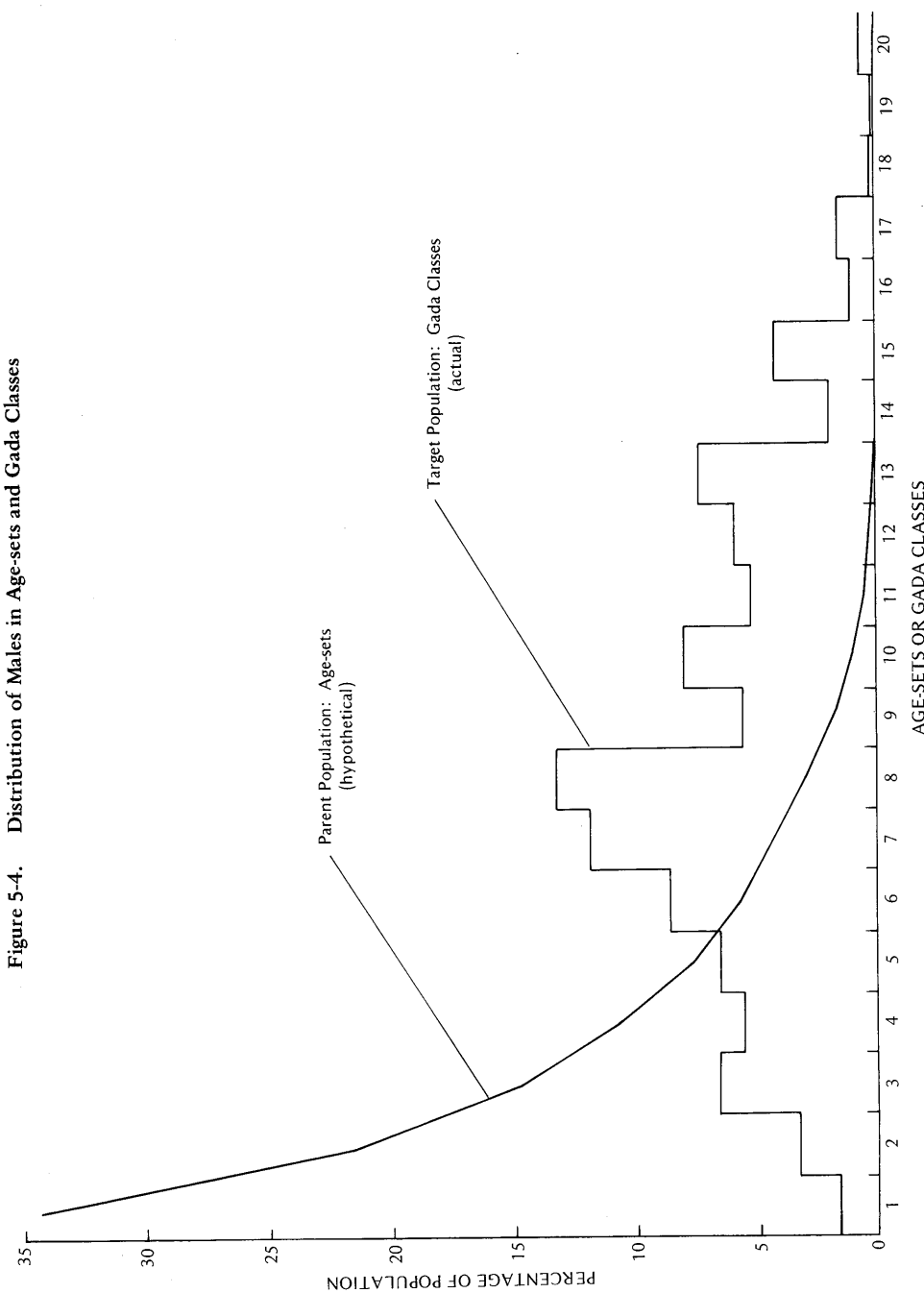
Table 5-2. Birth Rates

Number of Sons	0	1	2	3	4	5	... k
Probabilities	.53	.22	.18	.025	.025	.02	... $P(K)$

In executing the simulation the above values $P(K)$ will be used as a rough estimate of birth rate (B_k) and apply the same values to all the married gada classes. In general, $P(K)$ tends to underestimate B_k because the former is based on all married men without making an adjustment for the men who had been married for less than eight years at the time of the census. It would seem that this error is greater for the lowest married class that is allowed to have children (grade VI) than for the later classes.

The general method by which I estimated birth rates was arbitrarily to select an average number of sons per married man, per eight year period and generate B_k by trying to maintain approximately the ratio $P(I)/P(J)$.

Figure 5-4. Distribution of Males in Age-sets and Gada Classes



Marriage Rate (W_j)

The marriage rate of a particular age-set is defined as the difference between the number of married men in that age-set and in the next higher age-set divided by the number of bachelors in the younger of the two sets. [13] It may appear that this value would underestimate the actual marriage rates because it does not take into account the men who were married *and* divorced or separated during the gada period preceding the census date. However, Borana almost never divorce their wives, and the incidence of separation is extremely low. In accordance with the ideal norms the few men who deserted their wives or were deserted by them appear in the census as married men. This is a legitimate procedure because the offspring of a married woman who is living with another man always belong to the original husband despite the fact that the couple may have been separated for as many as ten years. We are interested in marital status only if it has an influence on birth rates. As defined here, W_j is therefore an appropriate measure.

Steps in the Execution of the Simulation

Starting point: the presumed original population was a smooth curve based on the population of Aguacatenango, see Figure 5-4, hypothetical curve.

- Step one: a. Apply the marriage and birth rates to the men in the 40 to 48 age bracket and determine the number of sons who will be born into gada class 1.
 b. Do the same with the men in the 48 to 56 age bracket and determine the number of sons who will be born into class 2.
 c. Same for class 3.
 d. Same for class 4.
 e. Same for class 5.

Note: all the new members in classes 1 through 5 are now age 0 to 8.

- Step two: At the end of the eight-year period, deduct the number of boys who will have died during that period.
 Step three: Move all the classes up one grade.
 Step four: Repeat step one with the following change: class 6 now contains a number of boys age 0 to 8. In theory they can marry and have children. However, since none of them is of child-bearing age their presence does not affect our computation.
 Step five: Add the newly born sons to the existing classes 2 to 5. Fill in class 1 with new members only.

$$[13] \quad W_j = \frac{\%M_{j+1} - \%M_j}{1 - \%M_j}$$

M_j = percent of men married in age-set j .

- Step six: At the end of the second eight years deduct the number of boys who will have died among the members of the class, this time applying two different death rates for the two age classes in each of the first six gada classes.
 Step seven: Move all classes up one grade.
 Step eight: Repeat step one with the following changes: class 6 now has three age groups, 0 to 8, 8 to 16, and 40 to 48.
 Step nine: Determine the number of sons who will be born to the marriageable classes.
 Step ten: At the end of the third eight-year period deduct the number of deaths in each age group.
 Step eleven: Move all the classes up one grade.

Continue this process until the mean retirement index of the whole population (RI) is equal to the value of 4.83, *i.e.*, the value obtained from the observed population. If our understanding of the Gada System is correct and if the structural transformation inferred from the system of rules is an accurate rendering of the actual process, we would expect the age structure of the observed and simulated populations to be similar. The greater the similarity between the two distributions, the greater our confidence in the structural model.

These eleven steps are a highly simplified and abbreviated version of the simulation procedure. The actual experiment was carried out with individual members of classes rather than with classes as a whole. Each individual was "processed" through the life cycle, confronting the life crises of marriage, childbearing, and death in accordance with the estimated probabilities assigned to each crisis, at each stage of life. We start with a hypothetical population of 1,000 individuals.

The flow chart (Figure 5-5) is an accurate description of the procedure employed in the simulation. The operation begins at the top of the chart and proceeds downward along one of the six different channels indicated depending on the specific contingencies confronting the individual.

Take any one of the 1,000 males in the hypothetical sample. Let us say that he belongs to gada class i , age class j . Using the probabilities $D(J)$, ask if he dies during the present eight-year period. If so, then there is one more question to be asked about him: namely, whether he was married or single when he died. If he was single, he no longer concerns us. Go to the next individual. If he is married, determine the number of children he will have because of the levirate (a kinsman inherits his wife, but the children are his). Produce sons using the probabilities $B(K,I)$. Go to the next individual.

Go back to the first decision box: death. If the individual we started with does not die, then we promote him to the next grade: $N(I+1, J+1)$. This gives rise to three alternate channels: the promotion may put the individual at some point on the gada cycle which is *below* the *cusa* grade, *in* the *cusa* grade or *above* that grade.

1. If he is below the *cusa* grade, then he cannot marry. He does not concern us.

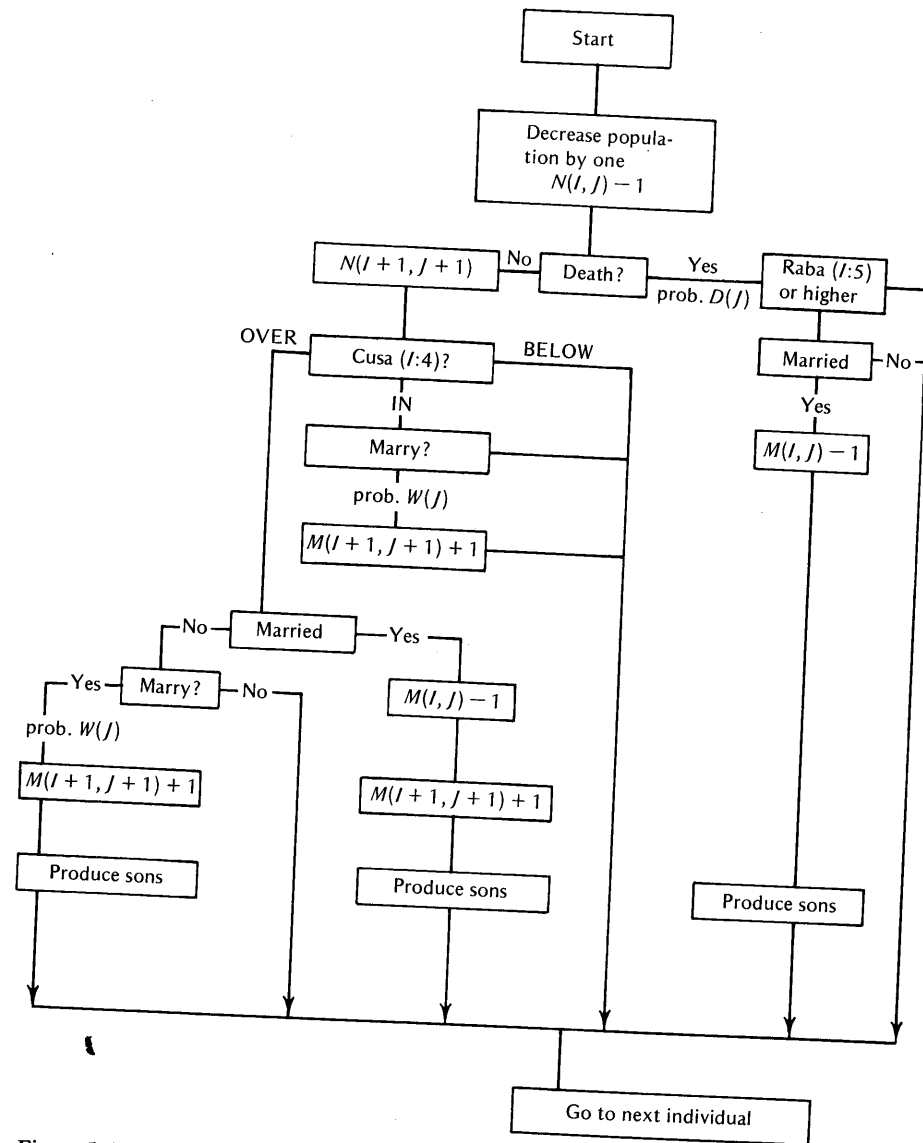


Figure 5-5. Flow Chart for Processing Individuals through the Gada Cycle

Go to the next individual.

2. If this individual is in the *cusa* grade, then ask whether or not he does marry. We determine that by using the probabilities $W(J)$. If he does, increase the population of married males by one and promote him to the next grade: $M(I + 1, J + 1) + 1$. Go to the next individual.

3. The third alternative is that the individual was in some grade higher than *cusa*. If so, then ask if he was married when we got him out of the sample of 1,000 males. If he was, decrease the number of married men in his grade by one, increase the number of married men in the next higher grade by one (*i.e.*, promote him), and

produce sons. Go to the next individual. If the man in question was not married when we got him out of the sample, then ask whether or not he marries during the present eight-year period. If he does not, ignore him. If he does, increase the number of married males by one and produce sons.

This completes all the relevant life crises (decision boxes) the individual goes through. We are, of course, considering only those life crises having immediate consequences for the demographic process *i.e.*, those that influence the probability of a Borana male having sons at any given time.

All the operations described here were performed on a single individual in a single eight-year period. They were repeated for 1,000 individuals and all their male descendants for a period of several centuries. The number of operations involved was so vast that it could be executed only with the help of a high-speed computer.

Results

The results are summarized in the Table 5-3. The table compares the observed population with the simulated population. To reduce the random variability between the size of the individual classes, the data were grouped into sets of five classes. From the percentage distribution of the population among the five sets of classes it can be seen that the simulated data are very similar to the target population. The value of the RI is also a very close approximation. It was not possible to obtain the exact RI of 4.83 because the simulation was carried out by eight-year steps and could not be arrested in the middle of the period.

Table 5-3. Results of the Simulation

Gada Classes	Observed Population	Simulated Population
1-5	23.7%	24.0%
6-10	46.1	46.9
11-15	24.9	24.4
16-20	4.6	3.2
21-25	.6	.3
Total population at beginning of simulation	unknown	1,000
Total population at end of simulation	unknown	624
Length of build-up in years	unknown	340
Value of mean retirement index (RI)	4.83	4.95

It is worth remembering that the simulation had to reach two objectives at the same time. The profile of the actual and the experimental populations had to be similar and, simultaneously, the value of the mean retirement index of the two populations had to be approximately the same. Both targets were achieved, with a very small margin of error.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of anthropology the evolution of a social system has been replicated experimentally. Stifling the almost irrepressible desire to celebrate this moment, we can return to the examination of less pleasant facts: the limitations of our results and the weaknesses of our analytical procedure.

According to our experiment, it took 340 years to transform the original age-graded population into a population very similar to the gada classes of today. This does not at all fit in with the historical record indicating that the Gada System was a full-blown military organization 450 years ago. Why the discrepancy?

Clearly, the time-depth estimate obtained experimentally does not represent the *origin* of the Gada System. It represents only the time required to transform the age groups into gada classes with the present demographic properties. It seems evident that the Gada System operated as a nongenerational system of age-sets for a major part of its history. (*i.e.*, during the fifteenth century and earlier). The rules restricting the position of the generations, marriage, and childbearing were introduced sometime during the sixteenth century to set limits on the rapid expansion of the population that occurred in that century. Once these rules were introduced, the Gada System became an extremely unstable institution and began to undergo a process of structural transformation. That is the process the simulation replicates. *The year 1623 (1963 minus 340) is the date we assign to the stage of history when the rules of generation, marriage, and childbearing were introduced, not the stage when the institution came into being.*

But even with this qualification, the time estimate does not agree with the historical records. The institution Bahrey described at the beginning of the seventeenth century was in fact constrained by the generational and childbearing rules. Our time estimate is therefore low. This discrepancy cannot be explained at the present stage.

The reason for this difficulty is quite clear. Once we leave the tidy world of structural analysis and enter into the sea of statistical variability, the number of forces entering the field is virtually unlimited. Not only demographic variables but also sociological and ecological variables can influence the gada process. We have no systematic ecological data. In the following chapter I shall examine the sociological variables and attempt to isolate some of the forces that might have acted as *negative feedback mechanisms* — *i.e.*, those forces that tend to retard the gada process.

Other aspects of the gada process can be examined at this stage. One way of looking at the results of the simulation is to analyze the interaction of the retirement index (RI) and the size of the total population. Figure 5-6 represents the value of the RI (dots) and the population size (x's) plotted by eight-year periods. In other words, the simulation was "arrested" at the end of every eight years, and the two factors were recorded.

A most surprising and quite unexpected result of the experiment is the fact that

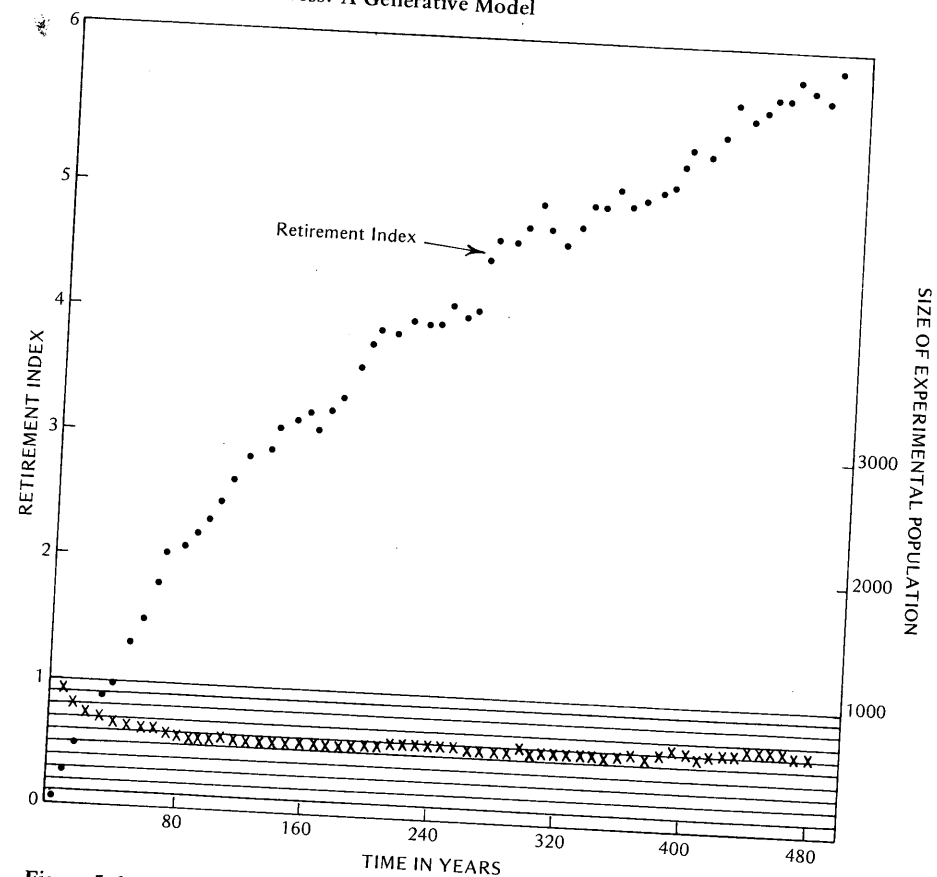


Figure 5-6. The Gada Process

the population declines by about 40 per cent during the first eighty years after the rules of the Gada System are imposed on the normal age-graded population. The decline continues until the end of the third eighty-year cycle. At this stage the population declines by a total of 50 per cent. This fact alone is a finding of considerable importance. It indicates that the Gada System was a very powerful mechanism of population control.

When population growth becomes excessively high, there are many ways in which the problem can be resolved. One is to expand into adjoining territories and therefore cut down the density of population in the home territory. The second is to intensify the exploitation of economic and ecological resources so that the same territory can be made to support a higher density of population. The third is to find ways of curbing the growth rate itself by institutionalizing marriage and childbearing rules which set limits on family size. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Galla resorted to all three solutions on a scale which staggers the imagination. We have already discussed their territorial expansion. In addition they adopted techniques of intensive cultivation in most of the newly occupied territories: *ensete* (false banana) gardening in the southwest and grain cultivation in the north and east. They also developed an institution which postpones the age of

marriage until a very late stage of the life cycle and, for many years after marriage, requires that children be abandoned.

The only kind of society that can withstand the demographic impact of an institution such as the Gada System is one that is experiencing the most extreme levels of population growth. When the rules are imposed on a society with a *normal* growth rate the population declines at a very rapid rate. Hence, the historian has to assume that there was a population explosion in the fifteenth century in order to account for the genesis of the Gada System and the simultaneous territorial expansion of Oromo society.

With what level of confidence can we say that a normal age-graded population will decline to the extent indicated by the simulation experiment when the rules of the Gada System are first imposed upon it? To answer this question *we repeated the simulation thirteen times, stepping up the birth rate each time until it reached the highest recorded rates. Even at the highest levels the rate of population decline was very substantial.*

What is the relevance of these results for the present Galla populations still under the regime of the Gada System? Since the restrictive rules of marriage and childbearing are still in force in Borana, must we assume that the population is declining at the rate of 40 to 50 per cent, per century? The simulation indicates that the population does, in fact, stabilize. The rapid decline occurs only during the first century after the introduction of the institution. The population maintains itself for another two centuries and subsequently begins to grow at a very slow pace. Hence, as far as population size is concerned the Gada System does reach a temporary steady state.

If we now re-examine our original census data in the light of this finding, the demographic implications of the rules become quite clear. The rule restricting childbearing initially applies to nearly 30 per cent of the total male population (age 16-40). *As the population shifts on the gada cycle, the rules remain the same, but they affect a smaller and smaller fraction of the male population.* Today only 18 per cent of the male population is between the 16th and 40th years of the gada cycle and therefore barred from having children. It is still a very significant factor. Nevertheless, the population does seem to maintain itself despite this restriction. [14]

Another important result of the experiment is the remarkable trajectory followed by the retirement index. It doubles within the first eighty years. In other words the population shifts to the later grades at a very rapid pace. During the following five eighty-year cycles, the development of the retirement index is about 50 per cent slower and follows an almost linear pattern. It should be noted that the simulation was continued for two cycles beyond the present level of the retirement index (4.83). *There is no indication that the position of the population on the gada cycle has stabilized. Nor is there any indication that it will stabilize during the next 160 years.* [14]

[14] Please notice the distinction between the *population size*, which does stabilize, and the *position of the population* on the gada cycle, which remains unstable.

Theoretical Implications

There is no theoretical model in anthropology which is directly applicable to the Gada System. Perhaps historical linguistics, which analyses the systematic structural transformation of languages through time, would have more to say to us than any model so far devised by social scientists. The system described by Edmund Leach in *The Political Systems of Highland Burma* comes closest to our problem in the sense that it reveals a pattern of internally generated structural change as opposed to change resulting from "culture contact" or from prophetic and millennial types of social upheaval. However, the pattern of change which Leach discovered seems to be reversible and, therefore, represents a different kind of reality from the gada process. [15]

The only other system with which we could compare the Gada System is the potlatch system of the Kwakiutl — an American Indian people who live on the northwest coast of the United States and Canada. They had an extremely unstable economic system in which men accumulated wealth for many years and proceeded to distribute their wealth among their rivals in a large potlatch ceremony. This allowed each leader to establish his reputation and shame his adversaries. The highly competitive socio-economic system of potlatching was undergoing rapid change throughout its recorded history between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. [16] Only in this institution do we find concrete evidence of cumulative change in a non-literate, non-industrial society.

As a structural type, the Gada System differs from the potlatch system because the source of change is internal, whereas potlatch seems to have been heavily influenced by external trade. The Gada System also differs from the pendular transformations of highland Burmese society because the gada process is nonreversible. As such, the Gada System is a type of transitive structure of which, I believe, there have not been any examples in the history of ethnographic research (see Table 5-4).

Table 5-4. Transitive Structures

System	Source of Change	Pattern of Change	End State
Burma	Internal	Cyclic	Changing equilibrium
Kwakiutl	External & internal	Linear	No discernible steady state
Borana	Internal	Linear	No discernible steady state

[15] Edmund R. Leach, *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*.

[16] Helen Codere, *Fighting with Property, a Study of Kwakiutl Potlatching and Warfare, 1792-1930*. More recent studies of the social structure of the Kwakiutl and their neighbors such as A. Rosman and P. Rubel's *Feasting with Mine Enemy* have ignored the instability of the potlatch system and dwelt on the fashionable problem of cousin marriage. As such, they contribute nothing to our understanding of the generative process.

For many decades anthropology has labored under the functionalist illusion that non-literate societies are *integrated* and *stable*. Like a biological organism the "primitive isolate" was supposed to have an inner regulating mechanism which kept it in harmony with its environment; and when the ill wind of Western civilization blew over it, it was supposed to sicken and die. This was, and still is, an axiom, not a working hypothesis. As long as we continue to build ethnographic data around this first principle there is no reason why we should ever discover endogenous change. Even when the anthropologist is surrounded by change in his field experience, he is not likely to "see it" unless it is spelled out for him in written records or unless the native prophets have loudly proclaimed the coming of Utopia. The functionalist therefore looks at neighboring systems (impact of West, ecological changes) to tap the sources of change. Rarely does he consider the possibility that the social structure itself might be a generative phenomenon. It seems clear, therefore, that the Kachin-Kwakiutl-Galla types of social systems have been neglected in anthropological research, not because they are rare, but because the anthropologist has no effective ways of understanding them.

Of course, there is nothing extraordinary about this type of change if we take into consideration the development of modern urban-industrial societies. These societies exhibit, for short periods of history, linear patterns of socio-economic growth. They seem to be locked in "uptrends" or "downtrends." They consume their own energy supply and those of neighboring systems at phenomenal rates. As such, they seem to be relatively short-lived phenomena — far too unstable and too predatory to endure. The metaphor which Lévi-Strauss uses in his *Conversations* with the French literary critic, Georges Charbonnier, is instructive:

In short, societies are rather like machines, and it is a well known fact that there are two main types of machine: mechanical machines and thermodynamic machines. The former are those which use the energy with which they were supplied at the outset and which, in theory, could go on operating indefinitely with this energy, provided they were very well constructed and were not subject to friction and heating. Thermodynamic machines, on the other hand, such as the steam-engine, operate on the basis of a difference in temperature between their component parts, between the boiler and the condenser, they can do a tremendous amount of work, far more than others, but in the process they use up and destroy their energy.

I would say that, in comparison with our own great society, with all the great modern societies, the societies studied by anthropologists are in a sense "cold" societies rather than "hot" societies, or like clocks in relation to steam-engines. They are societies which create the minimum of that disorder which physicists call "entropy," and they tend to remain indefinitely in their initial state, and this explains why they appear to us as static societies with no history." [17]

Borana presents us with a picture which definitely violates this polarity of the "primitive" and "modern" types of social system. The theoretical significance of

[17] Georges Charbonnier, *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss*, p. 33.

the Gada System is that it is certainly of the clockwork variety but, surprisingly, it exhibits the kind of disorder or entropy that generates change. It is therefore no surprise that Borana is endowed with a remarkable awareness of time and history and also that it shares with the modern world a governmental function that can have meaning only within an unstable socio-cultural system, namely, legislation. The historicity of Borana society is not due merely to the fact that the Borana's subjective awareness of time has considerable depth. It is also due to the fact the central socio-political institution of the Galla has been transitive: a short-lived historical phenomenon. It appears to have had a relatively well-defined beginning, and in most parts of Galla country it came to an end after half a millennium of explosive dynamism. To the chagrin of archive historians, who are satisfied only when they find "the causes" of the "rise and fall" of states and empires in chronicles and diaries, the decline of the Gada System is not explicitly recorded anywhere. The chronicles of Ethiopian emperors tell us everything about the Galla expansion and nothing about the collapse of the Gada System. The fate of the Gada System can be understood by reference to its internal structure and its demographic context, neither of which were intelligible to the chroniclers. The institution became progressively more ineffectual under its own inertia; and the external forces, such as the conquests of Emperor Menelik in the late 19th century, were acting on a society that had already lost its central institution. The readiness with which the northern Galla absorbed the institutions of the very people they conquered and their heightened susceptibility to cross-cultural influence were direct outcomes of the ritual, political, and military void created by the gradual decline of the Gada System. The only regions, Borana and Guji, that have preserved the core institution to the present day exhibit characteristics unique among all the Galla of Ethiopia. They have developed a compensatory institution that operates side by side with the Gada System as a subsidiary system of classes. By this strategy the institution continues to function quite adequately despite the extreme expansion of the age structure of gada classes.

My discussion of the Gada System has, so far, dwelt largely on the "grammatical" rather than the "semantic" aspects of the institution. I have tried to discover the system of rules and to examine the implication of these rules for the stability or instability of the institution as a whole. In carrying out the simulation experiment I ignored the meaning that the gada process might have for the Borana themselves and what, if any, reactions or adjustments they make to it.

The great majority of Borana seem totally unaware of the slow transformation of the Gada System. They have no understanding of the fact that the retired classes are increasing in size and that the lower classes may in time dwindle down to a few or become extinct. And if that possibility is understood, they explain it in terms of fertility — a supernatural gift — rather than the rules of the Gada System. I met some men in Borana who were fully capable of articulating the consequences of early or late marriage for the political viability of the descent group. These men knew that if a descent group had too many people who married late and had their first children many years after their marriage, the group would

become retired and would in time lose any political offices it had held in the past. In the words of a learned lineage elder, "Only fools let their huts collapse before the rains, only the imprudent let their wells cave in before the drought, only the ignorant let their children become 'retired' [literally 'aged'] in their childhood. Our ancestors are wise, our first sons [*angafa*] have always been bulls [*korma*] and the sons of bulls [*ilman korma*]." This is the cattleman's way of saying that his ancestors have succeeded in maintaining political power by marrying early, having sons while they are still in grade VI ("bulls") and keeping the lineage leaders ("first sons") in the active cycle. For a man to go much beyond the gada grade (VI), without having had a son is political suicide because the son would be too young to participate in his class effectively; and the lineage as a whole would be deprived of the opportunity of winning political office.

Indeed, the whole process of raising children — as many as possible, at the right time — has such critical political implications that the consequences of the gada process become an integral part of political conflict. As the number of retired men in Borana swells, so also does the pressure for their political representation. In other words, the rapid displacement of the classes on the gada cycle gives rise to marked inequalities and an exceedingly unjust distribution of political privileges. This is the "semantic" dimension of the gada process that is very real to the politically conscious Borana and whose meaning is not lost on those who have given up hope of ever playing a significant part in the Gada System.

The Influence of the Gada Process on the Structure of the Gada Assembly

As a description of the historical process, the simulation has given us a very rough estimate of the time that would be required to transform an age-set system into a system of gada classes as we find it today in the Borana region. If the gada process is real and not something we invented, we should expect to find further correlations with contemporary sociological processes. Such evidence turned up in the course of compiling numerical data on the composition of the gada assembly (See Appendix 3).

In an earlier chapter we saw that the junior council was composed of retired men only and that this council constituted a significant part of the gada assembly at any given time. In other words, the Borana social system has been sufficiently flexible to permit the reintegration of the retired population by means of the junior council. The very idea of a council representing all the retired classes in each gada period impresses us as a compensatory mechanism a response to changing conditions. In all probability this council of the retired has not always been part of the Gada System.

If we are right in assuming that the Gada System started out as an age-set system, then it is also reasonable to assume that in this initial stage there were no retired classes and, therefore, no council was needed to represent them. As the gada process developed, however, we should expect more and more people to be born into the classes that have already completed the ritual-political cycle. These men

would be completely disenfranchised. At the same time the active classes were reduced in size, and their age-structure became so expanded that they could no longer work as effective teams. Confronted with this grave manpower shortage, the class in power began to recruit able-bodied men from the retired classes. These men served as assistants and, in time, they became incorporated into the gada assembly as full-fledged councilors.

Significantly, the recruitment of the junior councilors is radically different from the recruitment of all other councilors: (1) they are selected just before the takeover ceremony; (2) they belong to a large number of classes; (3) the gada assembly itself is responsible for their recruitment instead of the normal recruitment by moiety leaders; (4) they are recruited by an outgoing class and they serve with the incoming class. All these differences in the recruitment procedure lend some credence to the idea that the junior council might be a relatively recent innovation. But the most direct evidence is the fact that the size of the junior council has been unstable in recent history and the fact that there is, at present, considerable popular pressure to give the retired classes direct representation in the deliberative assemblies of the Gada System. Furthermore, *the junior council, which represents the retired classes, is the only council in the Gada System that exhibits this characteristic of instability.*

This most astonishing fact became apparent in the course of compiling a roster of gada councilors going back over a period of about fifteen gada periods. The size of the junior council has increased steadily in recent decades. At the same time, the other councils have remained completely stable. The senior council, for example, has consisted of six members throughout the period of history for which reliable data were available, covering approximately one and one-quarter centuries. By contrast, the *garba* council remains stable for many gada periods, *i.e.*, the same size as the senior council; subsequently, the number increases by one in each of the last four gada periods. At the time of my fieldwork, the junior council consisted of ten men; and there is good reason to believe that the process will continue.

Table 5-5. The Expansion of the Junior Council

<i>Gada of</i>	<i>Number of Councilors</i>
Liban Kuse	6
Arero Gedo	6
Bule Dabbasa	6
Aga Adi	7
Guyyo Boru	8
Maḍa Galma	9
Jaldessa Liban	10

We do not know why the change has taken place over only the last four gada periods. If there were, indeed, a functional relationship between the relative size of the classes (active/retired) and the councils (senior/junior), we should expect the junior council to have increased throughout the last four centuries, or at least starting from the time it was introduced. There might have been special historical circumstances to account for the recent change in the pattern of political representation. The change is associated with the invasion of Ethiopia by fascist Italy in 1935. There is no question that this massive war disrupted many facets of Borana social life and caused the postponement of the handover ceremony (from Bule Dabbasa to Aga Adi) by three years. It is quite likely that this war might have given rise to the very condition that necessitated large-scale recruitment of retired, but able-bodied, men and that the expansion of the council might have been an attempt to keep the retired classes satisfied by allowing them greater representation in the gada assembly.

Although the Italian invasion might have been the immediate reason for changing the pattern of political representation, the need for such a change had been building up over a much longer period. An expanding junior council is a perfectly reasonable answer to the progressive disenfranchisement of the population resulting from the gada process. In time it is quite possible that the junior council might become the principal council charged with ritual-political responsibilities. This could come about if the junior council continues to increase and the active grades continue to become depopulated.

The superficial and empirically observable instability in the pattern of political representation is the epiphenomenon reflecting the deeper processes of structural change.

CHAPTER

6

IS THE GADA SYSTEM IN EQUILIBRIUM?
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

By itself the Gada System is a demonstrably unstable institution. The question that now remains unanswered is whether or not the institution is part of a larger equilibrium system. In other words we need to know whether or not the forces of instability are offset by other sociological factors that are structurally extraneous to the Gada System.

The recent history of ethnographic research indicates that when the student of society remains close to structural data and under the influence of native thought, he cannot gain much insight into the problem of societal equilibrium or disequilibrium. There are many aspects of human behavior which culture does not acknowledge or codify. Such areas are accessible to empirical rather than structural analysis. Unless we bring these uncoded areas of human life into our field of observation, we can never determine adequately the presence or absence of steady states. Whether or not a homeostatic system is at work depends on what the human community does, not merely what it thinks it is doing. Consequently, we can increase our analytical leverage by momentarily setting aside the mental constructions and rationalizations of the society under study and by concentrating on empirical data.

In the empiricist tradition, which is principally of American derivation, the investigator examines "lived-in" rather than "thought-of" models of society. He looks for latent, probabilistic relationships rather than those that are cognized by the native and therefore subject to manipulation.

In all the approaches used by American cultural anthropology (except ethnoscience) the nature of the data is the same. It is primarily nonverbal data obtained by observation or mechanical recording devices and analyzed by quantification or its intuitive equivalents. It is true that the empiricist will sometimes take human verbalizations into account. However, verbal information is usually treated as any other kind of empirical data and it is not accorded any special place. In other words it is analyzed as a quantum of utterances, not as an ideational-categoric system. Here then is one area where we find a huge schism between the behaviorally-oriented and the structurally-oriented students of human society.

In all branches of American anthropology (except ethnoscience) we find a single common feature. That common feature can be summed up by the word *variability*. The evolutionary thinker, the behavioral psychologist, the ethologist, the primatologist, the ecologist, the cross-cultural comparatist, and the general systems theorist are all concerned with variations in social and cultural systems. Whereas other schools of thought make a concerted effort to *delete variability* from their data (statistically or surreptitiously), American anthropology *uses variability* as its most potent instrument of research.

In this intellectual tradition, variability is used in three principal ways.

1. To examine the range of adaptive maneuvers developed in social systems and to use that range of variation as a means of discovering patterns of diachronic change.
2. To discover associations between elements of the social system that co-vary and *may*, therefore, be causally related to each other.
3. To analyze the variables that are related to each other and see if they act as positive or negative feedback mechanisms in the formation and preservation of equilibrium systems.

In the preceding chapter we saw how demographic variability interacts with the system of sociological categories to produce an orderly process of diachronic change (1). I will now use co-variation as a way of identifying probable latent relationships (2) that may either contribute to or set limits upon the instability of the Gada System (3). The strategy is to isolate one numerical property of the Gada System (*i.e.*, the retirement index) and examine that property in the context of a wider complex of variables. The fact that there are no culturally prescribed links between these variables and the structure of the Gada System need not deter us from exploring the possibility that both realities might constitute a single and coherent system of contingent relationships.

When we carry out this kind of empirical analysis we put ourselves in a different intellectual framework from the structuralist and we use a different body of data. The structural analysis (chapter 4) dealt with those aspects of society directly regulated by prescriptive rules. Thus when Borana say that marriage, the raising of sons, and the raising of daughters are not allowed until the individual has reached three well-defined thresholds of the gada cycle, they mean exactly that. The rules are followed so rigorously, that it would be pointless to amass statistical data to establish the degree of conformity to the rules. It would be more valuable to actively search out the exceptional cases rather than collecting a normal sample. The rare individuals who violate these rules are considered to be such outstanding anomalies by the Borana that their presence has the effect of dramatizing rather than weakening the rules. But there are other aspects of Borana social organization that are variable either because the culture has no control over them or because the norms that govern them are flexible or because there are significant disparities between norms and practices. Thus the proportion of the population that is retired varies greatly from clan to clan for reasons Borana can hardly explain. There are no rules that set limits on the retirement process. Wealth is also a factor that is a perpetual source of embarrassment to Borana social philosophers. The wealthy

seem to have greater access to gada offices in spite of the fact that the culture says that they should not. Here, the norm and the practice are at odds with each other. Another pervasive variable in the social system is the phenomenon of seniority. Borana claim that the strategy for ordering all individuals on a seniority ladder is not a ranking system at all, but rather an instrument of distributive justice. In the native conception it is more like a queue than a hierarchy. However, this conception seems to be vitiated by the apparent empirical connection between seniority and wealth.

The question we must raise is whether or not these interconnected variables have a measurable influence on the retirement process. The suggestion that such a conspiracy of contingent relationships might be at work in the social system is repugnant to the Borana sense of fair play. Indeed, they have denied vehemently and with appropriate expressions of moral indignation the possibility that such connections might exist. Nevertheless, the question is valid and the only way that we can answer it is statistically. [1]

My purpose is not merely to use statistics as a sensor to detect latent relationships. I go beyond this and ask whether or not all the variables statistically linked to each other — including those measuring the instability of the Gada System — do, in fact, balance out into a steady state.

Age: The Critical Variable

In our examination of the Gada System we considered many formal rules. We dwelt on such factors as the forty-year rule, the eighty-eight-year cycle, the position of genealogical generations, the concept of *gogessa* (and the specific arrangement of gada classes it implies), the *makabsa* epicycle (and the specific reordering of gada classes that concept implies), the systematic pattern of recruitment into the age-sets, and the equally patterned relationships between age-sets and gada classes. All these involve a large number of invariants that build up into a formidable system of relationships whose internal consistency and processual transformation we have already demonstrated.

The one factor we have not been able to explore structurally is age. This is the joker in the deck. It is the factor Borana have allowed to vary with the most surprising consequences. surprising to us, but merely amusing to them. We could, of course, ignore age on the grounds that it is not normatively regulated. That is

[1] The statistical method has been most fully exploited and elaborated in cross-cultural research. The pioneers of the cross-cultural method are G. P. Murdock and J. W. M. Whiting. The essential feature of this method is not that it is cross-cultural but that it explores functional relationships between sociological variables in a comparative framework. The units of comparison may be cultures or communities, descent groups, families, or individuals. We use the method in this investigation to examine sociological variables within a single culture. It should be noted, however, that many of the problems and strategies designed to deal with them are the same whether we use cultures or some section of the social system as the basic unit of comparison.

precisely what Enrico Cerulli did in his protracted exploration of the Gada System, and that is also what most structuralists would do.

From a purely formal standpoint, the analysis of the Gada System can be carried out without reference to age. The institution has hardly any rules relating directly to age except perhaps those linking the Gada System to the *hariyya* (age-set) system. Strictly speaking, age is not relevant to the structure of the Gada System. It is nevertheless a very important factor that determines the viability of the institution as a whole. Structuralism ignores such factors on the grounds that they are not relevant. They are probabilistic types of data, and structural analysis has nothing to do with probabilities.

We should, however, ask ourselves the question of the significance of magnitude in anthropological research. Can we ignore it? How far can we go in the analysis of social structure without it? Ethnographers expend considerable effort on the study of such problems as the rules of marriage and exogamy. However, they rarely examine systematically what the demographic consequences of these rules might be, or how demographic forces might affect the development of the rules. In the study of cousin marriage, for instance, it is important to ask how long a descent group would endure if it did follow the prescriptive rules it is supposed to live by. Must prescriptive rules be relaxed so that the descent group can survive? If so, are not the more flexible rules in part the outcome of demographic imperatives? There is, in short, a very direct link between the normative order and the domain of demographic variability. Many of the systems of prescriptive marriage analyzed by Lévi-Strauss are logically coherent systems, but they may also have apocalyptic implications for the society as a whole from a demographic standpoint. [2]

These are compelling questions that demand answers. We can ignore them only at the risk of ignoring the possibility of extinction the society under investigation may be facing as a result of the restrictive influence of the rules on marriage rates. It is somewhat cavalier to dismiss questions of variability, viability, and stability of institutions because we cannot analyze them structurally. Every institution is an adaptive maneuver. As such, it has either made effective responses to demographic imperatives or it will not be around for us to study.

In the Gada System it is indeed curious that age, the uncontrolled factor, should have been the source of weakness of the institution, the variable that rendered the institution more and more dysfunctional. As the age-span of gada classes increased, they became progressively less capable of performing the practical tasks expected of them. Just as age is the Achilles' heel of the Gada System, so also is demographic variability the perennial stumbling block of categoric prescriptive systems. Again and again we find that variability is the factor every normative order must – consciously or unconsciously – come to terms with. Not only does it set limits upon the perfectly arbitrary rules man develops; it has a direct influence on the course of their development.

The prescriptive rules of the Gada System are, in fact, only partially

[2] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Elementary Structures of Kinship*.

prescriptive. With regard to marriage, for instance, we have seen how Borana define the stage of the gada cycle before which men cannot marry. This is an invariable. After the 32nd year, however, there are no rules governing the time of marriage. The probability that an individual will or will not marry is influenced by a variety of nonformalized demographic, social, and personal factors. *The prescriptive rules and the nonprescriptive expectations exist side by side as components of the same social system.*

Similarly, the rules regulating the time when a man may or may not raise his own sons and daughters are only partially prescriptive. Borana specify the time before which children cannot be raised. Beyond that stage, they have little control over the time when the children are born, whether or not they will be allowed to live, and how long they will live. Borana have some influence over these natural processes through such institutions as infanticide, adoption, polygyny, the levirate, cicisbeism and the like, but even these constraints leave ample room for natural variation in the numerical size and age structure of gada classes.

Age is the factor I propose to analyse statistically. This is the dependent variable, the factor to be explained. This variable is not defined directly but in terms of the same measure used in the preceding chapter. The disparity between the actual age of an individual and his ideal age on the gada cycle is the factor that will be used in the statistical analysis. This factor was labeled the "retirement index" (RI).

Hypotheses

The primary hypothesis is that the results of the simulation are a reasonably good approximation of the actual process of change that the Gada System underwent historically. I shall now examine other aspects of the social system in an effort to jeopardize this hypothesis. If it turns out that there are factors highly associated with the retirement index that were not taken into consideration in the simulation experiment and if these factors are inversely related to the gada process, then the possibility that the Gada System might have reached or might be approaching equilibrium cannot be excluded. In that case, the simulation is only part of the actual empirical process and cannot by itself serve as an adequate basis for making inferences about the stability of the Gada System. On the other hand, if the factors in question have either a negligible or a positive association with the retirement index, then the hypothesis stands. In other words, the results would indicate that the presumed feedback mechanisms are either not influencing the process of retirement of the classes or they are contributing factors that help to accelerate it even further than was expected on the basis of the simulation.

We saw in the preceding chapter that some Borana are aware of some of the consequences of the gada process. One indication of this is the pride expressed by one informant who clearly associated the success of his lineage with keeping the first-born sons in cycle. Another indication is that Borana have made an

institutional response to the retirement of gada classes by creating the junior council and allowing it to expand from one gada period to another while the other councils remained unchanged. This, however, constitutes adjustment to the problem rather than being an attempt to counteract it. The question still remains whether Borana do anything that retards the gada process, consciously or unconsciously.

One obvious solution would be for Borana to marry and have their children at an early age. If they did so, most Borana could go back into the active hemicycle (I to V) in a few generations. We could therefore look at the marriage pattern of the contemporary population to see if we could detect a trend and to determine whether or not the trend confirms the results of the simulation.

