Introduction

When I set out to do field research in Chuuk I was planning to study the Chuukese view of the person, their sense of self and other (*nónnómwún aramas*).[1] Much work, if sometimes implicitly, had previously been done on various aspects of personhood in Chuuk. Goodenough (1951) described the social structure in connection with property or land ownership. Gladwin and Sarason (1953) looked at the relationship between culture and personality, while Mahony (1970) gave a good description of the Chuukese theory of sickness and medicine, thereby shedding additional light on aspects of personhood. Caughey (1977) went on to describe cultural values related to dimensions of (individual) character, and Käser (1989), in German, gave a thorough and systematic presentation of the Chuukese concept of the "soul," or psyche, of persons and later added an ethnography on the concept of the "body." Marshall in his famed *Weekend Warriors* (1979) gave insight into local concepts and manifestations of manhood, while Moral (1996), in Spanish, did her research on womanhood. What all of these studies have in common, though, is that none have explicitly focused on a comprehensive understanding of how persons constitute themselves. Also, with the exception of Goodenough (2002) and brief reference in Black (1999),[2] American anthropologists doing research in Chuuk have not included the central work of Käser into their research, mainly, I assumed, because of the language barrier they faced. Being fluent in both German and in English I sought to change that, while keeping in mind that much of the fundamental fieldwork on the view of the person had been done some twenty-five to sixty years ago.

In addition, it has become obvious that many things have changed dramatically in Chuuk and in Micronesia as a whole during the past sixty years. In 1945 the United States Navy took over political power from the Japanese and the islands then became part of a trusteeship granted to the United States of America by the United Nations in 1947. Many years later, in 1978, the people of the Trust Territory of the United States in the districts of Chuuk (then Truk), Kosrae (Kusaie), Pohnpei (Ponape), and Yap voted on a referendum to establish the Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). In 1986 the newly formed sovereign nation was officially born with the formal enactment of the Compact of Free Association (Compact) with the United States of America.[3] Hezel (2001; 2013) reflects on half a century of economic, political, social-familial, educational, and religious changes that have taken place in Micronesia since World War II and the arrival of the Americans (*remerika*).[4]

Reafsnyder (1984), Larson (1989), Flinn (1992), Wendel (1998), Lowe (1999), Bautista (2001), Marshall (2004), and Dernbach (2005) are a few others that have—more specifically—followed in dealing with selected themes of cultural change and continuity in Chuukese culture and thought since coming under the sphere of US and other foreign influence. Of course, these manifold external changes of livelihood have also affected the way people in Chuuk view themselves as persons and how they view others in their new and constantly evolving world. The many foreign influences have obviously diversified the spectrum of differences and cultural variance and with them increased potential for conflict. But they have also led to a "holding on" to some views and practices people in Chuuk have felt and may feel they cannot do without, even today. They are or might be their specific identity markers that clearly distinguish them from the people surrounding them who might be of other ethnic and cultural origin.

Knowing this and to avoid a static linguistic description or an "ideational order of culture" (Caughey 1977: 2) and a static construction of Chuukese personhood (e.g., Goodenough 1951, 2002; Caughey 1977; Käser 1977, 1989; Wassmann and Keck 2007: 2; and I might also add Lutz 1988 for the Chuukic continuum), I was hoping to approach personhood as it is established in daily interactions between people and is expressed in issues of external conflict (*fitikooko* and *wosukosuk*). For oftentimes there are discrepancies that can be observed between the ideals persons have and profess to live by and, secondly, how they actually live or abide by their ideals in real life situations—or do not abide by them. By looking at different types of conflicts, strategies, and styles of conflict resolution I was hoping to gather insight into the dynamic aspects of personhood as they were and are being lived and established by the people of Chuuk today (Wassmann and Keck 2007: 2, 4–7; White and Kirkpatrick 1985). It must also be noted that in their attempt to solidify their customs, the people of Chuuk along with the other member states of the FSM have included into their US-modeled constitution the protection of traditions by statute. We will encounter this set of questions in greater depth throughout this ethnographic account because the imported legislation carries and codifies imported views of the person that clearly collide with traditional views.

In this respect my small endeavor was part of a greater effort by the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Heidelberg under the guidance of Jürg Wassmann to further investigate the ongoing effects of globalization on the view peoples of the Pacific have of themselves and of others (Wassmann and Stockhaus 2007). A handful of masters' theses, five doctoral research projects, and one postdoctoral study have been the outcome of this ambitious project for Micronesia alone.[5]

The idea that cultural rules become most evident when they are broken seemed like a promising starting point for this endeavor. Conflicts are en-

demic in any human society and, I thought, could be analyzed from a legal perspective as well as from the perspective of more traditional versus modern, or by comparing Protestant versus Catholic Chuukese, and also by looking at related diasporic communities of Chuukese living in Guam, Hawaii, and the mainland United States, including in the context of their interactions with their own communities and even with non-Chuukese. By collecting and discussing cases of conflict with the local population I wanted to learn what values are still viable and actively influencing people's notions of right and wrong behavior in a mature (*miriit*) person and what distinguishes a mature person from an immature person (*semiriit*—child, immature person).

What expectations are attributed to being a decent or indecent woman (*feefin*) or man (*mwáán*), husband or wife (*pwúnúwa*), mother (*iin*) or father (*saam*), child (*naaw*) or sibling (*pwiiy*: same sex sibling; *mwááni*: opposite sex sibling of a woman, female; *feefina*: opposite sex sibling of a man, male), friend (*pwiipwi*) or foe (*chóón opwut ngaang*)? What makes a person to be viewed as crazy (*wumwes*) and how are disabled persons viewed (*aramas meyi ter*) in their society (Marshall 1994, 1996), and finally how are these views constructed and transmitted in their ever-changing world (Wassmann and Keck 2007)?

Interpersonal conflicts often arise when someone feels offended or is in fact offended by another person's inappropriate behavior, actions, or speech. But not only that, to offend one person means that a person is most likely also offending the collective ego or unit of persons that count themselves and feel themselves as being one people (*eew aramas*). What effects do such offenses have and what are the strategies people employ to solve such conflicts— should they want to solve them—or how do such conflicts play out over time between individual selves and their collective selves as opposed to another individual self or group of collective selves? And then of course there are some issues of conflict that may never really be resolved, that are a recurring source of aggravation, discontent, and conflict between individuals and the group of persons they belong to as well as between persons belonging to groups of distinguished "others." One such key source of conflict in Chuuk are land disputes. Because of its scarcity and necessity for survival land is highly valued, boundaries are constantly contested, and land rights challenged.

The Land Dispute

Little did I expect when coming to the field with my wife and two daughters, aged three-and-a-half and one, to be immediately immersed in such a conflict myself. We arrived in Chuuk in early December 2004 and were planning to move to the island of Paata in the western part of the Chuuk lagoon. An empty house in the village center had been prepared for us. We had been invited to

move to Paata by the Board of the Evangelical Church of Chuuk (ECC),[6] and the local *Sowupwpwún* (lord of the land, traditional chief) of Paata, Aichy Aikichy, and the people of his village and church in Epin, had agreed for us to move in with them into their community. Perry,[7] the senior head of a lineage in Epin, had also readily agreed to our move and was there to welcome us with his family on our first visit, when we brought in our luggage and some basic supplies. That was on Saturday, 11 December 2004. If the weather permitted, we were planning to move the whole family the following week so as to be settled down just in time for Christmas. On the following Monday morning, we were officially welcomed by members of the Executive Board of the ECC and were presented with the surprising news that we could not move into the home that was prepared for us at Epin. Perry had met with the ECC President the previous Sunday and was now asking for us to pay him a considerable amount in exchange for the right to move into the house and stay on "his piece of land." He was referring to a small portion of filled-in-land (former shoreline or *nééné*) on the ocean side of the house, approximately nine by two meters, which his lineage had sold to the Liebenzell Mission in 1969 and was later turned over to the Evangelical Church of Chuuk in 1973. Next to the signature of Riiken, who was the *Sowupwpwún* at the time of the title transfer, and that of a number of senior female lineage mates, Perry's own signature was also on all the official documents sealing the legal transfer of the land title. In fact, he himself bragged about having played the primary role in convincing his lineage mates to provide this small portion of shoreline to the cause of his church. "I was the first one to raise my hand [in 1969] when we were asked in a community gathering who would be willing to provide a portion of their land to establish a home base for the ministry of God in our churches [in Fááyichuk]." When it came to filling the land and reinforcing the shoreline some years later, he acted as the foreman of his lineage in this project. But, some years later, the *Sowupwpwún* came of age and died, and that was when Perry started making claims of additional compensation for the piece of shoreline his lineage had sold many years earlier. Then, before we arrived, Perry's remaining sister had moved to Hawaii permanently for medical treatment, and it had now become clear that she had no intentions of coming back home.

