Consideration of male-female relations in Mendi poses problems for a general understanding of the politics of gender in the New Guinea highlands. Gender roles are determined primarily by the nature of the exchange system, but they are also affected by other factors such as inheritance and land tenure. In Mendi, women are typically considered subordinate to men, and their rights over land and other resources are limited. However, women can also be involved in exchange autonomously. For example, women are involved in the exchange of ceremonial goods such as kina, and they may be involved in exchange activities on their own behalf. This suggests that women have some degree of autonomy in exchange, despite their overall subordinate status.

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last speech closed the meeting. It seemed that he had carried the day. Two days later, however, I was surprised to find people doing the opposite of what they had been, apparently, firmly set on doing at the end of the meeting.

On the face of things, this pattern is a familiar one in anthropological discussions of decision-making, political meetings or "councils", and oratory, especially in egalitarian societies (see, for example, Bloch 1975; Richards and Kuper 1971). In consensus-oriented political like Mendi, effective decisions (that is, ones that make a decision or the people involved) appear to be made in informal contexts, and not at formal public meetings, which frequentate either with their inconsiderateness or with their seemingly predetermined outcomes.

In this article, however, I will argue that the meeting mattered, and that the Suolol leader's speeches were quite effective. Despite their relative egalitarianism—even for the highlands—an ideology of gender hierarchy constitutes the tacitly accepted background of belief for both men and women in Mendi. In what follows, I will show how this ideology is used to structure certain formal meetings so as to give special cultural weight to male, corporate speech-making. Effective speech-making in this context defines and constrains individual action in particular ways that informal discussions do not. This conclusion echoes certain points made by Maurice Bloch in his Malinowski Memorial Lecture (Bloch 1977) about the relationship between formal or ritualised events, "social structure" and the amount of institutional hierarchy, but brings to bear on his thesis material from an unlikely source.

**VEILED SPEECH AND THE POLITICS OF CONSENSUS**

In his early discussion, leadership and consensus in the eastern highlands of New Guinea, Kenneth Reid (1959) noted two "antithetical orientations", perhaps generally present in highlands societies: "strength" and "equitiveness". Reid observed in highlands political life between assertions of personal autonomy and of the need for concerted group action. In the highlands, this tension is not resolved by the existence of a centralised political authority that can be turned to in disputes and decision-making. The social control of violence, as well as the social possibility of collective action, becomes, in effect, the responsibility of everyone. Andrew Strathern (1975) argues that the use of indirect, allusive language is a tool that makes social control in this social context possible, and his discussion applies equally to the Mendi case. Strathern describes how indirect, "veiled" speech is used in a range of situations, from children's games and courting songs to ceremonial oratory. This kind of speech can be used to focus attention on the speaker and perhaps thereby enhance his prestige. But it has a further important role to play: "veiled" speech in the context of disputes is used "to express...suspicions and aggressive intentions while at the same time not revealing these so openly as to provoke violence or to preclude a settlement" (199). Strathern argues that whereas direct questions, challenges or insults may provoke violence, indirect speech preserves social relationships while still conveying information about the contentious issues. This sort of language "is part of the total set of controls over, and cues about, the aggressive intentions of the parties at the meeting" (193). Elaborate, indirect speech puts a damper on aggression in the context of disputes and makes possible amicable settlements in the absence of a mediating authority.

The political significance of "veiled" speech in decentralised, egalitarian politics, standing in for central political authority in more hierarchically organised political systems, has been widely noted (see, for example, Brenneis 1978; Keenan 1974; Rosaldo 1974). New, "direct" forms of political discourse, associated with the imposition of modern national governments and centrally controlled court systems, contrasts with traditional forms of speech which aim, through slowly drawn out discussion, to arrive at a settlement of complex disputes. This contrast highlights the apparent close fit between indirection and egalitarianism. As Rosaldo observed of the Hmong (Philippines), the differences between direct, "straight" speech introduced by central government representatives, and circuitous traditional speech heard in egalitarian meetings, go along with different attitudes to human motives and truth. While direct speech in the modern context refers to a higher authority (to the courts, to God) as the source of truth and legitimacy, the use of indirect language in traditional dispute settlement refers to the community, and reflects the idea that people are "equal, individual and difficult to understand" (Rosaldo 1973: 221). For the New Guinea highlands, in particular, "veiled" speech resolves the tension Reid described between "equitiveness" and "strength". The ambiguity inherent in this form of speech makes possible a certain flexibility of response on the part of people addressed by it.