Our immediate reaction to this suggestion is to recall the ideal model and say, "Borana cannot marry before age 32 anyway; what is the importance of examining the influence of early marriage on the gada process?" This point would be valid only if all Borana males started at the beginning of the cycle, and we have seen that very few of them do. It is worth remembering that Borana do indeed marry before age 32, but they cannot and do not marry before reaching the 32nd year of the gada cycle. At present the retired (*yuba-jarsa*) population is so large that the marriage restriction affects only the relatively small fraction of the population in the first hemicycle. Subject to biological limitations, Borana can marry as many years before age 32 as the number of years by which they are retired (*i.e.*, the difference in years between their age-set and gada class positions.) Roughly speaking, all retired men can marry early without violating any of the rules of the Gada System. Early marriage of the retired classes may be the most significant feedback mechanism tending to retard the gada process. If this mechanism is a major force, it is conceivable that it might even reverse the gada process entirely.

There are two measures of the contemporary population that have decisive implications for the stability of the Gada System: one is the average age of bachelors in the contemporary population, and the other is the difference in age between fathers and their sons. [3] These two factors are demographic variables having a direct influence on the retirement index. If we find that they are positively associated with the retirement index, then we will have empirically demonstrated the instability of the Gada System. If they are negatively associated with the index, the instability of the system cannot be demonstrated.

[3] The practice of adopting children could also be a direct demographic feedback mechanism. If men who are married but are unable to have children did frequently adopt sons rather than waiting until they could marry a second and hopefully fertile wife, the practice would tend to reduce the difference in age between fathers and sons and thus reduce the mean retirement index of descent groups. My impression is that adoption is widespread in Borana. However, the frequencies in the census were so low that it was not possible to include this variable in the analysis. Adoption is not as widespread a demographic phenomenon as I had expected, and it would be necessary to compile a much larger body of census data before we could get reasonably stable adoption rates for each one of the lineages. The problem with the data on adoption is also partly due to errors in collecting information. The assistants who helped gather part of the data did not consistently ask the question about adoptive children. Our expectation that adoption would probably serve as a feedback mechanism must therefore remain untested for lack of data.

The Unit of Analysis

Before we proceed with the definition of variables, it is first necessary to determine the most appropriate unit for the statistical analysis. In trying to determine the influence of prestige variables on the retirement index, should we compare individuals or groups? If we decide to compare groups, at what level of the social structure should we aggregate the data?

There are several reasons, practical and theoretical, why we cannot use individuals as the unit of analysis. The sociological variables we are dealing with are mostly attributes of groups in Borana culture. Wealth is associated with kin groups rather than with individuals. Seniority is also the characteristic of kin groups. It is, of course, possible to figure out the seniority position of every individual in a Borana community. However, we do not have the kind of data that would be needed for such a computation; the seniority position of kin groups can be

Table 6-1. Lineages Used for Statistical Analysis

Moiety	Units of Analysis	Identification Numbers		
Gona	Oditu	1		
	Arsi	2		
	Daççitu	3		
	Hawaṭṭu	4		
	Maççitu	5		
	Karçabdu	6		
	Galantu	7		
	Warri Jidda	8		
	Bachitu	9		
	Maliyyu	10		
	Sirayyu	11		
	Dambitu	12		
	Konnitu	13		
	Nonitu	14		
Sabbo	Gobbu	Nurtu	15	
		Titti	16	
		Udumtu	17	
		Walajji	18	
	Digalu	Emmaji [a]	Molu	19
			Aru	20
	Karrayyu	Dayyu	Kallicha	23
			Bokkicha	24
		Basu	Bido	25
			Gollo	26
Maṭṭarri	Bokkicha	27		
	Kallicha	28		

[a] The segments of Digalu/Emmaji were first tabulated separately, but the data on them turned out to be so scant that they were re-grouped under Emmaji. In the final list of identification numbers the figures 21 and 22 have no value.

determined with much greater confidence. Similarly, political success is an attribute of lineages and clans. It is, of course, an individual who occupies the office, but it is the lineage or clan as a whole that is given credit for his accomplishments. Also, in campaigning for office the individual candidate campaigns on the historically accrued strength of his lineage. We can therefore use the degree of political involvement of kin groups as a measure of their collective prestige and see if that has an influence on their marriage prospects.

The main reason why we must aggregate the data goes beyond these practical and cultural considerations. The relationship between the above variables and the retirement index — if any relationship exists — can only be a cumulative phenomenon that built up over the centuries. Wealthy and prestigious groups might, *in the long run*, tend to remain in the gada cycle compared with groups of lesser means and lower seniority. This explains why I have used groups rather than individuals as my basic unit of analysis, but it does not say why we should aggregate the data at one or another level of the social structure.

I decided to use a unit holding an approximately intermediate position between the highest and lowest levels of the kinship system. The decision to use these units was not made on the basis of any *a priori* criteria but rather on the basis of computational feasibility. The higher units, such as moieties and clans, were too few for purposes of correlational analysis. On the other hand, the census data were too unevenly distributed across lower order lineages because informants did not regularly report their minor and minimal lineage affiliations.

In Borana thought, the fourteen clans of the Gona moiety are the same kind of sociological category as the three "clans" (or submoieties) of the Sabbo moiety. In the structural analyses these units were usually referred to as clans and the word was intended to stand for the vague Borana concept of *gosa*. In the present analysis, however, it is necessary to depart from the native classification scheme and arbitrarily select a unit of analysis that is appropriate for statistical computation. In an effort to balance the size of the units in the two moieties, I have selected categories from *lower* levels of segmentation in the Sabbo moiety and carved out a set of fourteen lineages (see Table 6-1). This set of lineages is comparable in size to the fourteen Gona clans. For descriptive convenience, all twenty-eight units will be referred to as "lineages."

Negative Feedback Mechanisms: Sociological Variables

To determine whether or not Borana have practices that retard the gada process *i.e.*, negative feedback mechanisms, we must deal with the factors that tend to facilitate early marriage. Wealth and prestige are the factors most obviously related to an individual's marriage prospects. The wealthier and the more prestigious a family is, the easier it is for them to secure wives for their sons. Similarly, the numerical strength of kin groups, the degree of their political involvement, and their success in winning political offices have a direct connection

with their social prestige, and that in turn might have an effect on their marriage prospects. There are no rules in Borana that say that the senior, the powerful, the rich, and the prestigious must marry at an early age, but there may be a tendency in such individuals toward early marriage.

Seniority

The idea of seniority is referred to as *angafitti*, which literally means "order of birth." The lineages occur in series based on the order in which they "originally" came into being. There are some origin myths justifying the precedence of some — but not all — the lineages. Indeed, there is considerable disagreement between informants about the actual position of lineages. In times of conflict the question is hotly debated.

Given the ambivalence and disagreement expressed by informants about the seniority of their lineages, how do we go about determining the relative positions? *In the absence of formal norms about which informants can agree, a statistical approach is the most effective procedure.* Hence, the seniority position of lineages was derived from a cross-tabulation of lists of gada officers (Appendix 3). In these lists, seniority was incidental information. It so happens that Borana tend to enumerate their officers in the order of their clan and lineage seniority. The relative frequencies representing the number of times that one lineage appears before and after another determines the relative seniority of the two groups. When several informants presented lists of the same groups of officers, each list was treated as a separate data source. The tabulation was done as in Figure 6-1. This illustration reads, for instance, that lineage B was listed before A in eight cases and after A in three cases. Hence, B is assigned a higher position than A.

The list of all the lineages, as they are re-ordered by seniority, is presented in Table 6-2. It is interesting to observe that there is a substantial overlap between the two moieties although on the average the Sabbo moiety is more senior. It is also significant that the average seniority of submoieties declines as we go from Sabbo/Digalu to Gona/Haroessa. Nevertheless, there are large overlaps between each submoiety. These average positions are in keeping with the Borana

		LOW				
		A	B	C		
HIGH	A		3	7	B/A 8/3 B/C 4/3 A/C 7/1 Seniority: B, A, C	
	B	8		4		
	C	1	3			

Figure 6-1. Method of Determining Seniority Statistically

Table 6-2. Seniority of Lineages

Sabbo Moiety			Gona Moiety		Seniority
Digalu	Karrayyu	Maṭṭarri	Fullelle	Haroressa	
				Hawaṭṭu	1
Nurtu					2
Titti					3
Udumtu					4
Walajji					5
Daddo					6
Emmaji					7
			Daççitu		8
			Maççitu		9
	Kallicha [a]				10
	Bokkicha				11
		Metta			12
		Gadulla			13
		Galantu			14
		Doranni			15
			Kaṛcabdu		16
		Bokkicha			17
	Gollo				18
	Bido				19
		Kallicha [a]			20
		Sirayyu			21
			Warri Jidda		22
		Manḳata			23
			Oditu [a]		24
			Dambitu		25
			Nonitu		26
			Konnitu		27
			Maliyyu		28
			Arsi [b,c]		[29]
			Bachitu [c]		[30]

[a] The seniority position of the Kallu houses is based on formal reports rather than on the tabulation of the councilor lists because the Kallu houses are not represented in the gada councils.

[b] No cases of these clans in the sample or census; and not included in the analysis below.

[c] No cases of this clan in councilor lists; seniority position based on normative information.

classification scheme. The rank assigned to the individual lineages, however, is the pattern that emerges inferentially. On this issue, no two Borana can be expected to agree.

Political Representation

The next variable to be considered is the degree of political representation of lineages. The greater the degree of political involvement of a lineage, the more likely it is to remain in the active gada cycle. Indeed, if the lineage is to maintain its position of political ascendancy, the oldest sons must be born into the *dabballe*

Table 6-3. Political Representation of Lineages

Lineage Seniority	Abba Gada	Adula Council	Garba Council	Medḍicha Council	Total
1 Hawaṭṭu [c]	1.93 [a]	1.24	2.43	10	15.60
2	2	0	2	4	8
3	7	2	4	1	14
4	1	0	0	2	3
5	1	0	0	3	4
6	1	1	0	0	2
7	3	3	3	0	9
8	0	0	2	8	10
9	0	1	1	0	2
10 Kallu Lineage [b]	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	4	3.66	2	9.66
12	2	6	3	0	11
13	0	2	2	2	6
14	10	0	3	0	13
15	0	1	2	1	4
16	4	1	4	12	21
17	2	9	9	5	25
18	0	6	5.66	7	18.66
19	0	0	1.66	2	3.66
20 Kallu Lineage [b]	0	0	0	0	0
21	2	0	1	1	4
22	1.5	0.5	3	6	11
23	0	0	1	2	3
24 Kallu Lineage [b]	0	0	0	0	0
25	4	0	3	3	10
26	5	1	4	3	13
27 Konnitu [c]	1.93	1.24	2.43	10	15.60
28	0	0	4	1	5
29	0	0	1	4	5
30	1	0	0	0	1

[a] The fractions on this table represent situations in which the lineage affiliation of a councilor was unknown. In such cases the councilor was "divided" among all the lineages of the clan, so as to leave the representation of the higher order categories undistorted.

[b] As would be expected, the Kallu lineages (the electors) are not represented in any of the councils.

[c] Hawaṭṭu and Konnitu have permanent representation in gada councils.

grade (I). Only then do they have good prospects of holding gada offices. If the oldest sons are too young at the time of the elections, in the 24th year of the gada cycle, the lineage will have missed its opportunity to win or maintain its political representation in gada councils. The politically conscious families will do everything they can to have their sons born into the *dabballe* grade. Not all families have this degree of political consciousness, and for most families the decisive factor governing time of marriage is the capacity to raise bridewealth cattle rather than political concerns. Nevertheless, if a sufficiently large number of families in a lineage aspire to political office, their aspiration might in the long run be reflected in the retirement index of the lineage as a whole.

The lineage that has frequently won political office is likely to command considerable prestige. Parents might therefore be more willing to cut the marriage negotiation short and part with their daughters more readily if a suitor is a member of a well known, politically active lineage. This would then have the effect of lowering the age of marriage and the degree of retirement of the lineage.

How do we measure the extent of political representation of lineages? We can use the number of councilors from each lineage elected over the past fifteen gada periods as a measure of political representation. This was computed from the total record of *adula* (senior), *garba* (junior), and *meddicha* (submoiety) councilors. Each councilor was given the same value regardless of the council in which he served and regardless of his seniority within the council. The number of representatives was summed up across lineages. The total also included the complete list of Abba Gada going beyond the normal depth of fifteen gada periods. The only Abba Gada who were excluded from the analysis are the "founding fathers." These appear to be eponymous figures who are perpetually appended to the active chronology. A complete list of all the councilors and their moiety, submoiety, clan, and (frequently) lineage affiliation is presented in Appendix 3. Table 6-3 is a summary of the data on political representation.

Wealth of Lineages

Wealth in Borana means cattle. Wealthy Borana own several kraals of cattle, each kraal normally being estimated at about 250 head of livestock. The poorest families might have about 25 head. Below that level a man is usually declared "poor" and given lineage support. Although there is an indication that there is an extreme disparity of wealth in Borana, there is no easy way of getting direct data on the statistics of economic inequality. Borana generally try to wish it away. They say that they do not count cattle, and if they do they very rarely divulge the count to strangers unless they have to. In general, they pretend not to know the size of their herds. In the absence of direct data on cattle wealth, we can use the number of wives per man as an indirect measure. We expect a high positive association between these two factors because in Borana the most significant factor inhibiting polygynous marriage is the inability to raise bridewealth cattle. We expect that wealth, as measured indirectly here, will have an appreciable influence on the retirement index of lineages. On the whole, the wealthy lineages should have little difficulty in marrying their sons at an early age. Such lineages might therefore tend to have a relatively low retirement index.

Size of Lineages

The size of lineages is expressed as a percentage of the total census and market sample population. We expect this factor to be negatively related to the retirement index. The larger lineages have considerably more prestige than the smaller ones. Their prestige is not the kind that derives from wealth or political ascendancy but rather the god-given blessing of fertility. Borana fathers are

therefore much happier if the men who ask for their daughters come from the "fertile" lineages, not from the ones that are dwindling down to a few families. What this does to the kinship system is an intriguing problem because it probably tends to build up the size disparity between descent groups even faster than would occur through random variability alone. This would introduce a degree of instability into the kinship system, analogous to the instability of the Gada System, but that is a topic for another book. For the time being we take the variability in the size of lineages as a given and attempt to establish its relationship to the gada process. The more numerous the people in a lineage, the more prestige they have as a group, the more likely that they will marry off their sons at an early age. This will in turn tend to lower the mean retirement index of the lineage.

Final Computation

Although we started out with thirty "lineages," an examination of the tabulated data revealed that the information was very unevenly distributed across lineages. In the final stage, therefore, eleven lineages on which the data were inadequate had to be either excluded from the sample (if they were independent

Table 6-4. Demographic and Sociological Variables That Might Influence the Gada Process

Lineage Identification	Seniority	Percentage of Population	Average Father-Son Age Difference	Mean Number of Wives	Average Age of Bachelors	Political Representation	Mean RI
1	24	9.59	39.30	1.000	29.33	15.60	43.424
2	29	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	8	0.000
3	8	2.61	35.00	1.000	26.50	14	48.222
4	1	10.46	39.38	1.400	30.87	3	48.944
5	9	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	4	0.000
6	16	1.41	35.50	1.000	30.00	2	59.600
7	14	6.68	50.69	1.142	25.27	9	29.869
8	22	8.43	42.36	1.166	24.00	10	41.000
9	30	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	2	0.000
10	28	2.90	35.33	1.200	25.00	0	28.700
11	21	1.74	35.25	1.000	0.00	9.66	64.333
12	25	5.81	42.27	1.285	22.40	11	39.850
13	27	4.94	39.66	1.400	23.50	6	26.823
14	26	4.36	43.00	1.166	34.75	13	51.200
15	2	12.50	41.33	1.272	20.38	4	35.883
16	3	1.45	55.50	1.000	40.00	21	74.800
17	4	4.36	42.50	1.000	20.66	25	42.466
18	5	0.29	0.00	1.000	0.00	18.66	7.000
19	6	0.00	0.00	0.000	0.00	3.66	0.000
20 (21, 22)	7	5.52	48.44	1.000	22.50	14	45.894
23	10	2.32	38.50	1.000	28.00	3	41.875
24	11	1.74	42.00	1.500	27.50	0	46.000
25	19	0.29	0.00	0.000	0.00	10	53.000
26	18	4.36	36.66	1.200	23.85	13	59.066
27	17	7.84	38.00	1.181	23.50	15.60	39.851
28	20	0.29	0.00	0.000	66.00	5	79.000
	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇

units of the kinship system) or regrouped into a larger category (if they were part of a segmented clan or submoiety). Thus the lineages carrying the identification numbers 2, 5, 9, 11, 18, 19, 25 had to be excluded, and identification numbers 12, 13, 15, 23, which are subdivisions of Maṭṭarri/Bokkicha, had to be regrouped under Bokkicha (number 20). The seniority position of these lineages remains unchanged because it is based not on the census data, but on another independent source of information, namely, the roster of gada councilors (Appendix 3).

The variables which were included in the final computation are recorded in Table 6-4. The independent variables are labeled X_1 through X_6 and the dependent variable – the retirement index – is labeled X_7 ; except for seniority rank and percentage of population all the other variables are average values for each lineage. The figures on political representation are absolute numbers.

Results

The result of the analysis is represented by the following multiple regression equation:

$$X_7 = -.398X_1 + -.76X_2 + -.22X_3 + -19.8X_4 + 1.258X_5 + .586X_6 + 49.162$$

X_1 = Seniority position

X_2 = Percentage of total population

X_3 = Average father son age difference

X_4 = Average number of wives per married man

X_5 = Average age of bachelors

X_6 = Political representation

X_7 = Average retirement index

The multiple correlation coefficient is 0.815. A computation of the analysis-of-variance test of significance yields a value of $F = 3.97$ with 6 and 12 degrees of freedom. This value of F is significant at $p < 0.05$. These results indicate that the independent variables explain 81.5 per cent of the variance in the retirement index and that there is a probability of less than 5 per cent that a correlation of this magnitude could come up by chance alone.

Interpretation of Results

The most important conclusion to be drawn from these results is that the direct demographic variables support the principal hypothesis. The mean difference in age between fathers and sons is a positive factor but it is only slightly correlated with the retirement index ($r = 0.18$), and the relationship is not significant. The second demographic variable – the mean age of bachelors – yields a very high correlation ($r = 0.66$), which is significant at the $p < 0.005$ level. This factor strongly suggests that the Gada System is still an unstable institution.

The question of whether these variables are redundant or not deserves some

attention. Do they not measure the same phenomenon that the dependent variable measures? They do, in fact, measure very closely related phenomena, so close that the relationship verges on a tautology. However, it is important to realize that the retirement index of a lineage is a factor that developed in a cumulative fashion over a period of several centuries. The demographic variables, on the other hand, are drawn from two contemporary generations: the fathers in the lineages and the unmarried males. Far from being a tautology, the positive association of these factors with the retirement index suggests that the same lineage that historically was ahead in terms of the trend toward retirement is still ahead. In other words, the same forces that were driving the gada process in previous centuries are still at work today. The institution has not stabilized.

The lineages that experienced a higher rate of change in the past are still exposed to the same kind of disparity. Only if this condition is met can we expect an association between a measure (such as the mean retirement index of a lineage) that is the result of centuries of cumulative development and the socio-demographic variables derived from the living population. If any of the lineages had at any time in the past been able to radically alter their retirement index relative to other lineages, it would follow that the *magnitude* of their mean retirement index would not be correlated with their present *rate* of retirement.

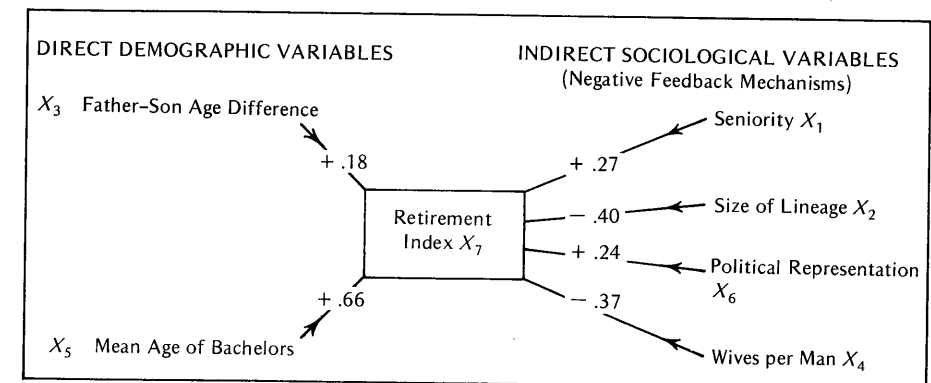


Figure 6-2. The Influence of Socio-demographic Variables on the Retirement Index

The pattern exhibited by the sociological variables is most interesting. Two of the variables are positively associated with the retirement index and two are negatively associated. Seniority and political representation are positive factors that tend to accelerate the gada process. Wealth and lineage size, however, turn out to be negative factors. Hence, only the latter can be presumed to have any effect as potential negative feedback mechanisms. Taken together the two pairs of variables tend to cancel out each others' influence although on balance the negative factors are somewhat larger.

If we take all six independent variables into consideration, the net result is

that the forces that tend to accelerate the gada process (positive) are greater than those that tend to retard the process (negative). In short, *the combined effect of the demographic and sociological variables is that they contribute positively to the structural transformation analyzed in the preceding chapter. The institution remains unstable today just as it was unstable during the four preceding centuries.*

The principal hypothesis concerning the instability of the Gada System has, therefore, withstood its first round of systematic counter-testing. This is obviously not the only way of analyzing and interpreting the information. Other investigators are welcome to use the data that are presented in the Appendices for the purpose of testing alternative hypotheses.

CHAPTER 7

TIME AND HISTORICAL CAUSALITY: STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

The analysis of the Gada System remains incomplete until we examine Borana conceptions of time and history. We interrupted the structural analysis of the institution to examine the evidence that can help us to determine whether or not the Gada System is a stable institution. We examined a considerable amount of evidence demonstrating that the system of classes is still undergoing change. We can now continue the examination of the Borana conceptual scheme and extend our cyclical model to cover a wider range of sociological phenomena.

Gada, this incredibly complex concept, is not merely the foundation of the Borana socio-political system and the basis of the temporal stratification of the society; it is also a concept that incorporates all history and the total cognitive framework within which historical processes unfold.

Borana have an unusually deep awareness of time and history. This does not mean that they are anxious about the passage of time. There is little evidence of time-linked anxiety in their cosmological and eschatological ideas. Nevertheless, they have the same degree of involvement with time as we find in the Western world. They schedule their lives, their rituals, their ceremonies, their political and economic activities to a very high degree. They schedule life-crisis ceremonies to a degree that would be inconceivable in the most time-conscious Western cultures.

It is tempting to explain the unusual awareness of time of the Galla as a response to structural change. The fact that the Gada System is unstable and that it continually confronts them with new problems might have some influence. However, this explanation is not adequate because the instability of the institution derives in part from the fact that the life cycle has been overscheduled. That could not be done without a reasonably well-developed system of time reckoning. We would, therefore, have to assume that the Galla had a reasonably precise calendar throughout the three or four centuries when the Gada System was undergoing relatively rapid change. The Galla calendar is a great invention, and it is the source of the gada process. Nevertheless, the possibility still remains that more and more refinements might have been introduced into the time-reckoning system as the institution evolved under the impetus of structural instability. The two dimensions may be mutually reinforcing.

The Galla calendar has been grossly misrepresented in the ethnographic literature. Almost every writer represents it as a solar calendar. Almost every writer acknowledges that the eight-year, forty-year, and eighty-year cycles are fairly accurately measured. But no ethnographer has given us a plausible explanation of how these segments of the gada cycle are measured. Eike Haberland, the most recent ethnographer to do fieldwork in Borana, came into head-on confrontation with the complex strategy by which Borana link time reckoning with astronomical observations and numerical epicycles. [1] However, instead of attempting to describe the principles underlying the system, he concluded that Galla attach "magical significance" to numbers and stars. Haberland's procedure is not new in anthropology. If the ethnographer fails to understand a particular system of thought, he accuses his informants of "magical thought" or of prelogical "childlike" mental operations rather than admitting that his data are inadequate and his understanding limited. On the whole, anthropology has tended to underestimate the intellectual accomplishments of nonliterate societies. This is partly a function of the linear model of the universe that is pervasive in Western thought. Technologically primitive societies must also be primitive in all other respects, it is thought. I believe that Borana culture amply demonstrates the error of this premise.

The Calendar

Borana time reckoning is unique in eastern Africa and has been recorded in very few cultures in the history of mankind. The best-known examples of this type of time reckoning are the Chinese, Mayan, and Hindu calendars; it is very doubtful that the Borana system derives from any of these cultures.

The Borana calendar is a permutation calendar based on lunar rather than solar cycles. The lunar month is about 29.5 days long. The Borana "year" consists of twelve such months or 354 days — eleven days shorter than the solar year. (In this book the meaning of years is always to be defined in this manner unless otherwise specified.) In many Near Eastern societies the solar year is made to equal the lunar year by adding an intercalary month to the latter. The Borana are unusual in that they seem to be the only people with a reasonably accurate calendar who ignore the sun. That is where the strength of their system lies. The only disadvantage of the system is that the year does not correspond to "seasons." However, in an area such as Borana, where the seasons (long and short "rains") are so thoroughly unpredictable, a seasonal calendar would be worthless.

The twelve lunar months have the following names: *Cikawa*, *Sadasa*, *Abrasa*, *Ammaji*, *Gurrandala*, *Biottottessa*, *Çamsa*, *Buça*, *Waçabajji*, *Obora Gudda*, *Obora Diķka*, and *Birra*.

There are no weeks; instead each day of the month has a name. However,

[1] Eike Haberland, *Galla Süd-Äthiopiens*. See the postscript in this volume for a critique of Haberland's interpretation of Borana time reckoning.

they have only twenty-seven names of days and not, as would be expected, twenty-nine or thirty names. The following are the names of days: *Lumasa*, *Gidada*, *Ruda*, *Areri Dura*, *Areri Ballo*, *Adula Dura*, *Adula Ballo*, *Garba Dura*, *Garba Balla*, *Garba Dullacha*, *Bita Kara*, *Bita Balla*, *Sorsa*, *Algajima*, *Arba*, *Walla*, *Basa Dura*, *Basa Balla*, *Çarra*, *Maganatti Jarra*, *Maganatti Briti*, *Salban Dura*, *Salban Balla*, *Salban Dullacha*, *Gardaduma*, *Sonsa*, *Rurruma*.

These twenty-seven days of the month are permuted through the twelve months of the year, such that the beginning of each month successively recedes by approximately 2.5 days and completes the cycle of 29.5 days in one lunar year. The loss per month is equal to the difference between the two types of months, that is, the 27-day month (ceremonial) and the 29.5-day month (lunar).

A Borana time-reckoning expert (*ayyanttu*) can tell the day, the month, the year, and the gada period from memory. Should his memory fail him, he examines the relative position of the stars and the moon to determine the day and the month astronomically. The seven stars or constellations he uses are: *Lami* (Triangulum), *Busan* (Pleiades), *Bakkalcha* (Aldebaran), *Algajima* (Bellatrix), *Arb Gaddu* (central cluster of Orion), *Urji Walla* (Saiph), and *Basa* (Sirius). These seven stars and constellations are roughly in line. In six out of the twelve lunar months the seven constellations appear successively, in conjunction with the moon. During the remaining six months none of these six stars and constellations is visible at the rising of the moon. In this period the first star (Triangulum) is visible only in the second half of the lunar month and is used in conjunction with successive phases of the waning moon.








BORANA TERMS	TECHNICAL TERMS
<i>Lami</i>	 Triangulum
<i>Busan</i>	 Pleiades
<i>Bakkalcha</i>	 Aldebaran
<i>Algajima</i>	 Bellatrix
<i>Arb Gaddu</i>	 Central Orion
<i>Urji Walla</i>	 Saiph
<i>Basa</i>	 Sirius

Figure 7-1. Stars Used in Borana Time Reckoning

This is the barest record of the basic facts that go into the making of the Borana time-reckoning system. The task now is to explain the structure and operation of the system. In other words, how does all the above information fit together into an intelligible design? How do the Borana use this body of information in making actual time-reckoning decisions?

The information on days, months, lunar cycles, and stars was obtained from a very large number of informants. However, in the present analysis we will consider only the information presented by three informants *i.e.*, the ones who were able to give an account of the total system, not merely fragments of it. The data presented by these men are assembled on a single time chart, Figure 7-2.

On the chart the horizontal lines are intended to represent correlations between the names of days (column A) and the corresponding astronomic observations (columns F, G, and H) at the beginning of each of the twelve months (column E). The days on which each month is supposed to begin was reported by three different informants (columns B, C, and D). The astronomic data were furnished by two different informants. These informants did not agree about the moon-star conjunctions that occur during the "first" half of the year (columns F and G), but they were in agreement regarding the "second" half (column H). The three men of learning who gave me this information, Duba Bikile, Jilo Afballo, and Arero Rammata, were the most competent mentors I was able to find in Borana. I respect their views equally and cannot therefore create a spurious consensus among them by deleting their differences. Their reports are presented side by side to show the kind of variability that occurs among individual experts.

We can start our account of the operation of the time-reckoning system at any point in the annual cycle. Let us assume that a new moon was sighted last night and that it appeared side by side with the star Sirius, which the Borana call *Basa*. We are starting at the bottom of the chart and we shall continue with the top of the chart. I do this to impress upon the reader that the flat rectangular chart, with top and bottom boundaries, is my doing, not theirs. To be faithful to Borana thought we must imagine the chart as a cylinder with the two ends joined together.

We shall first concentrate on the cycle of days (Figure 7-2, column A). The new moon appears with Sirius once a year. That event takes place in the month of *Obora Dikka*. This month begins with any one of the three days named *Salbana*, *i.e.*, *Salban Dura*, *Salban Balla*, *Salban Dullacha*. The three principal informants are not in agreement about this. The first informant claims that the month begins on any one of the three days, the second says that it has to begin on the first or the second, and the third informant says that it begins on the second or third. (These statements are reflected on the time chart by means of alternately shaded horizontal areas across columns B, C, and D. When the horizontal strips are jagged, the informants are in disagreement with each other.) Despite these inconsistencies the three experts agree on one fact: that the days named *Salbana* are permanently associated with the beginning of the month of *Obora Dikka*. If we assume, with the first informant, that the month begins on any one of the three days, how do we choose among those three days? Our choice is not entirely arbitrary; it depends on

A DAYS	B C D FIRST DAY OF LUNAR MONTH			E MONTHS	F G H DAY ON WHICH CONJUNCTION OCCURS		
	Duba	Jilo	Arero		Between Waning Moon and Triangulum	Arero	Jilo and Arero
(Salban Dullacha)							
Gardaduma							
Sonsa				Birra	15 (full moon)	14 (full moon)	
Rurruma				Çikawa	13	12	
Lumasa				Sadasaa	11	9	
Gidada				Abrasa	9	7	
Ruda				Ammajji	7	5	
Areri Dura				Gurrandala	5	3	
Areri Ballo				BITTITTESSA	3	1 (new moon)	Triangulum
Adula Dura				Çamsa	1 (new moon)		Pleiades
Adula Balla				Bufa			Aldebaran
Garba Dura				Waçabajji			Bellatrix
Garba Balla				Obora Gudda			Central Orion
Garba Dullacha				Obora Dikka			Salph
BITA KARA							Sirius
Bita Lama							
Sorsa							
Algajima							
Arb							
Walla							
Basa Dura							
Basa Ballo							
Çarra							
Maganatti Jarra							
Maganatti Briti							
Salban Dura							
Salban Balla							
Salban Dullacha							

Figure 7-2. Time Chart

how our reckoning had progressed during the preceding months. Since our hypothetical starting point does not allow for "preceding months," we must defer our discussion of this problem until later.

Let us say that the expert has decided that the beginning of the month occurred on *Salban Balla*. The second day of the lunar month has to be *Salban Dullacha*, the third must be *Gardaduma*, the fourth will be *Sonsa*, and so on. In this fashion we go through the twenty-seven names of days. *Before* the lunar month is over we shall run out of names of days. We must therefore go back to *Salban Balla* for a second time in the same lunar month. The first and the twenty-eighth days of this lunar month will both be named *Salban Balla*. We continue with the second cycle of names of days. The twenty-ninth day will be *Salban Dullacha*. Somewhere between the twenty-ninth and thirtieth nights the new moon will be sighted again. (Incidentally, the lunar month is 29.48 days long but Borana have no strategy for handling fractions of days and therefore see the months as consisting of twenty-nine or thirty days.) If the new moon is sighted on the twenty-ninth day, that day is *Gardaduma*. If it is sighted on the thirtieth day, the day is *Sonsa*. Of course, if we had decided that the previous month began on *Salban Dullacha*, we should now have to say that the month begins on *Sonsa*.

We proceed in this fashion losing about 2.5 days on the twenty-seven day cycle each lunar month. If at the "end" of the year the monthly losses added up to exactly 29.48 days, the system would be error free, and the same month would begin on the same day every year. In other words, the sum of twelve lunar months must be equal to the sum of the thirteen ceremonial months if the system is to work without error. In actual fact, there is a significant disparity between the two cycles. [2]

12 x 29.48	353.76
13 x 27	351.00
difference	2.76

There are certain anomalies in the nomenclature on the time chart in Figure 7-2 that give us some vital clues. We notice that some of the names of days are repeated two times and some are repeated three times. These repetitions serve to indicate the link between days and months. The grouping together of sets of two or three days – with or without the help of terminological classifiers – is an important part of the Borana time-reckoning strategy. It is a classification scheme that establishes a connection between two relationships – one natural and one cultural. This nomenclature strongly suggests that the maximum error the system tolerates is three days. That is the maximum leeway the experts have in deciding the beginning of different months. This margin of error is larger than the error that cumulates

[2] It should be stressed that these computations are made for *our* edification; they are of no consequence whatsoever as far as the Borana time-reckoning expert is concerned. It is nevertheless important for us to understand exactly how the Borana get around this arithmetical problem, whether they are aware of it or not.

during the year as a result of the disparity between the categoric and lunar months. In all probability one is a function of the other.

It is very likely that the Borana experts make an adjustment in the day nomenclature every two or three months on the basis of astronomic observations. Sometimes they follow through with the uninterrupted cyclical enumeration of days from one month to the next. This is the strategy used by Jilo Afballo. In other cases they fix the beginning of the month by astronomic observation only. Arero Rammata follows this procedure. The system of thought they use is a remarkable combination of deductive and inductive reasoning. Often the experts go back and forth between these two modalities of human thought, thus keeping the calendar keyed to astronomic events.

There is one day in the year in which the *ayyantu* assume a totally inductive stance: on that day the astronomic observation becomes decisive. This is the day of *Bitā Kara*, in the month of *Bittottessa*. This is a rather special day because the first one of the star series that the Borana recognize appears in conjunction with the *new* moon on that particular day. It is therefore very important for Borana experts to make astronomic observations on the first night of that month.

If atmospheric conditions do not allow them to make an observation and if the cloud cover persists throughout the night, the observation is postponed. In such a case they look at the stars on one of the nights following the expected date of the new moon, and they reckon backward to the critical date. Sometimes they will also get news from other parts of Borana where the new moon was sighted. In either case there is room for error.

Should the experts fail to get satisfactory information at the time of the critical conjunction, there is a second point in the year when a determination can be made. This critical point is not so easy to determine as the first. It is the time when the *full* moon is sighted with the first of the star series (Triangulum). That occurs on the day of *Sonsa* in the month of *Birra*.

There are two reasons why the second critical point is less dependable than the first. To begin with, it is easier to identify the new moon conjunction than the full moon conjunction because the moon in fact glides in and out of its "full" position rather ambiguously, whereas the sighting of the new moon is a relatively clear-cut event. Second, the experts cannot agree about the theoretical date on which the full moon conjunction is supposed to take place, *i.e.*, there would not be any consensus among them even if they agreed about the astronomic observations.

It is possible also that there are individual variations as to which of the critical points is used in making the annual determination. There is fragmentary evidence suggesting that some experts use principally the full moon conjunction and others use the new moon conjunction. Some, like Arero Rammata, use both.

It is important to realize that whichever critical point is emphasized the *ayyantu* change their reckoning strategy every six months. For half of the year they identify the *different phases* of the moon against the background of one particular star, Triangulum. In the other half of the year they identify the *new* moon relative to a set of seven *different stars*: Triangulum, Pleiades, Aldebaran, Bellatrix, central

Orion, Saiph, and Sirius. We shall consider the difference between the two strategies momentarily, but it is important to stress here that *Borana change their reckoning system at the two points in the year*. For half of the year they cannot use the seven stars because these stars are not visible at the time that the new moon is sighted. It is an entirely different hemisphere that comes into view. However, in the middle of the month, one of the familiar stars comes into view again, and it is used in conjunction with the full moon and with successively declining stages of the waning moon each month.

The latter strategy is reflected in the report by Arero Rammata appearing in column G of Figure 7-2. He states that the full-moon/Triangulum conjunction occurs on *Gardaduma*, *Sonsa*, or *Rurruma* in the month of *Birra*. He then proceeds to deduct two or three days each month to determine the phase of the waning moon that is sighted in conjunction with Triangulum.

Columns F and G contain the same information as reported by two different informants. This information is not consistent, and the disparity between the two reports helps to show the limitations of the Borana time-reckoning system. The first informant (column F) started out with the typically erroneous numerical assumption that the lunar month consists of thirty days. Consequently, he started his reckoning with the full-moon/Triangulum conjunction on the fifteenth day of the month. He then deducted two (rather than 2.5) days each month and concluded that seven months later the new-moon/Triangulum conjunction would occur in the month of *Çamsa*. In other words he was off by one month. He was quite embarrassed to find that his conclusion did not agree with his own earlier statement and the statements of others about the date of that conjunction. The consensus was that it occurs in the month of *Bittottessa*, not *Çamsa*, and on the day of *Bita Çara* or *Bita Lama*, not *Sorsa*.

In this and other examples we can see that the *Borana time unit* is not at all a statistical idea. It *exists because it is qualitatively distinguished from all other units of comparable magnitude*. The Borana time-reckoning expert is highly successful if he stays away from numbers. He is a logician, not a statistician. He does not have to know how to count, but he does have to know how to identify a very large number of named units and a large complex of rules governing the relationship between those units, on the one hand, and a system of astronomic observations, on the other hand. In a literal sense he must be able to understand the *relationship* between two complex sets of *relationships*.

The entire system of Borana time reckoning is so complex and so strange that it might be useful to repeat the central ideas, and as I repeat the basic strategies I shall attempt to explicate a few remaining anomalies in the time chart data.

The nomenclature of the days (column A) is so ordered that it allows the time-reckoning expert a two- or three-day margin of error each month. Most of the months are said to begin not on one particular day but rather on one of two or one of three sets of days. Thus the month of *Ammaji* begins on the day of *Adula Dura* or *Adula Balla*. The month of *Bufa* begins on *Arba* or *Walla*. *There are no two months beginning on the same day. Hence, if a Borana can identify the name of the*

month on the basis of astronomic observations; he can always identify the name of the day to the nearest one or two days.

As we follow the day series from month to month, a cumulative error builds up, and some of this error may be carried over from one month to the next. It is likely that this error will be ironed out in one or both of the two critical conjunctions of the year, *i.e.*, the beginning of the month of *Birra* and the month of *Bittottessa*. On these occasions, when the categorical reckoning does not agree with the two observable turning points, it is the astronomic information that wins out.

The Borana calendar is a permutation calendar. It is as though we coupled two cogwheels with an unequal number of cogs on each wheel. Let us say that one wheel has seven cogs and the other has five cogs. We mark the corresponding cogs at the beginning of the operation. We then rotate the two wheels and after seven revolutions of the five-cog wheel and five revolutions of the seven-cog wheel the original cogs must once again come into alignment. In permutation calendars it is this periodic realignment of corresponding "cogs" on two unequal series that defines the longer time units.

This is the astonishingly sophisticated principle that Borana are utilizing. The fact that they have twenty-seven names of days for a lunar month (29.5 days) is no accident. It is the inequality of the two cycles that constitutes the most important strategy underlying the Borana time-reckoning system.

The sum of these monthly differences does not, however, add up to twenty-seven days as it should. There is an annual error of 2.76 days. This error is smaller than the monthly margin of error that the Borana experts allow themselves. So long as the error is *under three days*, the system is in perfect working order. If Borana do indeed have a way of adjusting the error at least once every year, as I believe they do, there is no reason why the error should be carried over from one year to the next. I believe this is how the experts use the two critical turning points in the year. I present one structural characteristic of the time chart that strongly suggests that this inference is in fact correct.

The new-moon/Triangulum conjunction is obviously a special point in the year. The interesting fact, however, is that in the preceding month (*Gurrandala*) the new moon is supposed to appear on one of three different days. All three days are named *Garba*: *Garb Dura*, *Garb Balla*, and *Garb Dullacha*. Similarly, in the month preceding the full-moon/Triangulum conjunction, the beginning of the month (*Obora Dikka*) is said to occur on one of three days that are all named *Salbana*: *Salban Dura*, *Salban Balla*, and *Salban Dullacha*. The fact that these three-day series occur *only* in the two months preceding the critical points of the Borana year strongly suggests that we are dealing with the largest margin of error the system accumulates within any one year. For experts like Arero Rammata who make observations at both critical points the margin of error is only 1.5 days.

It should be noted that nothing catastrophic would happen if Borana failed to make observations on the two critical turning points. The error would not significantly build up from year to year because Borana can, just as easily, make

observations at the beginning of *any* one of the twelve months. The only problem is that their definition of the theoretical beginning of each month is not always accurate, and the accuracy decreases as we go further and further from the new-moon/Triangulum conjunction in *Bittottessa*. Notice that in the time chart of Figure 7-2 the jaggedness of the horizontal lines, which indicates disagreements among informants about the days on which each month is supposed to begin, is most pronounced at the top and bottom of the chart, *i.e.*, the parts of the year farthest removed from the new-moon/Triangulum conjunction.

To sum up, Borana are never absolutely sure about the name of any one day in the year. Each month they develop local pools of consensus under the influence of local observers and experts. They can always be one or two days off. There are two points in the year when astronomic observations are especially important. The cumulative errors that build up during the year are ironed out on the basis of these observations. The maximum three-day error is likely to build up in any one year when the full-moon/Triangulum conjunction has not been sighted. Furthermore, because there was no agreement among my three principal informants about the theoretical date on which the full-moon conjunction is supposed to take place, even if the experts made the same observation and agreed about what they saw, they could still come up with different dates. Hence, it is only the new-moon/Triangulum conjunction that can serve as a reasonably decisive consensus-building mechanism. This inference is based on the special place Borana accord one particular day in the year and one particular astronomical phenomenon: the day of *Bitā Kara* in the month of *Bittottessa* is – by structural fiat – the point that corresponds to the annual conjunction of the new moon and Triangulum.

In the final analysis the connection between culture and nature is an artifact of the human imagination.

Years

- 1 The succession of the years is treated in the same fashion as the succession of the days and the months. Each one of the eight years making up the gada period is qualitatively distinguished from every other year. Borana keep track of the passage of the years ceremonially, not arithmetically. Each one of the successive ceremonies is associated with a different shrine that is often located in a different part of Boranaland. At any one time the physical whereabouts of the Abba Gada and his councilors gives the layman a fair idea of their whereabouts in the gada period. The movements of the camp of the Abba Gada allows the Borana to estimate the stage their society has reached in its ritual progression through time. The layman is sometimes misled by delays in the performance of rituals. It is considered customary in Borana for the gada leaders to set the date of the ceremonies with great care and then to proceed with the actual performance at a terribly leisurely pace, summoning the gada class from far and wide, sending messages back and forth across Borana country, and waiting with appropriate exhibitions of impatience until

the hundreds of participating families drift gradually toward the ceremonial grounds. The rituals usually take place several weeks after the set date.

Regardless of the actual delays that inevitably distort the Borana ceremonial schedule, the *ayyantu* who advise the leaders go on saying, "This is the month of the handover ceremony," or "This is the year of the *oda* ceremony," whether or not these ceremonies take place at the expected time. The disparity is a perpetual bone of contention between the men of learning and the men of power. Criticism about careless delays in the ritual schedule is one of the commonest themes in the sermons of the *ayyantu* and often becomes an important basis by which the electors choose among the prospective candidates for gada office.

Gada Chronology

We now come to one of the most ingenious creations of the Borana mind: the gada chronology. Historians in other societies might envy the skill and logical coherence with which Borana have ordered their oral history. I have refrained from introducing the historic concepts of the Borana, such as *gogessa*, *maḳabasa* and *daḳçi*, until this point in the analysis for the simple reason that the human mind tends to rebel if it is assailed with too many unfamiliar concepts at the same time. I must stress, however, that these concepts are an integral part of the gada cycle, just as the gada cycle is an integral part of history.

The concept of *gogessa* must be defined at the outset; we cannot make much headway without it. In the list of gada classes appearing in Table 7-1 the gada periods are arranged in series of five, each series covering an interval of forty years. Each one of the five vertical columns is known as a *gogessa*. The term includes the living as well as the dead gada classes and corresponds to the opposite sectors of the gada cycle. If the reader refers back to the diagram of the gada cycle (Figure 4-2) it is easy to see that the opposite sectors on the cycle (classes 3, 8, 13, and so on) constitute one *gogessa* and are aligned as a single column in the chronology. The arabic numerals stand for the same classes in the cycle and the chronology.

The record of gada classes was compiled with the help of several *ayyantu*. These experts produced straight lists of Abba Gada covering forty to sixty gada periods. Experts as well as laymen were also asked to furnish lists of Abba Gada for their own *gogessa*. These two sources of data were then checked against the genealogies of men who are the direct lineal descendants of former Abba Gada. The three types of data were assembled slowly and painstakingly over a period of two years, a job that sometimes required long trips across the bush in search of some stray informant believed to be the descendent of an ancient Abba Gada.