In Chuuk women are the actual titleholders of lineage land. While their male lineage mates have use rights during their lifetimes they cannot actually bequeath the land to their offspring without the consent of the female titleholders in the lineage. This traditional form of collective landownership has only been recently reinforced and even tightened (since the mid-2000s) to the degree that all members of a lineage must actually sign a document of transfer of land title for it to become valid. In essence, it means that to purchase lineage land as a nonmember of a lineage has become a nearly impossible or at least very difficult and a costly thing to do as one could be required to obtain

Figure 0.1. Exiting Toon's Netuutu channel to the West facing Paata island.
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thirty to a hundred signatures. Perry, being the most senior member of his lineage, was considered to be the speaker of the land (*awen fénú*), the official representative of his lineage in such matters, but he is supposed to speak on behalf of his sister or sisters and other possible female titleholders. In addition, one remaining witness to the title transfer of 1969 had also just left Chuuk the summer before we arrived and had actually met and consented with Perry with regard to his claims, and Perry had assured him that the issue was settled and that he would not cause any problems. But now that this person had left the islands for good and it had become clear that his sister had left for good as well, the tables were suddenly turned. "If only the [well-respected] witness to this title transfer were still here, there would be no conflict and no claims made by Perry. . . . And if his sister knew about what he is doing she would get really mad at him. She would never approve of his dealings. But she does not know about it and is not here to confront him," the church president often exclaimed. "So Perry can just do whatever he wants." Now that the witness to the land title change, a person of respect, and Perry's sister had left the islands for good, Perry could display behavior he did not and would not have displayed in their presence lest he be considered as being *mwááneyas* (displaying arrogance and "behavior that disregards the presence or status of others"; Goodenough and Sugita 1990: 106). While these persons of status were present, there were no

such direct claims being made by Perry. What further confirmed this deference to other persons of rank and respect were Perry's own comments on the title transfer. "How was I to respond otherwise when chief Riiken [in 1969] called together our community and asked us if we were willing to also offer part of our shoreline for the cause being promoted. He was the *Samwoon* (chief) at the time. Who am I to have opposed his suggestions? Instead, I was the first one to raise my hand." Perry had in fact disguised his true feelings (*epinééch*) and constrained himself in the presence of higher-ranking and more powerful persons than he was. And to make a good impression before the community as well he had demonstrated full and model support, which at the time also brought him additional status and respect by the community and its leaders. In Chuukese society, I learned, maintaining harmony through exhibiting respect and deference in relation to someone in authority (*suufén*) (Goodenough and Sugita 1980: 162) or obedience toward others, especially toward people of a higher social rank, is considered to be one of the highest ethical norms. This is especially true for members of the same clan or kin group, and people will constantly be careful not to offend another person in daily interactions, and to carefully obey a superior even if it means to go against one's own will or judgment of the situation (*nóón* ósópwiisek) (Käser 1977; Dernbach 2005; Rauchholz 2008; Rauchholz 2010).

On the one hand, this all seemed exciting. I had come to study conflict and conflict resolution as a means to understanding the Chuukese view of the person and was now completely entangled in such a conflict myself along with my hosts, who were doing their best to find a solution to our dilemma. In the many meetings that followed with the ECC Executive Board over the next six weeks this conflict was discussed extensively in our collective quest to resolve the issue and also to think through other options.[8] I was experiencing that "ethnographic understanding of others is never arrived at in a neutral or disengaged manner but is negotiated and tested in an ambiguous and stressful field of interpersonal relationships in [usually] an unfamiliar society" (Jackson 1998: 5). There were a number of other "indigenous" factors, such as the upcoming gubernatorial and legislative elections, which complicated matters even more for some of the persons involved in solving the conflict and taught me a lot about the interweaving of persons, their families, and their lineages and clans, as well as about alliances and the pressures of politics, need fulfillment, power, and economic success, and the way they are all somehow interwoven in modern Chuukese society.

On the other hand, time was flying by quickly with my family still unsettled and having to relocate five times during the first six weeks in Chuuk between the island of Wééné and Toon. My only hope during these first weeks was that in the end our patience and endurance would be rewarded. I remained busy taking careful notes in the many hours of meetings and in discussions during

mealtimes and was also able to discuss my questions with the ECC board members even after the official meetings were over. I was also fortunate to find an informant in his fifties whom I began interviewing regularly in the evenings after he came home from his busy days at work. He was a rich source who stood outside the particular conflict itself but with whom I could further discuss and theorize about the Chuukese view of the person, especially in light of the particular conflict at hand. In the end, though, this prolonged stay on the capital island of Wééné, due to the dispute brought upon us by Perry, led to yet another encounter with an unexpected finding.

Initial Encounters with Adoption

As I was walking down the main street one afternoon I came across Hilary, an older friend I had known all my life. She was a bit surprised to see me back in Chuuk and was wondering what I was doing there. I briefly explained to her that I had come back to Chuuk to do research in cultural anthropology and was now studying conflict and conflict resolution in Chuuk as a means to understanding fundamental aspects of personhood in Chuuk (*nónnómwún aramas*). As our conversation continued, she stated that, if I wanted to understand the view of the person through the eyes of conflict, "you should study our practice of adoption. There is so much *wosukosuk* and *fitikooko* [conflict, tension, and *tohuwabohu [chaos]*]in our families in Chuuk because of adoption."[9]

Initially, I did not fully recognize the penetrating power and piercing force of this comment in the context of research on adoption because I had not yet studied in detail the anthropological literature on adoption in Oceania. What I did know and was familiar with were the basic ideas presented there of the naturalness of adoption and nurturance of children beyond the realms of the biological or nuclear family in the Pacific. Because adoption, fosterage, and transactions in parenthood are considered to be a "normal practice," why should one expect there to be a problem or for there to be any fundamental concerns regarding the effects of these culturally encouraged, cultivated, and accepted practices? But the fact that Hilary was claiming the opposite to be true led me to prick my ears and take note carefully. For one, insights gained from the study of inner-familial, lineage, or intraclan conflict would reveal most intimate aspects pertaining to personhood in Chuuk. Ideal norms presented in older ethnographies on Chuuk could be tested with present-day case material in order to bring out the dynamics of everyday life and expose how and within which boundaries personhood was and is being negotiated and transmitted by persons in Chuukese society. In addition, comparisons between present-day material and cases of the past would be an ideal way of looking at how these fundamental and ideal norms of Chuukese culture were lived, practiced, and negotiated in the past and in the present, and they would

shed light on culture change and continuity amid external global changes that have come upon Chuukese society over the past century and a half. Thirdly, I knew that people in Chuuk, like elsewhere in Micronesia, have the tendency to avoid speaking at all about sensitive topics, one of which is inner-familial conflict, especially to an outsider (Petersen 2009: 199), because the consequences of doing so might be too grave for the individual talking straight and truthfully (*wenechchar*) to bear.

In sum I thought that case material collected on adoption related to inner-familial conflicts would be an ideal supplement and very well complement my overall research intentions. So, I asked Hilary if she could further explain to me how she came to her observations and conclusions about adoption in Chuuk and the effects it had had on her life. It was then and there that I had heard for the first time that she had been adopted—despite the fact that we had known each other for such a long time. That alone proved to me the sensitivity and significance of the words spoken by Hilary, who was now talking to me as an adult and a researcher in cultural anthropology.

I must add here that when I began my research in Chuuk in late 2004, I came to the field with the benefit of having spent the formative years of my childhood and early adolescence in Chuuk. Having moved to Chuuk as an infant with my parents, I spent most of the following fourteen years in Chuuk. So, between 1972 and 1986, with subsequent visits in 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1996, Chuuk had been my home and I had also gone to a local elementary and middle school there. Not only was I fluent in the Chuukese language, but I was also able to fall back on relationships our family developed and maintained with people from all over Chuuk in the course of my parents' thirty-eight years of educational, social, and missionary service to the people of Chuuk. I was therefore familiar with these ideas of the naturalness of adoption and nurturance of children beyond the realms of the biological family from my own personal experience. I had considered the few cases of visible conflict in families that had adopted children as being a marginal situation. But my first conversation with Hilary began to change that.

Hilary

As an infant, Hilary had been adopted by her mother's brother and his wife, who were without children (*riit*). The person she thought to be her biological mother was actually her aunt, and she also grew up with her siblings and other aunts and uncles on the same piece of lineage land in their home village. Food was usually prepared and shared by the extended family. Her adoption had been kept a secret, but when she was about ten years old, she discovered who her biological parents were. That was when feelings of rejection (*nikinikingn-*

gaw) surfaced. Issues of self-worth and identity troubled her, and the question Hilary often raised was, "Why me? Why not my brother or sister? Did I do something wrong?" As a result, she felt isolated, withdrew, and harbored feelings of not belonging. Even though she was the *finniichi* (firstborn daughter), treated very well and even spoiled (*fón*), she felt *neetipengngaw* (see table 2) because of being adopted. In short, *neetipengngaw* summarizes all negative character traits and abilities of the intellect as well as all unpleasant dispositions felt by a person in his or her *tiip* (Käser 1977: 57), a Chuukese person's seat of emotions, intellect, and character (SEIC).[10] The artificial construct of the SEIC is a term Käser later suggested for the purpose of cross-cultural comparison to capture the essence of *tiip* and related ethnopsychological concepts of the disposition of the psyche in other cultures of the world (Käser 2004: 177–93). But we will turn to this in more detail later.

Hilary's biological mother, like everybody else in the lineage, was sworn to secrecy; and her mother later told her how badly it hurt her to give her away and that she would often stand around the corner of the neighboring house listening to her daughter cry after breastfeeding her, and that then she too would cry secretly over the loss of her daughter. What made matters worse was that, when Hilary was a teenager, her adoptive mother adopted two more children from her own lineage. This led to greater estrangement between Hilary and her adoptive mother because the mother showed more affection toward the two children who were of her own matrilineage and, thus, from her own flesh (*fituk*).

What this person was telling me was obviously contrary to the ideal view of adoption and personhood in the Pacific with which we have become acquainted (Weckler 1953; Carroll 1970a 1970 b; Brady 1973, 1976a, 1976b, 1976c; Silk 1980; Ritter 1981; Flinn 1985a, 1985b, 1992; Terrell and Modell 1994; Carsten 2004; Treide 2004; Carucci 2008). Even though she still suffers from these feelings of rejection and has ill feelings toward both mothers, it did help Hilary to discover later on that her biological mother was suffering just as much from the separation.