But allusive speech is not used in relatively egalitarian societies only. It is also used in hierarchical systems of traditional authority such as that of the Merina of Madagascar. According to Maurice Bloch, formal oratory of Merina leaders is highly indirect. But these allusive speeches constrain the responses of those who allow themselves to be addressed in this way. Like Strathern, Bloch considers indirect speech as a mechanism of social control, but he describes a very different relationship between speech and
social relationships from that implied by Strathern. 

The concept of 'politics' as defined in the context of social control is applicable to the Micronesian context. It is really a concept of communication (Braithwaite 1977) which has been adopted to accommodate the situation of Micronesian society, where the emphasis is on the communication of power and control. In this context, 'politics' refers to the process of social interaction in which individuals and groups attempt to influence the behavior of others to achieve their own goals. This process is characterized by the use of power and influence to shape the social environment in ways that are consistent with the goals of the actors involved.

Indirect speech, then, appears to be a range of political types, and not only does it enable the speaker to convey his or her messages without the need for direct confrontation or conflict, it also allows for the expression of power and influence in a more subtle and more effective manner. It is a form of communication that is characterized by the use of non-verbal cues and symbolism, and it is a way of expressing oneself that is not seen as confrontational or aggressive. In this way, indirect speech is a way of communicating power and influence that is consistent with the values and beliefs of Micronesian society.

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In Seneca, past parades have been marked by a degree of cooperation among community members, with the overall scale of the parade being determined by the amount of resources available. The most recent parade, held in the community, saw the participation of several local groups and organizations. The parade was scheduled for a weekend, and many of the participants arrived early to make preparations. The parade route, which included the main streets of the town, was lined with spectators and local residents.

The parade began with a group of dancers, followed by a Floaters' Association float, which featured a large banner with the words "Welcome to Seneca!". The next group to pass by was the Seneca High School band, which played a lively set of tunes as they marched down the street.

As the parade continued, many of the participants stopped to chat with one another, while others distributed flyers and promotional materials. The parade ended with a fireworks display, which lit up the sky and filled the air with colorful sparks.

Overall, the parade was a success, and the community came together to enjoy a day of celebration. The organizers were pleased with the turnout and the participation of local groups, and they look forward to planning future parades in Seneca.
Whose speech is this?
not in public meetings. He recounted other times when leaders got up to speak without first turning on the microphone. His comments and those of other participants in the Surup parade suggested to me the practical importance of informal talk in individual decision-making.

However, they do not answer my questions about what the meeting had accomplished. This was because private and public discussions concern two different categories of social relationship—that of the ‘personal network’ (see infra) and that of the ‘corporate group’ (see onda, what I have been calling ‘tribe’ or ‘clan’) in which one may have obligations to exchange partners, though group affairs may also be spoken about in this context. Both men and women, adults as well as unmarried people, take part in these discussions. Obligations to exchange partners (who may include affines, cognatic kin and unrelated people) centre around debts and credits in pigs, pearlsheels, Papua New Guinea currency, or other items required in marriage and death payments and other minor transactions, but also involve general hospitality and mutual aid, including support during parades. If it was true that Olonda had not done enough private lobbying, then perhaps he did not appreciate the current extent of such personal obligations between particular Senkere Suolol men and members of Surup. On the one hand, he had been lobbying extensively, he might have been able to convince or pressure more Suolol men into not parading that week. On the other hand, given the extent of Suolol’s internal conflicts and co-ordination problems, it is doubtful that his public rhetoric could have been softened in any case. He was consistently concerned about Suolol’s strength and consistently identified his own standing with that of the tribe. It is possible that if he had not argued so strongly for a separate Suolol sai pombe, it might never have happened.

Thus, the private lobbying to which Pua referred concerned decisions about personal obligations to their Surup exchange partners and not new consensus about the timing of Suolol’s sai pombe. Those who participated in the Surup affair were people like Pua who had important obligations to their Surup exchange partners. These people had indeed acted as ‘individuals’: the point is that Olonda had done his best at the meeting to ensure that they could not, in fact, do otherwise. Even Pua’s pearl distribution to Suolol did not make the participation of Suolol men anything more than personal, although it did create enough ambiguity to save the face of his Surup big-man exchange partners, and thereby enable them to back down from their threats to close the road.