When I was done with the chronology, one of my most learned mentors in the junior council of the assembly of Jaldessa Liban (1960-68) asked me to give him a copy and to teach his son how to read Amharic. Although his son never really mastered the Amharic alphabet, he does, nevertheless, have a written record of the Borana chronology and he plans to use it in future elections. It would be interesting to see how this new input will influence their future deliberations.

Table 7-1. Gada Chronology

1. Sons of Jaldessa 2000-08	2. Sons of Mada 1992-2000	3. Boru Guyyo 1984-92	4. Jilo Aga 1976-84	5. Gobba Bule 1968-76	ACTIVE
6. Jaldessa Liban 1960-68 Fullasa	7. Maða Galma 1952-60 Makula	8. Guyyo Boru 1944-52 Moggisa	9. Aga Adi 1936-44 Sabbaka	10. Bule Dabbasa 1929-36 Libasa	INACTIVE (YUBA): partial retirement
11. Arero Gedo 1921-29 Darara	12. Liban Kuse 1913-21 Mardida	13. Boru Galma 1906-13 Fullasa	14. Adi Doyyo 1899-06 Makula	15. Liban Jaldessa 1891-99 Moggisa	INACTIVE (JARSA): final retirement
16. Guyyo Goru Ingule 1885-91 Sabbaka	17. Dida Bittata 1876-83 Libasa	18. Haro Adi 1868-76 Darara	19. Doyyo Jilo 1860-68 Mardida	20. Jaldessa Guyyo Dabasa 1852-60 Fullasa	
21. Liban Jilo 1845-52 Makula	22. Maða Boru 1837-45 Moggisa	23. Sokore Anna 1829-37 Sabbaka	24. Jilo Nienco 1821-29 Libasa	25. Sakko Taddacha 1814-21 Darara	
26. Ingule Halake 1806-14 Mardida	27. Boru Maða 1798-1806 Fullasa	28. Wayyu Ralle 1791-98 Makula	29. Liban Wata 1783-90 Moggisa	30. Bule Taddacha 1776-83 Sabbaka	
31. Taddacha Oda Morowwa 1768-76 Libasa	32. Maða Boru Dadoye 1761-68 Darara	33. Guyyo Gedo 1753-61 Mardida	34. Halake Doyyo 1745-53 Fullasa	35. Taccacha Wayyu ilu 1737-45 Makula	
36. Sora Taddacha 1730-37 Moggisa	37. Wale Waççu 1722-30 Sabbaka	38. Jarso Iddo 1714-22 Libasa	39. Dawwe Gobbo 1706-14 Darara	40. Gobba Alla 1698-1705 Mardida	ACTIVE
41. Morowwa Abbayye 1690-98 Fullasa	42. Wayyu Uru 1682-98 Makula	43. Alle Kura 1674-82 Moggisa	44. Abbayyi Babbo 1667-74 Sabbaka	45. Abbu Laku 1659-67 Libasa	INACTIVE: antecedents of Yuba
46. Darara	47. Hindale Doyyo Mardida	48. Yalla Ole Fullasa	49. Babbo Horro Makula	50. Bidu Dokke Moggisa	INACTIVE: has no relevance for the present
51. Sabbaka	52. Doyyo Boru Lukku Libasa	53. Osoi Darara	54. Horro Dullacha Mardida	55. Kura Dalla Fullasa	
56. Makula	57. Boboru Moggisa	58. Yayya Fullelle Sabbaka	59. Gadayo Libasa	60. Urgumessa Darara	FOUNDING FATHERS

Note: All the dates on this chronology have been converted into the Gregorian Calendar

In the course of cross-checking chronologies obtained from different informants with those of my principal mentor – Arero Rammata – I was surprised to discover that Arero was not merely depending on his encyclopedic memory to accept or reject the information presented by others. He was using the concept of *maḳabasa* to judge whether or not the data were reliable. *Maḳabasa* refers to the cycle of seven names (Fullasa, *Makula*, and so on) that runs through the chronology. [3] These names are not the same as the names of gada grades or classes given earlier. They are a separate series known mainly to the experts and used for purposes of determining the patterns of historical causation. There is a body of rules governing the relationship of the *gogessa* and *maḳabasa* cycles. Arero used these rules either as a mnemonic device or when the historical information was incomplete. Here are the rules he employed, stated in his words.

The *maḳabasa* are seven: *moggisa*, *sabbaka*, *libasa*, *darara*, *mardida*, *fullasa*, *makula*. The present gada is *fullasa*, before that was *makula*, before that was *moggisa*, before that *sabbaka*, *libasa*, *darara*, and *mardida*.

1. The *maḳabasa* pass from father to son. *Mardida* is born to *libasa*, *libasa* is born to *moggisa*, *moggisa* is born to *fullasa*, *fullasa* is born to *darara*, *darara* is born to *sabbaka*, *sabbaka* is born to *makula*, *makula* is born to *mardida*.
2. The *maḳabasa* return to the same *gogessa* after seven fathers.
3. Before it returns to the *gogessa*, the *maḳabasa* goes to the other four *gogessa*.
4. The *maḳabasa* never goes to the *gogessa* of your *walanna* [rivals], and it never comes from the *gogessa* of your *walanna*.
5. When the *maḳabasa* returns, *daççi* also returns. It returns from *gogessa walanna* [rivals] and *gogessa kadaddu* [allies].

This is how the *maḳabasa* give birth to each other.

To understand the meaning of these five rules let us represent the chronology with numbers and letters. The Arabic numerals in Table 7-2 stand for the names of the Abba Gada and by extension the names of the gada classes, the lower case letters (*a* to *g*) are the seven *maḳabasa*, and upper case letters (*A* to *E*) are the five *gogessa*. The present Abba Gada is 6, his cyclical name is *f* and he belongs to the *gogessa A*. Notice the distribution of the cyclical name *f* throughout the chronology.

Our first observation is that the informant always enumerates the seven cyclical names in the same order (*a, b, c, d, e, f, g*). In his mind there is no such thing as “the first” *maḳabasa*. The cycle has no “beginning.” Hence, in enumerating the *maḳabasa* he may start with any of the seven names. The order is the only thing that is constant.

If we read the *maḳabasa* within any one of the five columns or *gogessa*, we can see what the informant means by the “descent” of the *maḳabasa*. Translating the words of Arero Rammata into our symbols we read:

[3] The term *fullasa* will not be italicized henceforth to remind the reader that this is the *maḳabasa* which was in force at the time of my fieldwork and that it will be used as a reference point in discussing the historical chronology.

Mardida is born to *libasa* or *e* is born to *c*,
Libasa is born to *moggisa* or *c* is born to *a*,
Moggisa is born to *fullasa* or *a* is born to *f*, and so on.

It is clear, from this, that the informant has two different ways of arranging the chronological data: horizontally, *a, b, c, d, e, f, g*, or vertically, *a, f, d, b, g, e, c*. The first rule, then, is a strategy for cross-tabulating the list of gada classes. The horizontal reckoning is described as *akka maḳabasa walirrafudani* or “how the *maḳabasa* take over from each other” and the vertical reckoning is described as *akka maḳabasa walḳalani* or “how the *maḳabasa* are descended from each other.”

Table 7-2. Schematic Summary of the Chronology

A	B	C	D	E
1a	2b	3c	4d	5e
6f	7g	8a	9b	10c
11d	12e	13f	14g	15a
16b	17c	18d	19e	20f
21g	22a	23b	24c	25d
26e	27f	28g	29a	30b
31c	32d	33e	34f	35g
36a	37b	38c	39d	40e
41f	42g	43a	44b	45c

The second rule states that the “*maḳabasa* returns to the same *gogessa* after seven generations.” The meaning of this becomes perfectly clear if we go back to Table 7-2. In that table we can see that the sixth and forty-first Abba Gada have the same cyclical name *f* and that there are seven forty-year periods separating them.

Next, we observe that the *maḳabasa f*, which was with the first *gogessa* initially, goes to the remaining four *gogessa* before it returns to the first *gogessa*. This is simply a restatement of the third rule of Arero Rammata in terms of our illustration.

The fourth rule is somewhat more complex. The terms *walanna* and *kadaddu* are commonly known words. If we ask Borana the meaning of these words, they say “enemies and friends,” or “adversaries and allies.” They would associate the terms with the joking behavior governing the relationship between age-sets and between gada classes. Adjacent classes are always adversaries (*walanna*) and derive much pleasure from singing obscene songs about each other. Alternate classes are always allies, the older class coming to the assistance of the younger if the latter is unduly harassed by the intervening class. The same rule applies to adjacent and alternate generations as well as *gogessa*.

Now, what did the informant mean by the statement that the *maḳabasa* never goes to a *gogessa walanna*? Does not the name "f" go from class 41 to class 34 or from column A to column D? Are these *gogessa* allies or adversaries? Arero Rammata said that they are allies, but this is not immediately clear from the table. If we use the A *gogessa* as our point of reference, the B's are adversaries, the C's are allies, and it would follow that the D's are adversaries. However, this procedure seems to violate Borana logic. The contradiction arises from the fact that our thinking is still "linear" and therefore incompatible with the Borana conception of the chronology. This apparent contradiction completely dissolves if we conceptualize the chronology as a spiral instead of a flat chart that begins at A and ends at E. From the standpoint of A, E and B are adversaries, D and C are allies. If we now

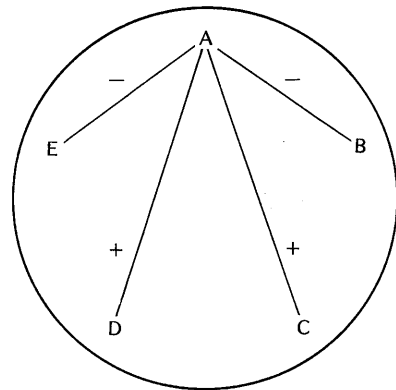


Figure 7-3. *Gogessa* Arranged Cyclically

examine Table 7-2 with this pattern in mind, we shall find that the name f goes from A to C to E to B to D to A. In other words the *maḳabasa* never goes directly to adversaries and never comes from adversaries (rule 4). If we modify the arrangement of the five *gogessa* so that they are in a cyclical relationship to each other, the fifth rule can be generalized as shown in Figure 7-4. The cycle represents the succession of *gogessa* the star represents the transmission of *maḳabasa*.

Finally, the informant's statement about *daḳḳi* is a formula that defines one of the two ways in which historical events are said to repeat themselves. *Daḳḳi* is the mystical influence of history on the present course of events. It may be transmitted from genealogical ancestors to their descendants, or it may operate in accordance with the *maḳabasa* epicycles. The complete historical cycle consists of thirty-six gada periods or seven generations as defined here. The events taking place during the present gada period, *i.e.*, when class 6 is in power, are first of all a replication of the forty-first gada period. In a secondary sense the gada presently in power is also influenced by all the previous gada, which have the same *maḳabasa* designation. In other words, 6f is a replication of 41f, and secondarily it is also influenced by 34f,

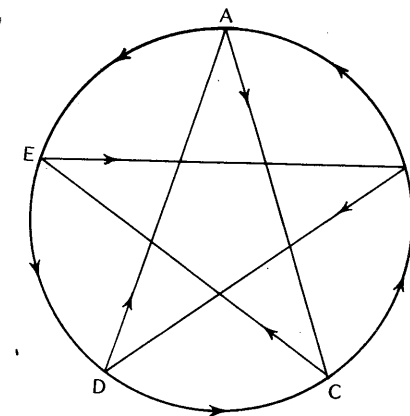


Figure 7-4. The Transmission of *Maḳabasa* from One *Gogessa* to Another

27f, 20f, and 13f. Hence, the statement that the *maḳabasa* returns from *walanna* as well as *ḳadaddu* means that if we look at history from the standpoint of one gada class, say 6f, then both allies (columns D and C) and adversaries (columns E and B) will influence the fate of that class.

The return of historical influence in accordance with the *maḳabasa* cycles is a source of great concern for gada leaders. One important service furnished by learned men like Arero Rammata is to advise the electors and the Abba Gada in power about the nature and course of history. It is imperative that the learned men keep track of history to a depth of eight generations. This explains why the chronology is complete only up to about the 45th Abba Gada. There is little disagreement about this part of the chronology among different *ayyantū*. Beyond that level, however, the data are inconsistent, and the record of one of the *gogessa* is incomplete.

Strictly speaking, only the last 40 gada periods, including the present one, are history and *history is defined as the interrelationship between events within this active cycle*. The way we have arranged the chronology, this cycle ranges from the 6th through the 46th gada inclusively. The present gada (1960-68) is under the most direct influence of the 41st gada (1690-98). The influence of all the intervening gada classes will be reflected in future gada periods.

In a more general sense, classes 36 through 46 are also active today. They are presently influencing the collective behavior of the people in the eleven grades of the gada cycle. The *dabballe* (1) are under the shadow of the class of Sora Ṭaddacha (36), whereas their grandfathers, the *gada moiji* (11), are under the shadow of the gada of Abbayye Morowwa (46).

Of course, the learned men also remember many gada classes beyond the 46th gada. However, at that level, the degree of agreement among different Borana historians is low. Some of the names that appear at the end of the chronology appear to be the names of the mythological founding fathers (eponymous

ancestors). Boboru, Yayya Fullele, Gada Gadayo, and Urgumessa are credited with having created the Gada System. "In the beginning," says the origin myth, "Gadayo was Abba Gada, Yayya Fullele was *raba*, and Urgumessa was retired!" Boboru's position in the origin myth was that of the first *cusa*, whereas the remaining *gogessa* makes no claims that any of their ancestors were involved in the founding of the Gada System.

There is considerable doubt about the two oldest Abba Gada in the *gogessa* presently in power, *i.e.*, the *gogessa* of Jaldessa Liban (column A). Some historians have emphatically denied that there was ever an Abba Gada named Abbayye Morowwa (46). There is somewhat more agreement about the two men named Morowwa Abbayye (41 and 51). Jaldessa Liban (6) claims that there were two men among his own ancestors who had the same name and who won the office of Abba Gada. If we compare this claim with the fact that the name Morowwa Abbayye is regularly associated with two different cyclical names by different informants, the situation becomes quite clear. The reports tend to confirm Jaldessa's claim. Furthermore, the cyclical names that turn up in association with the name of Morowwa Abbayye are *fullasa* and *sabbaka*. These correspond perfectly with the 41st and 51st positions in the chronology. This strongly suggests that Jaldessa Liban's claim is correct. The two men who hold the 41st and 51st positions are both Morowwa Abbayye, and they are probably related to each other as grandfather and grandson. The name of the Abba Gada who holds the intervening 46th position remains unconfirmed.

It is very likely that at any one time in Borana history the length of the active historical cycle remains the same and that only the beginning and the end of the cycle shift. In all probability, the names of the Abba Gada beyond the 46th level are from time to time left out, and the names of the founding fathers are appended to the active chronology. In a sense, the nature of the historical record changes beyond the 46th gada period. It quickly merges with the origin legends.

These are the essential characteristics of the structure and operation of the gada chronology. The most remarkable fact about this structure is that it is constrained along so many parameters. Borana historians do not always remember all the facts that go into the chronology but when they forget some of these facts they do not proceed to abridge the system. When the historian cannot remember a particular Abba Gada, there is a gap in his cognitive map and that gap remains open, until such time as he can fill it. If he is not aware of the fact that he has omitted an Abba Gada in his reckoning, the rest of his record will reveal many jarring contradictions. In this process, different experts invoke different constraints but the fundamental principles are the same.

Arero Rammata, for instance, uses the vertical line of *makabasa* names and names of Abba Gada. He also uses the horizontal ordering of the same information. If that fails, he couples the data with genealogies of living men who are descended from famous ancestors. His is a triple-entry accounting system in which it is virtually impossible to skip any one item in the three sets of data and get away with it.

The procedure can be illustrated by taking an actual case drawn from the interviews with Arero Rammata. In one instance Arero was unable to recall the name of the 40th Abba Gada, a name he himself had furnished in a previous interview. The procedure he followed to fill the empty cell in his mental map of the chronology is very instructive. He stated that the name he was looking for was the name of the *luba* father of Ṭaddacha Wayyu Ilu, *makula* (35), and was succeeded in office by Dawwe Gobbo, *darara* (39). So the man must be *mardida*. He could be an ancestor or a descendant of any one of the eleven other Abba Gada in the *gogessa*. He then recited the lineal ancestors of several of the recent Abba Gada. However, the procedure turned out to be an unproductive line of exploration because the Abba Gada in question did not have any descendants who won the office of Abba Gada.

He went back to the horizontal plane and again tried to remember the name by reference to those who had preceded and succeeded the unknown Abba Gada. At this point he recalled a critical piece of information. He said that Dawwe Gobbo (39) had had some difficulty in taking over power because his predecessor would not hand it over in time. Dawwe had to use force. The outgoing Abba Gada who had thus violated Borana custom was named Gobbo Alla. As soon as Arero Rammata remembered the name, it became obvious why he could not find his descendants among the subsequent Abba Gada in the *gogessa*. None of his descendants were allowed to hold the office of Abba Gada precisely because their ancestor had violated custom.

Arero Rammata then remembered that Gobba Alla did in fact have a direct descendant attached to the present gada assembly, a retired man by the name of Dida Jaldessa who was a junior councilor in the assembly of Jaldessa Liban (1960-68). Arero Rammata recited the genealogical ancestors of Dida Jaldessa from memory and demonstrated to me that the genealogy fully confirmed his claim about the position of Gobba Alla (see Table 7-3).

Table 7-3. Genealogy Versus Chronology

Name	Gada Class Affiliation
Dida Jaldessa	Bule Dabbasa (10)
Jaldessa Boru	Liban Jaldessa (15)
Boru Kimpile	Jaldessa Guyyo (20)
Kimpile Dulo	Sakko Ṭaddacha (25)
Dulo Liban	Bule Ṭaddacha (30)
Liban Gobba	Ṭaddacha Wayyu (35)
Gobba Alla	Gobba Alla (40)

I checked the gada class affiliation and genealogy of Dida Jaldessa in my own records of the present gada assembly, and it did tally with the information presented by Arero Rammata. The procedure seems to yield data having a remarkably high degree of internal consistency.

The Substance of Borana History

So far we have considered the cognitive structure within which Borana history is related. I do not have adequate data to go into a detailed discussion of substantive history. Students of oral tradition who wish to examine history within the framework of social structure will find Borana to be an incomparably rich gold mine. It is worth studying in great detail. I present here only a brief account of a few gada periods as described by Arero Rammata. Since much of this information was gathered at the end of fieldwork, I have not been able to check it against the reports of other Borana historians.

The text below is an almost verbatim translation of the original account by Arero Rammata. It should be noted that he is relating history within the framework of the total historical model, *i.e.*, as a set of relationships and not as a string of episodes. Each story begins with a formula that allows the historian to link two gada periods under the rubric of one *maḳabasa*.

The sabbaka of Abbayyi Babbo [44] returned upon Aga Adi [9]. Abbayyi Babbo was confronted by nine enemies who had entered our country. He routed all of them. Nine times he captured the herds of the enemy. He married nine wives and had nine children. He killed nine wild animals. Everything that regards Abbayyi Babbo happened in nines. We, Borana, do not like the number nine. Abbayyi Babbo was killed in Taddacha Warabi, beyond Dolo, in what is now Somali country. At that time, this was Borana territory. Even now it is called by the old Borana name. He had nine kraals of cattle. They were wiped out by disease. Even the cattle that were given to him by his clan to make up for his losses died out. It is this *sabbaka* that returned upon Aga Adi. Abbayyi Babbo waged war nine times and he ran away from the enemy nine times. Yet, the nine enemies from whom he had run away were in the end routed by other men. During the gada of Aga Adi, also, nine enemies penetrated Borana: the Italians, the Marrehan, the Dogodi, the Arsi, the Amhara, the Gurra, the Garri, the Janjamtu, and the Idora. Of these, the Somali and the Arsi gave the longest battles. They came to our country as the hired hands of the Italians. They were *Banda*. The Janjamtu came on their own. The Amhara came and invaded our land and raided our cattle. All these enemies were destroyed one by one. The Amhara were first destroyed by the Italians and the *Banda*. The Italians and the *Banda* were destroyed by the Amhara and the English. And so, in the end, all the nine enemies were driven out and our government [*i.e.*, *mangisti*, referring to the Ethiopian government] established order. As in the case of Abbayyi Babbo, Borana had to retreat in the face of nine different enemies, but in the end we got rid of all of them.

The fullasa of Morowwa Abbayye [41] returned upon Jaldessa Liban [6]. Morowwa's gada was a time of peace and plenty. Morowwa dug a well called El Morowwa. All Borana drank from that well. After Morowwa died, the well disappeared [*i.e.*, caved in], and the Galantu have been short of water ever since. It is this fullasa of plenty that returned upon Jaldessa Liban. As you can see today, both man and cattle are fertile and water is

plentiful. Jaldessa Liban has found the well of his ancestor and Borana has, once again, begun to drink to satiation.

The gada of Morowwa is very good, and we do not expect anything to go wrong in the present gada. The only problem is that the present Abba Gada is not following *ada* [custom] properly, and we do not know what that will do to this gada.

The mardida of Gobba Alla [40] returns upon Gobba Bule [5]. This is not a good *mardida*, and it is the responsibility of Gobba Bule to spare the people from the misfortunes of Gobba Alla. Gobba Bule is going to take *balli* [*i.e.*, become Abba Gada of all Borana] soon. Before he takes power, he should consult the elders and the *ayyantu* to find ways of making these misfortunes pass over. He can do this by following *ada* strictly, by sacrificing cattle, and by fulfilling his *ḳibayyu* [ritual] obligations. He should make sure that the *goro* is observed [*i.e.*, the requirement that all gada councilors must live together and be present in all ceremonial and ritual occasions].

The darara of Dawwe Gobbo [39] returns upon Jilo Aga [4]. The gada of Dawwe Gobbo is one of the best. We expect nothing but peace and plenty when Jilo takes over. When Dawwe Gobbo took over *balli* from Gobba Alla, he brought a miserable gada to an end. Gobba Alla had destroyed our customs; he had destroyed the land. He killed ninety-nine men from all the *gogessa*. His ideas were good, but he did not know how to be a father to his people. He killed *ayyantu* who made false predictions. He even killed children who did not know and respect the rules of the games they were playing. Finally, his great mistake was to refuse to hand over *balli* to Dawwe Gobbo when his gada came to an end. Dawwe had to pursue him all the way to Er Dar, and there force him to hand over. Contrary to custom, the handover took place away from the shrine, in the middle of nowhere. *Daḳci* catches up with people who thus destroy our laws.

Dawwe Gobbo was called to the great assembly of *gumi* Gayo to answer for his actions. The *raba-gada* and *jarsa-yuba* all assembled for the inquest. But Dawwe was an outspoken man, and he persuaded the *gumi* that he did what he did only to punish those who ignore custom and law.

To this day, the descendants of Dawwe Gobbo have not won the office of the Abba Gada again. Nevertheless, the gada must take heed and spare the people from the return of this *maḳabasa*.

The Borana Conception of History

The above account shows many facets of Borana oral history. It is first of all an account of a hemicycle of five gada classes, a factual description of the events that occurred during their successive terms of office. The story is told strictly within the framework of the *maḳabasa* cycles. Each account of a gada period begins with a formula such as, "The *sabbaku* of Abbayyi Babbo returned upon Aga Adi." The historian then recounts the events of the antecedent gada immediately followed by the events of the consequent gada. He does not try to show specifically

how the two sets of events are related because the correspondences are self-evident in his view.

The correlations are not always clear. Indeed, in the first pair of gada periods (44 and 9) the historian runs into contradictory evidence. Abbayyi Babbo, the older Abba Gada, was first described as having routed all his nine enemies. However, the later Abba Gada, Aga Adi, who was also confronted by nine enemies was unable to defend Borana. His gada was a succession of nine defeats rather than victories. The problem is resolved by saying that the later enemies routed each other and this appears to be a rather devious way out of the difficulty.

Another facet of this historical record is that the impact of history on the present is not always inevitable. If the antecedent gada was dominated by misfortunes, the later Abba Gada can prevent a recurrence of the events by adhering to customary requirements and sacrificing cattle. In other words, the conception of history reflected here is not fatalistic but rather shows that the living community has ways of acting upon the present course of events.

Perhaps the most important aspect shown by the above record is the nature of the *positive* influence of historical antecedents. If the older gada was an especially fortunate period, say, because the wars waged in that period were successful, the pressure on the later Abba Gada to try and replicate that war is very great. There is strong indication that Aga Adi became involved in numerous wars because he believed that history was on his side and that he could not possibly lose.

But the most compelling piece of evidence we have indicating how the positive influence of history is reflected in the present course of events is the second pair of episodes in the above account. The fullasa of Morowwa Abbayye (41) returned upon Jaldessa Liban (6). The latter was the Abba Gada who was in power at the time of my fieldwork. He was told by the *ayyanttu* that Morowwa Abbayye, his eighth lineal ancestor, an Abba Gada, had dug a well that became the home of many Borana. The well had caved in and had not been used for several generations. Jaldessa Liban felt that it was his sacred obligation to reexcavate the well and give it back to his clan and to Borana. As was described in chapter 3, he organized a very big project at considerable personal cost, a project that took seven months and involved several hundred workers. In fulfilling this obligation, the Abba Gada was acting according to his understanding of history and responding to the kinds of demands history imposes on the living community.

Although we must recognize the fact that Borana historians are highly selective in keeping track of some events and ignoring others and although this type of selectivity may account for the cyclical recurrence reflected in their oral-historical records, the cycles are not spurious. They reflect a very real structuring of events that results from the fact that the Borana have allowed the historical antecedents to guide their present course of action. History does indeed repeat itself, not only because they believe it to be cyclical and remember the events that tend to confirm their model, but also because they believe that the historical cycle is a basic philosophical given and they act in accordance with those beliefs.

Concluding Note

This analysis of time and history is a direct continuation of the structural analysis of the gada cycle presented earlier. We found little in the formal structure of the Gada System that suggested that the institution is unstable. There is even less in the larger model of time and history that would lead us to believe that the system is undergoing change. These are the puzzling results that now confront us. It would be a mistake to conclude that the gada cycle and the chronology are unreal because they do not reflect the reality revealed with the aid of empirical data.

It is nevertheless true that there is little in the Borana cognitive map that would point us in the direction of a transformational analysis. Quite the contrary, we are left with the impression that the society is locked in an endless cycle of repetitive events and that their system of thought is immensely constraining. If Borana formal culture were our only source of information we would have to conclude that the society has left no room for change and that the men of learning who guide it are prisoners of their cognitive schemes.

The judgment concerning the stability of Borana society and the structure of Borana thought must, once again, be suspended until we have considered the final body of data. It is necessary to look at history as it unfolds, not merely as it is transmitted; to analyze society as it develops not merely as it is cognized; to examine the dynamics of social life as the Borana grapple with the normal crises to which the living society is subject.

ELECTION 1963:
THE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL DRAMA

When the ethnographer becomes directly involved in a major collective event of a society, he comes to the unpleasant realization that the boundaries he drew for analytical purposes to demarcate the things he calls "institutions" are hardly respected by his informants. Indeed, the boundaries of the "society" as a whole may be crossed just as easily and as frequently as the institutional boundaries. People change their institutional identities and social alignments again and again in order to maximize their political, ritual, or economic prospects; they confront each other as adversaries in one context and as allies in another context. If our analysis so far has given the impression that the structure of Borana institutions is rigid to the point of being unworkable, it is equally true that the cross-institutional domain is flexible and superbly ambiguous. One is governed by what Jensen called "ruthless arithmetic," and the other is open to wide-ranging interpretations. The descriptive literature on the Gada System seems to remain on the formal plane because the structure of the institution is like an imposing edifice that commands the observer's full attention. Exclusive concern with structure, however, might give the false impression that Galla institutions are made up of nothing but rules grinding against each other as they force the system toward some logical end. We have already seen how the Borana have made many creative adjustments to the problems of the Gada System and how they have turned some of the worst consequences of the gada process into an asset by creating the junior council and, thereby, introducing new principles of representative government. But we do not fully realize the vibrant quality of Galla life until we look beyond the formal structures and empirical processes and see the people deeply involved in the development and resolution of social conflict. Men are about to enter the political arena. Verbal combat between the protagonists and their respective supporters can be heard far and wide, their claims and counterclaims becoming magnified as they are passed from one man to the next. Gada leaders are about to be elected, and that event is a source of widespread public concern throughout Boranaland. I shall examine all these events for the purpose of exposing Borana values as well as the interaction between kin groups, gada classes, and age-sets, the three major institutional frameworks within which Borana collective life is enacted.

The approach I shall use is comparable to Turner's social drama. [1] This is a procedure that is different from the statistical and structural approaches I have already employed. Neither of these models tells us much about how Borana institutions are used in the service of individual or collective interests. How do individuals understand the institutions? How is this understanding of the institutions utilized, manipulated, or variously interpreted for the purpose of resolving conflict or improving personal or group positions? Are there any inconsistencies in the definitions of roles and of role relationships? These are all aspects of social organization that I have not, so far, examined. This is the area to which the Manchester school of British social anthropology has made a pioneering contribution. Their research is methodologically and substantively far removed from the typical areas of concern of statistical-empiricist research and of Lévi-Straussian structuralist analysis.

The structural model inferred from data directly elicited from informants is a vital interpretive tool. However, when faced with a crisis, people begin to invoke their own varied models to legitimize social action. Here we are dealing with a different kind of reality. So far as the resolution of conflict is concerned, it is the native's own conceptual model that is relevant, not the anthropologist's. Thus in the social drama analysis presented by Victor Turner many private and poorly articulated models of institutions are utilized by the protagonists. [2] These models serve to define the range of intelligible debate and permit the expression of conflicting interests within the framework of a common culture. This is not unlike what Edmund Leach meant when he said that myth is the "language of argument." [3]

In this book I do not specifically deal with myths in their standard format. However, the mythology of the Gada System has been presented in the form of a chronology, and the native sociological model has been presented in the form of several groups of cognitive categories. Borana have a clear understanding of many of these concepts. They understand, for instance, the relationship between the concept of *gogessa* (patriclass) and *luba* (gada class), between *ilman jarsa* (retired) and *ilman korma* (active), between *yuba* (semi-retired) and *jarsa* (fully retired), between *luba* (gada class) and *hariyya* (age-set), and between both these latter categories and their intersection in the category of *barbara*. They understand also the position of generations in the gada cycle and the pattern of alliance (*ḱadaddu*) and conflict (*walanna*) governing the relationships between generations, between classes, and between age-sets.

The ability to work with these and many other semantic categories and to judge the truthfulness of sociological information on the basis of deductions made from these categories implies some understanding of the structure of these institutions. Several informants were capable of doing just that. However, they did

[1] Victor W. Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-160.

[3] Leach, *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*, p. 278.

not have any idea of the cumulative structural problems underlying the Gada System and the far-reaching demographic implications of the norms governing the system. To the extent that they did understand the structural model they assumed it in making decisions in day-to-day social relations. Those who had a better understanding of the institutions consciously used their knowledge for political advantage. In Borana, knowledge is recognized as a distinct political asset, and those who do not have it must seek alliance with those who do or they must find some way of securing the services of specialists in exchange for gifts.

It is unfortunate that the present case study forces me to be far more inclusive than I had intended and broader in scope than is justified by the preceding structural and statistical analyses. The dilemma that confronts us is probably inherent in the method of case study ethnography. The problem arises from the fact that the topic is carved out for us by the wide-ranging activities of the protagonists themselves, not by the theoretical predilections of the ethnographer. Part of the data are therefore presented in raw form and cannot be subjected to analysis because they are not relevant to the central thesis of this book. Such information is included because it is an organic part of the story and because it may help us understand the peculiarities and limitations of the case study method.

When conflict breaks out, whether the anthropologist chooses to remain in the background or whether he actively manipulates his relationships makes a significant difference. In situations other than the present episode, I chose to become actively involved and to take a stand on some issues. [4] In the present case I preferred to remain in the background and not to attempt to influence the decision of the council one way or another. A personal note will help to place the events in proper perspective.

My closest ties were with Jaldessa Liban, the Abba Gada of all Borana (1960-68) and with all the members of his assembly (*ya'a*). These were the two bands of *adula* and *garba* councilors who made up the gada assembly at that time. The choice was dictated by the nature of my investigation. My relationship with all other leaders in Borana and in particular with the previous and future Abba Gada, with the two *Qallu*, and with the District Administration was influenced, favorably or unfavorably, by the close ties I had cultivated with one particular gada class. The nature of the influence depended on the network of alliances of which I will give a fuller account below. Fortunately, Jaldessa Liban and his councilors were required to remain in another ceremonial ground throughout the conflict and could not become directly involved. As a result it was possible for me to maintain a semblance of neutrality in order to obtain daily reports from all the principal delegations and the main protagonists in each delegation.

[4] This occurred when the Abba Gada was kept under house arrest on a religious issue. As a citizen, I felt that I had an obligation to advise the councilors about their constitutional rights and assist them in appealing the case to higher authorities.

The Background of the Crisis

The election of *adula* councilors in the summer of 1963 is by far the most important event that took place during my fieldwork. For about two months Borana was much more agitated than it is under normal circumstances. Everywhere I went, I saw men huddled together near market places, around wells, and near settlements arguing about the approaching proclamation ceremony (*lallaba*). As I traveled from Negelli to Moyyale to Arero along an approximately triangular course over the eastern half of Boranaland, I was astonished to find a remarkably high level of interest in the events unfolding in central Borana. So high was this level of awareness and interest that I was able to collect a substantial amount of information about the individual candidates before arriving at the main political arena at Guto, a few miles outside the subdistrict capital of Arero. Guto is the large and permanent settlement of the *Qallu* of the Gona moiety. The *Qallu* was at this stage engaged in the difficult task of selecting three *adula* councilors in consultation with all the clans of his moiety. At the same time the *Qallu* of the Sabbo moiety was engaged in similar negotiations in his own settlement about eighty miles to the west near the district capital of Yaballo. Although I had planned to cover both moiety "capitals," it became evident that the Sabbo elections were of little interest to the Borana. The negotiations within the Sabbo moiety generated little conflict. I suspected that the Sabbo elections would be less instructive and decided to direct my investigations to the Gona. Furthermore, after the election all the clan delegations were to gather on the ceremonial grounds of the Gona to perform the *lallaba* ceremony. It was therefore possible to get a fair idea of the Sabbo elections at Guto without having to make wasteful and difficult trips between the two ceremonial grounds. For these and other reasons to be mentioned later, the election of the *adula* councilors from the Sabbo moiety does not figure prominently in the present case study.

In most cases each of the clan delegations that went to Guto presented only a single candidate. In a few cases different lineages of the same clan could not agree about the most suitable candidate and sent competing delegations to the council. Borana clans generally try to present a united front at Guto and make a great effort not to reveal intra-clan dissensions. They hold meetings in advance and attempt to come to an agreement before sending their elders to Guto.

One reason why the Gona are exposed to greater conflict is that there are many clans from which only three *adula* must be elected. Gona has fourteen clans. There is therefore an acute rivalry *between clans* to get at least one man to represent them in the *adula* council. The Sabbo moiety on the other hand has only three clans and what little competition there is for gada office occurs *between lineages* of the same clan.

There is no explicit norm that prescribes that lineages or clans must be equitably represented in the gada councils. Historically, most of the clans, although by no means all, have won the top office of the Abba Gada at one time or another.

On the other hand, some lineages have become deeply entrenched and have monopolized the office for five successive generations. We have already examined the underlying processes. At this point only one general norm should be emphasized. The *moieties must always be equally represented* in the senior gada council. So far as we can tell, there have been no exceptions to this rule in the past century. Furthermore, the traditional custom has been that each moiety would select its three councilors with the consent and approval of the opposite moiety. In other words, the two *Ḳallu* councils have been closely tied to each other and could not act independently. During the gada of Dida Bittata (see chronology, Table 7-1) the councils could not come to an agreement, and the conflict broke out into a major civil war. The Ethiopian government intervened, and as a result of a decree issued by the Ministry of Interior, the moieties were required by law to "appoint" their *adula* independently.

The conflict discussed in this paper was at a lower structural level. It concerned a schism that had developed in the Gona moiety. As the case developed over a period of two months, many institutional leaders became involved. Among the groups mobilized to resolve the conflict were two gada classes, one age-set, two clan delegations, two *Ḳallu* (moiety) councils, a district governor, a subdistrict governor, a *balabbat* (Borana district representative). In addition to these groups and office holders, many personal and informal forces were also at work. Some individuals were exerting influence despite the fact that they had no legitimate role in the election of the *adula*. Women in general are expected to retire into the background whenever the *Ḳallu* council sits to discuss a candidate. Nevertheless, they have access to the mother of the *Ḳallu* and by offering their services to her they can win the support of the *Ḳallu* himself. Although I was led to believe that this is how women generally operate, the only politically-minded woman in this case study established her alliances not through the *Ḳallu*'s mother but directly with the leaders of the lineage. With this one exception, I was unable to uncover any other instances in which women had a formal or informal effect on the course of the deliberations.

The Electors: The *Ḳallu* Council

The council of electors consists of six men elected from the *Kallu* lineage (*mana Ḳallu*) of the Oditu clan. They are elected by a general meeting (*cora*) of the clan once every eight years. One of the four councilors had died a few years earlier. The remaining three members represented three different lineages of the clan. The council, headed by the *Ḳallu*, constitutes the top leadership of the moiety. The office of the *Ḳallu* is a hereditary office held by a boy in his early teens. His home is the repository of the most important collective symbols of the Gona moiety. Borana clan leaders gather every eight years for the *oda* ceremony. On that grand ceremonial occasion the *Ḳallu* is presented with large numbers of cattle, and he gives his blessing to all the clans.

At the time of the 1963 elections the life of the young ritual leader was constrained by many taboos. He was not allowed to travel alone or to carry arms. If he wandered out of his settlement to play with his peers, there was usually an adult nearby watching him. His every whim was attended to, and he exerted influence through his mother, the *Ḳallitti*. His father, the *Ḳallu*, had died a few years before, and he was invested as the ritual leader of his moiety. Until he came of age, his oldest half-brother, Boru Tutto, would continue to act in his stead. Boru was a middle-aged man who was out to strengthen his alliances during the *Ḳallu*'s minority. As head of the *Ḳallu*'s lineage, he had the final word in the election of all senior gada officers from the Gona moiety. His brother, Jatani Tutto, also a middle-aged man was jealous of Boru's power. But, instead of competing with his elder brother, Jatani turned his attention to the other seat of power – namely, the provincial administrative machine, which is an arm of the Ethiopian government. Jatani aspired to become the chief *balabbat* (district representative) of his moiety. [5]

Several decades earlier a similar rift had developed between their father, Tutto Anna, and his brother, Guyyo Anna. Tutto wanted to extend his authority beyond his traditional ritual functions. He wanted to become the chief *balabbat* for his moiety. His brother argued that the *Ḳallu* could not do justice to both offices and that the office of *balabbat* should be given to him. After extended negotiations with the Ministry of Interior, it was decided that the *Ḳallu* should retain his traditional powers and his younger brother should serve as the representative of the moiety in district administration. The schism within the *Ḳallu* lineage resulting from this conflict has endured to the present. Although the two houses have in theory accepted the formal delineation of function and authority prescribed by the Ethiopian government, they continued trying to maintain influence in each other's domain. This perpetual source of conflict became one of the central factors in determining the course of events in the election of 1963.

The Candidates

The class of people from among whom the six leaders were to be elected were known as the "sons of Guyyo Boru," the name of the third gada class. The class of Guyyo Boru (grade VIII) was retired. Guyyo Boru was the head of all Borana in 1944-52. He and five other councilors went into retirement after completing their term of office and handed over authority in 1952 to the class of Maḍa Galma. Eleven years later they had come to the point in the gada cycle when they must campaign for their sons.

The sons, who were about to complete grade III, had for the first time assembled

[5] For a short period of time, Jatani did hold the office of *balabbat* at the subdistrict level, but he has since given up his appointment under the pressure of Guyyo Anna.

together as a gada class. For three months they had been moving around Borana visiting the settlements of their *luba* mates. Wherever they went their parents had been slaughtering cattle for them and performing a ceremony known as *wal'argi*. This extended meat feast allowed the members of the class to get acquainted with one another. They were now nearing the end of the 24th year of the gada cycle.

The Campaign

In August, 1963, several hundred men belonging to the eighth class arrived in the town of Arero. They came from every part of Borana, some with their families and with their herds of cattle. They soon established new settlements close to wells and other sources of water. Other men came without their families and herds and attached themselves to the established camps. In the center of this complex of camps at Guto was the permanent residence of the *Ḳallu* of the Gona moiety.

The *Ḳallu* himself and his lineage were the hosts to a large number of clan delegations. The arrival of prominent clan leaders was usually followed by a meat feast because the hosts felt obliged to slaughter steers for their guests. Even insignificant clan leaders deserved at least a goat.

Amidst all the feasting and construction of new huts, there was an unusual level of tension and gossip. Every clan had come to offer presents to the *Ḳallu* and to present their candidates (or, rather, the fathers of the candidates) to the council of electors. None of the clan delegations would admit to having given presents to the *Ḳallu*. However, they freely accused each other of bribing the *Ḳallu* and ingratiating themselves with the council. It seems evident that large numbers of cattle and horses changed hands during the following weeks. It was not possible to get any idea of the magnitude of these dealings: bribes have an elusive quality and "campaign funds" an immeasurable dimension.

The Case

Three candidates were to be elected from the Gona moiety, the most prominent of the candidates being Guyyo Boru, the former Abba Gada. There was general consensus several months before the negotiations started that he would have no difficulty in getting his son elected gada councilor. The basis of this popular consensus was interesting. He was a soft-spoken but highly persuasive and generous man. He had a fair knowledge of Borana history and of the complex ritual governing the Gada System. Knowledge of Borana traditions and the ability to convey one's thoughts with eloquence are critical factors in the election of gada councilors. This, however, was only part of Guyyo Boru's story. By far the most important reason why he had such a large following was his conduct during his gada period (1944-52). His supporters claimed that he never faltered in the performance of his ritual obligations. He took over power and he handed over to his successor on

time and in the proper ceremonial grounds. He succeeded in the difficult task of getting all the clans to give their dues to the gada council in the form of cattle or manpower.

This is briefly the record of achievement that led Borana to accept Guyyo Boru's son as the most suitable candidate for the top office of the Gada System. The council of electors had little public discussion on the son's candidacy. There was an implicit assumption on their part that he had no worthy opponents. No other candidate "asked" for the office. Despite his popularity, however, Guyyo Boru was publicly criticized by the assembly at Guto. Several clan delegations mentioned the fact that Borana was invaded by the Guji during his gada period. The arrival of the Guji raiders had been followed by a long drought that left Borana destitute. Borana blamed the Abba Gada for failing to resist the invaders and for the inefficacy of his rainmaking ritual. According to Borana tradition, these shortcomings would normally disqualify the candidate. In Guyyo Boru's case, the council of electors chose to overlook these unfortunate events because of his personal qualities and his overall success as a gada leader.

If there was any speculation about Guyyo Boru, it did not have to do with his own ability to win, but rather which other candidates he would support. Throughout the weeks of negotiation, he maintained a public façade of neutrality, as was expected of him. Behind the scenes, however, it was almost certain that he exerted considerable influence.

It was the second candidate, Adi Dida, who was the most controversial figure of all. Borana came very close to war over his candidacy and election. His followers were deeply committed to him, and his enemies were legion. I have rarely found a Borana who had pale feelings about him. He is the central character in our story.

Adi Dida belonged to the Hawaṭṭu clan of the Gona moiety; in his own clan there was a strong undercurrent of criticism against him. Members of another lineage within the clan sent a delegation (Nura) to present their views to the council of electors. The leader of the Nura delegation stated that Adi Dida was "quarrelsome and he cannot work peacefully with other *adula* [senior councilors], he is ungrateful and he destroys our *ada* [customs]." The informant's lineage did not want to appear as an organized opposition to Adi Dida. Nevertheless, they were ready to present a substitute candidate "in case the council decided against Adi Dida."

Members of other clans also voiced similar criticism against the candidate of the Hawaṭṭu clan, stating that he was stingy and that he allowed his guests to go hungry. To a people such as the Borana, for whom the sharing of food is one of the highest moral virtues, the rich but miserly Adi Dida became an easy villain. Still others claimed that he was not fit to be the father of a gada councilor because of his religious affiliation. It was believed that he had been converted to Christianity and this fact, if true, would disqualify him (or his son) from holding an office that entailed many ritual obligations. Aside from his adversaries, very few people were willing to say, unequivocally, that Adi had become a Christian. It was therefore possible that his rivals were keeping the rumor alive for political advantage.

The Ḳallu lineage was divided along the line of fission discussed earlier. The council of electors, consisting of patrilineal kinsmen of the Ḳallu, came out strongly in support of Adi Dida. It was almost certain that the head of the council, Boru Tutto, was heavily bribed by the candidate. Within the Ḳallu's clan and lineage, however, there were a large number of men who criticized Adi Dida openly for using his wealth to influence the decisions of the council.