When she got older, she also found comfort in her relationship with her younger biological sibling who had also been adopted into the same family and who could share their common burden. When I shared this person's biography with an anthropologist who had worked in Chuuk, he was surprised as well, and we thought it to be a rather marginal finding. Hence, I revisited R. Goodenough's article on adoption in Romónum, where she mentioned a few cases that, to her, seemed to deviate from the norm, in that they revealed something "about the real feelings that may be involved in adoption and how they must be camouflaged" (1970: 336). What she meant by real feelings becomes clear in the account she gives of a woman from the neighboring island of Wútéét who herself had

adopted children from three different families. For each adoption her account was full of the richest emotional detail. Mothers yearned and wept, whole lineages gathered to discuss a proposed adoption, children were torn in their feelings, and a grandfather [in 1964/65!] remarked that "it is easy for an animal to give up its young, but for people it is not easy." (1970, 335)

The reason R. Goodenough did not follow up on these accounts of adoption was "because they did not involve Romonum people" (339n14).

Pulling Together the Threads

Little did I know or understand at that point how relevant and important my opening observations and findings evolving from the dispute with Perry would be to help me understand central cultural underpinnings in the Chuukese view of the person and their relevance in the practice of adoption. I learned how important the physical presence of persons of authority is, that as soon as such a person is not present or becomes old, weak, or dies, decisions made by that person, and relationships created, enacted, maintained, or controlled (!) by that person's authority and strength, may lose their *manaman* ("mana" or efficacy, innate power), their personal and socially binding character. People in Chuuk will readily agree that when young men run out of control it is because no such person of direct authority is present in the village to effect respect (*suufén)* and humbleness (*mósónósón*).[11] Perry's death six weeks after our arrival and at the climax of the dispute was what eventually put an end to our housing and field site problem. Because of his death, Perry's sister was forced to return to Chuuk, and she was apologetic for the trouble her brother had caused without her knowledge and consent.[12] In Hilary's case a similar thing happened to her after her adoptive father died, who was the closest biological link to her birth mother, being her mother's brother. Without the presence of his authority (*péchékkún*) and efficacy (*manaman*) holding the family together, Hilary's mother's affection and energy now began drifting towards her native lineage and the children she had adopted from her own flesh (*fituk*). How then, I began to ask, does such a view of the person affect the durability, strength, and stability of adoptive relationships? Was this a reason why Ward Goodenough (1951: 215) had found that "[o]lder persons who were adopted in childhood are usually functioning as members of their natal lineages just as if they had not been adopted at all"?[13] I learned how personal character or identity changes depending on contrasting social identities (Caughey 1980: 176–77), which included the social identity of adopted persons and their kin. These social identities, it appeared, not only changed when a person moved between localities and different groups of kin and non-kin, but also through time. In other words, when one generation of siblings that shared their own children (Ottino

1970: 115; Marshall 1981, 1976: 28) gradually began retreating from this world, the adoptions or adoptive relationships they had established, "created," and maintained would begin to deteriorate, dissolve, or even be terminated—despite the fact that most kin who share their offspring in Namoluk and in Chuuk already share physical substance (Marshall 1976: 37; 2008: 4).[14]

Secondly, if persons are raised and taught to conceal their personal emotions for the sake of group harmony or out of deference and respect toward a higher-ranking person within their kin group, what are the personal emotions they might have but must conceal? What do they feel and how might they experience their "self" under or within such a cultural design for living? What strategies do they develop as an individual to cope within their culture, which stresses the primacy of the elder kin and community over the emotions of an individual of that group? In Perry's case he seemed to wait for his time to come, when he would be free to determine what he wanted to do and could finally do without having to defer to some other authority. That finally gave him the freedom and the power to do what he felt he wanted to do and also reflected his changing social identity based on the presence or absence of others.

Finally, these two cases of adoption—the personal encounter and the historical encounter through Ruth Goodenough—were what led me to begin asking a whole new set of questions. I began to turn the focus of my attention from the practice of, and quantitative data on, adoption to the psychological and other effects adoption had had and was having on those persons who had become objects of exchange "in the same way that land, food, residence, labor, physical possessions, political support and money are shared" (Marshall 1976: 47). I turned my attention to those who had been, or still were, such objects of exchange and asked them how they experience and have experienced their adoption in the course of their lives. As I have demonstrated above, inquiries into and lessons learned about varying aspects of the Chuukese view of the person and the psyche remained my constant guide and have greatly contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of adoption.

Outline

In the end, a fourfold aim of this study emerged: first, to make a contribution to the ethnography of Chuuk; second, to look at person and emotion through the lens of adoption (*mwúúmwú*) by providing a comprehensive and systematic exposition of the effects of adoption on the adoptees themselves and other people most intimately affected by the adoption; third, to include legal perspectives and the effects of migration on this age-old traditional practice; and finally to discuss these findings in the light of past and present anthropological research, thereby refining and revising some commonly held views on adoption in Micronesia and the Pacific.

The remainder of the introduction sets the scene of this book by connecting central issues of personhood with the practice and effects of adoptive relationships. After a discussion of the fieldwork methodology and ethical considerations, the ethnographic and geographical background of Chuuk and its people are briefly outlined. Some comments on history and cultural change and how they relate to the data presented here close the first chapter.

Chapters two and three present the heart of this study on adoption. After giving an overview and discussing central issues in the anthropological discourse on adoption and fosterage in Oceania, a historical review of adoption in Chuuk narrows the focus to our ethnographic field of study. In line with our research goal to study the effects of adoption on individuals who have been adopted, a conflict of identity emerges, and looking at the view of the person in Chuuk and the disposition of the psyche of persons becomes necessary. This section forms the basis of the discourse between individuals and their social group, their family, lineage, and clan. The themes that emerge in this context are extensively discussed on the basis of the ethnographic data collected.

The effects of history and cultural change are acknowledged in chapter three. The laws and economics of the modern nation-state and its challenges to traditions are presented here. The efforts undertaken to accommodate tradition and law in a globalizing world and its effects on adoption practice are displayed in the context of adoption at home in Micronesia and abroad. As more and more Chuukese migrate to the United States, some of the discontinuities and continuities and the effects of this widely practiced tradition will be traced.

The conclusion shows that the ethnographic data from Chuuk clearly reveals the ambivalence of adoptive relationships and thereby challenges some generally held views on adoption in Pacific societies. It suggests a reassessment of the idealized view of adoption promulgated by anthropologists in Oceania.

Research Methodology

To meet the abovementioned goals and answer the open questions data has been collected so far on the life histories of over two hundred people who have been adopted (*mwúúmwú*). These are opposed to cases of mere fosterage (*túmwúnúúw*), for example a student staying with his uncle or some other lineage or clan member's family while studying abroad. What the two adoption cases discussed above reveal is that—although commonly practiced—adoption is a very delicate issue when one tries to follow up on the effects it has had in the everyday lives and sentiments of those most intimately affected by it. This is especially true on the "one island" or "one village" level, where, traditionally, fieldwork on adoption has been done. As we will see below, honest

Figure 0.2. Caught in rain. Most of my local travels in the Chuuk Lagoon were by 21- or 23-foot skiff with a 40hp outboard motor like the one pictured. © Bianca Krafft.

information relating to feelings people have in a closely knit society about their own kin and other people is hard to obtain because of the danger involved for those who are heard talking or suspected to be talking about these issues. My own experience has shown that multi-sited ethnography has been the most effective approach for this set of questions. I have performed structured interviews with people from all parts of Chuuk, rather than simply focusing on one island or village. With this approach, the identity of the informants could be more easily concealed, and a groundwork provided for an open exchange of information.

The data was obtained through interviews with friends and relatives of adopted persons and their families, including grandparents, mothers and fathers, and brothers and sisters, all of whom either had a son or daughter given to them or personally had given away one or more children in adoption. Where possible, biological and adoptive siblings of those interviewed were also consulted. Beyond these, fifty-two people who themselves have been adopted provided in-depth and detailed insight into their personal experiences, their struggles and feelings, and traced for me the effects adoption had and still has on their lives. Oftentimes they were able to include siblings and others they knew of in their generation from their island who shared the same adoption experience, thus expanding and solidifying the data.

Table 0.1. Age and sex of interviewed adoptees.

Age	Male	Female	Total
51 and above	9	10	19
31–50	12	5	17
18–30	5	11	16
Total	**26**	**26**	**52**

Of the two hundred persons I interviewed on adoption, one hundred were either siblings or otherwise closely related to an adopted person. Thirty-three were fathers and fifteen were mothers of an adopted child or had given their child in adoption. Finally, 26 men and 26 women were interviewed who themselves had been adopted. Of the 26 men, 9 were 51–90 years old, 12 were 31–50, and five 18–30 years of age. Of the 26 women, 10 were above the age of 50, five were 31–50, and 11 were 18–30 years of age.   For nineteen of the more than two hundred interviewees, people testified—or it was reported of them—that the positive feelings outweighed the negative ones. Of these nineteen, eight were adopted because of the death of one or both biological parents. An additional ten were adopted by a childless couple as a firstborn or only child at the time of the adoption. In all of these cases, an increase in status accompanied the adoption. Three were adopted because they were born out of wedlock, and one because of her parents' divorce. Of the nineteen, eleven were infants (twelve months old or younger) at the time of the adoption. In all cases, residency and jural parenthood,[15] also central to customary adoption, were transferred to the adopting parents.

What this look at the positive cases tells us is that certain circumstances surrounding an adoption seem to account for a higher probability of a more positive adoption experience. When tragedy strikes, such as the death of a parent, the adoptees interviewed personally say the "giving away" factor is missing when they compare themselves to other adoptees' experiences and it helps them cope with their situation. They are rather thankful for the affection they received from whomever adopted them and raised them after they lost one or both parents.

The second category are those children who were adopted to a childless couple that was obviously in want of a child. All but two of the children adopted to childless couples were infants when they were adopted and again a firstborn or an only child in the new family.

Figure 0.3. Conducting interviews during fieldwork. © Manuel Rauchholz.