The strongest opposition to Adi Dida came from the new branch of the Ḳallu lineage under the leadership of a grandson of Guyyo Anna. As was indicated earlier, this branch of the lineage had acquired the function of representing the moiety in district administration. Jaldessa Anna, the young man who headed this branch, attempted to persuade the council not to elect Adi Dida. His central argument was, "Borana does not want him because he has violated custom. His own clan, the Hawaṭṭu, do not want him and have offered an alternate candidate." He then proceeded to point out the specific offense committed by Adi Dida. He said that when the Abba Gada (Jaldessa Liban) and his councilors were summoned by the district governor and detained in the district capital (Yaballo) for a month, all Borana was angered but not Adi Dida. The district governor had ordered the Abba Gada to mend his heathen ways and to accept Christianity as his faith. The Abba Gada said that he was the father of all Borana and a ritual leader of his class. Therefore, he was not free to accept Christianity. The governor then declared that he would keep the Abba Gada under house arrest for an unspecified period of time.

The Borana appealed to higher authorities. When the central government discovered the archaic administrative practices of the district governor, he was removed from his office and Borana never saw him again. The incident had a far-reaching effect on the relationship of traditional Borana leadership and the administration.

During this confrontation, Adi Dida was living in the district capital but did not raise a finger to assist the Abba Gada and the other *adula* councilors. At a time when the ritual and political leadership of all Borana was in jeopardy, Adi Dida denounced the Abba Gada as a coward and said that Borana would do better without him. He said that he would not care if the Abba Gada were detained indefinitely. Furthermore, he did what no Borana can do without fearing divine retribution: he refused to give the *adula* councilors food and shelter.

These were the main arguments presented by Jaldessa Anna to the Ḳallu council and to the assembled clan delegations. Members of the Nura delegation added that Jaldessa Anna's family had also suffered in the hands of Adi Dida, Jaldessa's father, the former *balabbat* of the Gona moiety, had tried to raise money for the purpose of taking a Borana case to court and when he asked Adi to contribute, Adi failed to give his share and insulted the old man. Jaldessa himself was very reluctant to pursue this line because he was intent on presenting issues that concerned all Borana. He was afraid that the council might misconstrue his position as a simple case of personal animosity. The Ḳallu council was eager to bestow upon him the dubious distinction of being the advocate of the Nura delegation and his father's errand boy, while he was making a magnanimous effort

to speak for all the Borana who objected to Adi Dida's candidacy regardless of clan and lineage affiliation.

The council's final response was a well-calculated move. The whole weight of their argument rested on one fact only: that a *balabbat* is not the legitimate spokesman for Borana who disagree with the council's choice of gada councilors. Indeed, they never challenged the veracity of his statements, nor did they try to salvage Adi Dida's reputation. They were secure in their belief that Jaldessa was not competent — either by administrative law or by Borana custom — to question the council's wisdom in the election of *adula*. So long as they adhered to the legitimacy issue, their position appeared unassailable.

In addition to Jaldessa Anna there were several other prominent Borana who had a direct interest in the case of Adi Dida. Among these Jaldessa Liban, the Abba Gada of the class in power, was a principal figure. Sometime earlier (July 31) the Abba Gada had called a meeting of the entire gada assembly on his ceremonial grounds near Negelli to discuss the problem of Adi Dida. They said that Adi had insulted their *luba* and refused to give assistance to the Abba Gada. On this issue, the whole assembly seemed to be in agreement with everything that was reported by Jaldessa Anna to the council of electors. However, when the gada assembly began to consider the courses of action open to them, the assembly fell into disarray. They had a long argument concerning the propriety of sending a message to the council of electors. They considered the possibility of my taking the message to the council because I had informed them that I would soon be leaving for Guto. After a long debate they decided against such a measure. Arero Rammata, the renowned historian, strongly advised them that *custom prohibits the gada assembly from intervening in the selection of adula for any gogessa other than their own*.

It became evident that whatever influence they might be able to exercise must remain strictly informal. The specific strategy the Abba Gada adopted was most interesting. He sent his able mistress to the Ḳallu. The Abba Gada had two young wives who were both rather inept. Socially, the mistress was his chief asset. Every season she built a large hut for him, lavishly entertained his guests, and made a great effort to build up his reputation and alliances. Her departure for Guto had obvious political significance.

It turned out later that she did not go to Guto merely as an informal messenger. She said that the Abba Gada had "given" her to the Ḳallu. By making this move, it seemed that the Abba Gada was trying to gain an enduring access to the inner sanctum of the sacred settlement of the Ḳallu. In giving up such an important member of his household, the Abba Gada was making a long-term investment for his unborn son who would become a candidate sixteen years later. His immediate purpose, however, was to block the election of Adi Dida without antagonizing the Ḳallu. For that purpose a shared mistress was perhaps the most appropriate bond between the two leaders.

Ironically, the mistress switched allegiance after living with Boru Tutto — the Ḳallu surrogate — for a few weeks. As the date of the great ceremony approached, she began to speak in support of all the candidates who had the Ḳallu's favor,

including Adi Dida. On several occasions she warned me not to exacerbate the situation by talking to Adi Dida's adversaries and by recording statements that might damage his reputation. To my great surprise, she later disclosed her own political aspirations. She had a plan for getting her own son into the junior gada council. [6] It remains to be seen whether she will stand by the Abba Gada when he begins formal negotiations for his son (in the mid-1970's) or whether she will turn away from him in pursuit of her own goals. As for the immediate problem of Adi Dida, it seemed that she had chosen to forget the message she was supposed to convey on behalf of the Abba Gada.

As the deliberation of the assembly progressed, it became increasingly more difficult for the *Ḳallu* council to give Adi Dida unequivocal support. Boru Tutto announced that the council could not arrive at a decision about the case of Adi Dida and that they needed to consult with their opposite numbers in the Sabbo moiety. Messengers were therefore sent to Yaballo asking the *Ḳallu* to send councilors who could exert influence and who might get the assembly out of the stalemate.

In the meantime, Jaldessa Anna appeared on the scene with a directive from the subdistrict governor ordering the council of electors to suspend all their meetings and to appear in court immediately. The court order was delivered to the *Ḳallu* by Dullacha Boru, who headed the local warrior age-set and who appeared to be uninvolved in the conflict until that time.

On the following day, all the major protagonists appeared in the Arero Court. Boru Tutto (the temporary *Ḳallu*) and Jaldessa Anna (the *balabbat*) were the principal litigants. Jaldessa presented his case in much the same language that he had used before the *Ḳallu* council. Boru, on the other hand, proved to be more resourceful — he claimed that the case had been resolved in a higher court and that the subdistrict court did not have the authority to reopen the case. He produced an old document that had been issued by the district court in 1948 that delineated the jurisdiction of the *Ḳallu* and the *balabbat*. The document is reproduced here in verbatim translation from the Amharic text.

Imperial Ethiopian Government
Sidamo Province
Borana District
Megga [7] No. 46/3234
Miazia 7, 1940 A-M. [8]

In the presence of Mr. Boru Tutto

Re: Those customs of yours known as Gabra [9] -Adula

[6] I have learned since that she was successful in getting her son elected to the junior council and that her son is presently serving in the assembly of Gobba Bule — Abba Gada, 1968-76.

[7] At this time Borana was a single district, and Megga was the old district capital.

[8] A-M stands for Amharic *amata mehret*, or the Year of Grace, indicating that the year is given according to the Ethiopian calendar. The year 1940, Ethiopian Calendar corresponds to 1948, Gregorian.

[9] This word is misspelled in the document: Gabra is the name of the Galliina-speaking community living among the Borana, whereas a *garba* (the word intended here) is the name given to the junior councilors in the Gada System.

* In accordance with your ancestral custom all matters concerning the making of Gabra-Adula rests in the hands of the *Ḳallu* alone. We declare that this judgment was made in a conference held in 1939 A-M on the basis of evidence obtained from witnesses.

[signature] First Secretary
[seal] Tesfaye Wolde-Gabriel
Borana District Government

After examining the document, the court dismissed the case, reprimanded Jaldessa Anna for obstructing the *Ḳallu* from carrying out his duties, and permitted the house of the *Ḳallu* to proceed with their meetings. In response to this judgment, Jaldessa Anna immediately declared that he would appeal the case to higher authorities, and, if need be, he would petition the Emperor.

At this point, a serious threat developed from an entirely unexpected quarter. What was until this stage a diffuse undercurrent of discontent in the clan of the *Ḳallu*, suddenly assumed an organized form. The warrior age-set within the *Oditu* clan threatened to abandon the *Ḳallu*'s settlement if the council of electors continued to ignore the demands of so many Borana throughout the land.

The age-set in question was named *wakor* Liban (age thirty-four to forty-two) and was acting under the leadership of Dullacha Boru. The leader identified himself as *hayyu hariyya* (age-set councilor). When I asked what right the age-set had to try to influence the assembly, he said, "What the *ya'a* decides, the *hariyya* executes: without us they are nothing. Boru Tutto has destroyed custom and we cannot stand by him. If he refuses to listen, we will abandon him to the people of the forest (*warra badda*)." He added that it was not only his age-set but also two younger age-sets (Dambal Arero and Ijolle Cuch) who had decided to challenge the *Ḳallu* council. It was not possible to substantiate the extent to which the younger age-sets were actively involved in this confrontation.

To appreciate the significance of this development, we should keep in mind the special nature of the *Ḳallu* village. The community is always in need of young men to defend it against Guji cattle raiders. In recent decades, Borana population as a whole has moved in a southwesterly direction and, as a result, many of the old ceremonial grounds are now either in Guji-occupied territory or they are uncomfortably close to the Guji border. Since the *Ḳallu* is not allowed to nomadize or even to change the site of his settlement, his village has been left behind in the slow southward drift of the population. To survive the community requires a well-organized defense system. A few years before my fieldwork, the Guji overran the *Ḳallu* settlement and killed a great number of people including Tutto Anna, the father of the present *Ḳallu*. If the Guji had discovered that the settlement was once again defenseless, I suspected that they would raid it without hesitation.

The warrior age-set was therefore using the Guji threat as a tool for the purpose of coercing the council of electors. This threat was met with the most erratic reactions. In private, Boru Tutto said that Jaldessa Anna was the villain who was inciting the youth to rebellion, that no harm would come to the *Ḳallu* because God was on his side, and that the police would protect him from the Guji. In meetings, however, his stance was entirely different. He refused to acknowledge the fact that there was anything amiss with the defense system of the *Ḳallu* settlement. So long

as he maintained this posture, there was no need for him to bargain with the age-set leaders.

The accusation that it was Jaldessa Anna who was inciting the youth to rebel was an interesting point. Jaldessa Anna, the young *balabbat*, was a member of this age-set, and it was quite possible that the youths were acting on the basis of their loyalty to an age-mate. Both supported each other in the assembly, but it was not clear if anyone had planned this development. In any case, Jaldessa left for Yaballo to obtain an injunction from a higher court, secure in the knowledge that he had driven a wedge into the *Ḳallu* clan and formed a significant alliance with his own age-set.

Later, I learned that the age-set leaders were taking action in response to a message they had received from the Abba Gada in power, Jaldessa Liban. However, neither the age-sets nor the Abba Gada was willing to divulge the content of the message. In any case, it was apparent that the *Ḳallu* council was faced with a three-cornered alliance between the *balabbat*, the Abba Gada, and the age-sets.

The *Ḳallu*'s response was to quickly dispatch a message to the Arero sub-district governor asking him to send out armed policemen to help him defend his village. The policemen arrived the same day and became a permanent fixture in all the subsequent meetings and rituals. Nevertheless, the council was anxious because a few policemen could not effectively block a Guji raid. Guyyo Boru was supposed to negotiate a truce with the warriors; after extended discussions, he came back to the assembly to report that the recalcitrant age-sets were determined to carry out their threat. Members of the age-set stated that Guyyo Boru — a retired Abba Gada — had no authority over them. They expressed confidence that the current Abba Gada would not order them to remain in the *Ḳallu* settlement until the injustices had been set right.

Despite their numerous maneuvers and confident pronouncements, it was obvious that the council of electors were now under great pressure. If they waited too long, Jaldessa Anna might return with an administrative directive that would bring the whole procedure to a standstill. Alternately, the age-set might carry out their threat. The council, therefore, decided to "jump the gun" and declare the name of the winning candidates a week earlier than the date fixed by time-reckoning experts. As indicated in earlier chapters, all Borana ceremonies are supposed to be held in a fixed cyclical order if they are to have full ritual efficacy. In performing the proclamation (*lallaba*) ceremony early and omitting several preparatory rituals, the council was breaking some basic rules in order to avert a catastrophe.

They hastily sent out messengers to all the men of the class of Guyyo Boru who had settled in the surrounding territory, asking them to assemble in the shrine set aside for the *lallaba* ceremony (the shrine of *Ṭaddacha Ḍera*). The sons of the class of Guyyo Boru, who had remained in isolation throughout the time of the negotiations, were also asked to assemble in the ceremonial grounds. On the assigned date, the fathers arrived in a great procession wearing colorful headgear and carrying staffs. The sons came in another procession with clean-shaven heads,

wearing ceremonial costumes and carrying large spears. About 1,000 men and youths attended the ceremony.

The successful candidates from both moieties were present, accompanied by a large number of retired *garba* councilors. Speech making was an important aspect of the *lallaba* ritual. In contrast to the extreme informality that characterized the meetings of the assembly, the language, dress, posture, and seating arrangements of the celebrants were now rigidly patterned.

Three of the candidates made highly stylized, but occasionally powerful, defense speeches eulogizing their own ancestors, their gada class, their *gogessa*, and the house of the *Ḳallu*. Guyyo Boru and Adi Dida were among the speakers. The speeches are all reproduced below in quasi-verbatim translation.

TEXT OF LALLABA (Proclamation)

Guyyo Boru Speaking:

Hai! We are brave, we are strong, we have fulfilled our obligations. We cut *dannisa* [10] during the gada of Boru Dida. [11] Those were lean years. Borana was hungry when [the ceremony of] *butte* [12] approached. We met with our *luba* fathers and we said that since Borana was poor, let us hasten to finish the ceremony. For five days we went without food. In spite of all this, I completed the ceremony.

May the bulls multiply, may the streams swell. I took *balli* and served faithfully [as Abba Gada]. I have not fallen short of what custom requires. I am strong. I am wise. Our family has produced thirteen Abba Gada, including this boy [referring to his newly elected son]. Thirteen times Borana elected us because we are an able family. To the *jarsa* and *yuba*, to the three gada and the five *ladu*, to all these I owe much gratitude. And because they owe me gratitude, they have given me *adula*. I am strong, I am wise.

Within our *gogessa*, it is our family that founded the gada [system]. Raba Yayya [the first *raba*] is a member of our family. [13] Throughout history, only three times have we failed to win. Our *gogessa* is strong, because it is a *gogessa* that does not hesitate. Neither I, nor our *garba* councilors have taken our duties lightly. I am strong. Our *luba* is strong. The accomplishments of the councilors who have died must also be told. The son of Liban Sara [14] did not sleep when he was faced with responsibility. His work is well-known to Borana, and Borana has given him *adula*. Even if he is not among us, his work must be remembered.

Hai! Of all the *moggisa* [15] Abba Gada, I alone have succeeded in having my son elected to the same office. With the help of God and of Borana, my son has become *adula*. Our *gogessa* has a good name. I had grown old

[10] *Dannisa* — the fatherhood ceremony.

[11] Abba Gada, term of office: 1936-44. Died in office. Succeeded by Aga Adi.

[12] *Butte* — refers to a rite performed in the last year of the junior *raba* grade (Va). *Butta* is the name of the rite, *butte* is the large milk jug employed in that rite.

[13] A legendary figure reputed to be the Abba Gada of the *raba* class when Gada Gadayo created the Gada System.

[14] A member of Guyyo Boru's *adula* council named Jaldessa Liban.

[15] One of the cycle of seven names that are given to the gada classes and that determine the pattern of historical influence in the chronology.

and wise during the lifetime of my father. That is how I have achieved success. There was no question about my son. This is one issue about which Borana did not hesitate [*i.e.*, about the election of his son].

The speaker was interrupted with a loud comment from the audience. A member of his own lineage said, "You have left out certain families, you have left out certain families. God bless those whom they have elected. God bless those whom they have elected." He was obviously referring to the family of the *Ḳallu* and accordingly the speaker proceeded to laud his electors.

All Borana is my witness: the *bokku* [16] stands on my left and the *ladu* [17] stands on my right. My *ladu* is strong, my *ladu* is wise. Our *ladu* is blameless. It is like a bunch of thorns – untouchable. Those who raise their voice against it shall be poisoned, as by snakebite. Those who do not shall be left in peace. Such is the strength of the family of the *Ḳallu*, such is their wisdom.

The Abba Gada then led the assembled celebrants in the recitation of the *murti* (pledge? prayer?), which is perhaps the most sacred ritual statement that occurs in Borana ceremonies.

Hai! Hai! Hai!
 Oh God! Lead the gada.
 Oh God! Lead the gada.
 Give long life to the gada-*luba*.
 Give life to our horses.
 Give smell to our *denge*. [18]
 Make rain.
 Make the land plentiful.
 Destroy the Arsi and the Guji.
 Multiply our steers and heifers.
 Multiply the bulls and cows.
 Make war.
 Give us the spoils of war.
 Give us fortune.
 Give us fortune.
 Speak!

It is difficult to convey in words the powerful impact that this recitation had on the listeners. It was recited at an extremely fast pace with the crowd responding like an echo by repeating the last word of each line. The response was as close an imitation of thunder as one can produce without divine intervention. When the

[16] The staff held by the ritual leader of the gada council, the *bokku*. Both the officer and his symbol of office bear the same name.

[17] The armband of the *Ḳallu*, which is used symbolically here to refer to the *Ḳallu* himself.

[18] *Denge* – an archaic term the meaning of which is not known.

recitation was completed, Adi Dida immediately took over and delivered a speech that has since become a celebrated piece of Borana folk literature.

Hai! Listen to me Borana and listen well! I know what you have already heard about me. Now, listen with undivided attention. When I rise to praise myself, I know what you are thinking. But I am strong and wise. I speak well of myself because custom requires that I do so. Our family is known to all Borana. As the father of Boru Guyyo has said, my family too has produced thirteen [senior councilors]. If anybody doubts my word, let all Borana be my witness. I am a leader and I have never kept my followers waiting. People have never said of me, "Go and wake him up, he lies asleep." Guyyo Boru is right in saying that we have fulfilled our obligations. It is I who was called to act whether the task was pleasant or difficult. This is why I dare to speak well of my family.

My family is like a salt mine. As the cattleman does not tire of constantly returning to the salt beds, so does Borana not tire of returning to our family [for leadership]. You might say that people hate me, but that is untrue. Alone, I asked for the office of *adula*, for I had no worthy opponents. Nobody worth mentioning has dared to raise his voice against me. The man who criticised me accomplished nothing. He offended the *Ḳallu*. He offended the *Ḳallitti*. For five generations our family has built spring beds for the family of the *Ḳallu*, and I find myself still sitting beside that bed. Yet, some people have criticized my actions. These men do not offend me. They offend the *Ḳallu*. They offend the *Ḳallitti*. In spite of my services some people have thrust the spear at me. Those who thrust the spear at the bed of the *Ḳallu* are not wise or strong. They are the product of the times. Do not say that these men have speared Adi. Rather say that they have speared the *Ḳallu*, the *Ḳallitti*.

Hai! Hai! Hai!
 Oh God! Lead the gada.
 ...
 Give us fortune.
 Give us fortune.
 Speak!

After Adi Dida's address, there was a long silence. The Abba Gada asked the next councilor to speak, but no speech was forthcoming. The councilor who was being asked to speak was Bukke Liban, [19] an *adula* who lost in the contest. When the celebrants realized what was happening, a great murmur swept through the crowd. The Abba Gada implored them to be quiet. Again there was a long moment of silence, and Bukke Liban proceeded with the *murti* recitation without a speech.

Hai! Hai! Hai!
 Oh God! Lead the gada.
 ...
 Give us fortune.
 Speak!

[19] The name of this councilor, which is Dido Adi, has been altered to avoid confusion with Adi Dida and with his son Dida Adi.

The man who competed against Bukke Liban was named Arero Irbi. Forty years earlier, when these two men were adolescents, their fathers and lineages had competed for the office of *adula* and Arero Irbi's lineage had lost. [20] Now, the situation was reversed and Arero was the victor. He delivered the following speech:

Hai! Listen Borana, listen Borana! Do not destroy our laws. If the law is kept, the land will be kept; and if you have the land, you have nothing to fear. Borana keep the laws! Borana keep the *dibayyu*! Borana keep the *dawa*! [21] Do not ask what the law is.

Hai! I am a leader of leaders. I am wise. I am brave. That I am wise, that I am brave is a fact well known to you. I lost the office of *meddicha* in our gada, but I never slept, I never gave up. Finally, Borana has given me *adula*. Borana is mine, just as poison is mine [*i.e.*, I have friends as well as enemies].

The *ladu* is like a trough of salt, and I never took my head away from it. I was born to the Digalu-Maṭṭarri [22] and I have never acted contrary to their will. Nor have I acted against the will of the Konnitu-Hawaṭṭu. [23] They too have been a trough of salt for me. I gave my trust to Borana and Borana has given me *adula*.

Those who competed against me are brave men. I never raised my voice against them, because they are great leaders. My family lost [the office of] *adula* and *garba*. Some people thought that we would never hold office again. To those people I can only say, "We won!"

Hai! Hai! Hai!

Oh God! Lead the gada.

...

Give us fortune.

Speak!

The concluding phase of the *lallaba* ceremony consisted of the recitation of the names of the winners. Up to this point I have related the story as if the candidates were the fathers — the class of Guyyo Boru. This is how the Borana see it. The names that were announced, however, were those of the sons. This was the first verbal recognition given to the boys. The names were announced by order of seniority.

1. Boru Guyyo, son of Guyyo Boru
2. Dida Adi, son of Adi Dida
3. Dida Arero, son of Arero Irbi

The remaining three councilors were from the Sabbo moiety and do not concern us here. The Abba Gada shouted out each name three times and the celebrants responded as follows:

[20] Having failed to win the office of *adula*, he settled for the next best thing. He joined the *meddicha* council during the following gada period, after his class had gone into semi-retirement (*yuba*). He served in the assembly of Maḍa Galma.

[21] Rituals performed during the gada period.

[22] Digalu was the speaker's clan, and Maṭṭarri was the allied clan in the same moiety.

[23] Konnitu and Hawaṭṭu controlled the *meddicha* councils in which the speaker served for eight years (1952-60).

Speaker	Celebrants
Boru Guyyo <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Boru Guyyo <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Boru Guyyo <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Adi <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Adi <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Adi <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Arero <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Arero <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!
Dida Arero <i>hayyu gara</i> .	Garomsil!

In this manner they acknowledged and blessed the names of all six young councilors. "So-and-so, fortunate councilor." "May he have fortune!" This round of blessings was repeated by every member of Guyyo Boru's assembly, including *adula*, *garba*, and *meddicha* councilors as well as ritual officiants. Once again, the man who declined to make a speech, Bukke Liban, committed ritual offense by giving his blessings to all the newly elected councilors *except* the son of his rival — Arero Irbi — and again the celebrants were loud in their condemnation of such ignoble behavior.

This was the climactic end of a long series of conflicts and rituals, the conclusion of several decades of planning, scheming, hoping, and waiting. Behind the simple rite of *lallaba*, there were many powerful, clashing loyalties. We should remember that the winners as well as the losers are required to do their share in the *lallaba* ceremony. Their concession must be unambiguous, their blessing must be "loud enough for the gada ancestors to hear." Sometimes the boys whom they reluctantly proclaim are the sons of their long-standing rivals — the very men who have thwarted their highest aspirations. For the loser not to give his blessing is highly offensive to the Borana sense of fair play. Indeed, the manner in which they give the blessing becomes a subject of scrutiny and social commentary.

Before closing this narrative and proceeding with the analysis, one point needs further clarification. The six boys whose names were proclaimed in the *lallaba* ceremony were only provisionally invested into office as leaders of their gada class. Until they reached the sixth grade, twenty-one years later, they would remain under public observation. At any time during this period they could be removed from office if they proved to be ineffectual leaders. The removal of an officer is described as *bukḳisu*, which literally means "to uproot." I asked the Kallu assembly if they knew of any cases in which an elected officer was "uprooted," and they had no difficulty citing several cases that had occurred in recent gada periods. An examination of the record of all the *adula* elected during the past century (*i.e.*, the information summarized in Appendix 3) shows that a very large fraction of them were either killed in wars or removed from office long before they reached the gada grade (VI) and assumed a position of leadership over Borana as a whole.

For many months after the election Adi Dida's rivals were insisting that the case

was still open and would remain so until their grievances and those of many other Borana had been attended to. *The Nura delegation continued to try to mobilize clan, age-set, and gada forces in order to put their candidate into office.* Even those who sympathized with Adi Dida said that his son would have to exhibit exceptional ability if he were to stay in office. Because of the unusual circumstances under which he was elected and proclaimed, if he faltered in his duties, he would be judged more harshly than his peers.

Analysis I: Values

The case of Adi Dida served a useful purpose of showing how the egalitarian social system of Borana operates in the recruitment of leaders and in the resolution of the attendant conflicts. It exposed the values which Borana try to maximize through the election of some and the exclusion of others from public office; their desire and hope for peace at home and successful wars elsewhere, for productivity, for the maintenance of law, and for the preservation of the codes of nomadic cooperation and mutual aid. These are virtues which most societies would probably extol in theory. The differences arise partly because of the disparity in the inventiveness of each society in developing institutional mechanisms which maximize some values while leaving others to the goodness in the heart of men. Borana have, on the whole, opted for complex institutional arrangements and left very little to the internalized *homunculus* known as the "superego." The confrontation between Adi Dida and his numerous adversaries indicates how defensive Borana society can be when its core values are threatened. The election served the explicit purpose of recruiting gada leaders. But the latent and equally important effect of the election process seems to have been the testing and collective reaffirmation of the core values.

We can gain some insight into the Borana system of values and political ideology by examining the criteria they employ in selecting their leaders and by analyzing the concepts their leaders invoke in an attempt to legitimate their winning of political office. There is a general understanding among the electors and among the men competing for office that *personal qualities, achievements, mystical attributes, and public service* are the most important factors. In evaluating candidates in terms of these factors, it should be stressed that it is not the candidate himself who is being judged but rather his whole lineage and in particular, his lineal ancestors. Specifically, the candidate's father is the one most closely scrutinized. Indeed, in Borana thought, the father *is* the candidate, although he is in the retired (*yuba*) class and can no longer hold public office himself. The son is elected on the basis of the father's merits and on the basis of the accomplishments of all his lineal ancestors; beyond that he must prove his own worth.

This approach to the recruitment of leadership is based on the concept of *daççi* and is closely linked with Borana conceptions of time and history. *Daççi* implies that whatever has happened to a man will happen again to his patrilineal and gada descendents. At times *daççi* is seen as returning from father to son; at other times *daççi* returns in accordance with the complex of historical cycles and epicycles

that we considered earlier (chapter 7). When an individual becomes a gada councilor, he brings with him the *daççi* of all his ancestors and *luba* fathers. In the context of this ideology, it matters little whether the electors consider the merits of the sons or their fathers: both are seen as members of a patrilineage whose history, past and future, is to some extent predetermined.

Borana speak of the young candidates, their fathers, and all their lineal ancestors interchangeably. We can decide only from the context as to whom they are referring to when they say that X has been elected. Indeed, in Borana idiom it is perfectly appropriate to speak of a lineage as being elected or removed from office. It is the mystical attributes of the lineage as a whole that become active over Borana when one of the members of the lineage is elected councilor. In Borana ideology a lineage is one person with a long history, a distinctive personality, and an indefinite lease on life. Before allowing a lineage to return to office, its performance during the preceding eight generations must be examined with care. This is done with the assistance of learned men who instruct the political aspirants and the electors in history, genealogy, and chronology.

The council of electors, therefore, considers the moral qualities of the candidates and their ancestors. Any offenses committed by the candidates may be aired by the clan delegations. Not only the contestants but any Borana present may discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the men seeking gada office. The moral problems they raise range from momentous issues such as the desecration of a shrine and failure in warfare down to trivial issues and personal animosities. With apparently infinite patience, the assembly listens to almost any matter the participants wish to raise concerning the candidates.

Adi Dida was criticized for several offenses "to Borana." His worst offense involved the violations of customary requirements: he failed to give the Abba Gada services which the head councilor is entitled to demand of any Borana. Adi Dida refused to provide food and shelter for the Abba Gada and his councilors when they were under house arrest in the district capital of Yaballo. The question has nothing to do with the relationship between retired councilors and the active leaders. There is considerable ambiguity in Borana traditions about the obligations of retired gada councilors toward the men in power. They are generally expected to stay out of each other's paths. Therefore the offense of Adi Dida was not connected with his position as a retired *adula* councilor. Any Borana who is visited by the Abba Gada is required to sacrifice livestock for him. Even impoverished families kill small livestock to honor the leaders. It is this general obligation as a citizen that Adi Dida failed to meet. For a man reputed to be wealthy, such behavior, is, in the eyes of Borana, inexcusable.

Similarly, Adi Dida's failure to give support to the *balabbat* of his moiety was another serious offense. However, this was not a source of great concern because the office of the *balabbat* is a new and rather peripheral institution, without the symbolism and sacred aura surrounding the Abba Gada. Borana do not consider the support of the *balabbat* to be a ritual obligation, nor is failure to assist him regarded as an infringement of basic values. The domain of the *balabbat* is more often than not, the domain of opportunism.

It is not difficult to see why there was so much opposition to Adi's Dida's candidacy — and given such opposition, it is difficult to see how he did succeed in winning the office. Borana was reacting to his personal qualities. He was said to be stingy, self-centered, discourteous, given to anger. But above all, he was said to be unscrupulous.

If we now examine Guyyo Boru's reputation in terms of these values, his success is readily intelligible. He exhibited nearly all the personal qualities considered essential for a leader. He was generous, truthful, knowledgeable, and persuasive. He was the speaker who praised the *gogessa* as a whole, including the deceased members of his council. His claim that thirteen of his lineal ancestors had won the *Abba Gadoma* was not outlandish. The chronology the *ayyantu* helped me compile does not go back far enough in history to serve as a check. However, during the past ten generations, Guyyo Boru's ancestors appear on the chronology six times. Raba Yayya — an eponymous figure recognized as one of the men who founded the Gada System — is reputed to be his lineal ancestor. Guyyo Boru eulogized his ancestors, but he did so with great care not to falsify the historical record. Indeed, one of the statements he made was a valuable piece of historical fact. He said that of all the *moggisa* councilors in Borana history, he alone had succeeded in having his son elected into the same office. An examination of the chronology reveals that this was perfectly true. During the past eleven cycles of forty years — which in Borana idiom means eleven generations — eight Abba Gada held the cyclical name *moggisa*. Every one of these, except Guyyo Boru, was succeeded by an Abba Gada who belonged to a different lineage or clan and, hence, could not be a descendant of the Abba Gada in question (see Table 7-1). Only a well-informed Borana could make such a sweeping but accurate statement. In this and other instances, Guyyo Boru exhibited the kind of virtuosity and awareness of history that commanded the people's deepest respect. With good reason, Borana felt that it would be presumptuous to contest his candidacy.

By contrast, Adi Dida's speech was thoroughly defensive and lacking in generosity. Borana admired Adi Dida in the same sense that theater-goers admire the perfectly cast villain. Despite everything, they could not help but respect him for his defiant oratory and his powerful speaking voice. His stirring delivery was the essence of what Borana call *dubbi* (eloquence) — the *sine qua non* of leadership. After the ceremony men, women, and children became addicted to a tape-recording of the speech. From a purely stylistic standpoint, he completely overshadowed the other speakers.

His speech indicated, however, that he did not come out of the protracted conflict unscathed. His opening remarks, "when I rise to praise myself, I know what you are thinking. . .," "I speak well of myself because custom requires that I do so," seemed to indicate that he had some second thoughts about his reputation, and that he was on the defensive. His attempt to eulogize his ancestors was a mediocre performance. The only substantive claim he made — that thirteen of his ancestors had won gada office — received no confirmation from the gada chronologies. Indeed, it was in all probability false.

Borana culture tolerates self-adulation when the speaker is comparing himself with his political rivals, but the culture also demands humility when the speaker sees himself in confrontation with Borana as a whole. Again, Adi Dida violated this aspect of the cattle herder's ethic when he said, "My family is like a salt mine. As the cattleman does not tire of constantly returning to the salt beds, so does Borana not tire of returning to our family." The proper symbolism is that Borana is like a trough of salt to which the individual returns again and again to satisfy his craving. The self-centered twist Adi Dida gave to this customary symbolic expression is what made the speech so majestically galling to Borana audiences.

The speech delivered by Arero Irbi offered a strong contrast in this regard. Arero was generous with his praise for his rivals. "Those who competed against me are brave men. I never raised my voice against them because they are great leaders." Even more remarkable, however, was the manner in which he used the salt symbolism. It was the obverse of Adi Dida's phrase. "The *ladu* (Kallu) is like a trough of salt, and I never took my head away from it."

Much can be learned from the speeches about the moral attributes Borana expect from their leaders and about the system of values by which Borana judge the men who seek political office. Two of the speakers fit the Borana ideal; the third exhibited a jarring deviation in all respects except for daring and eloquence.

Analysis II: The Organization of Social Structures

The case of Adi Dida reveals many facets of Borana social organization. It shows how individuals interact within the framework of the three central institutions: (1) the system of moieties, (2) the age-set system, and (3) the Gada System. These three sets of classes are the macro-categories segregating all Borana males into 400 mutually exclusive groups, *i.e.*, the product of two moieties, ten age-sets and, at present, twenty gada classes. Borana feel that they have the right to ask any stranger the three questions needed to identify him in terms of the above classification scheme. They may go beyond that to narrow down the stranger's classification by clan, lineage, and band. This information permits the identification of any individual with considerable precision.

The purpose of this procedure is not idle categorizing. It is by reference to these elements of the body politic that Borana individuals decide which way to turn for support in situations of conflict or economic crisis. Thus, the candidate who cannot get the support of his moiety may try to mobilize his age-set to exert political pressure. Another candidate may find that he does not have the confidence of his age mates and may turn to his gada class for support. Still another candidate may withdraw from his age-set and gada class and use his clan as a political stepping stone. In short, on a limited scale, *Borana has the characteristics of a pluralistic society*. This is true in spite of the fact that membership in all these groups is based on ascription rather than achievement. Borana has no voluntary associations. One enters a gada class, an age-set, or a moiety by birth rather than by choice. It is customary in sociological literature to assume that the preponderance of ascriptive

groups in a social system leaves little room for individual choice and independent action. [24] The case of Adi Dida demonstrates that nothing could be further from the truth. The individual is free to take political action as a member of an age-set or a gada class or a moiety (clan). *It is this phenomenon of changing alignments within the system of cross-cutting categories that introduces considerable freedom of individual choice into an otherwise rigid pattern of social differentiation.*

The most vivid illustration of this fact occurred in the age-set agitation at Guto. The core group that initiated the action belonged to the same gada class as the clan delegates (6), and to the same clan as the electors (Oditu). By setting themselves apart as an age-set, they were dissociating themselves from the council of electors — to whom they were tied by bonds of kinship — and trying to secure the support of all the youths in the complex temporary camps that surrounded the Ḳallu's village. In other words they were attempting to use the local assemblage of senior warriors as a pressure group. The very fact that they saw the age-sets as an alternative power base that could be activated when gada and kinship ties failed to meet their needs is a significant phenomenon.

Most ethnographies on East African age-set systems stress the fact that age-sets do not fulfill any important functions. For reasons not immediately apparent, British social anthropology has consistently blown up the kinship order and subordinated all other institutions to that order. [25] It is difficult to decide whether this is a bias in the academic tradition or a sociological reality. Whatever the case might be, it is important to realize that in the case of the Galla of Ethiopia, the age-set and Gada Systems are central. The Borana perform most rituals and wage most wars as gada classes supported by age-sets — not as members of clans and lineages — and when kinship groups appear in ritual or in pan-Borana assemblies, they do so as subdivisions of the gada class rather than as autonomous segments of society.

Election is, of course, one sphere in which moiety leaders play a central role. In this sphere, kinship interests are prominent. After the recruitment is completed, however, gada leaders take over. Even in the proclamation ceremony the Ḳallu had no part whatsoever. The child Ḳallu did not attend the ceremony, and his half-brother, the Ḳallu surrogate, sat on the periphery as a spectator.

After the names of the winning candidates have been announced and collectively acknowledged, the new gada leaders are expected to serve their class without regard to kinship ties. Custom prescribes that they abandon their paternal

[24] Lucy Mair, *Anthropology and Social Change*, pp. 123-26. Mair stresses that there is a very limited "room for manoeuvre" or "field of choice" in ascriptive societies. Others, such as Adamson Hoebel and Ralph Linton (cited below), go even further in equating the ascription of roles with lack of choice in social action.

[25] Radcliffe-Brown's opening statement in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (p. i) reads as follows: "For an understanding of any aspect of the social life of an African people — economic, political, or religious — it is essential to have a thorough knowledge of their system of kinship and marriage. This is so obvious to any field anthropologist that it hardly needs to be stated." One might legitimately ask whether this is dogma or hypothesis.

settlements and establish a new band consisting of the councilors and their assistants. Thus, leaders drawn from both moieties are required to live, camp, and nomadize together throughout their active careers. Their settlement (*olla arbora*) is the ritual-political center of the fourth gada class and later of all Borana. No decision can be made and no ritual can be performed unless all six councilors are present. In other words, they constitute the focus of a corporate class.

The gada council bears the authority to wage wars on behalf of all Borana. Even today the gada councils exercise their authority to conscript men from all the clans, including the clans of the Ḳallu. If they cannot get a sufficiently large number of volunteers for the defense of the *olla arbora* and for the protection of Borana shrines and wells, they can coerce men to join them. It should be noted that the moiety leaders have no such powers. Their authority is felt principally during elections and in certain rites of propitiation (*oda* and *muda*). This analysis of Borana politics casts doubt on one of the major dogmas of African ethnography: the dogma that either kinship or territory or both are the main — if not the only — organizing principles underlying political behavior. To begin with, territory is largely irrelevant in Borana because none of the corporate sections we have identified are, in fact, localized. Neighborhood ties are not significant factors in the formation of group loyalties. Kin groups, gada classes, and age-sets are the real bases of political and ritual behavior. Among these three institutions, there is no reason to single out the kinship system for special treatment. Furthermore, it is meaningless to assign distinct "functions" to the three institutions. There is only a minimal division of labor among them and even this low level of specialization does not seem to be stable in time.

As a result of the functional indeterminacy of the institutions, members of the cross-cutting groups are often drawn into conflict with each other. A clear case of this occurred in the *lallaba* ceremony when one of the *luba* fathers failed to give his blessing to the newly elected councilors. The indignation of the celebrants is a good indication of how Borana teach their peers to accept their multiple loyalties: in recent decades many councilors have found themselves in the awkward position of having to praise, bless, and install into office the sons of the very men whom they loudly denounced during the earlier period of negotiations. In this instance the losers were expected to place the interests of the gada class above those of their own clans and lineages. In a sense, therefore, the proclamation ceremony marks the transition from the sphere of kinship and family into the gada sphere or, more accurately, into the complex triadic structure of the adult society.

In Borana, kinship alone cannot explain the nature of the political system. The responsibility of electing gada leaders is, of course, in the hands of the Ḳallu lineages, and both electors and candidates address each other as kin groups. After election, however, it is the gada class, assisted by age-sets, that is the principal repository of political authority. *The moiety leaders, who are the most senior men in the kinship system, are barred by custom from seeking gada office for themselves and from trying in any way to influence the political and ritual activities of the gada councils.* So rigid is this requirement that the Abba Gada must establish his

settlement in one of several ceremonial grounds removed from the *Ḳallu* settlement. This is especially true during the third year of the gada period when the elections are taking place. At this time and at certain other times during the gada period, there is a ritual requirement that the moiety and gada leaders should not cross paths.

Various checks on the *Ḳallu*'s authority have already been discussed. Of these, the most important is the fact that he and his descent group are barred from holding any senior gada offices. Among the Sabbo it is the *mana* *Ḳallu* of Karrayyu as a whole — *i.e.*, the major lineage — that is barred; whereas in the Gona moiety, the restriction is imposed on the entire Oditu clan. Both these groups are admitted into the junior (*garba*) council — the body representing the retired gada classes. This exception does not in any way violate the general principle — that the electors should not have any descent group ties with the candidates — because the *Ḳallu* councils do not, in fact, recruit the junior councilors. The latter are elected by the outgoing gada assembly and passed on, as a group, to the incoming class soon after the transfer of power (*balli*). [26]

Therefore, we are confronted with a paradoxical situation: in one sense custom provides for the *separation of responsibilities* among the three sets of institutional leaders and imposes formal restrictions on their spheres of authority; in another sense they have *overlapping responsibilities*, so that the gada, age-set, and kinship leaders can participate in the same political arena as if they represented coordinate segments of the social system. This ambiguity is an essential feature of Borana political institutions.

The ambiguity is most clearly reflected in their attitudes toward the *Ḳallu* and the symbolic representation of his authority. The speeches of the successful candidates — especially those of Guyyo Boru and Adi Dida — contained numerous references to the *Ḳallu*, which suggested that he was the source of legitimacy for their political power:

My *ladu* (the *Ḳallu*'s armband) is strong, my *ladu* is wise. Our *ladu* is blameless. It is like a bunch of thorns — untouchable. Those who raise their voice against it shall be poisoned as by snakebite. Those who do not, shall be left in peace. Such is the strength of the family of the *Ḳallu*, such is their wisdom.

In making this statement, for instance, the Abba Gada was not alluding to the human power, strength, and wisdom of the *Ḳallu* but rather to his supernatural attributes. He is strong, but his strength is like the power of the lowly snake and quite unlike the virile power of warriors.

Another way in which Borana symbolize the ambiguous sacred authority of the *Ḳallu* has to do with his sexual attributes. He is said to be like a woman and upon his investiture he is said to go into post-partum confinement (*ulmaya*). He is

[26] In recent times the *Ḳallu* has begun to exert some influence in the election of junior councilors. This constitutes yet another bone of contention between gada and moiety leaders.

barred from carrying arms and from taking part in any of the activities Borana consider especially masculine. As so often happens in African cultures, ritual authority is symbolically associated with an ambiguous sexual identity. [27]

When Borana are asked to identify the people who elect the *adula*, they will readily respond, "*Ḳallu*, *Ḳallitti*." This is a code message representing a complex political process in which many groups play legitimate or semi-legitimate roles. All these processes are symbolized by the "holy family," — the *Ḳallu* and his mother. Without them the election of councilors would be inconceivable. At the same time it is difficult to pin down the exact nature of their power. They remain in their permanent village while several hundred people representing clan delegations of the eighth gada class come and go. Like the static center of a whirlpool, the house of the *Ḳallu* is the sacred reference point around which the entire recruitment process revolves.

It is interesting to note that neither the *Ḳallu* council (*hayyu* Oditu), nor the Abba Gada in power (Jaldessa Liban), nor the clan delegations (*jarsi gosa*), nor the age-sets (*hariyya*) were mentioned in the speeches, although all of them had critical roles in the negotiations. This is consistent with the myth that the *Ḳallu* and the *Ḳallitti* alone are the "king-makers" and that all other groups are there to "ask" for the offices. The actual political relations are quite different.

As indicated earlier, the child *Ḳallu* did not attend the proclamation ceremony. The *Ḳallu* surrogate was present but he had no significant role in the ceremony. More important than their visible marginality in the ceremonies, however, is the fact that neither the child *Ḳallu* nor his mother were publicly consulted in any of the negotiations concerning the election of councilors. The *Ḳallu* was not consulted because he was too young and the *Ḳallitti*, because she was only a woman.

In theory the *Ḳallu* should work in collaboration with the *Ḳallitti* and assisted by the *Ḳallu* council to elect the senior gada leaders. The *balabbat* is supposed to serve as the liaison between "Borana" and the district administration and strive to keep conflict between Borana custom and administrative directives at a minimum. The age-sets must defend the *Ḳallu* settlement from Guji and Somali raiders and execute the decisions of the gada assembly, especially in regard to offensive wars. The gada in power (6) should remain far removed from the site of the negotiations and stay out of the *Ḳallu*'s dominion. The clans and lineages should compete for the support of the electors and for the support of "Borana." They may offer presents to the house of the *Ḳallu*, not for the purpose of influencing their deliberations, but to facilitate their work and lighten the burdensome responsibility of feeding and entertaining all the clan delegations for an extended period of time.

This is the ideal model to which most Borana would readily subscribe in

[27] Rodney Needham, "The Left Hand of the Mugwe," pp. 26-29. Needham indicates that both sides of the dual symbolic system, including the feminine and masculine symbols, might apply to ritual leaders. See also Max Gluckman, *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations*, pp. 153-56; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, pp. 113-19.

peacetime. It is an important guide for social action. If we look at the actual situation in times of conflict, however, and try to identify the groups involved in that process, we come to the realization that every category we mentioned exercised legitimate, semi-legitimate or illegitimate influence in one and the same political arena. The *balabbat* was ubiquitous and was deeply involved in the activities of the assembly. Far from being a mediator between the district administration and the traditional leaders, he was the main cause of the friction between them. The Abba Gada in power did not refrain from influencing the *Ḳallu's* deliberations as he is expected to do, but instead tried to get access to the decision-making process through the good offices of his able mistress and probably also through the warrior age-set. The age-sets themselves did not guard the *Ḳallu* settlement as custom prescribes but they used their power as warriors like a commodity they can give or withhold at will, to express their support of one candidate against another. Finally, at the center of the stage, we expected to find the *Ḳallu* and the *Ḳallitti* using their sacred authority to fashion the future gada assemblies of Boranaland, but neither of them was, in fact, on the stage.

Many gada leaders insist that "the *Ḳallu* is nothing, he is *makkala*" — a messenger of the gada councilors. They claim that in former times the *Ḳallu* was a simple ritual assistant holding a position and status comparable to that of the *bokku* — the ritual officiant of the gada assembly. The *Ḳallu* themselves conceptualize their roles differently. They compare themselves to the kings (*moti*) of northern and southwestern Ethiopia and cite as further proof that it is they — not the gada leaders — whom the Ethiopian government has recognized as the legitimate leaders of Borana.

There is frequent debate in Borana about the limits of the *Ḳallu's* authority and the nature of his power. There are two diverse models Borana can invoke. Sometimes they will say that he is an assistant of the Abba Gada, and at other times they will say that he is the king (*moti*), depending on the political loyalties of the speaker. The *Ḳallu* can thus be conceptualized as the ultimate source of political authority or as a "sounding board" whose function is merely to reflect the people's attitude. In fact the *Ḳallu* is neither a king (*moti*) nor a messenger (*makkala*). These polarized attributes are simply the extreme termini of the native model that defines the domain of political debate.

A typical conclusion of functionalist anthropology might, at this point, be that the three critical institutions of Borana are "poorly differentiated" and that the native model is not a useful guide to an understanding of the "real" political organization. Such a conclusion would be consistent with the classic Durkheimian presupposition that differentiation is the mark of "advanced" societies and that the less differentiated system of institutions is somehow less effective. [28] That may well be true in regard to some kinds of tasks. When we look at the Borana socio-political system and the specific task with which it was confronted, we realize that rigid institutional specialization would have been thoroughly

[28] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, pp. 70-132.

counter-productive because the latitude open to individuals would have been severely curtailed. Indeed, the most fundamental feature of the political process we have examined seems to rest on the minimal functional specialization of the constituent institutions and the fact that there is a *de facto* overlap in their political prerogatives. That is why the moiety leaders whose contemplated actions proved unsatisfactory to a large number of people found themselves confronted by *balabbats*, by age-sets, and by gada classes. People were making use of their triple affiliation to give the leaders support or to deprive them of it.

Theoretical Implications

This evidence suggests that we are in the presence of an African principle of political organization deriving its effectiveness from an unexpected mechanism: *the fact that cross-cutting institutions perform the same or closely related tasks allows groups to use them as alternate instruments of political action.* I label this phenomenon the *sectional principle* and conceive of it as an idea complementary to the *segmentary principle* formulated by E. E. Evans-Pritchard in his classic monograph on the Nuer.

Segments are discrete units; sections are by definition overlapping. One cannot belong to two coordinate segments at the same time. One must belong to two cross-cutting sections simultaneously. The main deterrent to violation of norms in the former is the threat of counter-force (*e.g.*, feud); in the latter it is the loss of support through the defection of members across sections. [29] The sectional and segmentary principles are not mutually exclusive. The former operates on a higher structural plane than the latter in the sense that the sectional system involves a minimum of two principles of social classification, whereas segmentation is an attribute of a single system. Thus, a sectional system may harbor a full-fledged segmentary structure within one or more of its components.

It might be useful at this point to compare our findings with those of Evans-Pritchard's and by that step attempt to show the relevance of the Borana data to general African ethnography. The broad institutional outlines of the Nuer and Borana are similar, but the manner in which the two social systems are analyzed is somewhat different. Evans-Pritchard describes a society in which segmentary lineages, villages, and age-sets bear the same kind of relationship to each other as do the Borana institutions. I believe that the difference lies not in the ethnographic data but rather in the interpretative models.

[29] Cross-cutting cleavages are a favorite topic of political anthropologists. See Max Gluckman, *Politics Law and Ritual in Tribal Society*, pp. 91-97, 140-41; Mark Swartz *et al*, *Political Anthropology*, pp. 34-35. They have been discussed also by sociologists such as Simmel and Coser with much greater clarity. The most common way of viewing cross-cutting cleavages is to examine them as structural features that inhibit deep schism along one axis. See Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict*, pp. 78-79. This is quite different from our present analysis in that we are not concerned with the "depth of schism" problem but with the range of choices available to the individual actors when the cross-cutting cleavages are functionally redundant.

Evans-Pritchard's analysis of the segmentary structure is as brilliant as his understanding of the sectional system is inadequate. In his study of Nuer age-sets he came into direct confrontation with the sectional principle in operation and failed to realize its import. He describes age-sets as another illustration of the segmentary principle. [30] It seems evident, however, that there is nothing in the structure of age-sets that is analogous to the process of fission and fusion characteristic of segmentary lineages.

Furthermore, Evans-Pritchard has told us very little about the structural relationships between age-sets and lineages or between age-sets and villages. Is it not possible for the Nuer to invoke one or another of these sociological categories to elicit the support of others? If so, the relationship would give rise to a pattern of social action different from segmentary opposition: instead of the massing effect triggered by feuds and growing in an incremental fashion, as larger segments became involved, we would have a more complex and more flexible system of changing alliances in which people would activate their rights in one group or another depending on the degree to which the group supported their personal goal priorities and did not violate their basic loyalties.

In the case of the Nuer, then, we suspect that the sectional principle was at work in the development of political processes. Evans-Pritchard gives unconvincing evidence that two of the three cleavages are functionally distinct and the third is trivial: people, we are told, are mobilized as lineages in ritual, as villages in wars, and as localized age-sets in games. [31] Evans-Pritchard never seriously considered the possibility that the three institutions may be structurally distinct but functionally redundant.

The corresponding institutions of Borana — moiety, gada, and age-set — are not as well differentiated as they might appear if we looked only at the formal order. On the contrary, they exhibit a remarkably high degree of *functional redundancy*. This is not an especially novel observation in African ethnography. The novelty of the present interpretation lies in the fact that functional redundancy is analyzed not as a flaw or a shortcoming but as the distinctive attribute of the socio-political system — the very reason for the effectiveness of the institutions. Without such institutional supports, "free" individuals confronted by a myriad of voluntary associations (as in the West) might be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the political process and withdraw from participation. Leaving political activity to voluntary associations is hardly a solution to the problem.

On the other hand, if people belong to ascriptive groups only, as in most traditional African societies, it is not participation that is the problem but, rather, the limitation of personal choice: individuals cannot exercise choice by changing group affiliation. In Borana, membership in all three institutions is fixed for life. However, to the degree that the cross-cutting groups to which Borana belong have overlapping functions — individuals can throw their weight behind one or another

[30] Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, p. 255.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 254, 257, 260.

group and thereby exert some influence on political leaders. Whether or not this principle does operate in most of the rest of Africa remains to be seen. The idea is worth exploring.

It would be misleading to analyze the basic institutions of Borana merely as redundant. I have already shown that in theory and in fact the institutions are minimally specialized. In the present interpretation, redundancy and differentiation are seen not as the static attributes of institutions but as the two poles of a dynamic continuum: the institutions sometimes control the same areas of life, and at other times they are relatively autonomous or complementary. The conditions under which they become more or less autonomous is something that deserves much greater attention than we can devote to it at present.

Our data leads us to formulate the following principle: *there is an inverse relationship between institutionalized conflict and functional differentiation in human social systems*. Institutions are mobilized as alternate channels of collective action in times of social conflict. Such conflict enhances the degree to which the institutional leaders regulate each other's activities and minimizes the degree of functional differentiation among them. Conversely, the institutions become relatively autonomous in the absence of social conflict, permitting institutional leaders to perform relatively more specialized services for their respective sections.

The sectional principle goes beyond Evans-Pritchard's analysis along three parameters:

1. It applies to higher order cross-cutting cleavages rather than homologous structures.
2. It reexamines the value of functional redundancy in socio-political systems.
3. It points to the apparently negative relationship between conflict and differentiation.

A Note on the Case Method

The strategy employed in this chapter is quite different from the earlier approaches. The purpose of the case analysis was not to elucidate the basic parameters of social structure but, rather, the dynamic qualities of collective behavior. At the end of the analysis, I formulated a hypothesis framed as a relationship between two *variables*. One case study is obviously not enough to establish a "principle." The fact is, however, that ten such cases would not be much of an improvement. So long as we remain with case material, we have no explicit generalizing procedure. The most reasonable way to proceed from here would be to test the hypothesis using quantitative measures of conflict and functional differentiation.

The case analysis was valuable in examining some Borana *values* (truthfulness, generosity, self-praise, humility, mystical interdependence — *daççi*) and some of the nonstructural *forces* (wealth, prestige, alliance, hostility) to which individuals and groups were responding as the conflict developed. All the structures analyzed in earlier chapters (gada cycle, gada classes, age-sets, gada chronology, moieties, and clans) surfaced in the social drama, but we learned nothing new about their internal

ordering. All new insights gained had to do with the nonformalized relationships *between the structures* and the manner in which the protagonists invoked them in an effort to advance their interests or resolve the conflict.

It is important to stress that the sectional system did not become apparent until the case analysis was completed. Nor is it likely that I could have discovered it by means of structural or quantitative analysis. There is nothing in the native model that would lead us even to suspect that the sectional system might have been operating. The Borana presents the three institutions simply as three separate structures having separate or at best interdependent activities. He would never acknowledge that the institutions are functionally redundant. And when they turn out to be just that, in situations of marked conflict, he sees it as a violation of the ideal model.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL

The task now is to examine the principal intellectual traditions in anthropology and their relevance for the study of African social systems. The question is even broader than that: it concerns the relationships of Western social science to Africa and Africans. These larger philosophical questions will be dealt with in the postscript. At this stage, we shall look only at some of the *distinctive methodological contributions* of the principal schools of thought to the present investigation and the theoretical consequences of using one or another method.

The discussion begins with a very brief indication of the methods that were employed in the analysis of the Gada System and the intellectual traditions most closely associated with each method. *Structuralism* is an important contributor to this study. This school of thought is principally of French derivation and most commonly associated with the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss. The second source of ideas is American *cultural anthropology*. Many of the methodological ideas used in this study are derivatives of techniques developed in the positivist tradition. In particular, the quantitative procedures developed by Murdock, Whiting, and their associates suggested to me ways in which similar techniques could be applied to the study of intra-cultural variability. Third, I shall be referring to one particular branch of British *social anthropology*, which has produced by far the most valuable intensive studies of African social systems. [1] The particular method that is most widely used in this school and that I employed in chapter 8 is the method of case analysis. Within this intellectual tradition the works of Max Gluckman and Victor Turner are most directly associated with the development of the method. [2]

There is a great deal more to the three intellectual traditions than is indicated here. At this stage I am concerned with the unique aspects of these traditions not

[1] The larger school of British structural-functionalism is not discussed at length in the present study because it has little to say to methodology. It is too wholistic to be of much use in a comparative study of analytical procedures. Edmund Leach, who is an intellectual tradition unto himself, has made some critical contributions which we shall consider.

[2] Gluckman, *The Judicial Process among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia*; Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*, pp. 73-74, 175-76, 236-37.

the creative redundancies that survive in their interstices. I focus more on their analytical procedures and less on their substantive ideas and theories. Furthermore, it is not legitimate to describe the schools of thought as if they were divorced from each other. From time to time they have exchanged methodological and theoretical ideas. [3] Some social anthropologists have borrowed cautiously from the structuralists. On the other hand, American cultural anthropology is boundless in its enthusiasm for new ways of looking at society and has developed branches that use techniques similar to those of the social anthropologists and the structuralists. [4] In spite of these welcome attempts at cross-fertilization, the distinctive methodological contributions of each school are quite different and deserve careful study.

All three schools of thought have accepted in varying degrees the Malinowskian imperative that sociological theory should grow out of intensive fieldwork, not armchair speculation, and that non-Western societies should be understood in their own terms, not by reference to the West. [5] Later I shall consider the problem of ethnocentrism and the influence of Western values in anthropological research. Aside from this, the questions I raise are mostly post-Malinowskian in character: granted the need for intensive fieldwork, how do we proceed with our investigation, and what do we expect to find at the end of our study? Do we expect to discover laws, [6] formulate descriptive, explanatory, or generative models, [7] establish patterns of co-variation, [8] develop functional [9] or structural typologies, or settle for vaguely perceived "regularities?"

The goals of anthropology are dependent on the nature of the research instruments it utilizes. Its prospects as a discipline are predicated upon the power of the analytical procedures it develops. This is why, in the present study, I have placed so great an emphasis on problems of method. The theoretical conclusions of this study would have little meaning unless the analytical models are spelled out. Similarly, the methodological conclusions cannot make sense without an evaluation of the field study.

Anthropologists often reduce the description of their field experiences to a

[3] The dialogue between Edmund Leach and Claude Lévi-Strauss is one of the most instructive developments in the recent history of anthropology. The relationship between the two thinkers is probably most evident in the collection of essays by Leach entitled *Rethinking Anthropology* and in Leach's biographical study of Lévi-Strauss.

[4] In particular "ethnoscience" and structuralism are parallel developments in the United States and France.

[5] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 1-24.

[6] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, pp. 54-79; S. F. Nadel, *The Foundation of Social Anthropology*, p. 246ff; Murdock, *Social Structure*, pp. 113-83.

[7] Fredrik Barth, "Models of Social Organization." This author is unique in that he claims to have developed a generative model that works, but it is very difficult to see what it is that he has generated or how he went about doing it. The procedure is certainly not replicable.

[8] Nadel, *Foundation*, p. 222ff; Murdock, *Social Structure*, pp. 314-22.

[9] Meyer Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems*, pp. 1-23.

few peripheral comments hedged by apologies to the reader for burdening him with "personal" comments. In so doing, they deprive the reader of important data on which he could base his evaluation. It seems reasonable, therefore, to preface the methodological conclusions with an assessment of the field investigation. This somewhat unfashionable procedure is intended to underscore the idea that field methodology is not a marginal concern. It is the essence of anthropological research and should not be banished to footnotes, prefaces, and appendices.

Methodological Implications of the Field Research

First of all, the fact that I had attempted to devise a structural typology of East African age-set systems *before* going to the field had considerable impact on all the subsequent stages of the project. The concluding remarks of this chapter are a direct answer to some questions raised in the first analysis. As I discovered later, my thinking concerning structural analysis had at that time many factors in common with what Lévi-Strauss calls the structural method. [10] My comparative study of "age-sets" examines the variables that are regulated in different East African systems of temporal stratification. Each variable thus controlled becomes a constant or "invariant" in Lévi-Strauss' terminology. [11] There are five such invariants normally occurring in pairs in each society. Less than two structural constants does not yield a system. Controlling more than two variables causes many critical problems. Some of the problems of the Gada System are due to the fact that the Galla do indeed regulate more than two variables.

Specifically, East African "age-set" systems are based on the regulation of age (A), the numerical size of the group (N), the interval between initiations (I), the interval between the entry of father and son into the system (I') and the distribution of genealogical generations (G) (see Figure 9-1). Using these five

N					
A	1. Masai				
I	2.	5. Otoro			
I'	3.	6.	8.		
G	4.	7.	9. Jie	10. Konso	
	N	A	I	I'	G

Figure 9-1. Structural Typology of Systems of Temporal Stratification

[10] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, p. 279ff.

[11] Asmarom Legesse, "Class Systems Based on Time."

invariants in pairs, we can describe any system of temporal stratification of society, of which age-sets are a special case. The combination of the five variables gives rise to ten different types of temporal stratification. Of these only four have turned up in the ethnographic literature. There is no need to repeat the general results of the analysis here.

The essence of this kind of structural analysis is that the classification scheme it employs has logical limits. [12] It is based on the definition of parameters that exhaustively describe all conceivable types, not merely all observed types of structures. The space formed by the cross-tabulation of the structural dimensions is all meaningful regardless of the availability of ethnographic cases to fill this space. [13]

Such a classification scheme is *productive* because we can use it to describe unknown social systems. After such a hypothetical "description" has been attempted, the job of identifying and understanding concrete cases on the ground is infinitely simpler. On the other hand, the obverse need not be at all true. The accumulation of detailed ethnographic data, in any quantity, is no guarantee that the ethnographer will discover the structural parameters of the institution he has described. [14]

The power of structural analysis thus becomes quite evident. It has the effect of allowing the fieldworker to consider the widest range of structural possibilities before embarking on the field study. This is quite different from going to the field with an open-ended bag of functionalist categories to which one can add new categories *ad infinitum*, as more and more unintelligible cases appear. Such categories might have the unexpected effect of limiting our conceptual horizon rather than facilitating the discovery of new parameters.

At this point it may be useful to indicate briefly how the preliminary hypothetical interpretation of the Gada System turned out when checked against the field data. The main purpose of the model was to speculate about how the Gada System might work given the fragmentary published information then available. This inferential analysis was done against the background of the structural typology (Figure 9-1). The interpretation turned out to be wrong in several respects (all page references are to Legesse "Class Systems Based on Time").

1. It was wrong in examining the Gada System as a closed cycle. The retired classes do not, in fact, go back into the grades as Cerulli suggested (pp. 21, 23), but they continue their careers as separate classes.

[12] Cf. Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology*, pp. 10-17.

[13] Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, p. 16ff.

[14] See for example the case of Masai age-sets in Legesse "Class Systems Based on Time," p. 7ff. In this instance the ethnographer, Alan Jacobs, seems to have been quite unaware of the fact that his data exemplify a most unusual type of "agegrading," one based on the regulation of the age of initiation and the *numerical size* of successive age-sets. Neither Jacobs nor the generation of ethnographers who preceded him in Masailand realized that if two factors are controlled, *i.e.*, the age and size of age-sets, the third factor — interval between initiations — *must* vary. There is no reason why the widely differing reports on the periodicity of the initiations could not be equally correct.

2. The model was wrong in assuming that the adoption of children served as a substitute for the abandonment of children (infanticide). The Borana evidence indicates that the abandonment rules are still in force (p. 25).

3. The possibility that the institution might be unstable was not considered. This, of course, is one of the most significant results of the field investigation.

The model was correct in other respects.

1. The premarital sex rules do have the function of making the highly restrictive rules against marriage and childbearing tolerable (p. 24).

2. The two halves of the gada cycle do correspond to genealogical generations, as predicted (p. 28).

3. The assumption that there is a structural link between the abandonment of children and the age structure of gada classes is correct. The upper age limits of gada classes are maintained because the abandonment rules are still in force (p. 25).

4. Gada classes are not strictly differentiated by age but they do reflect a minimal degree of age differentiation in that the mean age of each class increases as we go through the gada cycle. This is due to the fact that Borana does have lower but not upper limits on childbearing. [15] The Borana system is therefore intermediate between the two systems postulated in the last paragraph of the hypothetical analysis (p. 29).

In retrospect, the hypothetical analysis was extremely valuable in spite of the fact that it was partly wrong. It is far more productive for the ethnographer to formulate detailed hypotheses before going to the field than to approach the field experience in a naive state with the hope that great things will impress themselves upon his blissful *tabula rasa*. What anthropologists frequently mistake for an inductive approach is nothing more than a sophisticated kind of nonpurposive groping.

Fieldwork

The process of checking out the hypothetical model in the field was extremely rapid. It took no more than two weeks of interviewing to determine those aspects of the hypothesis that were productive and those that were irrelevant, or wrong. This intense beginning of the field experience was followed by a slow and difficult process of reorientation. I had to discard favorite hypotheses that did not work out and start afresh with nondirective interviews designed to elicit the Borana's own cognitive categories and relational concepts.

The interviews were not merely intended to elicit responses which could then serve as raw materials out of which the ethnographer fashions his descriptive and analytical models. Nor were they intended primarily to record cases from which one could make inductive generalizations. The Borana themselves were asked to

[15] Circumcision sets the lower limit for raising daughters, and the fatherhood ceremony sets the lower limit for raising sons. Borana neither discourage nor prohibit childraising after the man is circumcised, regardless of age or gada class affiliation.

make generalizations and to abstract the rules governing their institutions. Not only did they make many generalizations; they went further and explained the logical procedures by which they arrived at the general rules. They often found these double level explorations strange and stimulating. It seemed that my informants and teachers had rarely gone as far as I was asking them to go in exposing the implicit rules of their habitual systems of thought. Normally, they do not need to. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that they cannot. They do so with minimal prompting from the ethnographer. [16]

Borana spend much time thinking and talking about the Gada System although most often they think about it in an instrumental way, *i.e.*, as a guide for action or as a medium of socialization. A misbehaving child, for instance, is told about the savage – though imaginary – punishments that would be meted out by the gada ancestors (*abbotin luba*) if he persists in his misbehavior. Similarly, gada leaders are constantly apprised of the historic forces acting upon their terms of office so that they can take the appropriate steps (ritual, war, cattle raids, and so on) to meet the demands of history. My interests in the interviews had a different emphasis. I was after the rules governing the Gada System, and it seems that the Borana were quite willing to go along with me and explore the logic of their normative system.

In the course of these interviews, cases inevitably cropped up; and when they did, I recorded them faithfully. These cases served as the empirical basis for discussing the normative system with people who had a concrete orientation and who were reluctant to discuss abstractions. The cases also served as the basis for formulating the next series of issues to be raised in the interviews. In this regard the recording of cases proved to be invaluable.

The most disconcerting problem faced by the structurally-minded ethnographer is the fact that he keeps running into blind alleys whenever he begins to explore avenues that are meaningless to his informants. In such situations, returning to concrete cases and starting the exploration anew proved to be more productive. Despite this periodic use of case material it should be stressed that if we compared the normative and empirical sides of the interviews, they were heavily weighted in favor of the former. Observation of rituals and the detailed recording of major cases were treated as separate areas.

Interviewing on the Gada System and the gathering of census data were carried out simultaneously. Both these projects went hand-in-hand during most of the fieldwork period. The fact that this procedure was followed meant that the normative and quantitative levels could be compared as the investigation progressed. In some cases, the comparison revealed that the normative data were distorted because there was pressure from the district administration to abolish some gada practices that violated the national system of laws. Such, for instance, was the case of the abandonment of children. Borana were consistently claiming that the practice had long been discontinued while the census was telling another

[16] See page 192 above.

story (see Figure 5-1). The advantage of combining the two types of data is quite clear in this instance. From a methodological standpoint it is important to stress that the census could not have been recorded adequately without knowledge of the social structure, and some aspects of the social structure could not be understood without the census. Ideally, then, the two types of data should be gathered simultaneously or in alternate periods.

Except in the case of the abandonment of children (and in situations of social crisis), I found no reason to believe that Borana were deliberately falsifying information. Hence, I did very little cross-checking of the normative and census data in the field. It is difficult to judge the gains and costs of doing complete statistical analysis of census data before the termination of fieldwork or of breaking up fieldwork time into two separate periods and carrying out a major part of the analysis in the intervening period. This is one area in which radical innovation is possible.

Some field analysis of census data is essential. The purpose of this would be to allow the ethnographer to identify inadequacies in the census before leaving the site of fieldwork. A simple tabulation often reveals huge gaps in the data. Furthermore, if successive tabulations are made as the data are accumulating, one can determine when the sample is large enough for the type of statistical analysis which he intends to make. Roughly speaking, the census-taker should not stop until each one of the units of analysis is represented and until the two latest tabulations exhibit virtually identical profiles. This is the point of diminishing returns beyond which additional data do not yield a commensurate increase in information. Of course, this type of tabulation is possible only if we have some idea of the units of analysis to be used in the final computation.

The Borana census has one very unusual characteristic and my awareness of this accounts for the disproportionately large amount of time I devoted to it in the field. Borana are one of the few nonliterate societies in the world who can tell their age accurately. It is very difficult to find ethnographies that contain reasonably good information on the age structure of nonliterate communities. Anthropologists usually estimate age by inspection! This makes it very difficult to do an empirical analysis of the role of age in social structure. Anthropologists occasionally come up with methods of collecting age data that are quite ingenious. I refer to the technique of gathering data on relative age for all the members of a reasonably large community, fitting the data on a hypothetical population curve (percentage of population by age), and making age estimates for all the individuals in the census. [17] The technique is far more accurate than the inspection method. Before we can apply this method, however, we must have a few reasonably accurate age censuses representing societies at a low level of technological development and having little or no health facilities. With the introduction of large scale public health

[17] Frederick G. G. Rose, *The Classification of Kin, Age, Structure and Marriage amongst the Groote Eilandt Aborigines: A Study in Method and Theory of Australian Kinship*, pp. 42-51.

services, the population curve changes dramatically. If we can find a few nonliterate societies that have a way of reckoning age, their populations can serve as the base line for estimating age in other societies at a comparable level of development. This is possible because the available censuses suggest that the variation of population curves from one nonliterate society to another is, relatively speaking, very small. It is small in comparison with the errors introduced by using the very crude procedures mentioned above.

In view of the possible theoretical value of the Borana census, I spent much time collecting and double-checking the information on age. The informants gave their age in years, the year and gada period of their birth, and their age-set affiliation. Future investigators might replicate this census and compare it with the technique described earlier of inferring absolute age from relative age. Such a procedure would allow us to check the accuracy of Borana age reckoning. In very rough terms, the present data are probably accurate to the nearest year. Some of the data collected during the last stages of fieldwork are probably accurate to the nearest month. In the early stages of fieldwork, it was not possible to gather very accurate information because I did not then adequately understand the ceremonial schedule of the gada period and the techniques of reckoning time in months or days.

The recording and interpretation of transition rites was one major undertaking that was not part of the original research design. That the rites did occur in the middle of the fieldwork period is a most wonderful coincidence. Only in the course of the preliminary field survey did it become apparent that they were scheduled to take place in the summer of 1963. At that stage there was enough time to modify the research design and to devote about three months to the observation of the rites. The explosive events leading to the election of the gada councilors were also quite unexpected and occurred at the same time as the transition rites. I learned about this conflict only after being in the field for several months. The background data on the nascent conflict were collected during the spring of 1963.

I took an active part in the rituals of the "first" *gogessa*. I belonged to that *gogessa* by virtue of the fact that the Abba Gada, Jaldessa Liban, had admitted me into his gada and given me the same clan and lineage identity as himself. In all the ceremonies of the *dabballe*, gada and *gada moji*, I had an obligation to contribute ritual supplies (*katto*) in the form of honey, butter, and cloth purchased in the Arero or Negelli markets. Membership in the clan and gada class involved a certain degree of joking behavior. The Borana were on the whole tolerant toward any breaches of custom that I committed. They were not so tolerant in regard to moiety etiquette. All women fall into two categories and must be addressed in radically different ways. One can take liberties with the women of the opposite moiety but not with the women of one's own moiety. This introduced a new and rather burdensome obligation of having to know who was who in every community in which I worked. From time to time we suspended the fiction that I was a member of the Galantu clan to permit interviewing and census taking in a reasonably neutral

context. In particular I tried to maintain the role of "outsider" in the course of the election and proclamation of *adula* councilors. Adi Dida's supporters, who belonged to the "third" *gogessa*, totally dismissed my posture. They insisted that because I was a friend of the Abba Gada, I could not be sympathetic to *their* cause. Of course, they were right in their assessment of my attitude toward Adi Dida, but I was not about to admit that fact and abdicate from my position of disinterested observer.

No attempt was made to utilize participant observation as a formal research strategy. I did not take an active part in the *performance* of any rituals. At the same time, there were no rituals I was not allowed to observe or record.

Intensive interviewing on time reckoning was done very late in the second year because it was the most difficult problem. Part of the reason for the difficulty was that I did not know enough astronomy to keep up with my Borana teachers, and partly it was due to the fact that the process of decoding the technical language of Borana time reckoning was a very slow process. Often, what they told me in January only began to make sense in March! I therefore blindly collected information on dates anytime that I found a new informant who had some knowledge of the days, months, and stars. Along with the star lore, I obtained one date every month or so. Each entry consisted of the name of the day (*ayyana*), the month, the year of the gada period, the phase of the moon, the number of days since the last new moon or full moon, and the position of the moon against the background of the stars. This information was entered in a logbook along with the date according to the Gregorian calendar. I was collecting this information even in those frustrating periods when nothing made sense and I dismissed the whole thing as some kind of "divination." What convinced me that I was dealing with science rather than divination was the fact that on several occasions in the spring of 1964, men who lived in widely separated parts of Borana came up with almost identical calendric information. The probability of any recent contact between them appeared negligible, and I reluctantly resumed my record of dates after neglecting it for a short period.

The last month of fieldwork was full of surprises. I spent the month in Addis Ababa, and during part of that time I was joined by Arero Rammata. In the city it was possible to have the undivided attention of this distinguished historian for an extended period. In Borana his services were in great demand. There were many men, women, and children who were just as eager as I was to hear him "talk gada" or just tell wonderful stories. As a result of these final conversations with Arero Rammata, I belatedly became aware of the total historical cycle and of the *makabasa* epicycles, and I hastily recorded as much about them as I could. For that reason, the analysis of the chronology must be considered tentative and preliminary.

The fact that Arero Rammata was far removed from his natural environment and free from the pressures to which he was normally subject in his home made it possible for us to go into an exploration of complex problems that were understood by the Borana laity only at a subliminal level. These interviews were very different

from what I had been accustomed to in Borana, where the interview so frequently turned into a large, noisy conference or, even worse, a merry festival in which the playing back of interview tapes was the main feature of entertainment. The "off-base" interview, which is held far from the informants' home, should probably be adopted as an excellent research strategy to supplement the normal kind of ethnographic interview carried out *in situ*.

Methodological Conclusions

This investigation goes against the present trend in anthropology in which the investigator aligns himself with one columnar intellectual tradition, immerses himself in the types of problems habitually tackled by that tradition, collects the same kind of information his predecessors have gathered, and subjects it to the kind of analysis his school of thought permits and encourages. This whole trend is extremely constraining and counter-productive.

I have adopted the three perspectives successively for the purpose of examining their strengths and weaknesses and for the purpose of raising the leverage of the investigation to the highest possible degree. The methods are combined, but the combination is not a simple incremental process. As each method is applied *in relation to other methods*, it is redefined, restricted, and rendered more explicit. Furthermore, the interaction between different kinds of data is examined with the hope of demonstrating that the three methods should be interdependent analytical procedures, not alternative philosophies of society.

The Peace in the Feud

The three schools of anthropological thought are held together by a healthy and enduring feuding relationship. They confront the young scholar who is embarking on an anthropological career with a bewildering array of evaluative epithets each designed to guide him toward the "correct" view of human society. If the novice carries out a purely structuralist interpretation of society, the other camps will criticize him for being "tidy-minded, unreal, trivial." If he explores the ambiguities of social life, the structuralist will accuse him of projecting onto the social system the confusion that exists in his own mind, and the behavioral anthropologist will criticize him of being "mystical" or "particularistic." If he then loses trust in his capacity to gain an objective understanding of society and restricts his domain to observation and quantification, he will be accused by the other schools of "dust-bowl empiricism" of missing the very qualities of structure and paradox that make man what he is and distinguish him from other species of animals.

Whichever way he turns, he is in trouble. This is the present level of discourse among the three schools of thought. Rarely does an investigation go across the borders of structure and process, process and paradox. At best, anthropologists may go so far as to make the hackneyed observation that there is a disparity between the

"ideal" and the "real" in human cultures. In this regard, we have not yet reached the level of sophistication of the young Karl Marx for whom Hegel (the idealist) and Feurbach (the empiricist) were two creatures who had to be incorporated into one and the same model after their respective errors had been duly exposed. [18] Rarely do we give the two realities equal weight in our analyses and attempt to pursue the consequences of that assumption.

For many contemporary anthropologists, the choice of one or another method is part of a lifelong philosophical commitment, and the question of the relationship between methods is much less significant than the question of the validity and power of each method as applied to an autonomous empirical domain. Therefore, we must take one final regressive step into the realm of classification and consider each method as if it dealt with an autonomous body of data before we proceed with the study of the interaction between different kinds of data and explore this truly challenging facet of anthropological research.

If we were entirely rational men not subject to the quirks of history, we might have classified the three branches of anthropology under the categories of "cognitive," "behavioral," and "dynamic." *Cognitive anthropology* would include the study of language, of the grammar of human thought, of man's accomplishments as a classifier, a model builder, and a myth maker. *Behavioral anthropology* would include ethological, ecological, demographic, and observational studies, all of which view man as an organism in a community of organisms, and the community as interacting with the natural environment. *Dynamic anthropology* would deal with all forms of human crises arising from the uneven distribution of scarce resources. It would include the study of conscious conflict in human society, of man's attempt to reconcile his behavior and his cultural models, and, when they are irreconcilable, his attempt either to change the empirical and cultural realities or to raise his problem to the realm of paradox reflecting the fan of meaning, the range of alternatives which the society places within the reach of its members.

It is probably not useful to attempt to persuade the anthropological fraternity to abandon the classification of the discipline under the chauvinistic banners of French (structural), American (cultural-empiricist), and British (social) camps, despite the fact that each camp is multi-national in membership. Nor can we hope to systematize the confusing array of labels we use to describe the branches of the discipline. We are, in fact, at the mercy of the history of our profession, and we are not free to scrap our native model — the result of a century of *bricolage* — any more than the native is free to scrap his models and start anew.

Problems of Cross-Method Analysis

The approach adopted in this investigation might be called "cross-method analysis." The essential feature of this method is that it examines three different types of *social facts* and attempts to examine relationships within and between each body of

[18] Karl Marx, "The Holy Family (1844), or Critique of Critical Criticism Against Bruno Bauer and Company," and "The German Ideology."

data. Perhaps the most important practical fact about this procedure is that it is extremely time-consuming. It can be executed much more effectively as a collaborative investigation by students of culture trained in divergent traditions and willing momentarily to set aside their chauvinistic loyalties for the purpose of examining the dialectic parameter of human society.

This approach raises a large number of questions for which anthropology has no rough-and-ready answers.

What are the legitimate domains of each method? Does each method have boundaries beyond which the analysis cannot extend without violating the logical and methodological constraints on which the method rests? What are the properties of the type of data each method elicits? Is one method better suited for the study of some institutions and not others? *Do different analytical procedures sometimes yield contradictory or inconsistent results?* When they do, how do we deal with the dilemma? Do we modify our methods, or do we consider the possibility that the contradiction may be inherent in the social system under study? What procedures do we have for reconciling the results of different analyses? Should we change our assumptions in one analysis on the basis of findings resulting from another analysis? Does the availability of one kind of data influence the gathering and interpretation of another kind of data? If so, should we not devote some thought to the order in which we collect and analyze different kinds of data?

These are the problems of cross-method analysis. They are all problems that arise directly out of the plurality of vantage points I have brought to bear on a single ethnographic study. Although the three approaches were present in my mind – in an exceedingly nebulous form – at the start of fieldwork the questions we are now considering all surfaced in the course of gathering and analyzing the data and cannot in any sense, be regarded as part of the original research design. In this regard, the procedure employed here is inductive and quite different from the deductive procedure adopted at the start of fieldwork.

The methodological problems are important in their own right, whether or not we can supply adequate solutions for them. On some of these issues – such as the order of analyses and the order of data gathering – it is not possible to give definitive answers at this stage because I have tried out only one of several ways of ordering the different phases of the investigation. Some insight can be gained into the special characteristics of the particular order I have employed, but its merits relative to other orders of analyses remains to be seen. In other respects, I have reached fairly definitive conclusions. In particular, the results concerning the domain and logical boundaries of each method are relatively unequivocal.

Domains

An interesting fact that became apparent in the course of executing the separate analyses is that each method calls for very different kinds of data and consequently each method exposes different facets of the social system.

The structural analysis dealt mainly with *cognitive categories* such as *luba* (gada

class), *kariyya* (age-set), *gosa* (clan), *mana* (lineage), *ayyana* (time, days, mystical power), and *relational concepts* such as *walanna* (adversaries), *kadaddu* (allies), *gogessa* (vertical alignment of gada classes), *makabasa* (epicycles), and *daççi* (mystical interdependence). It also showed how these sociological categories and relational concepts are governed by a set of rules, such as the permutation rules governing the lunar-stellar conjunctions and the *makabasa-gogessa* correspondences. The total complex of rules builds up into a system that is internally consistent and has a compelling influence on the thought processes and collective behavior of the Borana. The data used in this analysis is almost entirely drawn from Borana language. The fundamental modality of thought predominating in these data is dichotomy. Each concept is a way of either segmentalizing the sociological reality or of establishing relationships between the resulting dichotomies.

At no point in this analysis did I try to ferret out latent functions. Quite the contrary, the analysis is completely consistent with Borana thought and grows directly out of it. The analysis renders explicit what is contained implicitly in the social system and in the associated verbal model. My structural model of the Gada System neither violates nor contradicts the cultural model.

The statistical analysis, on the other hand, allowed me to examine the influence of certain sociological variables on the institution, variables the native model does not link with the structure of gada classes and variables whose connection with the institution is explicitly denied.

Here we are definitely dealing with latent functions. [19] Neither the native model nor the underlying cognitive categories are of any use in this phase of the analysis. Thus, when we raise such questions as the relationship between the wealth of lineages and the degree of their retirement in gada grades, we are considering a connection the Borana themselves rarely make.

Borana have no interest in measuring the amount of wealth or the degree of retirement. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that because Borana culture does not give these factors much attention they are therefore unimportant. They have a very real and direct impact on collective behavior. It is precisely in regard to such factors that quantitative analysis becomes the only dependable way of discovering relationships.

Finally, the election of 1963 was analyzed. This is essentially a record of social drama, a case history of the complex and volatile assembly that met for several weeks to try to resolve an issue over which Borana came to the brink of civil war. Here the fundamental modality of human thought that came to the fore is quite different from the thought processes that were dominant in the course of normal interviews leading to the structural analysis. In these latter interviews, men and women constantly resorted to consensus-building mechanisms and were very reluctant to be interviewed individually lest they report information that, upon further checking, turned out to be wrong. During the turbulent weeks preceding the election of the *adula* councilors, however, a different mental set was at work.

[19] Robert K. Merton, *On Theoretical Sociology*, pp. 73-138.

People distrusted each other and dismissed the reports of their adversaries on the grounds that their statements were "motivated." There was no question of consensus. One could only hope to get a more or less balanced record of the polarities.

The case study allowed me to examine conflict as it unfolded. This process was accompanied by a heightening of linguistic and behavioral ambiguity. *The same society that utilized a generally univocal mode of communication under normal circumstances began to invoke ambiguous classificatory and relational concepts in the face of conflict.* It was often the same concepts concerning roles and statuses that received a univocal emphasis at one stage and a multivocal emphasis at another stage.

Conflict is the established domain of case ethnography. It seems obvious, however, that the study of conflict is not the same as the study of social structure. The effect of social conflict is not to create or maintain structure but to reduce it to its most rudimentary proportions. Social systems based on conflict tend to become simple polarities because the groups in conflict are intolerant of any other structural principle except the one on which the conflict itself rests. The more intense the degree of conflict, the more likely that structural differentiation will be reduced to a minimum. Conflict is an anti-structural force. It begins to develop into a rudimentary structural component only when it is limited, regulated, and ritualized.

When conflict theorists come to their grand conclusion that "conflict binds the very groups which are in a state of balanced opposition," the statement might impress any "reasonable man" as a hopelessly mystical way of looking at human society. I doubt, however, if there is a simpler way of expressing this reality because the ambiguity it embodies is not, in fact, the result of fuzzy thinking on the part of the ethnographer. It is an inherent aspect of the social system. There is a special affinity between social conflict and the ambiguous mode of human communication.

To sum up, the fact that we passed systematically from the structural to the quantitative and finally to social drama analysis permitted us to consider the special domains of each analytical procedure. These procedures are sometimes used rather expansively by their enthusiastic proponents. I believe that each method has a restricted domain in which its analytical leverage is highest and that the application of a perfectly valid method to the wrong kind of data is one of the most wasteful problems now plaguing the discipline.

The two domains most frequently confused are the structural and the quantitative. The domain of case material is, by definition, fuzzy. But it should be possible to keep the other areas reasonably distinct. We conceptualize structural and quantitative procedures in such a way that the first deals only with those aspects of human society governed by culture and by native idea systems. The other deals with those aspects of collective behavior that derive from the fact that human society is, in some respects, very similar to other animal societies and is governed by the same forces to which they are subject. One method deals with discontinuous data whose discontinuity rests on the peculiarly human practice of categorizing and cognitively segregating groups. The other deals with continuous data that have

Table 9-1. The Parameters of Cross-Method Analysis

	BRANCHES OF ANTHROPOLOGY			
	<i>Cognitive (Structuralism)</i>	<i>Dynamic</i>	<i>Behavioral (Empiricism)</i>	
Methods of analysis	Structural method	case analysis	quantitative method	
Types of data	discontinuous (categories)	mixed (episodes)	continuous (variables)	
Modalities of thought	univocal	multivocal	nonvocal	
Domains {	Society (synchronic)	coherent cultural models	conflicting or ambiguous models	independent of cultural models
	History (diachronic)	nongenetic	microgenetic	macrogenetic

direct parallels in animal societies and that constitute systems unto themselves regardless of what the culture has to say about them.

Analytical Boundaries

Up to this point the adherents of the three schools of thought might, with reservations, accept these conclusions. The second set of conclusions, however, go beyond the identification of special domains to indicate the areas in which the application of each method is logically and methodologically *not* legitimate. These conclusions touch upon so many cherished traditions that we can hardly expect to find anthropologists who will agree about them. The conclusions that we must draw are these:

1. The use of the case method as the primary instrument for the study of social structure is a misapplication of the method.
2. Similarly, the use of quantitative procedures as the main analytical tool for the study of social structure is a misapplication of that method.
3. Structuralist procedures alone cannot explain long-term social change or the micro-genesis of social systems.

The use of the case method to analyze social structure is so well established in anthropology that the very suggestion that this body of research rests on a methodological error smacks of heresy. Like many heresies before it, however, it is true. British case ethnographers have often claimed to be studying social structure when in fact they were engaged in analyzing its very antithesis. They have characteristically concerned themselves with the subtle forms of behavior, the

extra-legal and the subnormative aspects of social life. At the same time, they treat all coherent formal structures as sociological legerdemain, as something rather fake created by the ethnographer to impose order on his data or by the native to hoodwink other natives.

Let us retrace our steps for a moment and think about the analysis of Borana society. The structural analysis demonstrated that structures resting upon cognitive discrimination can be as orderly as the grammar governing language. We cannot assume that this is the only kind of order in human society. In the analyses of instability we saw the kinds of regularities that are not based on native conceptual schemes but that are, nevertheless, of the utmost importance for our understanding of collective behavior and social change. Such regularities are not the stuff that social structure is made of. They are rather events, processes, and trends that exist in spite of structure and, frequently, in opposition to structure. *These analyses lead us to the conclusion that structure is best understood categorically, and process is best understood quantitatively.* We therefore fail to see what the British case ethnographer — who is suspicious of categoric or quantitative analysis — can contribute to our understanding of structure or long term trends.

This is a dilemma: it seems obvious that British social anthropology is a most creative and prolific school of thought. At the same time, it seems that it has nothing to offer to the central concerns of anthropology. This conclusion would be completely true if the human condition were reducible to structure and empirical process, but it is not. There is a third domain that is both anti-structural and anti-empirical. This is the domain of creativity, ecstatic religion, prophetism, and revolution. It is here that British social anthropology has made its greatest contribution, and by comparison, the structuralist and empiricist interpretations of these phenomena appear to us lame and unreal.

This is why Turner's newly born classic, *The Ritual Process*, is bound to emerge as a milestone in the history of anthropology. It represents the culmination of an enduring trend in British social anthropology away from social structure. Turner has finally established liminality and multi-vocality as the third major area of anthropological analysis. His study is appropriately subtitled *Structure and Anti-Structure*.

Turner did not invent the concept of liminality. [20] He is, nevertheless, a pioneer of the same stature as Murdock and Lévi-Strauss. He has extended the interpretative power of the concept of liminality far beyond the sociology of initiation rites, the limited ethnographic context in which the concept developed. He has established that the topsy-turvy world of transitional and marginal groups, dominated as it is by a rich multi-vocal symbolic medium, is nothing less than the third facet of human society. It is a domain that is just as important as structure and variability. It is a domain in which the categoric distinctions that normally segmentalize the social field are temporarily held in abeyance, allowing the human community to experience the bonds of total empathy. These inordinately fragile

[20] The concept appears first in Arnold Van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*.

liminal communities exist only for very brief periods of history, and in the very process of dying they give rise to new forms of social structure or revitalized versions of the old order. Liminality is the repository of the creative potential underlying human society.

Liminal phenomena should not be seen merely as isolated events in the life of the community. They are also an enduring feature of the living community. There is a drive toward liminality in every organized society for the simple reason that structure is always a source of dissatisfaction for some individuals. Most structures perpetrate some injustice to one or another segment of the community. Hence, part of the community often marginalizes itself, "abdicates" from the social system, and by that very act sets itself up against the established order. The very presence of the liminal person casts doubt on the thinking of the community about the validity of its way of life. Faced with this type of threat, the society may respond by institutionalizing the liminal person, making his status one of the many ordinary statuses available to all citizens.

It is most unfortunate that my data on Borana have not yielded adequate material concerning liminal communities. This is partly due to the fact that Turner's work is quite new and could not have served as a guide in the process of gathering field data. It is also due, in part, to the present state of Borana society. The Borana do not seem to be undergoing any radical short-term upheavals. Indeed, other segments of Galla society would have been much more productive in this regard. Further studies might reveal that liminal communities do exist in Borana in a rudimentary state. There are at least two phenomena that appear to be the beginnings of the liminalizing process. The towns of Arero and Negelli have a few families of urbanized Borana who regularly take part in the *zar* cult, a form of spirit possession that seems to be the refuge of marginal men and women. Similarly, converts to the Muslim cult of Sheik Hussein make up another group of marginalized Borana who do not belong to any established religious community and who no longer take part in traditional Borana ritual. The sociological significance of these processes is at present unknown.