In sum, we can conclude that adoption in infancy, an increase in status and economic well-being, and the death of a biological parent are factors that may contribute to a more positive adoption experience. Nevertheless, these factors do not remove the experiences of the remaining 90 percent of adoptees. Being adopted to one's grandparents does not seem to be a factor that influences the positive experience of adoption as my data on this type of adoption has likewise shown.

Altogether I spent about two years and five months in the "field." The majority of my time in Micronesia was divided as follows: three months on Guam, five months on Wééné in the villages Faayis/Neepwukos and Mwáán, four and a half in Epin, Paata, and fourteen months on the island of Toon in a village called Chuukiyénú.[16] In addition I spent two and a half months in Chuukese communities in the US: four weeks in Hawaii and six weeks in Los Angeles and San Diego, the greater Portland, Oregon area, and finally in Kansas City. Most of the data I collected was from my daily interviews, observations made at community and church gatherings, meetings of the different levels of church leadership I was asked to participate in on a regular basis, and with many other informants and people I met during the course of a day on the road. A pocket notepad was my constant guide for the in-between and unexpected encounters. In the end I had amassed around forty kilos of handwritten interview and field

notes. Most of these materials have not found their way into this exposition, of course, but they did provide me with additional ethnographic background information that has influenced the development of this ethnography.

Chronology of Fieldwork

My field research for this project began with my arrival on the island of Guam on 11 November 2004. I was accompanied by my wife Mihamm, who had just submitted her own dissertation in Tübingen, Germany, and our two daughters aged one and three-and-a half. After a month on Guam that included some preliminary interviews with Chuukese residing there, a considerable amount of time spent in the library of the Micronesian Area Research Center, and the purchasing of supplies we moved on to the island of Wééné in Chuuk on 11 December 2004. The housing conflict mentioned above kept us moving between short-term housing options on Wééné and the island of Toon in the western part of the Chuuk Lagoon. While this unsettled state was hard on the family it also propelled me into the circle of the Executive Board of the Evangelical Church of Chuuk (ECC), which was handling the problem since it involved one of their pieces of property. Most of these discussions were held in the Chuukese language and during meals I had the opportunity to clarify misunderstandings. The ECC was supportive of my work locally and it was through this network that I got to know many other valuable and helpful sources on Chuukese tradition, religion, language, and politics from all parts of Chuuk State.

At the end of January 2005, right after attending Perry's funeral, I left Chuuk for a week of research at the Micronesian Seminar library on the neighboring island of Pohnpei and continued on from there for another week and a half to Hawaii for the annual Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) meeting in Kauai and additional library research time at the University of Hawaii's Pacific Collection. By the end of April, we were able to move the family from Toon Island to Paata, the place we had originally intended to reside. Every morning we awoke to the sound of the church bell, a fifty-pound propane tank hanging from a tree right outside our bedroom window, which some of the deacons of the neighboring Protestant church would strike full-force with a hammer between 5:45 and 6:15 AM. After morning devotion, the traditional chief, senior pastor, and church district president, Aichy Aikichy, would swing by for morning coffee and breakfast. When he was leaving, usually around 10:00 AM, other more junior family members or people from the village arrived, which provided for a continuous flow of people to talk to and interview as I sought to acquaint myself with village people and their lives.

After four and a half months on Paata, I returned to Germany, and for the next four months, from September to December, I interrupted my field work

to care for our family as my wife was preparing for her final examinations in connection with her doctoral exams in Protestant theology at the University of Tübingen. On 26 December, less than two weeks after the successful completion of her doctorate, we returned to Guam, and in January I resumed my research among the Chuukese on Guam and used the time prior to the 2006 ASAO annual meetings in San Diego to pull together some of my preliminary findings on adoption in Chuuk.[17] Upon my return the family moved back to Chuuk, this time to Wééné in the village of Mwáán for three months before finally settling in the village of Chuukiyénú on the island of Toon the first week of June 2006. While residing in Mwáán, I was driving back home one morning after a "breakfast" interview when a young man from across the street motioned to me asking if he could ride with me. I invited him into the car, and it turned out that he was a great grandson of Efot and grandson of Boutau, two of Ward Hunt Goodenough's primary informants and assistants during his visits to Romónum Island in 1946–47 (when he worked with Efot, the last recognized *Itang*, or "political priest," on Romónum) and in 1964–65 (when he worked with Boutau) (Goodenough 2002: 377–79). Alexia, his grandmother and wife of Boutau, he said, was still alive and clear of mind, so we met a second time and made arrangements to visit with her on Romónum—which I did three times in 2006 and 2007.

While residing in Toon I also made a few visits to the island of Wútéét to meet with Tochuwo Márew and Masamichi Ukaw in Mwáánitiw and Wiisapan. Tochuwo is over seventy years old, head of his lineage with some seventy members, and was trained in *fóósun fénú* (language of the land), or *wuruwoon fénú* (lore of the land), and in *wuruwoon aramas* (lore of people), associated with *Itang* (political priests) (Goodenough 2002: 290–320).[18] He was a valuable source on adoption and emotion and the view of the person as formerly taught and transmitted by the *Itang* in Chuuk. In addition, the close relations between the people of Romónum and Wútéét also caught my interest because of the accounts given by R. Goodenough (1970), who reported on emotions apparently involved in Wútéét adoption by visitors from Wútéét versus the rather emotionless accounts described to R. Goodenough by people from Romónum, the island of her residence. Disappointing was that a number of other former informants of R. Goodenough on adoption had since passed away and some died days before I could get back to the island to meet with them. On one occasion a *máchen* (literally: a long-pointed projection) had just been put up that morning indicating the closure of reefs and properties belonging to the deceased person I was planning to interview. Violators of this taboo it is believed will become énúúmaamaaw ("cursed," and die). Nevertheless, what these visits did reveal was that there was a lot of ambivalent emotion involved in Romónum adoption and that these emotions are felt to be too sensitive and explosive to talk about with others and between members of the same family.

If there is talk, then it is usually from elders to more junior clan members, reminding everyone to pursue unity precisely because elders are aware of the ambivalent emotions below the surface—but that again is the ideal. The reality, Tochuwo remarked, is that all families will have adoption-related feelings of ambivalence, expressed or unexpressed, which can easily lead to open conflict (*wosukosuk)*, especially when it comes to inheritance. I was also able to review with him some of the Bollig data (1927), which contains numerous proverbs, sayings, idioms, metaphors, and expressions used in traditional Chuukese society. In the past and even today the *Itang* are perceived as being "Chuuk's language experts" (Goodenough 2002: 292). At pastoral gatherings with up to fifty men from Fááyichuk present, Tochuwo was usually asked to make some special or final remarks because he always had some proverb, poem, verse or saying up his sleeve that everyone wanted to hear and learn from. I also became part of the "entertainment" since I was the only one feverishly marking all of his words down.

In Chuuk, the three pillars of public social life have been song and dance, food and feasting, and finally speeches. At pastoral meetings all of these—except for the dancing that is more often part of political and other social gatherings—are still joyfully pursued and wholly enjoyed. During the nearly twelve months we spent in *Chuukiyénú* on Toon Island between June 2006 and May 2007, I was able to map all households in the village and tried to collect family trees of as many families as possible. Trying to talk to individuals about their emotions in adoption was a great challenge and only possible with some of the villagers. It was much easier to talk to them on neutral grounds or in places like the main island of Wééné, where they were unobserved by their local community. The multi-sited approach (Marcus 1995) proved itself useful over and over again when discussing such a sensitive cultural matter and also gave due respect to the mobility of the population being studied. Moving freely on Toon Island was sometimes inhibited, though, by two other factors: the many dogs some people keep to prevent theft around their house, thus preventing spontaneous visits; and at times by a resurgence of violence between two feuding clans in January and February 2007.[19] During our residency in Toon I also made a week-long trip to the Mortlock Islands (Satawan, Mwóóch, Téé) and another trip to the Western Islands, to Howuk, Pwolowót, Tamatam, and Pwollap, where I stayed for a few nights.

In mid-May 2007 I left Chuuk for Guam and after a week there flew on to Hawaii for an additional three weeks of library work and interviewing with Chuukese residing in Hawaii. Most notable here were my extended interviews with Bernard Billimont of Siis Island. We met for four hours every other day for three weeks in between his dialysis treatments to discuss traditional aspects of personhood in Chuuk. Bernard was trained in the *Itang* (political priest) lore of Chuuk (see Goodenough 2002: 290-320; Dobbin 2011:

53–55). His education spanned decades of disciplined one-on-one learning and servitude (fishing, cooking, gardening) for his teacher and mentor. Upon leaving Hawaii I reunited with my family and the Chuukese community in Los Angeles and San Diego for further inquiries into my research topic and was grateful for the hospitality and valuable discussions of my work with Sherwood and Judy Lingenfelter, who had both worked on Yap. The final two weeks en route to Germany to complete my field research were spent in the Portland, Oregon, area and with the Chuukese community from Paata Island living in Kansas City. Here is where my field research came full circle. The week we spent in Kansas City, chief Aichy Aikichy "happened" to be there as well, and we spent a few nights in his youngest brother's house. The house had just been purchased from a Sikh realtor that same week. Also with us was our eldest daughter Luka's best friend Anseni from Epin/Paata, a granddaughter of Aichy who had moved to Kansas City in fall of 2005 with her family. A year and a half ago she had been unable to speak English and now her family was proud that she had completed first grade with straight A's and was speaking English "like an American." Before returning to Germany in August 2007, I was able to meet with the late Rev. Erwin Pegel and his wife in Wisconsin for half a day. He had studied under Ward Goodenough in the 1950s in preparation for his work in Chuuk, and the two men later met in the field in 1964–65 after Pegel had been working in Chuuk for around nine years.[20] In February 2009 another week of follow-up interviews was spent with a Chuukese community in Portland and Salem, Oregon. Then finally, in August 2009, I moved back to Micronesia, this time to the island of Pohnpei to work as a consulting anthropologist for the Federated States of Micronesia. I have been able to probe and discuss my Chuuk data on adoption, especially the questions pertaining to the psychological effects of adoption with adopted persons from Pohnpei and with groups of Marshallese women and Palauans as well. In all three cases, interviewees who have been adopted or have adoptive siblings have confirmed very similar findings in Pohnpei, in the Marshall Islands, and on Palau,[21] where people speak more openly about this whole thematic complex than they might in Chuuk and especially in Yap. So, while we are mostly concerned with the effects of adoption in Chuuk, we should be aware of the fact that we are not dealing with an isolated, exotic case of Pacific adoption as some anthropologists might want to believe. Instead, all of my interviewees from the named island groups of Micronesia, including those from Hawaii, have confirmed the relevance of this study for their own people because it resembles what they have observed adoption does and can do emotionally to people within their societies by setting adoptive children apart from those who have not been adopted. Occasionally throughout this work I will therefore make reference to other Pacific Island societies to underline these statements.