What I did find is the second type of liminality. The *dabballe* and *gada moiji* are liminal persons of the institutionalized variety, who enter into that state not because they are dissatisfied with the normative order but because they stand at the borders of the social structure and are therefore elevated to the status of divine mediators and free critics of the men of power. The balance and opposition between these grades and the *gada* grade (VI) are precisely what Turner meant by the dialectic between structure and anti-structure, between office holders and marginal men, between "bureaucracy" and *communitas*.

Conflict, liminality, and the microgenesis of social structure constitute the exclusive domain of dynamic anthropology. All these aspects are, in common, dominated by the multivocal mode of human thought and for that very reason cannot be subjected to formal structural or quantitative analysis without radically altering their meaning. These are some of the areas in which the case ethnographer's approach has proved to be most productive.

The case analyst excludes certain types of data, such as formal structures, from his mental purview in order to limit his object of study to manageable proportions. It would be a mistake, however, if he were to assume that what he excluded from his field of vision does not exist. Consider, for instance, the statement made by Gluckman at the end of his authoritative case analysis of Barotse jurisprudence. [21]

Social life, always and not only in a period of great changes, is marked by (to use Shiller's words) ambiguity, diffuseness, deviating phenomena.

Admittedly, the statement was made under the pressure of unfavorable criticism. Nevertheless, it reflects a view of social life that is a direct product of the fact that Gluckman has chosen one type of behavior (conflict) as his special area of study and one approach (case method) as his principal analytical tool. As I have already indicated, there is an association between ambiguity and conflict in the sense that society becomes functionally redundant and status-role systems become more diffuse in times of strife. The pervasive ambiguity of social life reflected in the general works of Gluckman is an artifact of the methodological choices he has made. [22]

Social anthropologists believe that case analysis is not only useful for the examination of social dynamics; they also claim that *structures* can be abstracted from such data. That may or may not be true, but it is certainly not the most effective way of discovering structures. One does not have to write the history of a chess bout in order to understand the rules of the game. One does not have to observe feuds in order to discover the rules governing segmentary structures in human society. Case histories are best suited for the purpose of formulating hypotheses about interaction processes and short-term social change and for the analysis of such critical problems as flexibility, ambiguity, liminality, conflict, and redundancy. However, case studies can tell us very little about structure, in the proper sense of that word. The case of Adi Dida, or any other case, is not on the path leading toward the discovery of the gada cycle or the gada chronology. Indeed, it takes us to a domain far removed from the structural model. Even if we did succeed in identifying some structures on the basis of case material, we would have taken the most tortuous path to get there, because the structures can be discovered directly by interviewing knowledgeable informants and eliciting cognitive categories and relational concepts from them.

One major problem with case studies is that they are elusive and unmanageable. Important crises cannot be scheduled. By their very nature, they are unpredictable. The exigencies of fieldwork are often such that we have to settle for the more frequent types of episodes that yield, upon analysis, models that explain trivialities. Significant events may occur at the beginning or the end of fieldwork, or they may not occur at all during that period. An event like the case of Adi Dida,

[21] Gluckman, *The Judicial Process*, p. 405.

[22] Gluckman, *Custom and Conflict in Africa and Order and Rebellion in Tribal Africa*.

which agitates the whole society down to its very foundations and exposes so many hidden forces, is not at all a common occurrence. Judging from the oral history of Borana, it might occur on average once in each generation.

The greatest problem with case ethnography is that it does not seem to yield valid and testable generalizations, partly because the generalizing procedure itself has not been worked out and partly because the data themselves have a proliferating, unsystematic quality. Faced with this problem, the case analyst often falls back on particularism and vivid description and claims that his data, unlike the structuralist's or the empiricist's, exhibit the characteristic of "authenticity." What he really means, of course, is that he has seen it all and does not quite know what to do with it.

Only the structuralists have made plausible claims that their method can yield universal and testable laws. Lévi-Strauss, for instance, believes that his method will yield results that will permit us to understand the kinds of "social laws" he believes exist at the base of every social system. In this regard, structuralism has not yet lived up to its promise. After searching through several works of Lévi-Strauss, I have been able to find only one instance in which he can be said to have demonstrated the existence of social law. His study of the avunculate comes closest to that target. [23] That the possibility of demonstrating the existence of social laws should be established in such a narrow domain is not surprising. By carving out a limited field of study and ignoring factors external to that field, structuralism discovers regularities that are otherwise undiscoverable. Lévi-Strauss believes that after the existence of the lower-order systems (such as the avunculate) has been demonstrated the same method can be applied to the study of the relationship between institutions. This remains to be seen. At present the less rigorous procedures of British social anthropology seem to be the most productive in the study of the cross-institutional relationships.

The statistical procedure has one very important advantage. It is a reasonably definite way of resolving issues concerning magnitudes in human society. Its generalizing procedure is unambiguous. The procedure is devoid of the mysticism — so widespread in the social sciences — whereby questions are asked only if they promise to be incapable of solution. Like structuralism, however, the statistical method achieves a measure of decisiveness by carving out a narrow domain — although the method of defining problems and dimensions is different from structuralist procedures. In quantitative ethnography and in cross-cultural research, the epistemology of how variables are selected has yet to be worked out. The method is less disciplined than structural analysis, and the freedom derives, in part, from the fact that the model is on a different scale from the social facts it seeks to analyze.

The structuralist carves out his domain under the constraints imposed by his data. Thus, the boundaries of the avunculate Lévi-Strauss discovered are not, to my

[23] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, chap. 2.

mind, a question of arbitrary choice. [24] If we drew the boundaries erroneously, the system would reveal contradictions as in the earlier formulations of the avunculate by Radcliffe-Brown. [25] The situation is analogous to the omission of a phoneme in comparative linguistics. If we left out a phoneme in comparing the cognates of two genetically related languages, as often happens when the linguist's native tongue does not make the phonemic distinction in question [26] the rules of soundshift designed to demonstrate the equivalence of cognates would reveal persistent contradictions.

In his study of the Gada System, Cerulli left out one component of central importance: he believed that the abandonment of children had no connection with the institution. So long as he maintained that assumption, he was unable to demonstrate that the Gada System was indeed a system. Failure to incorporate this and other structural factors into his analysis led him to interpret the age structure of gada classes in a manner very different from the pattern established in this study. [27] This example shows that *the procedure of selecting factors to be included in structural analyses is not arbitrary. It is constrained by the structure itself. This is possible only because the model is on the same scale as the phenomena it explains.*

Not so in quantitative ethnography. If we omit a vital factor in gathering or interpreting our data, there are no jarring contradictions to clearly indicate the shortcomings of the model. In other words, when we fail to include some relevant variables in the analysis, our only guide is the magnitude and significance of associations; the correlations we obtain will be low and that serves as a rough guide. In regression analysis, for instance, when the multiple correlation approaches the maximum value of 0.99, we can be reasonably sure that we have adequately delineated the boundaries of the "system," *i.e.*, of the group of variables that interact most directly. The actual value I obtained was 0.85, indicating that I have come close to defining a major part of the statistical environment of the institution.

In social drama analysis there are no *definite* criteria for deciding what to include in the study. Nor do we have even a rough guide for determining whether or not we have taken all the relevant factors into account. In the case study (chapter 8) I used somewhat arbitrary procedures to define the sociological boundaries of the area under investigation by selecting some protagonists and informants and not others, by the network of friendships I had cultivated, by dwelling on some themes and not others, and so on. Some effort was made to let this amorphous "system" define itself by pursuing the lines of investigation suggested by the activities of the

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function*, pp. 15-31.

[26] See for example Edward Ullendorff's phonological study *The Semitic Languages of Ethiopia*. Here the linguist failed to recognize that gemination is an important parameter of the phonemic system. After completing the analysis, the author realized the gap and inserted a few erroneous examples of gemination in an appendix. Italian scholars such as Enrico Cerulli have no difficulty in isolating this phonemic feature because their own language makes the distinction.

[27] Cerulli, "Folk-Literature," pp. 168-69.

protagonists. Had I pursued the network fully, however, I would have found that it extends over a much greater area than the Gada System or Borana as a whole. It includes Guji, Arsi, Somali, Wata, Garri, Gabra, Konso, the Ethiopian government, the Kenya government, traders, hunters, missionaries, and so on *ad infinitum*. We must draw the line somewhere and we are often compelled to make that decision on the basis of intuitive criteria which other investigators could never hope to replicate.

Both the cross-cultural school and British social anthropology have this weakness in common. The former do at least have an empirical procedure for testing when system-boundaries are being approached; the latter have no such procedure. Case analysis has the potential of exposing an infinite variety of patterns of social relations. That is the source of its strength and weakness.

Finally, what is the connection between the synchronic study of social structure and quantitative analysis? Is it ever necessary to collect frequentative data in order to understand structure? In the present study there were only two instances when statistical procedures were used for this purpose. The seniority ranking of lineages was inferred statistically from verbal behavior (roster of councilors). Similarly, the degree to which Borana do, in practice, refrain from raising their children before entering the second half of the gada cycle was deduced from census data. [28] In both these instances, the only reason it became necessary to use statistical data was because the informants could not agree about the norms or the practices involved.

Thus, quantitative analysis is useful in determining either covert norms (abandonment of children) or norms not governed by strictly mechanical procedures (seniority). Beyond this, however, it is not clear that statistical analysis has any relevance at all to the study of *synchronic* structures.

In this study, one of the purposes of the quantitative analysis was to discover long-term trends in the development of the Gada System. The simulation showed that over a period of about four centuries the institution has been changing according to an orderly pattern of transformation. Case material is of little value for the identification and examination of this type of change. The lack of comparability of data from one case to another is a serious handicap because the cumulative properties of social change tend to drown in the plethora of individuated data. Similarly, structural analysis *in its present form* is of little value for the study of structural change precisely because the analysis is on the same scale as the native models it seeks to interpret. As yet we have little evidence that the structuralist can use his method productively in the study of transitive structures, and there is good reason why the evidence is not forthcoming: the facet of human society the method elicits is dedicated to the denial of the apocalyptic End to which all change seems to point. [29] Hence, one reason the temporal dimension plays such an insignificant role in the works of Lévi-Strauss is because the data he has chosen to examine have a timeless, unchanging quality.

[28] See pp. 142, 145-46 above.

[29] Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology*, p. 16; Leach, *Rethinking Anthropology*, p. 125.

There is another reason – a much more fundamental one – why structuralism has remained a-historical. This has to do with the deletion of variations in the course of abstracting structural dichotomies. Lévi-Strauss' attitude toward the study of variation is reflected in the following comment:

One ethnographer working in South America expresses surprise at the way in which the myths were conveyed to him: "The stories are told differently by almost every teller. The amount of variation in important details is enormous." Yet the natives do not seem to worry about this state of affairs: "A Caraja, who travelled with me from village to village, heard all sorts of variants of this kind and accepted them all in almost equal confidence. It was not that he did not see the discrepancies, but they did not matter to him. . . ." Quoted from W. Lipkind, "Caraja Cosmography," *Journal of American Folklore*, 53 (1940). [30]

There is a direct link between synchronic variability and diachronic change. Just as natural selection generates change by acting upon the existing range of genetic variations, so too does the influence of extra-systemic factors such as demography and ecology induce structural transformations by acting upon the range of institutional responses present in the social system. To the extent that Lévi-Strauss ignores behavioral and cognitive variations in culture, he is unable to gain much insight into the nature of change. The fact that some of the informants, or even the typical informant, of the anthropologist pays little attention to variation is not adequate justification for our ignoring it.

Order of Analyses and Interaction between Domains

In this investigation the order of analyses I followed was (1) description, (2) structural analysis (life cycle), (3) simulation, (4) regression analysis, (5) structural analysis (historical cycle), and (6) case study. In some respects this order of analyses could not have been modified because the results of one study were the preconditions for the next. In other respects the order could have been altered.

First of all, the simulation directly presupposes the structural model. It also presupposes knowledge of the demographic properties of the society. In combination, these two types of phenomena generated a process that replicated the profile of the actual gada population. The simulation could not have been carried out without the normative data or without the census.

As employed in this investigation, the regression analysis is directly dependent on the structural analysis and the simulation. In chapter 6 the question was whether or not the gada process had come to an end and whether the population had stabilized. There were no sociological variables with a sufficiently large impact on the gada process to retard it significantly. The answer thus obtained was a direct response to the questions of stability raised by the two preceding analyses.

Is this the only way of ordering the analyses? It probably is not. The regression

[30] Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 12.

could have been executed as the second instead of the third step, and all the variables significantly correlated with the retirement index could then have been easily incorporated into the simulation. That would probably have raised the power of the simulation to a higher plane. It is, of course, still possible to carry out a second round of analyses with that objective in mind. There is much room for innovation and experimentation in this regard.

Another very closely related strategy might be called "systematic feedback." Instead of changing the order of analyses, we could maintain the same order, repeat all the analyses, and in the process of repeating them allow the results of the subsequent analyses to influence the premises of the earlier ones. As they stand now, the successive analyses influence each other only in a uni-directional manner.

It should be possible to execute three analyses – A, B₁, B₂ – and return to A and repeat that analysis armed with the most important and most relevant results of B₁ and B₂ (see Figure 9-2).

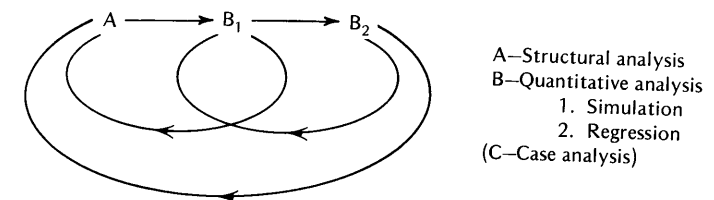


Figure 9-2. Ideal Pattern of Feedback between Different Analytical Procedures

One result of the simulation that was not expected at all was the massive decline in the population during the first century after the rules of the Gada System were imposed on a normal age-graded population. My original structural analysis did not, and could not, have taken this factor into consideration. The question that now arises is this: should we reinterpret the structural model to incorporate this critical discovery? If we did that, would it not be a violation of the boundary between structure and measure drawn by Lévi-Strauss? [31]

Indeed it would be. I believe it is justified, however, because there are specific situations when nature violates the conceptual autonomy of social institutions, and we cannot understand the resulting transformations of the institutions unless we take into account the processual forces acting upon them. No interpretation of the Gada System that fails to take the demographic forces into account can be complete. Granted that these forces do not, in the short run, affect the structure of the Gada System. They do, nonetheless, have a far-reaching implication for the viability of the institution as a whole and for the persistence of its components.

Here, then, is one area in which feedback between quantitative and structural analyses is not only possible but unavoidable. Demographic processes can have an impact on structure if they are sufficiently extreme. *When population changes wipe*

[31] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, pp. 283-89.

out one or more components of a differentiated structure, such as the gada cycle, then the structure as a whole is altered. [32] This is precisely what has been happening to the Gada System throughout the past four centuries. Consequently, the institution does not become fully intelligible until we view it from a diachronic perspective.

So great was the impact of the decline in population that in almost all parts of Galla society the highly restrictive rules of the Gada System were relaxed. *Different rules were relaxed in different parts of the Galliñña-speaking community.* The resulting structures are highly instructive because they are in fact readily intelligible permutations of the basic model.

We have fragmentary evidence of two of the many permutations we expect to find. The evidence is from Guji (near Borana) and from Shoa (in central Ethiopia). In nineteenth century Shoa, the group observed by Cecchi, the grades in the middle of the cycle contained individuals in their eighties. In other words, these men would have had to be about forty years old when they entered the beginning of the cycle. My own interviews in Guji territory contain similar evidence suggesting that the Guji case also seems to have taken the same kind of turn as the Shoan groups. I interviewed some men who were about forty to forty-five years old and who belonged to the *dabballe* grade (I). Such individuals would, of course, be in their eighties when they reached the middle of the formal cycle (grade VI). Thus, the Shoan and Guji situations appear to be very similar but different from the Borana case. I would suggest, in both instances, that it is the decline in the total population and in particular the relatively large decline of the warrior and ruling classes that caused the northern societies to discontinue the marriage and childbearing rules. That, in turn, gave rise to a highly accelerated expansion of the age span of the classes.

Of course, the two situations cited here cannot take place in Borana. The maximum age of each gada class is delimited by the very fact that the fathers' class is not allowed to raise children before reaching grades V and VI. Hence, the Borana classes are spiraling only outward (clockwise) whereas the Shoa-Guji pattern was spiraling outward as well as inward. Stated differently, this means that in Borana the average age of the class is becoming progressively smaller, and people are therefore living far beyond the end of the gada cycle; whereas in the Shoa-Guji case, the oldest members of a class were becoming older and the youngest were becoming younger. Consequently, in Shoa and Guji we would expect to find a few uninitiated classes in the empty stations preceding grade I. We have no evidence that such classes exist. The alternate models we are developing here, however, strongly suggest that such classes probably did exist in the nineteenth century in Shoa and

[32] An example of this type of process occurs in Eggan's study of Hopi social structure. Hopi clans were dying out rapidly, and their totems were being taken over by the surviving clans. Consequently, the structure of the totemic system appears quite chaotic unless we view it in historic perspective. This is an instance in which social structure cannot be understood from a purely synchronic perspective (Fred Eggan, *Social Organization of the Western Pueblo*, pp. 76, 110).

still exist in contemporary Guji society. It is obvious that we have to postulate the existence of "pre-grades" in order to account for the forty-year-olds whom we find in grade I. Of course, these peer groups may or may not have any formal gada grade affiliation. In some cases (Shoa) it appears that three *dabballe* grades were created to accommodate these uninitiated classes. In other cases (Guji?) it seems that they spent many years marking time, without any gada grade position. Gada class membership is, of course, always unambiguous because the relative positions of the father and his children are fixed. As such, the groups may acquire some corporate functions even before their admission into the formal cycle, just as in Borana they have retained some corporate function after they have been retired out of the system. These inferences can be checked against historical and ethnographic data when such data become available.

This, in short, is what I mean by *systematic feedback: reformulating the basic model of the gada cycle and explaining the structure and genesis of its local variants using the most definitive results of the simulation analysis as our new baseline.* This is obviously a research frontier that has considerable potential. It has the possibility of creating a dialogue between two intellectual traditions (structuralism and empiricism) that have so far remained divergent in their interests.

So much for the interaction of structural and quantitative analyses. The same kinds of questions arise when we consider the relationship between structural and case study methods. Can these approaches be combined? If so, in what order should the analyses be executed? In the present investigation, the case study was interpreted after the structural analysis was virtually completed. The principal advantage of this procedure is that it provides a well-defined framework within which to analyze the relatively ambiguous pattern of conflict involved in the social drama. It was helpful to understand the formal meaning of the principal sociological categories that the protagonists invoke before I could gain adequate understanding of their motivation and interaction. The procedure also revealed when the protagonists were distorting the native model for political advantage.

It is obvious, however, that this procedure has problems. There may not be a clear-cut cognitive framework within which the social drama is being enacted: the society may be in the course of developing a model or may have two or more divergent models people can invoke in times of conflict. As I indicated, even the modalities of human thought that predominate in the two domains may be different. The question about the advantages and disadvantages of the two orders of analyses is therefore a wide-open question.

What would be the advantage of starting the entire investigation with intensive case analyses, including studies of critical moments in the history of the society under investigation? If, for instance, the conflict over the case of Adi Dida had occurred at the start of fieldwork and if the analysis of the case had been completed before the end of fieldwork, it would have been possible to formulate the hypothesis concerning the relationship between conflict and functional differentiation and to gather data systematically to subject the hypothesis to test. This, of course, is a very common procedure in quantitative sociology and in the

American variety of functionalist anthropology. Both tend to by-pass structure and proceed directly from case material to statistical analysis. Had I followed such a procedure, my contribution to anthropological method would have been negligible. It would merely be an exercise in the application of existing methods to a new body of data.

Can the Generative Method Be Applied to Any Social System?

An important problem we must now briefly consider is whether or not the generative model has general applicability as a method. Is it merely a complicated model designed to examine an obscure social system, or is it in fact a method relevant to other types of sociological investigation?

I believe that *the generative method can be applied to any social structure that is governed, partly or wholly, by disjunctive categories and prescriptive rules.* Any society, regardless of the level of its technological advancement or its structural peculiarities, can be subjected to such an analysis. Sociologists are likely to object to this claim because they have been led to believe, under the influence of the native models they study, that urban-industrial societies are free from excessive categorization and prescription. I shall therefore take the case of the United States, *the urban-industrial achieving society par excellence*, and show how the model might be applied.

One of the many immutable prescriptive rules of America is the classification of human beings into Blacks and Whites. These are mutually exclusive categories in the sense that one cannot be both Black and White at the same time. One cannot help but be impressed by the extreme rigidity of this native model. It denies the fact that Blacks and Whites do intermarry and enter into elaborate, illicit sexual liaisons. The myth of the two races is preserved by the simple rule that all the offspring of interracial unions are automatically classified as Black. Given this rule, the number of Blacks must of course increase. Add to this the fact that Blacks have a higher birth rate than Whites. If these were the only factors acting upon the field, the Black segment of the population would increase at a phenomenal rate. The strange custom of "passing" probably tends to limit this process and act as a negative feedback mechanism: the number of very light-skinned Blacks who pass into the White category annually might be a significant factor. The country also boosts the White segment of the population by means of preferential immigration laws, and this tends further to retard the process.

Given these factors and any other factors that turn out to be significantly correlated with them, it should be possible to simulate the instabilities of the American racial caste system and predict how long it will be before the system collapses and the categories are modified. Of course the categories may be retained regardless of the consequences. Alternately, the actual color continuum may be recognized and institutionalized in the same way that the races have developed in Brazil. Another possibility is that the system might mutate into a triadic structure of Blacks, Whites, and Mestizos — each with its own "Bantustan." Such

transformations are bound to come about if indeed there are cumulative demographic factors acting upon the cultural model and if race continues to determine the distribution of scarce resources.

We should not, of course, assume that the triadic structure would be any more flexible or stable than the diadic. If a triad were to develop, a new kind of drift would be initiated that would let the Mestizo category grow at the expense of the other categories. The only way that the process can be arrested is for the races to abandon the peculiarly human habit of categorization and acknowledge the fact that, from the point of view of race, American society is indeed a continuum.

The reader might feel that this example is somewhat far-fetched. But is it, in fact? Is it not true that our legal systems are full of categoric prescriptions that do not work? Even cultures which have whole armies of professional *bricoleurs* (legislators) do not get around the problem. The legislator modifies our laws from time to time to bring them into closer alignment with reality. However, legislation can never resolve the contradiction between cultural prescription and empirical drift. Viewed in terms of our model, legislative behavior is nothing more than man's attempt to leap from one prescriptive trap to another. The only way that human laws could be made to work is if they were framed as variables rather than as structures.

I have deliberately selected the United States as an example because it stands at the other end of the technological continuum from Borana. The two societies are, nevertheless, confronted with the same kinds of problems because they are both the result of the same kind of human proclivity. The same holds true for the speech communities of Switzerland, the caste system of India, the rules of cousin marriage in southern Asia, and the elitist castes of modern Africa. I cannot go into a discussion of these products of human categorization to show the specific ways in which the generative method could be applied to them. Suffice it to say that my method is not parochial merely because it was developed in analyzing a particular social system.

I cannot, with any degree of confidence, state that the model presented here has never been applied in sociological research because my familiarity with the field of complex societies is strictly limited. The recent study by James Beshers, *Population Processes in Social Systems*, which is an analytical review of demographic studies in sociology, generally confirms the hunch that the studies carried out to date have, on the whole, failed to incorporate structural analysis into their models. [33] Even when sociologists examine the impact of demography on "social systems" they are concerned with the relationship between sociological *variables* and demographic and ecological factors. Rarely do they consider the sociological *system of disjunctive categories* as a system in its own right and analyze its interaction with all *variables*.

The difference between these two approaches can be stated quite succinctly. The first recognizes that structure and empirical variability are *two realities that*

[33] James Beshers, *Population Processes in Social Systems*, *passim*.

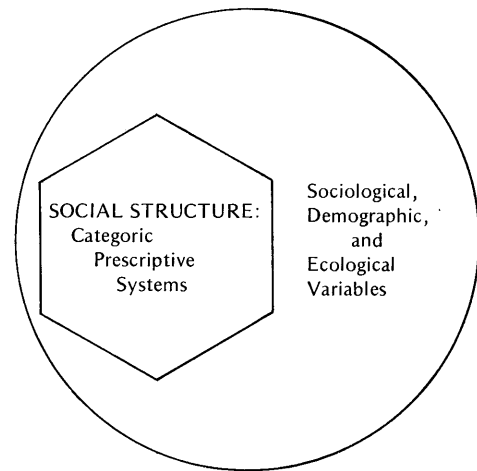


Figure 9-3. The Dialectic between Structure and Measure (*Asymmetric*)

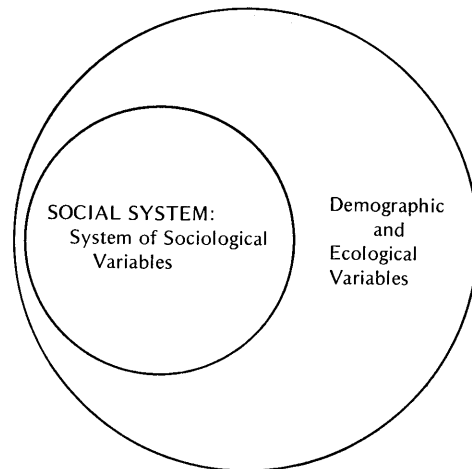


Figure 9-4. The Interaction between Social and Natural Forces (*Symmetric*). Note the relative position of the sociological variables in the two models.

have no common measure, i.e., they are *asymmetric* in the same sense that the mathematician uses that concept. The second approach does not recognize the distinction. It reduces structure to the empirical level and therefore creates a symmetry of data which is entirely an artifact of the analytical procedure. As such it can only examine the interaction between the non-sociological variables and the least important aspect of the social system, i.e., its quantitative characteristics. Hence, it has no access to the *asymmetric dialectics* analyzed here.

Theoretical Conclusion

Anthropologists assume that at a given stage of societal evolution, functional differentiation is a relatively enduring feature of the social system. Modern societies have a great number of specialized roles, whereas primitive societies have few such roles. As societies evolve, roles become progressively more specialized, and role bearers more interdependent. [34] Durkheim compared the specialized society with an organism in which each organ is essential for the proper functioning of the organism as a whole. In contrast, primitive societies were said to lack many specialized parts. The elements were so organized that we could substitute one component for another without affecting the operation of the total system — something we cannot do when the parts are specialized. Durkheim believed that such societies depend heavily on religion as the force to hold them together, since they lacked the interdependence that binds a system of specialized roles. [35]

There is much evidence to confirm the basic soundness of this insight. In Borana, the paucity of specialized roles and the profusion of ritual activity tends largely to confirm Durkheim's idea. What seems to receive little support from the Borana data, however, is the very common assumption that the level of functional differentiation is a relatively stable component of society. The Borana social system suggests that the few specialized roles they have (actually quite numerous by comparison with other pastoral societies) are variable in nature. To attempt to describe Borana as a system of definable roles as we did in chapter 3 is only a partial rendition of the reality. The study of social conflict (chapter 8) revealed that *the process of defining and redefining leadership roles is itself at the center of the political arena* and constitutes an integral part of the political process. [36]

Conflict and Functional Redundancy

Borana institutions and institutional leaders have ambiguous and poorly differentiated functions. This is no accident: it is a very useful form of ambiguity. Borana are reluctant to admit sharp distinctions in the activity and authority of their institutional leaders. This *functional redundancy* and ambiguity appear to be a most important repository of Borana personal freedom. A society such as Borana, in which all of one's institutional affiliations are ascribed, has much to gain by permitting individuals to act through one or another institution to accomplish the same social and political tasks.

This situation is the opposite of the pattern we find in the Western world. Whereas the West allows personal freedom through the reduction of ascriptive categories, Africa seems to accomplish the same thing through the reduction of

[34] M. D. Sahlins and E. R. Service, *Evolution and Culture*, pp. 50ff; and Isaac Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*, pp. 203-21.

[35] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, chaps. 2 and 3; and *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

[36] Cf. Leach, "Conceptual vs. Ritual Models."

functional categories. In the former, voluntary associations take the place of the more basic categories of social classification such as generation, age, sex, and kinship. In the latter, the basic categories are retained, but the resulting groups often have overlapping domains of activity. These two patterns have similar consequences. They both have the effect of creating unstructured spaces within the total grid of the social structure, spaces in which the dynamics of individual variability and inter-group influence are allowed to flourish.

My conclusion, then, is that the extent of ascription in a social system cannot, by itself, tell us much about the range of social action open to individuals or groups. This finding violates a common piece of anthropological folklore that is reflected in the following passage from Adamson Hoebel:

The greater the number of achievable statuses in a culture, the wider is the room for full participation (potentially, at least) by all members. The more extensive and rigid the ascribed statuses, the more constrained are the individuals in their culturally prescribed roles. [37]

Ascription tells us how people become the involuntary members of different social groups. It tells us nothing about what they do within the groups. The characteristic assumption of the sociologist and anthropologist that ascriptive social systems are unfree is, in the Borana case, clearly false.

My second conclusion is that *there is a negative relationship between functional differentiation and the degree of institutionalized conflict*. The specific observation on which I base this generalization is the fact that Borana was least differentiated at the height of the conflict over the case of Adi Dida and relatively more differentiated before and after that period. During the conflict gada councilors, clan leaders, moiety leaders, and age-set leaders were all drawn into the same arena; and in that state their specialized roles appeared to have been momentarily neutralized, rendered irrelevant. Appeal to bureaucratic principles was useless. All the leaders became part of the decision-making process as a result of many informal strategies that the culture condoned or tolerated. It is worth noting that bureaucratic principles (e.g., the *Ḳallu/balabbat* role distinction) received instantaneous support in the district administration, but not among the great majority of Borana participants who were drawn into the debates. [38]

[37] Adamson Hoebel, *Man in the Primitive World*, pp. 387-88. A similar view is also expressed by Ralph Linton, the founder of role-status analysis in anthropology: *The Study of Man*, chap. 8, especially pp. 128-31.

[38] It is, of course, gratifying for district governors to play a part in the definition of traditional offices because they are vaguely aware of the irrelevance of their own offices to the traditional socio-political system. This type of bonus involvement tends to reinforce their authority and legitimate their administrative power. Their efforts, however, tend to have the effect of increasing the bureaucratization of Borana society (more titles, more offices, sharper role distinctions, all enshrined in documents) rather than broadening the degree of participation in the political process. We must therefore realize that two different kinds of processes are going on in the two arenas. So long as the participants remain in the arena governed by customary law, rival groups are extremely reluctant to acknowledge the authority that emanates from specialized roles.

This, then, is the reason why it might be useful to reconceptualize functional differentiation as a *variable* in a dynamic continuum and not as a structural feature of society. In other words, it should be treated as a scarce resource rather than a building block. At any one time, the extent of differentiation probably depends on the amount of institutionalized social conflict. When conflict is intensified, functional categories tend to dissolve, and conflicting social units tend to become homologous elements of the social organization.

If this generalization is correct, then the case ethnographer who tries to understand society by analyzing cases of social conflict is likely to get a more homogeneous picture of the social system than the observer who gathers his data in relatively tension-free contexts. The former is likely to give a simpler, less differentiated model of the social system than the latter. Both would be correct as *partial* descriptions of the same reality, if the ethnographers realized the temporal limitation of their respective vantage points.

The conclusion regarding the negative relationship between conflict and functional differentiation is not intended to suggest that these opposed *forces* produce an equilibrium. There is no ground for assuming that the system of functionally related variables could not undergo change of a cumulative nature. The discovery of functional relationships between hitherto unconnected sociological variables has nothing to do with equilibrium states. Equilibrium is an issue that must be examined in its own right and requires analytical tools that go beyond the normal tools of functional analysis.

Equilibrium and Change

In his classic thesis on the political systems of highland Burma, Edmund Leach has done a great service to our understanding of non-Western societies by questioning the validity of our assumptions about equilibrium systems. [39] In so doing he opened up a new era in anthropological research.

Leach demonstrated that the human groups we call "societies" need not be as well bounded as we think they are, nor do they have to be in a state of equilibrium. They sometimes have structural features, such as marriage rules and rules governing the social rank of groups, that are quite unintelligible and unworkable if we try to study them within the imaginary boundaries of one "society." When we look at the same marriage rules within the framework of the *relationship* between two or more neighboring societies, however, the rules make ample sense. In other words, certain types of social structure can be understood only if we take adjoining "societies" as a single system and analyze them as such.

With this premise, Leach proceeded to discover one of the most astonishing facts in the history of anthropology. The two interdependent Burmese "societies" (Kachin and Shan) had two radically different political systems (egalitarian and monarchic) and some of the constituent communities were in the process of changing from one type of political organization to another. In other words, there

[39] Leach, *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*, p. 218ff.

were two ideal models available to any community, and consequently the total system was in a state of continual flux. [40]

What we have found in the present investigation is a phenomenon similar to Leach's, but operating on a different plane. We are dealing with the interaction between systemic and para-systemic factors within the same "society." This interaction creates disequilibrium in the Gada System. The simulation and the regression analysis examined the impact on the Gada System of forces not governed by gada regulations. Hence, after completing the structural analysis, I proceeded to explain the relationship of the Gada System to the para-systemic forces in nonstructural, quantitative, and equilibrium terms.

It is important to stress, however, that I do not take equilibrium for granted as is usually done in sociology and anthropology. Equilibrium is not to be assumed but to be demonstrated. The presupposition of undemonstrated equilibrium states in social systems has given us a body of illusory "explanations" that have tended to retard the progress of social science. We are frequently told how certain institutions are "dysfunctional" because they tend to upset the equilibrium state. We are also told how such unfortunate situations might be avoided. Such ideas are advanced without any definition of the forces that are presumed to make up the equilibrium state or an explanation of how these forces are normally balanced against each other. The following is a fair example of this intellectual tradition.

A marriage produces a temporary disequilibrium situation. In the small and close-knit groups with which we are here concerned, any removal of a member results in disequilibrium. The event that most markedly produces this result is death. But on a smaller scale, the removal of a daughter by marriage is also a disturbance of equilibrium in her family. . . .

The establishment of a new equilibrium after a marriage requires that in certain types of kinship or family structure there is a need felt for emphasizing the separateness of the two connected families. There are many customs in which this is shown, but a single example must suffice. In the Nguni tribes the personal name that a woman has in her own family, as a daughter, may not be used by her husband's family, who have to provide her with a new name, which again will not be used by her own relatives. She is a different person in the two groups. [41]

Nowhere has the author demonstrated that an equilibrium state exists, and therefore his explanation of the naming customs is an untestable hypothesis. The existence of equilibrium must be demonstrated before we can use it to explain unusual marriage practices or anything else.

Edmund Leach concludes his Burma study with the following remarks:

We functionalist anthropologists are not really "anti-historical" by principle; it is simply that we do not know how to fit historical materials into our framework of concepts. Thus Professor Evans-Pritchard, who is

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-14, 264ff.

[41] Radcliffe-Brown, *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 58.

one of the most staunch upholders of equilibrium theory in British social anthropology, is also an advocate of the use of history in anthropological analysis, but he has not yet explained how the inconsistencies between the two positions can be resolved. The beautiful lucidity of Evans-Pritchard's own writing is only possible because he limits himself to the description of certain unreal types of situation — namely, the structure of equilibrium systems. What I have tried to do in this book is to describe the structure of a system that is not in equilibrium and my method of demonstration has involved trying to display two or three different "ideal systems" at one and the same time. [42]

My objective is similar to Leach's; my method is different. Leach uses a large body of case material and historical data to demonstrate the instability of the institutions. I have used quantitative data to accomplish the same purpose. Aside from this, there is another very significant difference between the two approaches. Leach shows the impact of two ideal systems operating in the same human group. What I have done, on the other hand, is to demonstrate how a single coherent "ideal system" is continually subverted by demographic and other noncultural forces so that it never seems to return to an earlier or an equilibrium position.

I would now go beyond this conclusion to spell out the logical extension of my thesis. No prescriptive social system can take into account all the demographic and ecological forces acting upon it. And so, on logical grounds, we arrive at the conclusion that there can be no social system that is stable — whether it is technologically primitive or advanced — *if the system is based on prescriptive rules*. This conclusion, does, I believe, hold for all societies because every human institution does in fact prescribe some aspect of behavior. To the extent that it does, it cannot endure. The prescriptive system must, from time to time, change to accommodate the cumulative effects of noncultural forces. The inconsistencies between these domains are not ironed out in short order. Human societies are capable of tolerating vast disparities in their organization without suffering the dire consequences the clinically oriented ethnographer habitually predicts.

It might be argued that the instability of Borana society is due to the extremely prescriptive nature of their rules and that Borana is not typical of nonliterate societies. What is special about Borana is not the fact but rather the rigor of their rules. All societies have some prescriptive regulation of collective behavior and must therefore be confronted with the same kinds of problems. In general, we expect *the degree of instability of institutions to be positively related to the rigidity of the underlying rules*.

Nonliterate societies might appear stable to us either because we have based our analysis on their self-image or because the type of change that we discover has cyclical properties. A volatile political system such as the one described by Leach seems relatively stable because the range of alternatives is known and whatever changes we find occur within that range: it seems to be nothing more than a pendular swing between two extreme positions. However, even this kind of stability

[42] Leach, *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*, pp. 282-83.

is probably subject to the type of processual forces we are considering here so that the completion of a cycle never brings the system back to a previous position.

Whether or not any social system is ever stable remains to be seen. By *stable* I do not mean static but rather a system that *changes only within a given set of boundaries – free from cumulative transformation*. That type of stability cannot be demonstrated unless the advocates of equilibrium theory produce a sufficiently nonmystical definition of the presumed forces (magnitudes, quantities, continua) whose interaction is supposed to balance out into a stable equilibrium. Only then can we make any progress toward a reasonably decisive validation or invalidation of equilibrium theory. Meanwhile, we can proceed with the demonstration of structural instability and change in societies that are supposed to be stable or unchanging.

It is indeed most surprising that cross-method analysis has led us to a conclusion that is opposed not only to the equilibrium theory of the functionalists but also to some aspects of the theory of Claude Lévi-Strauss. That, most certainly, is not what we set out to do. The structuralist argument that nonliterate societies are in a state involving minimum internal disorder and therefore a minimum degree of historic process is clearly contradicted by the Borana data. It is true that in his most recent work – in response to a barrage of criticism – Lévi-Strauss has grudgingly acknowledged that structural models might be subject to change and that they might even accommodate exogenous forces that impinge on their internal order. Even in this work, however, the main thrust of his theory is dedicated to explaining how the models neutralize the effects of history, rather than trying to demonstrate how they change in response to it. [43]

Cross-method analysis gives us a perspective that is broad enough to permit an evaluation of the legitimacy of such conclusions relative to the limitations of the method – limitations that do not at all become apparent until we have empirically contrasted one method with other methods. *The type of entropy we have identified exists between the areas of human life characteristically analyzed by the three schools of thought, not within them.*

Lévi-Strauss' theory comes closest to my thesis when he says that:

Whenever social groups are named, the conceptual system formed by these names is, as it were, a prey to the whims of demographic change which follows its own laws but is related to it only contingently. The system is given, synchronically, while demographic changes take place diachronically; in other words, there are two determinisms, each operating on its own account and *independently* of the other. [44]

I accept this distinction and I have based this entire investigation on it. It is necessary only to add one critical qualification: that the two determinisms are *not* independent of each other, that they are perpetually in contradiction and that out

[43] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, p. 233ff.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 66, emphasis added.

of this contradiction is born a process which is no less orderly than structure itself.

In the analysis of the gada puzzle, the gada calendar, and the gada chronology, I arrived at conclusions very similar to those of Lévi-Strauss using the same kind of data and the same kind of analytical procedures. *Considered in its own terms* the Gada System admits no change and resembles a self-perpetuating clockwork mechanism. Viewed in conjunction with the demographic forces which are acting upon it, it turns out to be one of the most unstable institutions on record. The Gada System is carefully constructed to deny the asymmetric dialectic (between structure and demography) which is transforming it and substitutes for it a different kind of "dialectic," namely, the dialectic of symmetric oppositions, of alliance (*kadaddu*) and rivalry (*walanna*), of positive and negative valences which cancel out. This system of oppositions – which is central to the theory of Lévi-Strauss – cannot be regarded as dialectical in any sense which is remotely comparable to the Marxian concept. Whereas Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the systems of oppositions is not generative, the Marxian concept is inherently so and cannot be understood except in a diachronic framework.

It seems perfectly clear that Lévi-Strauss' conclusion about the synchronic nature of traditional societies is an artifact of his method. If the anthropologist starts out with the assumption that his model is on the same scale as the reality it seeks to analyze, then he is not justified in making inferences from his data about the diachronic properties of the societies he has studied. Such inferences are not justified because the domain selected by the ethnographer is dedicated to the denial of change; it deletes real contradiction (*e.g.*, between structure and demography) and substitutes for it a set of conceptual "contradictions" or dualisms that have the effect of preserving rather than changing the system.

If, as Lévi-Strauss says, structures are "instruments for the obliteration of time," the Lévi-Straussian genius is an instrument for the suppression of variability and change. [45] To the extent that the structural model of the anthropologist is an extension of the cultural model of his informants, there is a subliminal bond between them: one cannot reveal what the other conceals.

I close this discussion with that most forthright of anthropological confessions that appears in Lévi-Strauss' *The Raw and the Cooked*. The mode of thought reflected in this statement is the source of the intellectual license that has allowed Lévi-Strauss to gain mastery in the limited domain he has carved out for himself:

For if the final aim of anthropology is to contribute to a better knowledge of objectified thought and its mechanisms, it is in the last resort immaterial whether in this book the thought processes of the South American Indians take shape through the medium of my thought or whether mine take place through the medium of theirs. What matters is that the human mind, regardless of the identity of those who happen to be giving it expression, should display an increasingly intelligible structure as

[45] Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, p. 16.

a result of the doubly reflexive forward movement of two thought processes acting one upon the other, either of which can in turn provide the spark or tinder whose conjunction will shed light on both. And should this light happen to reveal a treasure, there will be no need of an arbitrator to parcel it out, since, as I declared at the outset the heritage is untransferable and cannot be split up. [46]

The Nature of History

History must indeed be "split up" if it is to become intelligible. We cannot understand the nature of the history of society unless we view it dialectically from two different perspectives. The analysis of cultural models should be carefully separated from the analysis of the trends and undercurrents acting upon it. Many earlier writers have pointed out the necessity of distinguishing the study of mythology and empirical history because they seemed to represent different types of realities. But these writers usually strain to produce some consistency between the two levels. If they cannot produce such consistency, they become zealots trying to correct erroneous "myths" or to "straighten out the historical record." I look at the situation from two standpoints, and I make no presupposition that there should be any consistency between the two realities.

The *formal model* of the gada cycle and of the chronology is a perfectly orderly system that is *internally consistent* and that has a great influence on collective behavior.

The *empirical model* (regression) is equally important and demonstrated how the numerical properties of the Gada System interact with exogenous variables to produce a very unstable social system.

The *combined model* (simulation) showed how the two disparate bodies of data (structure and measure) interact to produce a predictable process of orderly change.

The Gada System does not go back to an equilibrium position; rather, it continues to make adjustments to the new problems posed by the structural transformation. This may appear to be inconsistent with the earlier statement that Borana are largely unaware of the gada process. They are aware of it only as a *fait accompli*, not as a process. They do not acknowledge the fact that there will be more and more retired classes in the future than there are at present. They know that a particular family that has its children late will eventually be completely retired. They do not add up the fate of such families and conclude that there is a trend. Their thinking is principally structural, not statistical.

This is why their conception of history is one of a completely stable closed cycle. It does, of course, incorporate short-run upsets. But the total picture is one that does not involve the fantasy of man forever straining to change. The historical chronology is not going anywhere in spite of the fact that the gada process is steadily shifting the center of gravity of the population and generating structural

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

problems demanding creative responses. Borana do indeed make these creative responses without at the same time developing the fantasy of perpetual change that has become incorporated in the *weltanschauung* of urban-industrial societies.

What the Borana case teaches us, then, is not that "myth" and "reality" are inconsistent. Minor inconsistencies between these two spheres have been recorded by numerous social scientists. What we have discovered is a most remarkable situation in which the structural model and the empirical process are, in terms of stability, in direct and unequivocal contradiction to each other. This is the fact that leads us to the realization that the combination of structural and empirical research cannot be incremental: one cannot be a mere extension of the other. The combination of the two research strategies can only be *dialectical* in character.

We have seen that the formal model of the Gada System is probably modified from time to time in response to the empirical changes (*e.g.*, the creation of the junior council to represent the retired classes in gada councils and the creation of the age-set system to serve as a supportive organization for the gada classes.) The society makes these adjustments without ever abandoning the model of structural stability. One would expect, for instance, to get some awareness of change from Borana informants about the expansion of the junior council that represents the retired classes. However, all their explanations are particularistic: they say that they increased the size of the junior council during the gada of so-and-so because there were two rival candidates for the same office and they were both equally good. Hence, they were both admitted; that is why the council grew larger. The informants cannot explain why the senior council is not expanding for the same reason. The competition for that council is, after all, just as intense. Borana say that the difficulty simply did not arise in the recruitment of senior councilors. Such explanations, however inadequate they might appear to us, allow Borana to account for the "anomalous" growth of the junior council without abandoning their belief in the general stability of Borana political representation. This is one way in which Borana adjust to the contingencies created by the demographic process without acknowledging or becoming aware of the process itself. Borana conceive of their social system as stable and cyclical when in fact it is highly unstable and linear. Similarly Western cultures that claim to be faced with *chronic social changes* need not at all be changing as rapidly as the natives imagine. Their socio-political systems appear to be remarkably stable regardless of the phenomenal growth of their technologies.

It may be useful to examine the analogies in the relationship of model to process between preliterate and technologically advanced societies. There is no reason to believe that there should be greater congruence between cultural models and empirical processes in the development of Western civilization. However, the Western paradox corresponding to the Borana case is not at all likely to come to light so long as there remains a detached complicity that binds the Western historian to his society, a relationship no less binding than the ties that keep Borana historians imprisoned in the structural models of their society. These men, be they literate or nonliterate, should not be seen merely as empirical historians. They are

also the grammarians of society, men who are well versed in the technique of ordering a select body of historical facts within a framework that is completely consistent with the system of values, the *weltanschauung* and, above all, the cognitive model of their society. Their history socializes men, women, and children from generation to generation. It allays their fears, confirms their prejudices, nurtures their hopes, and serves as the guide of action for their leaders. Thus, when history becomes a component of culture it has a direct impact on collective behavior.

That is why history cannot be written within a single intellectual framework. It always has two facets consisting of two different kinds of data and calling for two different kinds of analysis. One kind of history must be written within the framework of the investigator's own analytical model and would seek to identify trends that are not incorporated into the cultural model. The second type would be an analysis of historical data within the boundaries of the cognitive model elicited from the members of the society under study. We should expect interaction between the two levels, but we should not expect an identity. To reconcile the two levels within the framework of a single analysis, as historians do, is to do extreme injustice to both.

For example, a civilization steadily declining along a given dimension is not at all likely to incorporate that dimension into its cultural model of history. It is true that some hardheaded historians might from time to time carry out such an analysis and bring out its apocalyptic implications. On the whole, however, structural history does not acknowledge an apocalypse even after it has arrived. It reinterprets it by changing the model and by introducing new dimensions for re-evaluating the collective heritage.

The implication of our analysis for history in general is this: historians have, it seems, confused two kinds of reality by attempting to deal with them within a single framework. They have done worse. They have attempted to "correct" the cultural model by checking it against "the facts," and they have selected and arranged the facts in such a way that they conform to their own cultural model. For the former, the work of Jan Vansina is an excellent example and for the latter, any elementary textbook in evolutionary anthropology will do. [47]

The two types of history we have identified are not merely two more types to be added to the current varieties the historian recognizes. All history has a structural and a processual parameter. These parameters cannot be judged to have unequal merit. Even when they contradict each other, they can be equally true. The truth of the scientifically established process lies in the fact that it is verifiable. The truth of the scientifically analyzed cultural model of history lies in its impact on collective behavior. Even if the latter model were not true to begin with, it becomes true in the course of time because it guides collective behavior. A self-fulfilling prophesy is not a mirage. Like Marxism, it is a plan of history that predicts and directs the course of events.

[47] *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, pp. 114-40.

Our final conclusion deals with culture and process. It has little to do with the inconsistencies between norm and practice. Nor does it have much to do with conflicting models in the same culture. It refers, rather, to the perennial conflict between culture and the numerous noncultural factors acting upon it. That is the universal problem that human societies must face and that cannot be resolved adequately by any society — regardless of the level of its technological development. What we observe on the ground, in the day-to-day crises of human groups, are the crude compromise solutions designed to reconcile momentarily the two domains. Out of this field of interaction emerges the liminal person to remind us that we need not forever remain prisoners of our prescriptions. He generates conscious change by exposing all the injustices inherent in structure, by creating a real contradiction between structure and anti-structure, social order and man-made anarchy. This is a type of dialectic that is very different from the nonconscious phenomena which we are after.

If the historian has failed to address himself to the fundamental problems of asymmetric dialectics, it is equally true that anthropology has not done better. Our focus has remained too narrow to produce significant results concerning the nature of social change. Aside from the limited area in which the human community makes a deliberate and conscious effort to transform itself, the more fundamental and nonconscious processes of change that I have analyzed have remained inaccessible to anthropology. All three schools of thought that we have considered fail to reveal the nature of the dialectical process. Structural anthropology fails because it has no access to empirical variability. Empirical anthropology fails because it has no tools for understanding the cognitive bases of structure. Dynamic anthropology fails because it attempts to integrate the two types of data, rather than analyzing them separately and considering the possibility that they might be contradictory and, therefore, generative. In combination the three approaches can raise the power of anthropological analysis to a new frontier.

POSTSCRIPT

AN ESSAY IN PROTEST ANTHROPOLOGY

A society can live, act, and be transformed, and still avoid becoming intoxicated with the conviction that all the societies which preceded it during tens of millenniums did nothing more than prepare the ground for its advent, that all its contemporaries — even those at the antipodes — are diligently striving to overtake it, and that the societies which will succeed it until the end of time ought to be mainly concerned with following in its path. This attitude is as naïve as maintaining that the earth occupies the center of the universe and that man is the summit of creation. When it is professed today in support of our particular society, it is odious. [1]

— Claude Lévi-Strauss

So far, this study has examined those aspects of the anthropological method that are potentially scientific and therefore morally neutral. After living on a steady diet of sociological and anthropological literature for a decade, however, I would be remiss if I did not share with my African colleagues some thoughts about those aspects of the discipline that are decisively noxious to the African.

Africans who wish to learn about their cultures find themselves in a peculiar position. They must fall back on sources written by Westerners on the basis of data largely gathered by European scholars for the benefit of their own societies. Not surprisingly, the literature rarely addresses itself to African concerns. Moreover, the analytical procedures developed by the social scientist are all products of specific cultures and tend to be associated with particular cultural presuppositions.

By far the most pernicious and pervasive presupposition is the belief that Western culture is superior to all other cultures. On this issue the social scientist

[1] Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, p. 332.

becomes an eager accomplice of his culture and his work becomes the source of legitimacy for the cultural peddler whose task is to disseminate Western civilization to the rest of mankind. Although supremacist thought and the ethnocentric assumptions on which it rests were overtly espoused during the colonial era, they have recently come under fire and retreated into a variety of shelters without significantly diminishing their impact. The present discussion will consider the relationship of ethnocentrism and the social sciences against the background of the common concerns of contemporary Africans.

We are reminded again and again that our traditional cultures are out of gear with the modern world and that their persistence in an urban industrial context is a barrier to development. In particular the lack of various psychological attributes such as achievement motivation is seen as a major weakness. When such criticism is based on replicable empirical findings, [2] an *a priori* rejection of it might be politically expedient and morally satisfying, but in the long run it is a disservice to ourselves. Glowing images of our traditions designed to neutralize the impact of such criticism have the potential of elevating the African into an illusory world of psychic comfort and depriving him of the survival strategies he might otherwise have developed.

Not all the criticism directed at Africa is of the same quality as the literature on achievement motivation. More often it is an updated version of Victorian ethnocentrism disguised in the language of science. Our defense is twofold: we can either address ourselves to it with effective counterpropaganda or attempt to expose its weaknesses with the aid of science. Both strategies are necessary. I prefer to follow the latter course of action and leave the field of counterpropaganda to those who have access to the appropriate and, it is hoped, effective implements.

If Western civilization is one of the few civilizations that has given sustained material support to scholarship, it also has the distinction of being a civilization with the most powerful, most enduring, and most imaginative advocates. [3] This advocacy is couched in such highly scientific language and native models of the universe that it is difficult to distinguish it from genuine research. Furthermore, the occasional dramatic clashes between the men of learning and the men of power help to sustain the illusion that scholarship is above cultural loyalties.

Where supremacist propaganda leaves off and social science begins is not always clear. Often there is a close link between them, a relationship Max Weber

[2] David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society*, and the numerous studies based on McClelland's pioneering work such as Robert A. LeVine's *Dreams and Deeds: Achievement Motivation in Nigeria*. The McClelland model defines entrepreneurial activity as the essence of achievement motivation. Curiously, dominance and power seeking are not regarded as a variety of achievement behavior. Hence, according to this model such notorious empire builders as the Hausa appear as lacking in achievement motivation. In spite of this culture-bound definition of what constitutes achievement, however, these studies are valuable because the cultural presuppositions are spelled out in the form of theoretical assumptions and it is usually understood that the results apply only within the limits of those assumptions.

[3] Including Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud, and Max Weber.

might have called "elective affinity" and Frantz Fanon would definitely call "detached complicity." The ideologue buttresses his efforts with well-selected scientific findings, the scientist dwells on the kind of research the men of power are willing to support, and the men of power derive their spiritual sustenance from ideology. The lines of feedback are innumerable.

The social scientist is at the mercy of research foundations, publishing houses, university bureaucracies, and intellectual fashions. These are some of the factors that impose severe constraints on his choice of research topics, his data gathering, his interpretation of results, and the dissemination of his findings. No censor is needed. The society has a most effective built-in mechanism that will quickly drive what it does not want to hear into the background and eventually into oblivion. [4]

The scholar, the layman, and the institutional leader who control the scarce resources of the academic establishment are all products of their culture. It would be surprising if their backgrounds did not influence their thinking about non-Western cultures. It is true that some scholars have become so conscious of this fact that they have devised highly sophisticated ways of restricting ethnocentric bias in research and subjected ethnocentrism itself to intensive analysis. [5] Most social scientists, however, are not aware of the fact that they *have* a world view because they believe that their system of thought has a special affinity with science, whose truth is presumed to be supracultural.

Ethnocentrism

The war that Africans must wage in the postcolonial era is a war against ethnocentrism as practiced by Africans whose intellectual horizons do not reach beyond their own ethnic backyards and by Europeans who believe that their civilization is the terminal stage of human development. Most traditional societies take the natural superiority of their moral order for granted; the West takes it upon itself to export its ethnocentrism to the rest of mankind — by the sword, if need be.

Yet I think there was something fine in the sight of the Englishmen standing up for the right and trying to conquer by their force of

[4] This is probably what happened to Durkheim's analysis of collective consciousness, Kroeber's study of the superorganic properties of culture, and Benedict's idea of cultural relativism. These ideas go against some of the most fundamental premises of Western civilization such as individualism and universalism. When this type of contradiction arises between scholarly research and cultural premises, the scientific proposition is rejected long before it reaches the testing ground. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*; Alfred L. Kroeber, "The Superorganic"; and Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*.

[5] See, for instance, Devereux's discussion of the method of triangulation as a strategy for achieving objectivity in spite of the inevitable distortion arising from the ethnographer's personal and cultural background. George Devereux, *From Anxiety to Method in the Social Sciences*, pp. 137ff; and T. W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, pp. 102-50.

superiority, the rooted custom of centuries, saying they would have no carrying off of slaves and women and urging the wild passions of these savages to seek a nobler channel. [6]

These were the words of Sir Frederick Lugard, chief scout of British colonialism in East and West Africa. The great expansion of the West during the last century was supported by ideologies designed to legitimize the colonial venture, including anti-slavery, Christianity, philanthropy, and antiquarianism. From a political standpoint colonialism is now defunct. From a cultural standpoint, however, the underlying system of values is still at work. The cultural expansionist will no longer express his thoughts with the brutal lucidity of Lugard when he says, "It is to me as clear as the sun that God has prepared the dominion of East Africa for the only nation on earth which has virtue enough to govern for its own benefit." [7] Nevertheless, the Western proselytizer is still deeply moved by that compelling force that drove Lugard to devote his life to the construction of the British colonial empire. The strange fact, however, is not that Lugard and his contemporaries were ethnocentric, but that the world view on which they built the empire became such an integral part of Western academic tradition.

Whenever Europeans plan the settlement of large portions of any colony, segregation and color bar become inevitable. This ought to be remembered by the enthusiastic minority of good-will, who may involuntarily raise high hopes through such doctrines as the brotherhood of Man, the Gospel of Labor, and the possibilities of assimilation through education, dress, manners, and morals. If from the outset, it were possible to make quite clear in preaching the gospel of civilization that no full identity can ever be reached; that what are being given to the Africans are new conditions of existence, better adapted to their needs but always in harmony with European requirements, the smaller would be the chances of a strong reaction and the formation of new, potentially dangerous nationalisms. [8]

This was the judgement of Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the fathers of modern anthropology and author of the theory of functionalism in the social sciences. Not only did Malinowski bring into full view his thoughts about the legitimacy of the ethnocentric world order, but he defined for us the purpose of the scientific theory he developed and explicitly stated how it can be used in the service of that order.

The practical value of such a theory (functionalism) is that it teaches us the relative importance of various customs, how they dovetail into each other, how they have to be handled by missionaries, colonial authorities, and those who economically have to exploit savage trade and savage labor. [9]

[6] Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Adventure, 1858-1898*, pp. 122.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 165.

[8] Quoted in Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, p. 558.

[9] Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change: An Inquiry into Race Relations in Africa*, pp. 40-41.

The philosophy thus expressed by Malinowski in his African treatise on culture change and race relations shows clearly how social science became a handmaiden to the most predatory strain in Western civilization.

The postcolonial anthropologist who considers himself to be liberated from his Victorian background will no doubt disown statements such as those of Lugard and Malinowski as momentary aberrations in the history of a civilization otherwise humane and universalistic. Yet it seems perfectly clear that the view of his forthright predecessors was part of a vast and *functionally integrated* culture. [10] The fact that colonialism has retreated into the background does not mean that its philosophical foundations have suddenly ceased to exist. To assume that degree of discontinuity in the development of any culture is naïve.

Varieties of Ethnocentrism

There are three distinct but interrelated types of ethnocentric thought. We might label these *sentimental*, *vicarious*, and *cognitive*. The essential feature of sentimental ethnocentrism is self-glorification and a belief in the superiority of one's own culture. Lugard and Malinowski adequately illustrate the meaning of this attitude. To both these writers the superiority of Western cultures was not an idea that needed to be subjected to critical thought. It was taken for granted. This attitude is so naïve in its essential properties that it does not merit much attention. It is often caricatured and despised by liberal scholars. [11] Numerous examples of it can be found in the recent survey of the descriptive literature on Africa by Dorothy Hammond and Alta Jablow entitled *The Africa That Never Was: Four Centuries of British Writing about Africa*.

The second type of ethnocentrism is somewhat more subtle. Laymen and scholars alike can fall under its influence. Every student of culture who has done fieldwork has experienced it. After living in an alien society for an extended period of time, the observer's world view is altered. The more conscious he is of the internal validity of the culture, the more likely that he will adopt the cognitive structure of his hosts and accept their stereotyped images of neighboring societies as a valid description of the reality. This form of vicarious thought is largely benign and easily corrected through the exchange of information by social scientists who have investigated adjacent societies.

The malignant version of vicarious ethnocentrism occurs when the student of

[10] For a detailed and highly instructive discussion of the historical relationship between colonialism and functionalist theory see Jack Stauder's paper entitled "The Function of Functionalism: The Adaptation of British Social Anthropology to British Colonialism in Africa."

[11] To appreciate the extent to which this most blatant type of ethnocentrism is still prevalent in some isolated pockets of the academic community one need only examine the contents of the scholarly journal known as *The Mankind Quarterly*, a journal dedicated to the historical, ethnographic, archaeological, biological, genetic, and psychological demonstration of the premise that there is a basic and permanent disjunction between the races of man.

culture builds up an entire interpretive model based on native ethnocentrism. [12] This phenomenon is best illustrated with a hypothetical example. Let us say that the social scientist is exposed to exotic cultures A and B. He finds both cultures strange and unacceptable, but A is more attractive to him than B. He is disturbed by his pronounced negative reaction to the second culture because objective scholars are not supposed to harbor such naked feelings. To his delight, he discovers that culture A despises culture B. He has now found a perfectly legitimate channel for the expression of his own bias. He presents us with a theory that purports to explain why culture B is so lacking in creative impulse and how it borrowed its redeeming features from culture A. As he goes through this intellectual labyrinth, the scholar has deleted three very important aspects of the empirical reality. First, he has ignored the fact that the prejudicial attitudes of A are fully reciprocated by B. Second, he has neglected to analyze the common moral code that is shared by the two cultures, a code that sets limits on the overt expression of their mutual prejudices. Third, he has failed to consider the possibility that culture A might be as likely to learn from B as B is to learn from A. The net result for social science is that we are saddled with one more useless hypothesis. The net effect on the cultures under study is that their submerged, ritualized, and carefully regulated hostilities have appeared in print and in time will become a bone of contention for the Western-educated native elite.

This is one of the most ingenious varieties of ethnocentrism occurring in the Africanist literature. It is also one of the few plausible shelters to which ethnocentric thought has retreated in modern times. It is a very useful shelter because the writer can freely indulge in it even as he rejects the more common and obvious types of prejudice: all he is doing is, in fact, describing scientifically the attitude of native cultures toward each other.

From Lugard to Seligman, from Bruce to Conti-Rossini, the Western scholar has been violent in his identification with specific African cultures. What better examples of this can we find than Bruce's portrait of the Ethiopian royal court vis-à-vis the southern Ethiopians who came to pay homage to their king, [13] Conti-Rossini's evaluation of Axumite civilization vis-à-vis the Cushitic influences to which it was subject, [14] and Seligman's glorification of Hamitic Africa and his dismissal of all the achievements of sub-Saharan Africa as Hamitic influences? [15] In these and many other instances, the Westerner has used African ethnocentrism as a cover for his own. The fact that these writers lived in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries might suggest to the reader that the attitudes they expressed are no longer relevant. However, the work of such scholars as Edward Ullendorff has brought the old misconceptions up to the present day. Like his predecessors Bruce and Conti-Rossini, Ullendorff is grossly sentimental in his identification with

[12] See, for example, the case of the "Hamitic hypothesis" in Carl G. Seligman's *The Races of Africa*.

[13] James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*, pp. 43-45.

[14] Carlo Conti-Rossini, *Etiopia e Genti D'Etiopia*, pp. 33, 44, 63-67.

[15] Seligman, *The Races of Africa*, pp. 31, 61, 100, 101, 138.

Semitic-speaking Ethiopians and is relentless in his denigration of the Cushites. He has gone so far as to cite M. M. Moreno's law of linguistic bastardization to explain how the "superior" and "inferior" segments of Ethiopian society interact.

The socially superior minority imposes its language by virtue of its prestige, while the majority 'deforms' that language by virtue of its large numbers.

Viewed thus, the reciprocal process of cultural exchange becomes an occasion for the vicarious expression of supremacist attitudes. The simple empirical fact is that Ethiopian culture and language have two components, one of Near Eastern derivation and the other firmly rooted in the African past. Only a severely distorted sense of proportion could conceptualize one as a gift of the gods and the other as a deformity. [16]

It is not useful to pursue this worthless type of social science further. I have given the above description of vicarious ethnocentrism in deliberately hypothetical terms and without the support of lengthy quotations because I do not wish to contribute to the dissemination of the underlying attitudes. Serious students of society who are interested in assessing the evidence can examine the sources cited here.

Cognitive Ethnocentrism: A Case in Point

The present discussion will concentrate mainly on the cognitive variety of ethnocentrism. Rather than attempting to document the history of ethnocentric thought, I prefer to confront the contemporary scholar in the specific areas on which I have concrete evidence and by that step suggest ways in which African social scientists might begin to clean up the ethnocentric debris that has accumulated over the centuries and continues to obscure current research in African studies. With this in mind let us examine a very modern anthropological treatise by Eike Haberland which is directly relevant to the subject of this inquiry, i.e., the Gada System. The treatise in question, *Galla Süd-Athiopiens*, is an impressive ethnographic document based on field data collected by the author himself. The factual information he presents is on the whole detailed and accurate. His interpretation and evaluation of the culture, however, leaves much to be desired. Parenthetically, we should acknowledge that Haberland is responsible for another monograph, *Untersuchungen zum Äthiopischen Königtum*, which is a magnificent example of objective scholarship and one that upsets the very biased presuppositions of his predecessors. This should indicate to the reader that my criticism is not *ad hominem*. I criticize the work, not the man.

The reader will recall from the analysis presented in chapters 4 and 7 that the most remarkable cultural achievement of the Borana – and of Oromo culture as a

[16] Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, pp. 49, 76, 98, 117 (quoted), 120-22, 126.

whole – is in the area of time, of history, and the organization of the life cycle. They have ordered the life cycle in such a way that individuals fulfill specific tasks as members of organized peer groups throughout their lives. They pass from sacred childhood – associated with the domestic feminine domain – to adolescence and cattle herding, to youth and warriorhood, to adult status and political leadership, to semi-retirement and legislative influence, to sacred old age and ritual power. Each stage of life has validity within the total design. Each peer group is tied to other such groups by a system of alliances and rivalries that ensure an equitable distribution of power and privilege among the generations and across the entire life cycle.

This institution – the Gada System – is keyed to a remarkably sophisticated system of time reckoning. The system is based on accurate astronomic observations associated with a complete day-month nomenclature. The total system is a permutation calendar the like of which has been recorded only three times in the history of mankind. It occurs among the Chinese, the Hindu, and the Mayans – three civilizations far removed from Borana.

In combination, the Gada System and the lunar-stellar calendar play an important role in the regulation of political-ritual activity and of the pastoral-nomadic economy. The two systems are also the bases of the historical chronology which allows Borana to keep track of four centuries of oral history, divided up into eight-year periods. Here again, Borana historians use the principle of permutation to check their records along several cross-cutting parameters. The system is an intellectual feat, the like of which has probably not been recorded anywhere. [17]

With this background, we can now examine what happens to this magnificent culture as it is processed through the mind of a European anthropologist who believes that African cultures such as Borana are by definition archaic, simple, and primitive (*Naturvölker*).

Haberland fails to grasp the central philosophical concern of Borana, namely, the relationship between history and society. We have seen how Borana have organized the contemporary population into five parallel series of classes known as *gogessa* and combined this structure with historical epicycles known as *maḳabasa*. It is, of course, the interaction between these two concepts that gives their socio-historic system its distinctive structural properties. It influences the course of history both objectively and in the subjective awareness of the society. In Haberland's investigation this fundamental aspect of Borana culture is completely lost. The concept of *gogessa* is totally misunderstood (p. 173) and the concept of *maḳabasa* is misrepresented (pp. 191-95). [18] Furthermore, the author does not even suspect that there might be some connection between these two ideas. Haberland's failure to grasp the conceptual organization of these institutions is a

[17] This general statement is based on an examination of all the information on time reckoning in the world-wide compendium of representative cultures – the Human Relations Area Files.

[18] All page references in this section are to Haberland's *Galla Süd-Äthiopiens*.

direct function of his assumption that Borana are a simple people whose ideas could not possibly be a challenge to the Western intellect (p. 10). In other words, he has badly underestimated the complexity of his subject of study.

The author also fails to explain how the Borana system of time reckoning operates. Again he has all the categoric data but none of the relational concepts. He names all the stars known to the Borana, but he does not suspect that they might have organized the stellar and lunar observations into a single complex permutation calendar (pp. 591-94).

This is compounded with some erroneous judgments concerning the alleged inability of the Borana to perform various numerical operations that are presumed to be essential for their social structure. Haberland claims that Borana are unable to count their age in years and that they do not know the duration of the gada period – the eight-year term of office of their leaders. We are told that even if they knew in what year of the gada period they were born, they could not reckon their age accurately because they do not know whether the gada periods were, in fact, eight, ten, or twelve years long (p. 577). [19]

The census data presented in this volume (Appendix 1, columns 14 and 15) amply demonstrate the error of this judgment. An examination of these data reveals that the majority of the population was able to report age in years. Moreover, we have found only one irregularity in the duration of gada periods caused by the great upheaval of the Italo-Ethiopian war in 1936 – an extremely unusual event in the history of the Borana. It is important to realize that although one gada period was extended by three years – to avoid confrontation with the Italian legions – the following gada period was abridged by the same number of years. Both the cause of this irregularity and its implication for time reckoning was clearly understood by the experts. In short, we are dealing with a society having as much awareness of time and history as can be found in most literate populations.

Haberland also states that Borana have a spiritual rather than scientific attitude toward numeration generally as evidenced by the fact that they dislike or sanctify certain numbers. Hence, the Borana are said to lack the basic intellectual skills and attitudes necessary to develop the complex institutions they possess. Here the author has come up with a strange non sequitur: if Borana say that they dislike certain numbers, as indeed they do, does it follow that they lack the ability to employ a statistical mode of thought in domains that are not connected with their numerical taboos? In technologically advanced societies, such as the United States, there are a great many people who spend their days working with numbers but adamantly refuse to live on the thirteenth floor of a building. Thirteen is believed to be an inauspicious number and the strength of this belief becomes evident when

[19] "Das Jahr hat im Denken der Galla nicht sehr viel Bedeutung. Niemand kann z.B. sagen, wie alt er ist, d.h. wie viele Jahre er zählt. Die einzig wirkliche bedeutsame Zeitrechnung ist die nach gada-Zyklen (acht Jahre). Jeder weiss, während welcher gada-Periode er geboren wurde, häufig auch im wievielten Jahre, wobei es allerdings keine Rolle spielt, ob diese Periode wirklich 8 oder 10 oder 12 Jahre zählte."

we realize that architects leave out the number entirely in their design of multi-story buildings. America, the land of science, is infested with astrologers, palm readers, and fortune tellers – natural and computerized. Magical and scientific thought can coexist in the same culture and become intertwined in ways we do not as yet understand.

Borana are fully capable of moving back and forth between the world of magic and the world of science. Their capacity to use purely pragmatic numerical operations is especially apparent in the marketplace. They are meticulous traders and can operate in the dollars-and-cents arena with skill. Their decimal and octavial number systems can handle any operations relevant to their culture.

Haberland's principal thesis is that a people whose religion prohibits them from counting their livestock cannot be held responsible for the invention of such an advanced institution as the Gada System. The institution is said to be so advanced that it does not fit in with the rest of their simple culture.

Let us first deal with the taboo concerning cattle. The author is right in stating that Borana do not count their herds (p. 777), but he does not seem to see the connection between this fact and the fact he himself discusses elsewhere (p. 91) that they can identify their livestock individually by name. Each animal is a unique creature with a different color, shape, pedigree, name, and life history. Cattle are to the herdsman as books are to the academic. The herdsman recalls not only how he acquired the animal, but often the specific and emotionally tinged circumstances. He is embarrassed to have some of the animals in his herd (*e.g.*, the ones he inherited) and he sings songs of praise for those he acquired by his own efforts (*e.g.*, the ones he captured in celebrated cattle raids). Many of the animals are associated with his own life crises. When visitors come to his home, he uses his livestock as a starting point in recounting his experiences. He does not have to take an inventory to establish whether or not all his livestock are present, any more than the academic has to count his books to establish that a particular volume is missing from his shelf. There are so many lines of information converging on each animal that its absence from the herd would be immediately and painfully clear to him. The fact that he does not know the size of his herd is not an indication of a *deficiency* of information, but rather a statement of an *excess* of knowledge.

Just as the Borana's understanding of his herd of cattle is based on a cognitive map and a systematic nomenclature, so too is his understanding of the Gada System and the system of time reckoning based on a logical ground plan. Numbers have no place in this design. If they are ever used, they serve as supplementary mnemonic devices and nothing more. Borana can generate the entire calendar, the historical chronology, and the gada cycle without ever having to count. All units are named, qualitatively distinguished from each other, and linked to each other by a perfectly orderly system of logical relationships. There is no reason why Borana institutions could not develop in a society lacking *any* knowledge of numbers and of the statistical mode of thought.

Haberland concludes his treatise with some astonishing remarks. He states

(p. 579) that "there is no connection – today at any rate – between the Gada System and the astronomic calendar." [20] In other words, the organization of the life cycle (the gada cycle) and the historical paradigm (gada chronology) is not in any way keyed to the system of time reckoning (the lunar-stellar permutation calendar). That two complex cultural realities both concerned with time can exist side by side in the same society and be totally unrelated to each other is something most students of culture would consider quite incredible. The data presented in earlier chapters show that there is a very close interdependence between gada leaders and time-reckoning experts. No ceremony is valid unless it is performed at the right time. Delays are frequent and give rise to much public criticism. Nevertheless, the ideal year, month, and day of each major transition on the gada cycle is known to most Borana. The actual day and month on which each ceremony is performed is determined by experts with the aid of astronomic observation. In short, the Gada System cannot function without an accurate calendar.

The second and final conclusion of the treatise is that since Borana are too simple a people to have developed their central institutions independently, they must have borrowed them from a higher civilization (*Hoch Kultur*). Hence, the Gada System probably came from another society (unspecified) and the calendar *definitely* came from a foreign source, probably the Orient:

Two important questions remain unanswered: First, is the gada-system an Ethiopian invention, or must we seek its origins outside Ethiopia? Second, how did the gada-system come to be adopted by the Galla? . . . it is arguable, in view of the extremely simple archaic pattern of Galla culture as a whole, that *the complicated nature of the gada-system makes it appear a foreign element, like the calendar, whose foreign origin is unquestioned* (p. 777, Haberland's own translation, emphasis added).

If Haberland wishes to use the criterion of complexity to determine whether the Gada System is a native Ethiopian institution or one borrowed from another society, he should be prepared to produce a society with a system of temporal stratification as complex as the Gada System. On the face of it, this would seem to be a futile venture. Moreover, he has presented no evidence indicating that the Borana astronomic calendar is of foreign origin. He merely states that there are undoubtedly connections – at the moment unknown to him – between the "perfect" Indian-Oriental calendars and their primitive equivalent in southern Ethiopia (p. 590). [21]

Having thus dissipated the highest cultural achievements of Oromo society, Haberland can adhere to his axiomatic position that the Oromo are incapable of sustaining complex thought processes and if they do it must be something taught to them by others, more civilized.

[20] "Zwischen gada-System und astronomischem Kalender besteht – heute jedenfalls – kein Zusammenhang." (The translation is mine.)

[21] "Zweifellos bestehen auch – mir im augenblick unbekannt – Zwischenglieder zwischen jenem "perfecten" indisch-orientalischen Schicksals-, Stern-, und Götter-Zyklus und seinem arg reduzierten Ableger in Süd-Äthiopien."

¶ This is the essence of *cognitive ethnocentrism*: the inability of the social scientist to understand the thought processes of another society except through the mediation of his own culture. When the investigator's cognitive models prove to be irrelevant to the culture under study, his data become a primitive mass of uncoordinated facts and the society in question appears culturally bankrupt.

We question the validity of the system of thought – indeed, the entire intellectual tradition – that leads some Western scholars to explain away the intellectual achievements of Africans in terms of some remote and nebulous fountains of knowledge. If our understanding of Africa were based solely on studies such as Haberland's, the probability of our ever wanting to look at our cultures as sources of ideas is slight. African culture, viewed through such scholarly obstructions, offers nothing to the future course of human development; it is merely a quaint archaic remnant of the human past.

The Embarrassing Question: What Can Africa Contribute?

The liberal Western intellectual will at once agree with the belief that Africa has much to offer to mankind. This is the posture he compulsively assumes, but it is a posture without meaning. Ask him outright to name – on the basis of his extensive field research – a single example of a contribution that traditional Africa could make and you will find that the wiring of his prolific mind has developed a short circuit. He can think of nothing. Ask him what the West can contribute to Africa, however, and his imagination is ignited. He becomes expansive, grandiose: Bach, Goethe, Einstein, Marx, Christ, parliamentary democracy, justice, freedom, prosperity, technology, urbanism, taste, manners, and gourmandism. He is so completely engrossed with himself, his culture, and his eponymous ancestors that he lacks the capacity of ever placing himself in the position of receiver. He lacks the intellectual humility needed to accept the merits of another culture and if he does, he is deeply aware of the precipitous descent he has made to the folksy bowels of a subterranean world.

Respect for the culture we study and humility before its genius is an essential ingredient of research. This attitude is rarely found in the scholarly literature on Africa – Victor W. Turner being one of the most distinguished exceptions. The typical Western scholar assumes that the natives are ignorant. Even the greatest anthropological thinkers have lived and worked in Africa under the weight of that assumption. It is therefore not surprising that they never found the native men of learning who have a deep understanding of the ideal model of their social system. Anthropologists, sociologists, and historians who go to Africa having prejudged the primitiveness of African thought are not likely to discover anything but its most mediocre aspects. Is it not possible, then, that these students of culture will set their expectations low – so low that the most valuable aspects of African thought will not gain admission into their mental parview?

African cultures arrive at the academic communities of the Western world

(and their replicas in Africa) after they have been processed, simplified, atomized, and reassembled in the mind of the Africanist. The naïveté of the final product is a direct outcome of his assumptions and procedures. To the extent that he has not risen above his ethnocentric limitations, what he transmits to us is no better than what his intellectual, moral, and esthetic filter will tolerate.

Africa and Western Social Science

In its present form, social science is a major threat to the African identity. On the whole, the less scientific the field of knowledge under consideration the more inimical it is to African aspirations. We must therefore rethink the premises and tools of the social scientist to the point where they can be applied to African problems without dragging in spurious cognitive, ideological, and value factors.

The social sciences as they have developed in the West have shown an extreme degree of susceptibility to external and often irrelevant influences. History seems to be forever ready to drift with social movements, so that old records of events are frequently reinterpreted to fit the mood of the times. Sociology is perpetually imprisoned in its narrow cultural context and its critical concepts are often irrelevant to the problems of the Third World. Even economics, the most "advanced" of the social sciences, comes in Marxist and capitalist packages and is still heavily dependent on its ideological environment.

In anthropology, the three schools of thought we examined above come out of different cultural backgrounds. They are keyed directly to value systems that encourage the examination of certain kinds of data and discard other types of social phenomena as irrelevant. The immense concern with values, individuation, variability, and change in American cultural anthropology, the deep concern with formal structures and with the logic of traditional institutions in the French school of thought, the perennial attachment to social conflict, ambiguity, and social drama in British social anthropology — these are abiding forces behind anthropological research. The resulting debates about the nature of structure and measure, formalism and ambiguity, stability and change, collective consciousness and individual freedom, social order and creativity are highly instructive and essentially pan-human in character.

Anthropology has not yet found a way of dealing with its own competing paradigms. Instead of offering serious evaluation of different approaches, the anthropologist is much more prone to give a chauvinistic defense of one or another approach on the basis of irrelevant cultural grounds. This aspect of the debate is not about science per se, but about the relative merits of American, French, and English values. This is precisely what the African social scientist has to set aside before he can make much headway in the application of the methods to his own concerns.

To an African student of culture, the tremendous accretion of *reflexive ethnography* that he has to plow through before coming to genuine insights into African systems of thought is a formidable barrier. Ethnography becomes reflexive when the ethnographer uses an African culture as an excuse to think about his own or as a measuring rod against which to assess the greatness of his civilization. This is

the noise that the African has to filter out before he can get to the message and frequently he can find no message beyond the noise. When this is compounded with the gratuitous deprecation of his culture that he finds liberally sprinkled throughout the literature, the relevance of anthropology to his own aspirations becomes questionable. He often discards anthropology *and its object of study* and proceeds to eradicate the best that Africa has to offer in the name of progress.

How often have Western writers used Africa as the great primordial continent whose prodigious backwardness demonstrates by contrast the greatness of European civilization? How many African cultural innovations have without the slightest hesitation been identified with what is quintessentially archaic and therefore excluded from ever serving as a guide to future human development?

Suppose we suggest that we examine African cultures to find ways of resolving some of the modern problems of human society, such as the generation wars now causing havoc in many national communities. This is surely one area in which the West has failed dramatically. Might not traditional Africa offer some valuable ideas about social mechanisms that can ensure an equitable distribution of economic and political resources across the generations and allow men and women of all ages to play a meaningful role in social life? Indeed, we do not have to confine our thinking to generational relationships because the implications of African social structure go far beyond familial and social problems. We should examine all the ingenious mechanisms of distributive justice developed by traditional African societies with a view to incorporating them into the political and economic structure of modern nation-states. In this regard Western civilization is a poor model for us to emulate. Although the West has developed a most elaborate egalitarian philosophy, in practice it does not and cannot live by that philosophy because it lacks effective institutional mechanisms that can set limits upon the magnitude of social and economic inequalities.

Anthropologists will readily grant that the study of traditional institutions is valid and necessary if our purpose is essentially antiquarian or historical. The question that African anthropology raises is whether or not we should study traditional societies with a view to using some of the strategies they have developed as viable alternatives to what the civilized West has to offer.

Social scientists have not seriously considered the possibility that some aspects of Western civilization may not be the pinnacle of human achievement. Even the avowedly catastrophic trends that it harbors are considered to be the most advanced forms of catastrophe created by man. Hence, the civilization considers itself incapable of learning from any of its contemporaries. As long as this state of mind continues, a real dialogue between African and Western students of culture is not possible.

Science, Technology, and Culture

Westerners have exhibited a powerful proclivity to identify their way of life with science and technology and to use this presumed link as the justification for the propagation of their culture. Not only do Westerners consider technology to be

the unique product of their culture, but also their socio-cultural peculiarities are interpreted as the direct product of technology. Even when the Westerner is blaming his worst social ills on uncontrolled scientific developments, he is building up a thesis that legitimizes his supremacist ideology. The presumed link — which might be called the *techno-cultural fallacy* — is central to Western systems of thought. The nature of that link must be reexamined by *non-Western* scholars because it has become so deeply imbedded in the most basic folk literatures of the Occident.

Many schools of thought have attempted to explain the cultural background that gave rise to the scientific revolution. Of these the most powerful is the thesis advanced by Max Weber and his followers. [22] Weberian scholars have assumed that the link between the "emergence" of the scientific method and the specific historic circumstances that preceded it are necessary connections. Indeed, some particularize this relationship to such an extent that the German Protestant Pietists of the seventeenth century are given the main credit for making the "emergence" possible. [23] Today this thesis faces some rather awkward problems. First, it seems that the scientific method did not emerge at any one period of history. Africans, Near Easterners, and Far Easterners have all contributed to its growth at different stages of the human career. [24] Second, the Soviets and the Japanese, who are neither German, Protestant, nor Pietist, have rapidly advanced to the forefront of scientific growth without accepting the associated cultural accoutrements.

The curious fact about the literature on the genesis of science is that it is unscientific. Max Weber and his followers "demonstrated" that the rationalist foundation of Protestant *asceticism* was the prime mover behind the scientific revolution. Lewis Feuer, on the other hand, reverses the thesis completely and still manages to produce a mass of historical evidence "demonstrating" that the scientific revolution took place in a predominantly *hedonistic* cultural ambience. [25]

In combination, what these two theses tell us is not that this or the other culture is the necessary condition for science, but that the parameter of culture they examined (asceticism-hedonism), or possibly the nonmaterial aspect of culture as a whole, may not be relevant to science. We must therefore return to a null hypothesis and consider the possibility that any culture may be capable of engendering scientific development if it can create a hospitable and rewarding niche for the scientist. It seems obvious that social philosophy and scientific research can develop side by side as two qualitatively different systems of thought. We have no

[22] Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 249.

[23] Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, pp. 289-404; elsewhere, Merton has also developed a similar thesis in regard to scientific development in Britain: Merton, "Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England."

[24] Alfred L. Kroeber, *Configurations of Culture Growth*, pp. 97-215.

[25] Lewis S. Feuer, *The Scientific Intellectual: The Psychological and Social Origins of Modern Science*, pp. 1-19, 116-124, 319-409.

compelling reason to believe that a total merging of these domains is either necessary or possible. One is not a mere extension of the other in spite of the fact that they are in dialectical interaction with each other.

Science is always an intrusive factor in human civilization. A society can be technologically advanced and retain extremely maladaptive characteristics in the social realm. Cultures with vastly different social and attitudinal systems have proved equally capable of reaching the highest levels of technological achievement. There is no evidence to demonstrate that there is a necessary connection between the level of science and technology on the one hand, and the qualities of culture and social structure on the other. Civilizations glorify or reject science on the most preposterous of pretexts. In the final analysis, the culture of the scientist is a culture unto itself; it knows no national or cultural boundaries and can migrate from one civilization to another with great ease. [26]

Historicism, Futurism, and the Cultural Supremacist

Of the many cultural factors which the Westerner sees as his distinctive attributes, the most important is his temporal orientation. Historicism and futurism are the critical factors which go into the making of that orientation. These factors are as much a part of the Western native model of the universe as they are the cornerstones of the social sciences.

The West is said to be future oriented — perpetually at the brink of the future, if not *in* it. By contrast, all other societies are said to be *in* history, ordered by degrees of retardedness ranging from millions of years to centuries or decades. The scholar has a lovely ritual by which he can reenact this myth. He takes steel axes to Stone Age Australians and observes with pseudoscientific fascination the reactions of savage mankind, fully convinced that at that very moment his own beginnings are unfolding before his eyes. [27] He then examines his own society and observes research scientists and prophetic youth movements engaged in highly innovative experiments. As he observes these wondrous events he is overwhelmed with the feeling that *the* future is unfolding before his eyes.

The belief that the West is the only window to the future rests directly on the evolutionary model furnished by the anthropologist. Of course the evolutionary model is not entirely false. Like all myths, it is built on a series of empirical half-truths. The model is generally valid in the realm of biological evolution and in the development of technology and economy. These are the areas of human life

[26] Nothing can demonstrate this fact better than Albert Einstein's definition of his cultural loyalties: "I have never belonged wholeheartedly to any country or state, to my circle of friends, or even to my own family . . . Such isolation is sometimes bitter, but I do not regret being cut off from the understanding and sympathy of other men. I lose something by it, to be sure, but I am compensated for it in being rendered independent of the customs, opinions, and prejudices of others . . ." Quoted in Feuer, *The Scientific Intellectual*, p. 12.

[27] Lauriston Sharp, "Steel Axes and Stone-Age Australians."

which have grown in a demonstrably *progressive* fashion during the last two million years of human history. On the other hand, *there is no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate that human culture as a whole has undergone the same kind of growth.*

All the living cultures of man and their antecedents have been on the surface of the earth for the same amount of time. All have *changed* throughout their respective histories. None of them *evolved* in a manner remotely comparable to the development of biological, technological, and economic systems. Furthermore, the *rate of change* in the adjacent institutions of the same culture need not be the same. As Ruth Benedict discovered in her comparative study of North American Indian cultures, a society may invest great energy in one area of life and not in other areas. It may elaborate one institution because that institution expresses its ethos most fully. In time, the institution becomes extremely complex and furnishes the ground plan for the culture as a whole. [28] It is this kind of phenomenon that we find among the Borana of Ethiopia where the Gada System (originally nothing more than a strategy for ordering the life cycle) came to "tower" over all other institutions. The cyclical concept on which it is based now pervades their economic activities, their political behavior, their warfare, their view of time, of history, and of astronomic phenomena. The institution appears so "overgrown" that one ethnographer concluded that it could not belong to the same culture.

It is this phenomenon of intracultural disparity in the complexity of institutions that the evolutionary thinker has problems incorporating into his model. He sometimes (though not consistently) uses sociological complexity as the measure of progress. He must therefore flatten out the disparate components of a culture before he can determine its position in the grand evolutionary hierarchy. Often he does so by academic fiat; merely calling the music, the religion, or the social structure of a technologically simple society "primitive" makes it so. Yet we know that the polyphonic music of the Cushites of southwest Ethiopia, the time-reckoning system of the Borana, the sculptural traditions of the Dogon, the potlatch system of the Kwakiutl, the kula ring of the Melanesians, and the natural taxonomies of a vast number of societies are all very complex aspects of culture and cannot be equated with their simple technologies.

Man's artistic, religious, linguistic, social, and political systems follow their own internal laws. These *structured* and *distinctive* aspects of human culture undergo a pattern of change similar to that of language. There is, for instance, ample evidence to show that the laws of linguistic change are markedly different from the laws of biological or technological evolution. Indo-European languages underwent an orderly process of structural transformation over a period of five millennia. Nevertheless, the ancestral language of the Indo-Europeans is in no sense more primitive than any of the daughter languages. There is no compelling force that causes culture or language to change from *lower* to *higher* forms. [29]

[28] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*.

[29] Although natural selection *positively determines* the properties of the emergent biological forms in the evolution of organisms, there is nothing in the development of

In all those aspects of human culture in which techno-economic processes do not have a demonstrably positive influence, the pattern of change is not necessarily progressive. Consider, for instance, the efficacy of political institutions. Are we to believe that American democracy is "higher" or "more effective" than Athenian democracy or that either is superior to the type of traditional African democracy that we have found in Borana? Are not these cases merely parallel experiments designed to manage common human problems that arise in the egalitarian distribution of power? Are the African, Athenian, and American institutions millennia apart from each other in their level of development merely because they occur at different points in history or because they are associated with different levels of technological development? How has technology aided the modern nation-state in improving the efficacy of its political institutions or its mechanisms of social control? Has not technology aided those who threaten to destroy the political and legal order as much as those who seek to make them more viable? If, for example, we take the incidence of homicide as the ultimate criterion for judging the effectiveness of the order-maintaining institutions, we find that the technologically advanced societies do not fare any better, or worse than the tribal societies. The difference between them is negligible.

Annual Homicide Rate of Offenders per 100,000 Population

	<i>Lowest</i>	<i>Highest</i>
18 American cities, 1948-1952	2.3	15.1
Uganda tribes	1.1	11.6

Source: Paul Bohannan, "Patterns of Murder and Suicide," in *African Homicide and Suicide*, edited by Paul Bohannan, p. 238.

These data strongly suggest that man's capacity to control the violation of his legal and political order has probably not improved in time. Nor is there any significant evidence that the industrial "post-industrial," and "post-modern" revolutions have contributed anything positive in this regard. On the whole it seems that the positive feedback on one plane is neutralized by negative feedback on another. There is an endless race between technologically sophisticated lawmen and equally sophisticated crime syndicates. Science does not seem to favor one to the exclusion of the other.

human society which gives it a discernible pattern of improvement. As we have seen in earlier chapters, the exogenous forces acting on human society are fully capable of destroying particular components of social structure and thereby altering the structure as a whole. However, their impact is like that of a river on a bridge: it can bring it down, but it cannot build it up. Social structure is the result of conscious and unconscious cognitive processes for which there are no parallels in nature; the influence of extra-systemic factors on those processes is purely negative. They impose severe constraints on the range of institutions that man can adopt, but they do not make any positive contributions.