The Data Collection Process

As the focus of my research began narrowing down on the psychological effects of adoption it soon became clear how difficult it was to talk to people about this topic for a number of reasons. For one, the location and surroundings were a crucial factor as well as who informants felt was "watching" the interview taking place. A secluded place outside the view of peers and family members was a crucial factor for adoptees themselves to feel comfortable when talking about the relationships between themselves and the closest of their kin. The more rural the area and the younger the informant, the more this was a factor that needed careful consideration. It was also an issue adopted persons brought up: "How would I, or anyone else, in the presence of the anthropologist talking to my lineage elders about adoption, be able to voice his own opinion and speak up, especially if it were to be in opposition to what my elders are telling you as the anthropologist?" (Takami). Instrumental in talking to informants on a one-to-one basis was my ability to speak Chuukese fluently. The result is that most of these field notes are written in Chuukese with some German or English explanations. It was especially crucial with the more rural population. I would have to remind informants who switched to the English language to recount their thoughts in Chuukese.

Interviews with elders of the community were generally expected and pursued, but when they talked about adoption and secrecy, for example, they had to do so without the presence of other family members or people standing around lest the secrecy be broken. It is nearly impossible in the rural areas to visit with people alone on a one-to-one basis because there will always be people hanging around interested in hearing and finding out what the anthropologist is doing. So, in most interviews in such public settings with elders of a community there were many people present who were also interested in a learning experience of their own, especially when their elders began answering and discussing questions related to traditional values and views of the person. This was usually the context in which I could appropriately include questions related to adoption, emotion, and identity. In general people in Chuuk showed a great interest in my research and considered me to be "blessed" for all the traditional knowledge and information I was picking up from all around Chuuk.

Overall, the urban center of Wééné island provided for a "neutral" ground and a great majority of interviews on emotions involved in adoptions by the adoptees themselves occurred there, where people from rural places (including myself) would go for medical attention, to shop, for schooling, to pick up or see off relatives arriving from overseas or departing at the airport, or to attend work-related meetings. So even while residing on the island of Toon between June 2006 and May 2007 I, too, frequently traveled to Wééné for the sake of meeting with some interviewees on more neutral ground.

Finally, it mostly required a relationship of trust before people felt comfortable talking about these intimate, conflicting, and often hurtful private matters. The fact that my father was a well-known and established figure and had proven his trustworthiness over thirty-eight years of commitment to the people of Chuuk was essential in this respect. My own upbringing in Chuuk, where I had spent most of my first fourteen years of life and also attended a local school (grades 4–7), as well as my obvious return—which was often referred to as an indication of my attachment and commitment to, and love for, the islands—established this privileged right to certain kinds of information for myself as well. Some interviewees who were much older than I was stated this directly as a reason for sharing some of the sensitive data they would otherwise not talk about to others.

Other interview partners, though being themselves adopted or having adopted children, preferred not to talk directly about their own children or their own experience in the first person. Instead, they chose to talk about the experiences of others within their family and extended network of kin. I accepted that, because both of us knew very well that they too had been adopted or had adopted children of their own, they were including their personal experiences and feelings into their expositions of other family members for their own protection and comfort. That is a culturally accepted way of talking about personal emotions without exposing one's personal pain, hurt, and vulnerability, just because the matters discussed were "too close to home." In the case of a few informants who provided me with some rich data from their communities on a regular basis I later found out that they too had adopted children besides their own, which they never revealed to me during my stay in Chuuk.

Key Questions Asked

Here are some of the key questions I asked when interviewing adopted persons or when inquiring into a case of adoption:

1. What were the names, dates of birth, sex, and names of the biological parents, including their clan membership and island of origin and the names of the adopting parents, along with their clan membership, island of origin, and kin relations to one another? Also, how many siblings were in the biological family and in the adoptive family, and what was their place in both families?
2. What was the motive or purpose of the adoption as far as that was known by my interview partner? Sometimes another (elder) family member was able to answer this question.
3. What was the age at the time of adoption?
4. If no secrecy was involved, I would ask if they had any memories of the adoptive transaction that they could relate to me and if they could

recall what they felt and how this experience of separation from one set of parents to another affected them over time.

5. What was the relationship in the past and present between both families and sets of parents involved in the transaction?
6. If secrecy was involved, why it was involved? When and how did they find out about their adoption, and what did they feel when they found out. What did it do to them emotionally?
7. How did they feel toward their sets of parents prior to knowing and then after finding out that they had been adopted? Did this knowledge affect their relationships in any way? What did they do after they found out? What changed in their behavior?
8. How did the adoptive family or birth family react to the adopted child/person after they too knew that the secrecy had been broken?
9. Where did the interest in their biological family come from? Why did they want to get to know their immediate biological family members?
10. What were the reactions encountered by family members on both sides when attempts were made to contact or visit the biological family?
11. How did the adoptive person or others describe the adoptive relationship? Would they describe it as being loose or tight?
12. Finally, which ties did they feel were stronger, adoptive ties or biological ties? This is a very interesting question because most adoptions take place between close kin, people that are already considered to be biological kin and to share the same flesh (*fituk*) on the matrilineal side or the same blood (*chcha*) on the patrilineal side.

Ethical Considerations

The sensitivity of the research topic and the questions I was asking made it necessary to move away from the one-island approach often preferred by cultural anthropologists and ethnographers in Pacific societies. For one, my interviewees found it hard to talk about sensitive private matters, especially because they were made aware that their words could one day be published and thereby made accessible to others in their family and community. The publication of "secret knowledge" could only endanger their and my own safety because basically everybody knows everybody on a small island or in a village of the size common in Micronesia (200–600 people). It was therefore soon decided to present the effects of adoption on a broader platform in the context of Chuuk as a whole and to convey this to my informants. That made them and me more at ease because it would make it easier for me to conceal a person's identity. I have therefore not mentioned any real names unless permitted or asked to do so. I have also omitted names of islands and villages in order to protect the identity and maintain the trust between the informant and the researcher. If

I were to name any of these it is likely that almost everyone from that island would immediately know whom I was talking about, and the consequences for the adoptee would most likely become unbearable and could even lead to expulsion. I must also explicitly ask any Chuukese or Micronesian reading this book to not utilize what they read in order to further stigmatize their adopted kin, and to not use the information presented here as a "handbook" against members of their family who have been adopted in order to question their loyalty. It is in the best interest of the adoptees, their parents, and their siblings, who shared with me their innermost concerns and struggles, that the exposition of their experience of adoption be seen as a starting point toward comprehensive understanding and a source of empathy for all members of a family affected by the words of this research project.

Geographical and Ethnographic Background

In the study of adoption, emotion, and identity among the Chuukese a crucial question we need to raise at the outset also relates to the comparability and applicability of anthropological and psychological work done within Chuuk State and on other islands and atolls in Micronesia within the Chuukic continuum, that is on the far-flung islands belonging to the political entities of Chuuk and Yap States in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Palau, which borders the FSM to the west and in the past even included the island of Mapia, now belonging to Indonesia off the coast of West Papua (Goodenough 2002).

Within Chuuk State, first of all, Goodenough and Sugita (1980: xi–xiii) distinguish three language groups, the Lagoon Chuukese (R. Goodenough 1970), Mortlockese (Marshall 1976), and Pwolowótese, including Pwollap (Flinn 1985a) and the Namonuitos (J.B. Thomas 1978; M.D. Thomas 1978),[22] all of which are represented by previous research on adoption (see section on "Historical Review of Adoption in Chuuk"). The people I have consulted represent all three of these language groups within Chuuk. It will become clear that, although some regional differences (Caughey 1977: iii) in the practice of adoption exist (e.g., higher numbers of people adopted, more customary than legalized adoptions, fewer land disputes, etc.), they do not erase but rather underline the overwhelming conformity of the emotional struggles that accompany the great majority of people who have been adopted in greater Chuukese society.[23]

Secondly, the languages spoken on the southern atolls of Palau (Tobi and Sonsorol) in the west and between Yap and Chuuk all belong to the Chuukic (Trukic) family, which "range[s] from Tobi, at about 131 degrees east longitude, across approximately 1600 miles of the Pacific Ocean to Lukunor [the most southern island in the Mortlocks group], at about 154
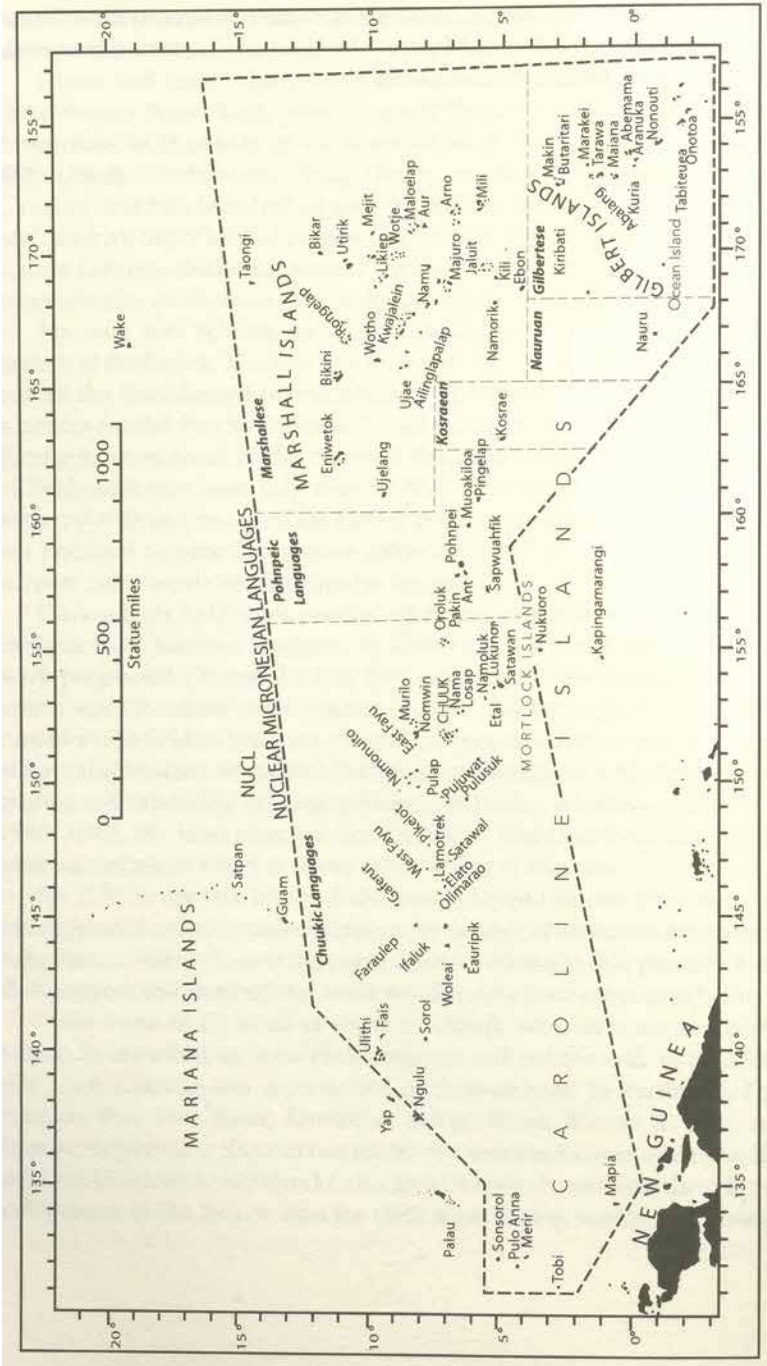
Map 0.2. Micronesia and Nuclear Micronesian languages (Goodenough 2002, xiv). © American Philosophical Society.
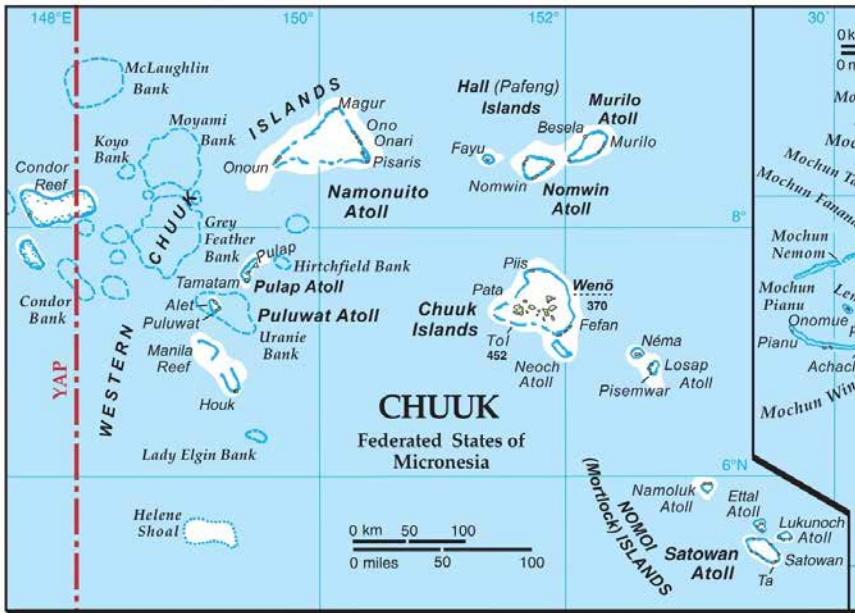
Map 0.3. Chuuk State, Federated States of Micronesia. © 2009. University of Hawai'i Press. *Reference Map of Oceania: The Pacific Islands of Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia*, 2nd ed. Cartography by James A. Bier.

degrees east longitude" (Jackson 1983: 1; see also Bellwood 1979: 130; Metzgar 1991: 40ff.). Today, artificially drawn political boundaries established during colonial times place Tobi in the Republic of Palau. Other islands such as Fais or the atolls of Ulithi, Ifaluk, Woleai, and Lamotrek and Satowal are part of the State of Yap, Chuuk State's westerly neighbor and one of the four states comprising the Federated States of Micronesia. In precolonial times, there was frequent commerce and even ongoing warfare between these different Chuukic communities (Girschner 1912; Jackson 1983: 7; Gladwin 1970; Metzgar 1991: 43; Burrows and Spiro 1953).

One key characteristic of these islands is that persons are members of a matriclan (*eyinang*) and within a matriclan part of a smaller genealogical subdivision, which can be referred to as a matrilineage (*eterekes*). The importance of the mother's line of descent permeates society at all levels. Siblings who were born of the same mother and matrilineage were considered to be closer and their relationships to one another more important than any other relationship, including that between a husband and a wife. Traditionally, the head of a matrilineage, usually its oldest male member, acted as the spokesperson and representative of his lineage and was responsible for the protection of the women

Map 0.4. Chuuk Lagoon (Goodenough 2002, 18). © American Philosophical Society.

through whom lineage and clan land was inherited. Male members of a clan had use rights to the land of their clan during their lifetime but could not automatically transmit the ownership of lineage land to their children, who were primarily members of their mother's clan and subject to the mother's brothers rather than to their fathers. The patrilateral ties (éfékúr) were more important for males than they were for females in that they provided an additional source for gaining certain skills and knowledge required of men.

Also, "a system of political, economic, and religious ties called *sawey*" (Metzgar 1991: 41) linked the islands of Pwolowót speakers (Goodenough and Sugita 1980: xii–xiii) with the outer islands of Yap State that brought tribute to Yap proper up until the German colonial administration (1899–1914). Literally, the term *sawey* refers to the "food basket" made from coconut fronds people might still use today to transport food. Sohn and Tawerilmang define *sawey* as "a tribute system, a system linking Yap with outer islands and also representatives of the social groups of respective islands" (1976: 128). For further information regarding the *sawey* system of exchange see Lessa (1950, 1966: 36–39), Alkire (1980, 1989), Metzgar (1991: 41–42), Fitzpatrick (2008), Hunter-Anderson and Zan (1996), and Bellwood, who argues that the system was enforced by "religious considerations and fear of sorcery" (1979: 106), which I can also

confirm from inquiries in Yap. The sorcery feared the most, and which Yapese are proud of, was controlling the weather since the chain of islands between Yap in the west and Chuuk in the east lies along the path typhoons take en route to continental Asia or the Philippines. Ethnic Yapese have maintained their authority through their claims to power in calling upon typhoons that can easily wipe out human life on the small, scattered atolls that are only a few feet above sea level. In Yapese tradition though, the knowledge associated with these magical powers did not originate in Yap proper but on the island of Losiyep (Losiep) in Ulithi and from there found its way to Yap proper (Rauchholz field notes, 2009).

This is important to note because though some variation in language exists along the continuum—usually less than 20 percent, except between Ulithi and Tobi with a language cognate variation of 22 percent (see Quackenbush 1968 and Jackson 1983: 10)—speakers of the Chuukic family of languages have much of their culture in common. Their frequent contact and maintenance of kinship ties, and their shared clan histories, stories of origin (Marck 2009), navigational knowledge (Gladwin 1970), religion, and mythology (Alkire 1972; Goodenough 2002; Kühling 2008; Petersen 2009), allow the anthropologist to compare and consider research done on islands within the Chuukic continuum other than the ones the anthropologist may have studied directly. Mobility of people has been part of the culture of the family of Chuukic speakers, especially those residing outside the Chuuk Lagoon.[24] A brief illustration by Edwin Romolow, a Chuukese from Pwolowót Atoll, will serve to illustrate this point. A few years ago, he was accompanying the Sea Haven on a medical and supplies run to the remote islands between Chuuk and Yap.[25] In the evening after a day of hard work treating the sick on Falaalap Island on Woleai Atoll he suggested to the captain and crew that they anchor off *his place* at an uninhabited island in Woleai Atoll (Rawúr), which is located about *seven hundred kilometers west of Pwolowót,* Edwin's home island. There they were able to relax and enjoy the fruits and serenity of the island. But toward sundown they were surprisingly met and intimidated by a woman who approached them angrily and accused them of intruding on her property, asking who had given them permission to just get off there! Edwin said he remained calm amid the accusations of trespassing and theft, and when she was done with her accusations met her with a smile, "because I knew she was just testing me to see whether or not I knew my rights and linkages to the land or not." These linkages are established and maintained in kinship ties and Edwin went on to explain to the woman how they were related to each other by common descent and were both members of the same clan (*Pwéél*). Then all of a sudden, the woman started laughing heartily and confirmed that she was just trying to test Edwin's knowledge of their kinship affiliation and their shared rights to land use and ownership on Rawúr Island in the Atoll of Woleai. The intimidated bystanders, who did not quite understand what was

Figure 0.4. Riding an *ós*, or tin-roof boat, a modern substitute for the small paddling canoe used for short-distance travel in protected bays like here in Toon island. © Bianca Krafft.

going on, were then relieved that the angry woman was only trying to play a practical joke on Edwin.