There is no doubt that technologically the West is perpetually experiencing an exponential growth trend. As far as all other aspects of culture are concerned, however, the Westerner is faced with the same dilemmas which have confronted mankind for millennia, and the crafty, deliberate, pseudoscientific solutions he creates for them are more often than not catastrophic. Consider for instance that great Western invention — the jail. This is the ultimate solution for most social problems. There are jails for the criminal, jails for the poor (“ghettos”), jails for the insane (“mental hospitals”), jails for the young (“juvenile correctional institutions”), jails for the aged (“old people’s homes”), and jails for a great many other types of human beings who do not fit into the good society. This is a most drastic and inhuman strategy for cleansing a society; it is difficult to believe that these institutional monstrosities were actually created by intelligent beings. The present moral crisis in the United States regarding these institutions might conceivably make the West more conscious of the way other cultures have confronted the same social dilemmas.

Many decades ago Ruth Benedict perceived that there are infinitely more humane and more effective ways of dealing with social problems than we find in the civilized West. [30] She believed that the West had much to learn from the rest of mankind in the area of deviance and mental health. Her message was unfortunately drowned in a sea of supremacist thought and her books are now treated as belletristic fantasies and anthropological curios by the powerful lobby of neo-Darwinian philosophers.

Socially, politically, legally, and in the domain of religion and art, the Stone Age Australian is not inferior to the Westerner or to any other segment of the human race. When we use particular criteria, such as the efficacy of the mechanisms of distributive justice or social control, to judge the success of any two human societies, our evolutionary scheme falls apart. The technologically inferior society often has sociologically more viable institutions.

The evolutionary thinker enters into direct complicity with his own society when he ignores this fundamental fact and thereby distorts the very nature of culture. He does so by using technology as his ultimate criterion of human development and magnifying tenfold those aspects of society that are clearly dependent on the technological order. Indeed, he sometimes goes so far as to define culture as an assemblage of tools and the human patrimony as a “tool-making tradition,” thus giving his civilization the *prima materia* for the construction of the techno-cultural fallacy. His excuse is that archaeology can only retrieve the physical remains of ancient societies and that the material component of culture history is necessarily exaggerated. But what excuse does he have for transposing that expedient distortion into the study of contemporary societies whose material and nonmaterial cultures are equally accessible to him?

The philosophical genesis of the techno-cultural fallacy is quite clear. The fallacy derives from the *failure of anthropology to distinguish the purposive aspects*

[30] “Anthropology and the Abnormal,” in *An Anthropologist at Work: Writings of Ruth Benedict*, edited by Margaret Mead, pp. 262-83.

of human behavior (as reflected most clearly in revitalization movements) and the unconscious structure in human culture (as reflected in language and the cognitive bases of social life) from the nonconscious empirical processes that link man directly to animal societies and the ecosystem. Science and technology are mainly relevant to the latter, not the former.

Having failed to make this critical distinction, the supremacist thesis grows by equally fallacious steps: (a) if the link between science and culture is necessary and positive, it follows that the society that has access to the most advanced levels of scientific knowledge possesses the most advanced culture; (b) if the link between ecology and culture is necessary, it follows that the culture that can control its ecosystem can grow at will, whereas other cultures that adjust to their ecosystem are bound up in a perpetual natural equilibrium — they *might* change, but they do not develop; (c) it is the nature of science and technology to grow because of the demonstrably adaptive advantages that they confer upon their bearers; (d) it is, by the same token, the nature of Western civilization to expand at the expense of other cultures because it controls technology and the ecosystem.

These are the basic components of the techno-cultural fallacy, the cornerstone of Euro-American expansionism, the myth that allows the Westerner to maintain that the spread of his civilization is nonreversible and that the price of resisting this process is extinction. Just as nature is threatened by technology, so are the *Naturvölker* of the world threatened by the inevitable. The apocalypse is at hand. The “primitive cultures” of the world are dying. Organize a benevolent salvage operation. Call it urgent anthropology. Send out ethnographers and antiquarians. Collect the precious relics of the human past. Preserve them, stuffed, in museums for posterity. Thus expansionism-universalism deals the death blow, and anthropology picks up the remains and performs the appropriate mortuary rites. It is not difficult to see that there is a thinly disguised bond between the predatory tendencies of Western civilization and some of its central scholarly traditions. In particular, Weberian sociology of science and evolutionary cultural anthropology are two of the most important bulwarks of supremacist thought.

In conclusion, there are two philosophical attitudes that vitalize the study of culture. One is ethnocentric, supremacist, and antiquarian in character, and the other is dedicated to the development of scientific tools that can help us minimize all forms of ethnocentric bias in social science research. One threatens to destroy the African cultural identity; the other promises to uncover the most valuable elements of our heritage.

We study African cultures so that they may live and grow to become the enduring foundation of a distinctive African civilization. In that process of growth every culture has something vital to offer. Man’s wider cultural identities must be allowed to grow, not by the predatory expansion of one civilization but by the complementary integration of many diverse cultures. No human community, however humble, should be forced to give up its cultural identity without making a critical contribution to the larger reality of which it becomes a part. That remains true whether the larger reality is national culture, pan-African culture, or universal culture.

CENSUS

Code Sheet for the Borana Market Sample and Camp Census

Column	Description of Variable																		
	All the members of a man's family who live with him are listed immediately after him.																		
1-3	Identification number of individuals: 1-409 constitute the market sample. 411-673 constitute the camp census. 410, 413, 466 = blank, subject recorded two times.																		
4	Independent male: 1 = a man who is single and unattached to a household or married and head of a household. 2 = dependents.																		
5	Incomplete data: 7 = adult males in the market sample who were not asked about their marital status or their dependents. 0 = no data																		
6-7	Clan affiliation:																		
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Moiety</th> <th>Submoiety</th> <th>Clans</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>0 = no data</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gona</td> <td>Fullelle</td> <td>1 = Oditu</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>3 = Daççitu</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>5 = Maççitu</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>7 = Galantu</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Moiety	Submoiety	Clans			0 = no data	Gona	Fullelle	1 = Oditu			3 = Daççitu			5 = Maççitu			7 = Galantu
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	Moiety	Submoiety	Clans
			9 = Bachitu
			11 = Sirayyu
			13 = Konnitu
		Haroressa	2 = Arsi
			4 = Hawaṭṭu
			6 = Kaṛṇabdu
			8 = Warri Jidda
			10 = Maliyyu and Halchayya
			12 = Dambitu
			14 = Nonitu
		Sabbo	15 = Digalu
			16 = Karrayyu
			17 = Maṭṭarri
8			Identification number of camps 0 = subject not recorded in camp, <i>i.e.</i> , market sample.
9			Sex of subjects: 1 = male 2 = female
10			Identification of the two types of data: 1 = market sample, quasi-random. 2 = camp census, exhaustive record.
11			Marital status: 0 = believed to be unmarried (immature) 1 = definitely unmarried (adult) 2 = one wife 3 = two wives
12-13			Dated age plus one: computed by this ethnographer from the year of birth reported by the informant in gada periods. 0 = no data
14-15			Reported age plus one: computed by the informant at the request of the ethnographer or volunteered by the informant. 0 = no data

16-17 Age-set affiliation:

Name of Age-Set	Age in 1963	Born in the Gada of
1 = <i>Ilman</i> Jaldessa	0-3	Jaldessa Liban
2 = <i>Ilman</i> Maḍa	4-11	Maḍa Galma
3 = <i>Wakor</i> Duba	12-19	Guyyo Boru
4 = <i>Darar</i> Godana	20-27	Aga Adi
5 = <i>Dambal</i> Bule	28-35	Bule Dabbasa
6 = <i>Wakor</i> Liban	36-43	Arero Gedo
7 = <i>Dambal</i> Arero	44-51	Liban Kuse
8 = <i>Wakor</i> Sora	52-59	Boru Galma
9 = <i>Dambal</i> Ṭaddacha	60-67	Adi Doyyo
10 = <i>Wakor</i> Dida	68-75	Liban Jaldessa
11 = <i>Udan</i> Bukko	76-83	Guyyo Boru Ingule
12 = <i>Wakor</i> Mallu	84-91	Dida Bittata

18-19 Gada class affiliation: the identification numbers of gada classes correspond to the gada chronology, Table 7-1.

0 = not relevant, for females

20-21 Difference in age between a man and his oldest son (entered under the father's identification number).

0 = not relevant, for females

22-23 Difference in age between a man and his oldest daughter (entered under the father's identification number).

24 Adoption index (entered under the identification number of the household head and of the adoptive mother).

0 = not relevant

1 = 3 children adopted out

2 = 2 children adopted out

3 = 1 child adopted out

4 = no children adopted in or out

5 = 1 child adopted in

6 = 2 children adopted in

7 = 3 children adopted in

25 Adopted child:

0 = not adopted

1 = adopted into the family

2 = given up for adoption

26 Formerly married.

0 = not married, not separated

1 = spouse dead

2 = spouse separated

27-29 Husband' identification number (entered on wife's card).

30 Wives

0 = not relevant

1 = first wife

2 = second wife

3 = third wife

4 = established mistress

5 = inherited wife

The order of marriage is ignored for mistresses and inherited women because they are not ranked with the wives.

31-33 Father's identification number (entered on children's cards).

0 = subject's father not recorded

34-36 Mother's identification number (entered on children's cards).

0 = subject's mother not recorded

37-39 Retirement index (computed for males only):

0 = not relevant, for females

$(\text{gada class} \times 8) - (\text{best estimate of age}) - 1 = \text{RI}$

where "best estimate of age" stands for dated age when that is available or reported age when dated age is not available.

40 Gogessa affiliation:

0 = no data

1 = gogessa of Jaldessa Liban

2 = gogessa of Maḍa Galma

3 = gogessa of Guyyo Boru

4 = gogessa of Aga Adi

5 = gogessa of Bule Dabbasa

41 Submoiety affiliation:

0 = no data

1 = Fullelle

2 = Haroressa

3 = Digalu

4 = Karrayyu

5 = Maṭṭarri

42-43 Best estimate of age: dated age when that is available or reported age when dated age is not available.

44-45 The smallest units of the kinship system for which the census and sample data were adequate. These units were labelled "lineages" and were selected as the optimal units for statistical analysis. The identification numbers are the same as in Table 6-1. They are recorded for males only.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2	3	4	5									
110	80	11	25	55	8	1	2	3	0	2	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	2	5	5	8							
220	15	0	2	1	2	4	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0							
320	80	2	1	2	2	8	2	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	2	8					
420	80	1	1	2	2	5	2	5	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	2	2	5	8					
520	80	1	1	1	2	0	2	0	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	7	2	2	2	0	8				
620	80	2	1	2	1	7	1	8	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	1	7	8				
720	80	2	1	1	1	5	1	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	1	5	8				
820	80	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	1	3	8				
920	80	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	6	2	2	1	1	8				
1020	80	2	1	1	6	6	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	6	8					
1120	80	2	1	1	4	4	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	9	9	2	2	4	8					
1210	15	0	1	1	2	6	4	6	4	9	8	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	6	4	1	6				
1320	10	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	9	9	0	1	0			
1410	10	1	1	1	3	7	0	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	3	1	3	7	1			
1510	10	1	1	1	5	2	0	8	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	3	1	5	2	1			
1617	10	1	1	1	3	8	0	6	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	7	3	1	3	8	1			
1717	15	0	1	1	1	4	8	0	7	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	8	1	5			
1817	10	1	1	1	6	4	0	9	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	1	6	4	1			
1917	10	1	1	1	4	0	0	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	2	1	4	0	1			
2010	10	1	1	2	5	3	0	8	1	5	3	6	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	8	5	1	5	3	1			
2120	15	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	9	9	0	3	0			
2220	10	1	1	1	0	1	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	6	4	5	1	1	7	1	
2320	10	1	1	1	0	1	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	6	5	5	1	1	6	1	
2420	10	1	1	1	0	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	6	8	5	1	1	3	1	
2510	0	0	1	1	1	5	1	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	0	5	1	0	0		
2610	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	0	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	3	0	3	0	0		
2710	10	1	4	0	1	1	2	3	4	3	4	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	5	1	2	3	4	1	4	
2820	17	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	1	0	0	9	9	0	5	0	0		
2910	16	0	1	1	1	3	0	3	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	3	0	2	4		
3010	10	1	1	1	2	8	2	7	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	5	1	2	8	1	1		
3110	10	1	1	2	6	2	6	3	9	1	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	1	6	2	1	1		
3220	15	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	9	9	0	3	0	0		
3310	10	1	2	0	1	1	2	6	4	6	4	9	1	3	4	3	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	3	2	6	4	1	2	
3420	17	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	0	0	9	9	0	5	0	0		
3520	12	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	4	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	2	
3620	12	0	2	1	1	0	3	3	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	4	9	9	3	2	3	3	1	2

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 4020170212 0 0 0 0 0 0400 391 0 0-9905 0
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 4220120111 020 3 8 0 0000 00 39 40 45322012
 4320120111 012 2 8 0 0000 00 39 40 53321212
 4420120211 024 0 8 0 0000 00 39 40-99322412
 4520120211 022 0 8 0 0000 00 39 40-99322212
 4620120211 016 0 8 0 0000 00 39 40-99321612
 4720120211 0 6 0 8 0 0000 00 39 40-9932 612
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 61101701123939 6113836400 00 0 0 50153927
 6220120212 0 0 0 0 0 0400 611 0 0-9902 0
 6320170111 0 1 1 6 0 0000 00 61662 4815 127
 6420170211 0 3 0 6 0 0000 00 61662-9915 327
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 6620150212 0 0 0 0 0 0400 651 0 0-9903 0
 6710 801127272 9163941400 00 0 0 571272 8
 6820160212 0 0 0 0 0 0400 671 0 0-9904 0
 6920 80111 033 511 0 0000 00 67 68 561233 8
 7020 80111 029 511 0 0000 00 67 68 601229 8
 7120 80111 026 411 0 0000 00 67 68 631226 8
 7220 80111 0 9 211 0 0000 00 67 68 8012 9 8

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 7320 80111 0 7 211 0 0000 00 67 68 8212 7 8
 7420 80111 0 5 211 0 0000 00 67 68 8412 5 8
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 7620 80211 017 011 0 0000 00 67 68-991217 8
 771017011152526812 0 0000 00 0 0 45255227
 78101701124444 712 0 0400 00 0 0 53254427
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 8520150211 011 0 5 0 0000 00 80 81-99531121
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 8920 10211 0 7 018 0 0000 00 86 87-9931 7 1
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 9320150211 0 7 010 0 0000 00 90 91-9953 720
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 9620 40111 0 8 2 1 0 0000 00 94 95 112 8 4
 9720170212 0 0 0 0 0 0400 942 0 0-9905 0
 9820 40111 0 7 2 1 0 0000 00 94 97 212 7 4
 9920 40111 0 5 2 1 0 0000 00 94 97 412 5 4
 100101401116464 9 7 0 0000 00 0 0 -7226414
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 10320120212 0 0 0 0 0 00001021 0 0-9902 0
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 10520150110 031 5 8 0 0000 00102103 34333120
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 107101701125353 8174742000 00 0 0 84255327
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11120170210 0 7 012 0 0000 00107108-9925 727
11220170210 0 2 012 0 0000 00107108-9925 227
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11520 40212 0 0 0 0 00001141 0 0-9902 0
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11720170210 0 2 014 0 0000 00114115-9945 227
118101401112626 410 0 0000 00 0 0 55522614
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12320150110 0 3 112 0 0000 00120121 9423 316
12420150210 0 3 012 0 0000 00120121-9923 316
12520150210 0 4 012 0 0000 00120121-9923 416
12620150210 0 2 012 0 0000 00120121-9923 216
1271017011239 0 6 9 033400 00 0 0 34453927
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12920170211 0 6 0 4 032000 00127128-9945 627
13020170211 0 4 0 4 0 0000 00127128-9945 427
13120170211 0 3 0 4 0 0000 00127128-9945 327
13220170211 0 1 0 4 0 0000 00127128-9945 127
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13520 10110 0 2 1 8 0 0000 00133134 6331 2 1
13620 10210 0 6 0 8 0 0000 00133134-9931 6 1
13710 101113030 5 6 0 0000 00 0 0 191130 1
13817 7011052 0 812 0 0000 00 0 0 452152 7
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14220170210 0 4 0 5 0 0000 00139140-9955 427
14320170210 0 1 0 5 0 0000 00139140-9955 127
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147101701116666 918 0 0000 00 0 0 79356628
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15020 10110 0 1 1 3 0 0000 00148149 2431 1 1
15120 10210 0 3 0 3 0 0000 00148149-9931 3 1
15220 10210 0 3 0 3 0 0000 00148149-9931 3 1
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15420 80212 0 0 0 0 0 00001531 0 0-9902 0
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15620160210 0 2 0 7 0 0000 00153154-9924 225
1571015011224 0 5 5 0 0000 00 0 0 17532420
15820 80212 0 0 0 0 0 00001571 0 0-9902 0
15910 801135252 715 0 0000 00 0 0 695252 8
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16320160212 0 0 0 0 0 00001621 0 0-9904 0
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16520 60111 0 5 2 9 0 0000 00162163 6842 5 6
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17520160212 0 0 0 0 0 00001712 0 0-9904 0
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18220130111	0 6 210 0 0000	00176177	7551 613
18320130211	0 3 010 0 0000	00176177-9951	313
184101301135454	8 74045300	00 0 0	3215413
18520170212	0 0 0 0 0 0000	1841 0 0-9905	0
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18720130111	010 2 2 0 0000	00184185	7211013
18820130211	0 9 0 2 0 0000	00184185-9921	913
18920130111	0 8 2 2 0 0000	00184185	921 813
19020130211	0 7 0 2 0 0000	00184185-9921	713
19120130111	0 5 2 2 0 0000	00184185	1221 513
19220130211	0 3 0 2 0 0000	00184185-9921	313
19320160212	0 0 0 0 0 0300	1842 0 0-9904	0
19420130211	0 7 0 2 0 0020	00184193-9921	713
19520130111	0 6 2 2 0 0000	00184193	1121 613
19620130111	0 1 1 2 0 0000	00184193	1621 113
19710 301124043	612 036000	00 0 0	572140 3
19820160212	0 0 0 0 0 0000	1971 0 0-9904	0
19920 30211	0 4 0 7 0 0000	00197198	9921 4 3
20010 601113029	4 5 0 0000	00 0 0	115230 6
2011016011130	0 5 4 0 0400	00 0 0	3443024
2021015011122	0 4 4 0 0400	00 0 0	11432215
20310170111	0 0 0 4 0 0400	00 0 0	3345 027
20410 101111817	310 0 0400	00 0 0	635118 1
20510 7011248	0 7154244400	00 0 0	735148 7
20620170212	0 0 0 0 0 0400	2051 0 0-9905	0
20720 70111	0 6 210 0 0000	00205206	7551 6 7
20820 70211	0 4 010 0 0000	00205206-9951	4 7
20920 70221	0 3 010 0 0000	00205206-9951	3 7
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212101501126261	9 93454400	00 0 0	11436217
21320 70212	046 0 8 0 0400	2121 0 0-9931	46
21420150111	028 4 4 0 0000	00212213	5432817
21520150111	024 4 4 0 0000	00212213	9432417
21620150111	020 3 4 0 0000	00212213	13432017

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21820150211	0 8 0 4 0 0000	00212213-9943	817
21920150211	0 7 0 4 0 0000	00212213-9943	717
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22120140212	032 010 0 0000	2201 0 0-9952	32
22220160111	029 513 0 0000	00220221	76342924
22320160111	021 413 0 0000	00220221	84342124
22420160212	022 013 0 0000	00220221-9934	2224
22520160212	0 9 013 0 0000	00220221-9934	924
226101601112528	413 0 0000	00 0 0	80342526
227101501123737	6 5 0 0000	00 0 0	4533721
22820140212	0 0 0 5 0 0000	2271 0 0-9952	0
229101701123737	6 92732400	00 0 0	36453727
23020 70212	030 0 8 0 0400	2291 0 0-9931	30
23120170111	010 2 4 0 0000	00229230	23451027
23220170111	0 7 2 4 0 0000	00229230	2645 727
23320170211	0 5 0 4 0 0000	00229230-9945	527
23420170111	0 2 1 4 0 0000	00229230	3145 227
2351015011254	0 8114351300	00 0 0	35135415
23620 00212	0 0 0 0 0 0300	2351 0 0-9900	0
23720150111	011 2 6 0 0000	00235236	38131115
23820150111	0 8 2 6 0 0000	00235236	4113 815
23920150111	0 4 1 6 0 0000	00235236	4513 415
24020150111	0 2 1 6 0 0000	00235236	4713 215
24120150211	0 3 0 6 0 0000	00235236-9913	315
24220150111	0 7 2 6 0 0020	00235236	4213 715
2431016011229	0 5 82224300	00 0 0	36342926
24420 40212	0 0 0 0 0 0300	2431 0 0-9902	0
24520160211	0 5 0 3 0 0000	00243244-9934	526
24620160211	0 3 0 3 0 0000	00243244-9934	326
24720160211	0 2 0 3 0 0000	00243244-9934	226
24820160111	0 7 2 3 0 0020	00243244	1834 726
2491717011051	0 812 0 0000	00 0 0	46255127
2501715011033	0 5 9 0 0000	00 0 0	40433315
2511012011232	0 5 83028400	00 0 0	33323212
25220150212	0 0 0 0 0 0400	2511 0 0-9903	0

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25520120111 0 1 1 3 0 0000 00251252 2432 112
2561014011232 0 512 0 0400 00 0 0 65223214
25720 80212 0 0 0 0 0 04002561 0 0-9902 0
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26020 40211 011 0 3 0 0000 00258259-993211 4
26120 40111 0 9 2 3 0 0000 00258259 1632 9 4
26220 40211 0 6 0 3 0 0000 00258259-9932 6 4
26320 40111 0 2 1 3 0 0000 00258259 2332 2 4
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26520 40111 0 4 1 3 0 0000 00258264 2132 4 4
26620 40211 0 5 0 3 0 0000 00258264-9932 5 4
26720 40111 0 3 1 3 0 0000 00258264 2232 3 4
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2691015011127 0 413 0 0000 00 0 0 78332715
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APPENDIX **2**
 PHONEMIC NOTATION

The phonemic notation adopted to transcribe Borana terms is a simplified version of the one used by Enrico Cerulli ("Folk-Literature," pp. 17-18). Among the younger linguists, Andrzejewski has recently written a paper concerned specifically with the phonology of the Borana dialect of Galliñña. [1] The notation system he devised, however, is much more complicated than Cerulli's. For all the consonant and vowel phonemes in the Borana dialect I present opposite the symbols used by Cerulli, Andrzejewski, and myself. It can be readily seen that I have retained Cerulli's notation in most cases. I have left out the diacritic marks which he uses whenever that could be done without loss of phonemic information. Both Cerulli and Andrzejewski have elaborate systems of vowel-length notation. This aspect also has been left out because I have no evidence indicating that vowel length has phonemic value in Galliñña.

In the examples opposite, I use the same terms that Andrzejewski uses whenever possible. The vowel phonemes in Borana are the following:

i e a o u

When the vowel occurs in terminal position it is generally omitted or suppressed. Hence, the two most common ways of spelling the name of the dialect which we are considering, Borana or Boran, are equally accurate. The terminal *a* is in fact optional. The omission of the terminal vowel occurs when that vowel is short and the stress falls on one of the preceding syllables. Thus, if we follow Andrzejewski's use of double vowels to represent vowel lengthening, and the symbol (') to represent stress and raised letters to represent terminal vowels that are suppressed the proper phonetic transcription of the word Borana would be Boorán^a.

Gemination is an important feature of Borana phonology. It is represented in the text by a doubling of consonants: thus, *abba*, "father;" *gurra*, "ear." There are only two cases in which this feature is not reflected in the transcription system,

[1] B. W. Andrzejewski, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Borana Dialect of Galla."

Phoneme	Andrzejewski	Cerulli	Legesse	Example
Plosives				
Labial	b	b	b	<i>torba</i> "seven"
Dental	t	t	t	<i>torba</i> "seven"
	d	d	d	<i>dubra</i> "girl"
Velar	k	k	k	<i>kuḍan</i> "ten"
Glottal	ʔ	(')	(')	<i>goromsa</i> "heifer" <i>ta'u</i> "to sit"
Ejectives				
Labial	p'	p̣	p̣	<i>kope</i> "shoes"
Dental	t'	ṭ	ṭ	<i>fiṭe</i> "top, apex"
Alveolar	ts'	ṭç	ṭç	<i>ḥubbu</i> "injustice"
Velar-palatal	k'	q	ḵ	<i>maḵa</i> "name"
Implosives				
Alveolar	ɖ			
Alveo-palatal		d	ḍ	<i>ḍirs</i> "husband"
Affricates				
Alveolar	tʃ	č	ch	<i>gurracha</i> "black"
Alveo-palatal	dʒ	ḡ	j	<i>huji</i> "work"
Fricatives				
Labio-dental	f	f	f	<i>farda</i> "horse"
Dental	s	s	s	<i>obbolessa</i> "brother"
Alveolar	ʃ	s	sh	<i>shan</i> "five"
[Velar-palatal]	[x]		[x]	[<i>muxa</i> "tree"] [a]
Glottal	h	h	h	<i>harka</i> "hand"
Rolled Series				
Alveolar	r	r	r	<i>sare</i> "dog"
Lateral Series				
Alveolar	l	l	l	<i>hola</i> "sheep"
Nasal Series				
[Velar]	ɱ[b]			
Labial	m	m	m	<i>mura</i> "decision"
Alveolar	n	n	n	<i>nama</i> "person"
Palatal	ɲ	ñ	ñ	<i>ñapa</i> "enemy"
Semi-vowels				
Palatal	y	y	y	<i>guyya</i> "day"
Labio-velar	w	w	w	<i>waka</i> "God"

[a] This consonant is not a phoneme. It is an allophonic variant of *k* and occurs only in phonologically restricted environments, i.e. intervocalic. The same kind of alternation between *k* and *x* occurs in Tigriñña. Curiously, this allophone does not occur in any of the other dialects of Galliñña. Thus the word *muxa*, "tree," is pronounced *muka* in all the other dialects.

[b] A variant of the phoneme *n* which occurs only in a restricted phonological context.

namely, in the case of the phonemes *sh* and *ch*. Doubling these composite symbols would have been awkward. Below is a list of all the words in this book which should have been but were not geminated:

Bokkicha, Ḳallicha, Uchota, Bachitu, *nāchisa*, *lichō*

In Cerulli's notation these words should be transcribed as follows:

Bokkičča, Ḳalličča, Uččota, Baččitu, *nāččisa*, *liččo*

There were no instances in which the phoneme *sh* was geminated.

APPENDIX

3

RECORD OF GADA COUNCILORS

The following data are intended to supplement the information given in the gada chronology (Table 7-1). It is a record of all the known councilors who served as members of the three principal assemblies during the terms of office of the sixth through the fifteenth Abba Gada (1899-1968). The names of the Abba Gada are not included since these have already been reported in the chronology. The record includes the name of the councilor (column 1), the clan, major and minor lineages to which the councilor belongs (column 2), the gada council of which he is a member (column 4: A = *adula*, G = *garba*, M = *medḍicha*), the class which was in power at the time he served (column 5), the *gogessa* of that class (column 6), and a code number representing the councilor's lineage affiliation (see Table 6-1). In the case of the *garba* and *medḍicha*, the councilor need not belong to the gada class in which he serves.

The record also includes fragmentary data going beyond 1899. This data need not be fragmentary. With further research it should be possible to extend the list to cover a major part of the nineteenth century. At the present stage of the research project the data beyond 1899 and the information on all the councilors marked "X" is not reliable. This part of the record was not used in the statistical analysis (chapters 5 and 6). It was left out either because it was incomplete or because it was not confirmed by informants other than the one who originally furnished it.

All the data have been checked against a similar, but much shorter, record compiled by Domenico Pecci, "Note sul Sistema delle Gada e delle Classi di Età Presso le Popolazioni Borana."

Councilors who Served During the Present Century

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office
Halake Liban	Karrayyu/Hajeji/Basu	1960-68
Boru Arero	Digalu/Emmaji/Ilu	
Tari Liban	Maṭṭarri/Metta/Garasu	

Councilors who Served During the Present Century — *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Gada Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Dullacha Bonayya	Karrayyu/Sunḡanna/Namaso		G	6	1	26
Jarso Godana	Nonitu/Ammooye/Warra Jarso		G	6	1	14
Jarso Bilala	Digalu/Emmaji/Aru		G	6	1	20
Jatani Boya	Arusi/Ilanni/Co'eti		G	6	1	2
Jilo Wario	Maṭṭarri/Metta/Dampu		G	6	1	27
Sora Jilo	Maliyyu/Manabdu/Fulballo		G	6	1	10
Diḡḡa Dabobessa	Karrayyu/Dayyu/Walabu		G	6	1	24
Wario Kato	Galantu		G	6	1	7
Gufu Boru	Digalu/Titti/Boru		G	6	1	16
Dida Jaldessa	Ḳarḡabdu/Buyyama/Mida		G	6	1	6
Duba Guyyo	Ḳarḡabdu		M	6	1	6
Duretti Jaldessa	Ḳarḡabdu		M	6	1	6
Gayo Doyyo	Hawaṭṭu		M	6	1	4
Guyyo Wario	Daḡḡitu		M	6	1	3
Doyyo Adi	Karrayyu/Sunḡanna		M	6	1	26
Galgalo Boru	Digalu/Nurtu		M	6	1	15
Dida Guyyo	Konnitu		M	6	1	13
Galgalo Arero	Dambitu/Warra Gussa		M	6	1	12
Boru Adi	Warri Jidda/Anna		M	6	1	8
Nura Dullacha	Warri Jidda/Anna		M	6	1	8
Arero Ashane	Maṭṭarri/Metta	1952-60	A	7	2	27
Guyyo Dida [a]	Karrayyu/Abbole		A	7	2	26
Olka Liban [b]	Digalu/Daddo		A	7	2	19
Halake Galgalo	Maṭṭarri		G	7	2	27
Bante Dido	Maṭṭarri/Metta		G	7	2	27
Nura Duba	Karrayyu/Siba		G	7	2	26
Dida Halake	Karrayyu		G	7	2	24-26
Galgalo Jaldessa	Dambitu		G	7	2	12
Liban Dima	Digalu/Nurtu		G	7	2	15
Dida Ṭache	Maḡḡitu		G	7	2	5
Jatani Guyyo	Konnitu		A	7	2	
Halake Arero	Arusi		M	7	2	2
Galgalo Halake	Daḡḡitu		M	7	2	3
Jaldessa Arero	Hawaṭṭu/Wayyitu		M	7	2	4
Jilo Guduru	Ḳarḡabdu/Buyyama		M	7	2	6
Doyyo Waḡo	Karrayyu/Itu		M	7	2	25
Arero Nuru	Karrayyu/Jaro		M	7	2	24
Liban Adi	Ḳarḡabdu/Ilu		M	7	2	6
Doyyo Oddo	Konnitu/Wayyitu		M	7	2	13
Arero Irbi	Digalu/Walajji		M	7	2	18
Dima Dida Katelo	Nonitu		M	7	2	14
Jarso Doyyo	Maṭṭarri/Manḡata		M	7	2	27
Nura Waḡo	Digalu/Nurtu		M	7	2	15
Nura Arero	Hawaṭṭu		A	7	2	
Bule Doyyo	Karrayyu/Hajeji	1944-52	M	8	3	26
Jaldessa Liban Sara	Maṭṭarri/Metta		A	8	3	27

[a] Pecci identifies this councilor as Karrayyu/Basu.

[b] Son of Liban Kuse, Abba Gada.

Councilors who Served During the Present Century — *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Gada Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Dido Adi	Digalu/Titi					
Liban Boru	Karrayyu/Uchota		A	8	3	16
Adi Dida	Hawaṭṭu		A	8	3	26
Adi Galgalo	Konnitu		A	8	3	
Nura Duba (X) [c]	Karrayyu/Siba (Mada)		A	8	3	
Dida Halaxe (X) [c]	Karrayyu/Kojeja (Mada)		G	8	3	26
Guyyo Gababo (X) [c]			G	8	3	25
Dida Elema	Maliyyu/Halchayya		G	8	3	
Liban Dalan	Daḡḡitu		G	8	3	10
Galgalo Gololcha	Nonitu/Berritu		G	8	3	3
Arero Ḳanḡorro	Maṭṭarri/Gadulla		G	8	3	14
Ṭunne Raso	Digalu/Emmaji		G	8	3	27
Dida Duba	Karrayyu/Holle		G	8	3	20
Liban Nura	Karrayyu/Sunḡanna		G	8	3	24
Godo Jilo	Digalu/Walajji		M	8	3	26
Jaldessa Jilo	Konnitu/Halchayya		M	8	3	18
Dida Jaldessa	Dambitu		M	8	3	13
Nura Halake Sora	Dambitu/Jaro/Itu		M	8	3	12
Nura Jilo Galgalo	Sirayyu		M	8	3	12
Guyyo Halkano	Warri Jidda/Waragu		M	8	3	11
Karrayyu Duba	Ḳarḡabdu/Debitu/Barḡota		M	8	3	8
Dabbasa Ḳullicha	Arusi/Ilanni		M	8	3	6
Jilo Dida (X) [c]	Konnitu		M	8	3	2
Arero Jilo [d]	Maṭṭarri/Gadulla	1936-44	A	9	4	27
Adi Liban (X) [c]	Hawaṭṭu		A	9	4	
Godana Arero	Karrayyu/Gaddu		A	9	4	
Boru Dida [e]	Warri Jidda		A	9	4	24
Jilo Gurro	Karrayyu/Bido		A	9	4	8
Boru Abba Kule	Digalu/Udumtu		M	9	4	25
Boru Liban	Konnitu		M	9	4	17
Arero Gula	Maliyyu/Jarso		M	9	4	13
Jaldessa Bukkicha	Warri Jidda/Goyyitu		M	9	4	10
Boru Jaldessa	Ḳarḡabdu/Ilu		M	9	4	8
Gurracha Mali	Hawaṭṭu		M	9	4	6
Liban Guyyo	Daḡḡitu		M	9	4	4
Jaldessa Jilo	Maṭṭarri/Doranni/Hirriḡu		M	9	4	3
Jilo Boru	Maṭṭarri/Gadulla		M	9	4	27
Duba Walenso	Dambitu		M	9	4	27
Jaldessa Liban [f]	Ḳarḡabdu/Buyyama		G	9	4	12
Bidu Boru	Maṭṭarri/Manḡata		G	9	4	6
Ḳakessa Ḳotto [g]	Warri Jidda		G	9	4	27
Dullacha Godana	Karrayyu/Sunḡanna		G	9	4	8
Jaldessa Wario	Galantu/Berritu		G	9	4	26
Liban Baggajja	Digalu/Emmaji		G	9	4	7
			G	9	4	20

[c] X = Unreliable or inadequate data, not included in statistical analysis.

[d] Pecci identifies this councilor as Karrayyu/Dayyu.

[e] Became substitute Abba Gada.

[f] Son of Liban Jaldessa, Abba Gada.

[g] Brother of Guyyo Ḳotto, key informant on warfare, historian.

Councilors who Served During the Present Century — *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Gada Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Dido Jaldessa (X) [h]	Maççitu/Cora	1929-36	A	10	5	
Jarso Jilo	Konnitu		A			
Boru Daga (?) Liban	Mațțarri/Doranni/Hirriçu		A	10	5	27
Guyyo Liban	Hawațtu		A	10	5	
Anna Fayó [i]	Karrayyu/Mulata/Nole		A	10	5	24
Jaldessa Guyyo [j]	Maççitu/Cora		A	10	5	5
Halake Boru	Karrayyu/Sunķanna		M	10	5	26
Gollicha Wario	Karrayyu/Hajeji		M	10	5	26
Goyyo Galgalo	Konnitu/Wayyitu		M	10	5	13
Liban Jirmo	Ķarçabdu/Debitu		M	10	5	6
Galgalo Huķķa	Hawațtu/Wayyitu		M	10	5	4
Boru Ťachó Urde	Daççitu/Sodditu/Wayyitu		M	10	5	3
Kallicha Guyyo Bire	Arusi		M	10	5	2
Godana Jarso	Mațțarri/Doranni		G	10	5	27
Duba Liban	Maliyyu/Jarso		G	10	5	10
Waķo Bukke	Karrayyu/Mana Bido/Itu		G	10	5	25
Liban Halake	Daççitu/Sodditu		G	10	5	3
Arero Dida	Digalu/Titti		G	10	5	16
Guyyo Gababo	Nonitu/Millo		G	10	5	14
Liban Jilo	Mațțarri/Metta/Garasu	1921-29	A	11	1	27
Jilo Jaldessa	Konnitu		A	11	1	
Liban Huķķa	Karrayyu/Hajeji/Basu		A	11	1	26
Tisse Liban [k]	Hawațtu/Mulo		A	11	1	
Arero Ilmayo	Digalu/Emmaji/Ilu		A	11	1	20
Boru Liban	Karrayyu/Sunķanna		M	11	1	26
Shuna Ali (X)			M	11	1	
Doyyo Jarso Moyye	Mațțarri/Mankata		M	11	1	27
Anna Ali	Digalu/Nurtu		M	11	1	15
Duba Jilo	Nonitu/Millo		M	11	1	14
Oddo Godana Hedeķa	Konnitu/Wayyitu		M	11	1	13
Duba Katane	Ķarçabdu/Debitu/Barçota		M	11	1	6
Liban Jatani Liban	Hawațtu/Sab'ansa/Kura		M	11	1	4
?	Hawațtu		M	11	1	4
Jaldessa Liban [l]	Ķarçabdu/Buyyama/Mida		G	11	1	6
Adi Liban Elema	Ķarçabdu		G	11	1	6
Kote Galgalo	Sirayyu		G	11	1	11
Godana Waķo	Mațțarri/Metta		G	11	1	27
Dabobessa Guyyo	Karrayyu/Dayyu/Walabu		G	11	1	24

[h] Became adula as a substitute for Jaldessa Guyyo, same clan and lineage.

[i] Pecci identifies him as Karrayyu/Basu. In this instance, Pecci is probably wrong because my information was obtained from the subject himself.

[j] This councilor is a great-grandson of Saķo Ťaddacha, Abba Gada. The informant is Maççitu and the former Abba Gada is Bachitu. Probably indicates segmentation of the Bachitu clan since the time of Saķo, spinning off Maççitu as a new clan.

[k] Died soon after he was proclaimed Adula, was replaced by Boru Lallo, father of Guyyo Boru Lallo, submoiety Abba Gada in the assembly of Maķa Galma. The original and substitute councilors are members of the same clan and lineage.

[l] Father of Dido Jaldessa, who is Adula councilor in the assembly of Gobba Bule.

Councilors who Served During the Present Century — *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Gada Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Happite Ťuyye	Warri Jidda/Anna		G	11	1	8
Jilo Galma	Digalu/Nurtu		G	11	1	15
Guyyo Dida	Konnitu/Mulo	1913-21	A	12	2	
Arero Doyyo	Hawațtu/Bokkoltu		A	12	2	
Ashane Abba Ilo	Mațțarri/Metta		A	12	2	27
Gufu (or Dida?) Guyyo	Karrayyu/Abbole		A	12	2	26
Godana Dida [m]	Nonitu/Ammoyye		A	12	2	14
Nura Abba Tano	Karrayyu/Jaro		M	12	2	24
Mallicha Dida Racho	Digalu/Titti/Koyye		M	12	2	16
Galma Tore	Nonitu/Ammoyye		M	12	2	14
Galgalo Halake	Konnitu/Wayyitu		M	12	2	13
Wario Guyyo	Dambitu/Warra Gussa		G	12	2	12
Guduru Boru	Ķarçabdu/Buyyama		M	12	2	6
Liban Dida	Hawațtu/Mulo		M	12	2	4
Halake Jaldessa	Daççitu		M	12	2	3
Arero Liban	Arusi		M	12	2	2
Dida Jaldessa	Mațțarri/Gadulla		G	12	2	27
Habo Girimpe	Karrayyu/Hajeji		G	12	2	26
Adi Galgalo Malliso	Maliyyu/Berritu		G	12	2	10
Liban Gollisa	Galantu		G	12	2	7
Liban Halaxe Gollo	Digalu/Titti		G	12	2	16
Galgalo Godana	Konnitu/Afaji	1906-13	A	13	3	
Dida Adi	Hawațtu/Wayyitu		A	13	3	
Liban Sara	Mațțarri/Metta		A	13	3	27
Boru Kuli	Karrayyu/Uchota		A	13	3	26
Adi Haro	Digalu/Titti		A	13	3	16
Nura Godana	Karrayyu/Sunķanna		M	13	3	26
Irbi Arero	Digalu/Walajji		M	13	3	18
Guyyo Shuna	Konnitu		M	13	3	13
Duba Jatani	Warri Jidda/Anna		M	13	3	8
?	Ķarçabdu		M	13	3	6
Boru Duta	Hawațtu		M	13	3	4
?	Daççitu		M	13	3	3
Jilo Boru Dulo	Mațțarri/Gadulla		M	13	3	27
Dida Gollo	Konnitu/Afaji	1899-1906	A	14	4	
Arero Çiço	Karrayyu/Gaddu		A	14	4	24
Jilo Halake	Mațțarri/Gadulla		A	14	4	27
Sarbayye Liban (X)	(Gona)		A	14	4	
Liban Ukkunna [n]	Hawațtu		A	14	4	
Bule Balali	Karrayyu		G	14	4	24-26
Borbor Jilo	Digalu/Udumtu		M	14	4	17
Adi Hukko	Konnitu		M	14	4	13
Dida Giro	Warri Jidda/Anna		M	14	4	8

[m] Took over as Abba Gada when his brother, Boru Dida died. Godana also died and was replaced by Aga Adi.

[n] According to a second informant the name of this councilor is Liban Kunnayyu.

Councilors who Served During the Present Century – *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Gada Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Jaldessa Guyyo [o]	Ḳarḇabdu/Ilu		M	14	4	6
Sarbayye Liban	Ḳarḇabdu		A	14	4	6
Abbu Lake	Hawaṭṭu/Mulo		M	14	4	4
Guyyo Liban	Daḇḇitu		M	14	4	3
Liban Dida	Maṭṭarri/Doranni	1891-99	G	15	5	27
Dido Mallise	Karrayyu/Siba		G	15	5	26
Jilo Boru Hasumma	Digalu/Titti		G	15	5	16
Arero Boru	Warri Jidda/Anna		G	15	5	8
Makka Ḳana	Nonitu/Millo		G	15	5	14
Fayo Daga	Karrayyu/Mulata/Nole		A	15	5	24
Dabbassa "Gobba" Bule	Digalu/Emmaji/Ilu [p]		A	15	5	20
Liban Ḳikale [q]	Digalu/Nurtu/Ḳabdota		M	15	5	15
Liban Bargaji	Konnituu/Wakole		M	15	5	13
Wario Kotote	Ḳarḇabdu/Debitu/Warabejji		M	15	5	6
Galgalo Adano	Hawaṭṭu/Walenso/Wallo		M	15	5	4

[o] His complete name is Jaldessa Guyyo Sabaḳo.

[p] He is the lineal ancestor of the Abba Gada-elect,

[q] Gobba Bule, the fifth Abba Gada on the chronology. An ancestor of Jaldessa Jilo, Bokku.

Councilors Who Served During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Ilmayyo Watticha	Digalu/Emmaji/Ilu	1855-91	A	16	1	20
Guyyo Dima	Digalu/Emmaji/Aru (?)		A	16	1	20
Jilo Balambal	Maṭṭarri/Metta/Garasu		A	16	1	27
Huḳḳa Sarite	Karrayyu/Hajeji/Basu		A	16	1	26
Galgalo Boru	Digalu/Emmaji/Aru		G	16	1	20
Galgalo Kale	Digalu/Emmaji		G	16	1	20
Dido Ebere	Maṭṭarri/Metta		G	16	1	27
Galma Doyyo	Galantu/Berritu	1868-76	A	18	3	7
Galgalo Yayya	Hawaṭṭu/Walenso/Wallo	1860-68	G	19	4	
Liban Wario	Maṭṭarri/Doranni/Hirriḇḇu		M	19	4	
Daga Sara	Karrayyu/Mulata/Nole	1852-60	A	20	5	24
Kotote Arsama	Ḳarḇabdu/Debitu/Warabejji		M	20	5	6
Adano Galgalo	Hawaṭṭu/Walenso/Wallo		M	20	5	4
Sarite Sora	Karrayyu/Hajeji/Basu	1845-52	A	21	1	26
Balambal Oda	Maṭṭarri/Metta/Garasu		A	21	1	27
Bittata Mammo	Nonitu/Ammoyye	1837-45	G	22	2	14

Councilors who Served During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – *continued*

Name of Councilor	Clan/House/Lineage	Term of Office	Council	Class	Gogessa	Lineage
Sara Anna [a]	Karrayyu/Mulata/Nole	1814-21	A	25	5	24
Mata Nura [b]	Karrayyu		A	25	5	
Nura Boru Kibala	Karrayyu	1776-83	A	30	5	
Liban Dawwe	Ḳarḇabdu/Buyyama/Mida	1745-53	A	34	4	6
Godole Gobbo	Ḳarḇabdu/Buyyama/Mida	1714-22	G	38	3	6
Iggu Barru	Digalu/Emmaji	1706-14	G	39	4	

[a] Substitute Adula councilor.

[b] Died before his investiture, died in *raba* grade.

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