It therefore comes as no surprise that Petersen concludes that "[f]undamental patterns of social organization, in particular the dispersed matrilineal clans with their localized, landowning lineages nested within them, are characteristic . . . of all these Micronesian peoples" (2009: 19). Petersen continues: "by virtue of their unchallengeable membership in a lineage within a clan, individuals are free to move elsewhere . . . and claim as their birthright access to the land and labor of their fellow clan mates there" (22). This system of political and social organization is based on reciprocity and the obligation of clan mates to aid each other. With the ever-present potential for disaster through typhoons, any one group of persons may need to fall back on these lineage and clan connections for survival. For to arrive on an island without these kin connections, a group of persons might easily find itself as "supplicants" and "its members may be put to work in an inferior status, as quasi servants" (Petersen 2009: 22; Adams and Gibbons 1997: 37–38; Smith 1983 for Palau; and the chapter below on migration). The practice of adoption in Chuuk can also be understood within this cultural-historical background. In November 2009 four canoes were lost at sea when they got caught up in an unexpected storm while deep-sea fishing off their island of Howuk (Pwúlúsuuk), a neighboring island of Pwolowót. They immediately sailed back to their island but could not get through the narrow and dangerous passage through the reef of their island. After one canoe almost sank, they

were forced to lower their sails and let themselves drift. After a few days of drifting in the open sea, thereby keeping track of their whereabouts as best as possible using traditional navigational techniques (Gladwin 1970; Lewis 1994), the canoes ended up in two pairs about a week later and a day apart on Mékúr and Wonowu Islands in the Namonuitos, some 150–200 kilometers north and northwest of Howuk. Those who had clan ties to people on those islands were well taken care of, like family. Unfortunately, for the captain and sailors of the second pair of canoes, they had drifted to an island where none of them had clan and kin ties. They too were well taken care of, but in exchange for food, shelter, and their lives saved on an island without "family", they were obligated to gift their hosts one of their prized ocean-going sailing canoes—valued more than a human life—which is why they had not abandoned their canoes in the first place off of Howuk when they could have just swum to shore without them. In the pre-Christian past, washing ashore on an island without kin most often resulted in killing of the crew or a lifetime of servitude that encompassed one's offspring. A trademark teaching of the churches emphasizes to welcome and care for drifters.

History and Cultural Change

A pressing question I encountered in the course of my research was how the findings here might be linked—if at all—to the change of culture in Chuuk and in Micronesia as a whole. Were the negative emotions adoptive persons spoke about, their feelings of rejection, only a result of the loss of traditional values and social structure? The section on law, custom, and migration seeks to recognize and present some of these major changes that have taken place and influenced the practice and the circumstances of adoption through history. Adoption has a long-standing tradition and has from its inception, it seems, been part of the strategies of adaptation employed by Chuukese and other Pacific Islander kin groups as they cooperatively cope with their existence (Brady 1976c: 271ff.; Carroll 1966). In times of great need and self-maintenance, where one's life depends on such a strategy, personal feelings are generally of lesser importance, secondary to all else. Some anthropologists, when dealing with this topic in a cross-cultural perspective, claim that Pacific adoption does not stem from a familial crisis. But oftentimes, this means taking adoption in Pacific societies out of its local context and applying the researcher's own criteria of "crisis" to the purpose or felt motive underlying an adoption. To be living next to a sister that is barren is in Chuukese terms considered a crisis. To see an elder sister or aunt managing her household alone because she only has sons, or who has small children without an older girl to help her, is also considered a problem or a crisis that needs to be solved—even if it is for the sake of the dignity of the higher-ranking woman. One lady in her seventies

pointed this out to me, saying that under the conditions of World War II, it was easier for her to accept that she had been adopted by her mother's sister, who was married and living with her husband on another island. Back then she thought she and the family had had no other choice. But the war ended and the reason for her adoption it seemed to her had now become obsolete. It was difficult for her to continue this relationship now without asking the question why her mother was not taking her back.

One factor that also plays an important role is the near tripling of Chuuk's population since World War II, from slightly above 20,000 in 1945 to nearly 60,000 in 2004. A little over half of the FSM population of 110,000 people today are Chuukese, but they inhabit only one-seventh of the total land area of the FSM. Scarcity of land naturally leads to more conflict over the inheritance of this resource, which forms the basis for living and could lead to increased competition even between nonadoptive siblings. Even though a number of lineage heads have argued that land disputes have just as much been a central cause for division in the past, this is a factor that can increase the pressure on adoptive persons just as much as other valuables that might be up for inheritance nowadays.

It is important to emphasize here that some of the most detailed, reflective, and "complete" information has come from interviewees in their fifties and sixties. They can fall back on a lifetime of experiences and observations within their family and lineage and on their island, and they are often able to include data from people above their age group and from their lineage history as well. Many of their initial adoption experiences naturally date back to the time before overpopulation and "Western influences," such as the nuclearization of the family and the "monetization of the economy" (Hezel 1999: 318), which began in the 1960s and hit the islands full force by the end of that decade. Younger adoptees were of course engulfed by what Hezel calls the experiences that led to the "breakdown of the lineage system" (1999: 318) in Chuuk.[26] But in the case of adoptees it can work both ways, to their benefit or disadvantage. Nuclearization can mean that there might be fewer people involved in providing for an adopted child, but it can at the same time mean a greater investment of resources by an urbanized childless couple with well-paying jobs. What older informants can confirm is that my findings are not only of recent origin, merely the "logical" result of modern Western influences, but that they also existed in the past, before island life was "polluted" by them. This does not mean that the cultural changes that have taken place over the past hundred plus years under Spanish, German, and Japanese colonial rule had no influence on the practice of adoption and, in some respects, also on the emotions. Outside influences have diversified or even complicated the emotions people might have toward their fate and identity as an adopted person. But what the historic and present-day data clearly reveals is that change cannot be turned into a scapegoat for

already existing innate problems surrounding the ideals of adoption in Chuuk. Declaring cultural change as the culprit for all negative discoveries surrounding the practice and the effects of adoption would be an oversimplification in itself and does not do justice to the historical and current data obtained. "Just tell him the truth now, mother," her son and grandson pressed a woman who had denied the ambivalent emotions involved in adoption when interviewed by R. Goodenough on the subject in 1964–65. As tears began to form in her eyes, she began to tell the story of her husband and her son, both of whom had been adopted.

Again, Western influences, such as a rise in individualism, and increasing economic independence over the past thirty to forty years have de facto shaped and reconfigured the circumstances and context of adoption of the younger generations today. The fundamental questions of belonging and the emotional ambivalences resulting therefrom were themes adopted persons were confronted by and had to deal with in the past just as much as they have to deal with them today. That has been their testimony. The changes that have taken place, it seems, have made it easier for people to talk about the often troublesome effects and the emotions involved in their adoption experience. That is something most interviewees admit they would never have dared to talk about in the past, when their closely knit lineage hierarchy dominated all social life and talk, and where they, as younger members, were expected to conform to everything their elders said and did. They were expected to conceal their true feelings by keeping them to themselves. To express them would have been threatening to their kin relationships and in essence to their existence.

Notes

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1. In literature published prior to 1991 the islands of Chuuk are usually called Truk or Ruk. In dive magazines, for marketing purposes, the use of "Truk" prevails. During the four colonial periods, beginning with the Spanish in 1886, the German in 1898, the Japanese in 1914, and the American (United States) in 1945 (lasting till 1986), Chuukese have always continued the use of the term Chuuk, which in Chuukese translates as "hill/mountain" or "hills/mountains." The name "Truk" was derived from a misreading of the German orthography in writings on Chuuk, where the "tr" was read as "ch," as in the English "chalk." Testimony to this spelling and reading can be found on historical photographs depicting the interior of Protestant churches up until the 1990s. In the scripture verses written on the walls of the church at Wiisapan on Wútéét Island in the 1930s and as late as in 1991 on Nómwiin Island, words such as *feyiyééch* (blessing) or *aach* (our) are spelled with a "tr" instead of a "ch" to render

the "ch" phoneme (Rauchholz 2014 and personal observation between 1980-1991). On the islands to the north, northwest, and west of Chuuk the phoneme "ch" converts into an "r" as in the English "car," which is where the term "Ruk" is used for Chuuk. Ruk is also the name Pohnpeians use for Chuuk. For additional information on other names given to these islands by early European explorers I refer to Hezel (1973) and Goodenough (2002: 17, 27).

2. Dernbach (2005) is another exception, but her dissertation appeared while I was already in the field. The data for Goodenough's 2002 publication was mainly collected in 1946–47 and 1964–65 and, as the subtitle reveals, dealt with pre-Christian religious tradition and worldview in Chuuk.

3. Voters in the Mariana Islands District, the Marshall Islands District, and Palau District rejected the FSM Constitution.

4. Two earlier works by Hezel (1983, 1995) trace the history of foreign contact, colonial rule, and change brought upon these far-flung islands prior to World War II. Poyer, Falgout, and Carucci (2001) present Micronesian experiences under the final years of the Japanese Mandate, including the military buildup of the islands, World War II, and the transition from Japanese to American rule after 1945.

5. Stephanie Walda-Mandell looked at the "Effects of Migration and Social Change on the Cultural Identity of the People of Sonsorol, Palau (Micronesia)." The Sonsorol are of Chuukic origin. Kerstin Maelicke-Werle did fieldwork on Lamotrek Atoll in the State of Yap and wrote a dissertation entitled "Identifying with Change: Vision of Personhood and Ageing Framed by the Lamotrek Atoll, Micronesia." Jochen Resch's project was entitled: "There's a Need for Change? Experiencing New Worlds and the Generation of Visions on Yap and Fais (Micronesia)." Finally, Martin Schneider did his fieldwork in the Marshall Islands on Ailuk Atoll. "Charting and Navigating Marshallese through the Ocean of Time, Knowledge and Modernity" was the latest working title of his dissertation project. The latter two never completed a dissertation monograph but Resch did publish a book chapter on interdisciplinary research with children in Micronesia (Oberle and Resch 2013). All fieldwork for these projects was done roughly between 2003 and 2007. Finally, I must note Susanne Kühling's "The Face of Place" (2008), the fieldwork for which was completed on Woleai Atoll in 2005.

6. The ECC was first called ECOT (Evangelical Church of Truk), prior to the official name change of the State of Truk to Chuuk in 1991. The ECOT became independent of its founding Protestant mission organization, the Liebenzell Mission, in 1973, thirteen years prior to the political independence of the islands from the United States of America. Historically, the first Protestant missionaries had arrived in the 1870s from Pohnpei to begin working in what is today known as Chuuk State (Crawford and Crawford 1967; Hezel 1983; Reafsnyder 1984; Dernbach 2005; Kohl 1971). The majority of the missionaries were other islanders from Pohnpei and Kosrae who had converted to Christianity, and the foreign American missionaries actually spent little time on any one island in Chuuk. When the islands became a German colony in 1898 the American missionaries from the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) began experiencing difficulties with the German colonial administration and decided to look for a German mission organization that might be able to assist them and continue the work they had started. When some of the major mission agencies such as the Basler Mission declined their request, they finally

came upon the newly founded Liebenzell Mission (1899). In 1906 the first (Protestant) German missionary arrived in Micronesia. Historically the term "missionary" in Chuuk referred to Protestant missionaries. Catholic missionaries, who usually came as priests, were referred to as "paatire" or "father" (after World War II). Today the term missionary is also heard in use for Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses.

7. This is a pseudonym. The names of informants or other indigenous interviewees that have shared with me any sensitive information relating to their own adoption experience or that of others within their family networks have been replaced with fictitious names. They are also placed in parentheses behind quotes and citations. In most cases this was the explicit desire of the people interviewed and a measure taken to shield their privacy. Any resemblances (Chuukese) readers might find between names and life histories and their own or those of family members is coincidental and would in fact provide additional support of this work. Many people in Chuuk have names made up of their parents initials (i.e. MK, I.S., C.K. etc.). In my use of pseudonyms I have kept with that tradition.

8. We averaged two official Executive Board meetings a week during this six-week period, with meetings usually beginning in the morning between nine and ten o'clock and not ending before two to four in the afternoon. Lunch was eaten together as a group in our conference room.

9. Unless stated otherwise, names of sources listed in brackets behind quotes in this book are pseudonyms.

10. It also describes the disposition of a child who will not be comforted or is unwilling to reconcile itself, feeling itself to be treated negatively, as well as feeling disturbed, disappointed, and sad.

11. During my fieldwork in Paata in 2005 this was a common complaint of the villagers regarding some young men that had become a burden to the community. Two years later while residing on Toon island young men freely enjoyed a couple of days of illegal dynamite fishing in their lagoon because almost all lineage heads were on Guam for some meetings with their expat community. They would not have dared to exhibit such outrightly offensive behavior in the presence of their elders. Where it is still exhibited, bad character, arrogance, and disrespect, in short all possible negative attributes, might be attached to the person not abiding by the expected behavior. Sanctions may also follow, meaning lineage mates might beat up the arrogant or misbehaving male. This also tells us that people's conscience and behavior is guided more by external persons of authority and their presence rather than by an internal or innate personal conviction, an ideal of person as an independent self where the self ideally takes the role of acting on behalf of personal convictions rather than the convictions of the group of people it belongs to. By contrast, it is believed that a child in Germany "must find its own way" or "must go its own way," and a central part of growing up is the making of independent decisions. In Micronesia children are raised in the opposite direction, they are encouraged "to depend on a widening circle of kin" (Rubinstein 1995: 37).

12. A further discussion of this problem of person and authority in the context of the understanding and interpretations of "sin" and "curse" in Chuuk can be found in Rauchholz 2010.

13. Carroll (1970c for the Polynesian outlier of Nukuoro) makes the same observation: "While the majority of the people on the island appear to have been 'adopted,' there

are relatively few adoptions which have not been reversed before the death of the principals" (124).

14. This observation does seem to suggest the importance of the distinction between varying degrees of physical substance and the importance of immediate biological descent within the *inepwiinéwú* (literally: "the oneness of mothers and sisters" and their children), *faameni* (nuclear family, which can include grandparents and grandchildren living together), *eterekes* (lineage), and *eyinang* (clan), especially when we consider the importance of birth rank for rights, status, and responsibilities within a network of kin. In addition it also supports the fact that when the purpose of the adoption does not exist anymore it is terminated or becomes obsolete.

15. Jural parenthood is transferred orally and with the change of residency it is enacted. The transfer of jural parenthood is what distinguished traditional adoption from nurture (*túmwúnúúw*). For a traditional adoption to be legalized, adopting parents must give proof that the child they intend to adopt has been under their primary permanent care. The court then confirms the traditional adoption as legal.

16. Lothar Käser had done his fieldwork here from 1972 to 1974, and Frank Mahony lived in bordering Fóósón, a few minutes by foot north of where we resided, a few years prior to Käser.

17. Jeanette Dickerson-Putman and Judith Schachter (Modell) directed a working session at the 2006 ASAO entitled "New perspectives in the study of adoption and fosterage in the Pacific." The contributions to these successive meetings were published in a *Pacific Studies* special issue in 2008.

18. The "lore of the people" consisted of knowledge of genealogies and traditions of clans and lineages. While people would generally know their own clan and lineage history, an *Itang* would not only acquire genealogies of his own clan but especially be knowledgeable in the genealogies and land history of other lineages and clans of Chuuk (see also Goodenough 2002: 292). One prominent example where an *Itang* used this knowledge in a positive way was Petrus Mailo. One day in the 1970s he was informed about two young men fighting at Chuuk High School. Fights occurred almost on a daily basis during that time. But to everyone's surprise, Mailo immediately rushed up to the school and got the fighting boys together to settle the issue. Even though they were from different islands, Mailo knew what nobody else was aware of: their specific lineage affiliations and rank, and that, if the conflict were left to escalate further, it would set off a chain reaction across numerous lineages and clans that would easily culminate into a major confrontation between so many clans that nobody could then control it any longer. In a less prominent but similar way, Tochuwo was a great source, with insights from clans and lineages other than his own, including the generally known and unknown adoptive relationships and how people are biologically and otherwise connected or disconnected on his island and beyond, since clans are dispersed all over Chuuk.

19. The feud was actually between families of closely related clans who were also neighbors. On one Sunday morning in the first week of January some twenty to thirty men openly fought each other. The state police officer had just handcuffed an eighteen-year-old youth. He in turn had shot the policeman's uncle with a self-made arrow shot off with a slingshot the previous day and had now just turned himself in to the police. The relatives of the policeman had followed their state officer relative outside of view

parallel to the path. As soon as the youth was handcuffed they jumped out of their cover and began to lynch the now defenseless young man. The young man's immediate relatives were observing the arranged arrest carefully to assure that their relative made it safely to the waiting police boat. In the end, the police barely got the young man to the hospital alive. The police officer had fired at least nine shots in the skirmish and needed doctors to remove at least three lead arrows from his chest and back.

20. Rev. Pegel, suffering from a rare type of leukemia, died two months later.
21. See the legend of Ngelekel Budel and Ngelekel Chelsel in the final "conclusion" of this book.
22. John and Mary Thomas did concurrent doctoral field research on Namonuito Atoll.
23. Greater Chuukese society refers to the islands of Chuuk State. The Chuukic continuum refers to the islands of Chuukic-speaking people in Micronesia.
24. For the land-oriented Westerner sea travel may seem quite troublesome. For purpose of comparison, it might be noted that through history until the introduction of the train in Europe, travel between Rome and Paris (1,430 km) generally took a month, while a Pwolowótese sailing canoe might take only two weeks to cover the same distance.
25. The Sea Haven is a clinical boat operated by the Protestant Pacific Missionary Aviation (PMA) based on Pohnpei, FSM. PMA was founded in the mid-1970s and among others, maintains a small fleet of aircraft that offer medical evacuations and airline services to the remote islands in the FSM.
26. The lineage system is indeed under transition, especially since "money does not have to be shared like food was shared in the past. It does not spoil when you try to keep as much of it to yourself or for your immediate family" (Adam). "Washington" (the US one dollar bill) is what spoils people's character, many Chuukese will remark today in reference to the effects of money on their society. One educated Chuukese explained the changes by pointing to his own experience, which stands for the experience of many: "When I took my first job after college and brought my first paycheck to my lineage head for him to distribute, he only took a small share the first time and then said, 'now you keep the other ones for you and your family. You worked for it so it is yours and you also have to feed your family and kids.' That's what actually changed the way my lineage worked from that day on." At the same time, one woman reminded me, the new modern technologies, such as the public radio and transportation opportunities, available in the 1970s for some time actually enhanced the cooperation between scattered members of her clan's lineages. She remembered how her mother would regularly attend these clan meetings and said that here they got to know members of their clan they would otherwise never have gotten to know. At these meetings people were taught their own clan history, instructed in traditional forms of respect and behavior and learned about landholdings and other relevant information of fellow clan members and their lineages from all other parts of Chuuk.