Public discussion concerns seem onda action almost exclusively: large pig kills, war-dead compensation payments, large ‘fertility’ cults. During formal, public discussions, attention is focused on the group significance of events, even though the personal obligations of group members to exchange partners in other groups may also be fulfilled at these events. The meeting was not, then, merely a ratification or summation of many individual decisions, nor was it undone by the individual actions that followed. The successful staging and harmonious outcome of the meeting was significant, not so much because they could determine what actions would take place, but because they shaped a particular and widespread public understanding about the group meaning of subsequent actions.

These understandings were, of course, considerations in the private decisions for action which people made, and had many practical effects on the lives of both those who paraded that week with Surup and those who did not. At least, the new timing and the general importance of Suolol’s own sai pombe at Senkere two months later (in which most Suolol men participated, including most of those who paraded the first time with Surup) created problems of resource allocation for many people. Men with Surup exchange partners and affines had to manage their debts and credits very carefully in order to be able to participate in two separate parades. Personal exchange relationships were strained, and a few appeared to break down as a result.
REN A LEIDEBERG

Olopa was the only speaker whose performance was exhibited, however, before everyone's

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diomas that, "bureaucracy" or "structure" meant more than usual in that the

...assembly spoke about a narrowly defined problem, expressed in terms of

...or organization, on the level of social norms..."and the more that, to

...centre...only appropriate to individuals, sets of exchange partners or

...over many topics, and refer to anything from personal data or families
to...
lower than that of men. When I asked a few women why they had not been the ones to answer with comments like "Why should I? That is men's business", and "I had garden work to do.

"Code consistency" has to do with what conveys a formal event's "seriousness". Few Mendi "consistency"; more are punctuated with purposely inappropriate contributions such as sexual joking. In contrast, this meeting was quite proper and serious. Restrictions on who might speak and about what they might speak were matched by the location and the focusing features to give this effect. As the handful of such meetings I witnessed during my stay in Mendi, women did not make speeches. A "female" voice is inconsistent, inappropriate. Women do not form part of the primary audience; they are not even addressed.

But what aspect of "femaleness" is being ruled off stage? The social identity of women in Mendi is not narrowly defined in ordinary circumstances. Normally, they are quite vocal, although it is significant that there are no specifically female "council" nor issues that require collective female decisions and action, unlike the situation described, for example, by Bloch (1971). Mendi women compared with women in the highlands generally, are unusually autonomous participants in exchanges. As I have noted, they have their own exchange partners and not uncommonly conduct transactions in shells, pigs and other items independent of their husbands. In particular, some of the shells on display at the meeting had been contributed by women, and some of the talk concerned the allocation of those shells. Furthermore, the talk concerned allied groups, that is, the natal groups of many of the resident wives. From these facts, it would seem that women ought to have been involved directly in the proceedings.

Yet they were not. That women's "public" identities are antithetical to sem onda-oriented formal occasions is illustrated by the behaviour of one of the most remarkable women in the community. In her late 40s in 1978, Tempuri had a roster of exchange partners and active debts and credits quantitatively equivalent to the two most important big-men in Seskers, and was, from the point of view of informal exchange, more active than her husband. However, if a pearlshell distribution in the ceremonial ground was in order, or if pigs had to be slaughtered and speeches made, her husband officiated (sometimes accompanied by her insistent sotto voce instructions and comments). In these formal contexts, her personal identity as a prominent member of the community was not relevant. Moreover, her public identity was characterized by restriction—by what she could not do, despite her desires and abilities. That any woman should give shells or make a speech at a tribal gathering—unless explicitly as a "place holder" for a dead or absent male—is not proper in Mendi. Action by a woman, and female imagery in men's speeches, both may be interpreted, or intended deliberately, as an affront. For example, in boasting or challenging speeches during inter-group competitive displays (tamol tukim pilu) men call their opponents "women" or "our wives" when they claim victory.

In contrast, the participation of men in formal, sem onda affairs is normal, appropriate and valued highly. Men, like women, participate in household production activities, and have obligations to their networks of exchange partners. But men, as members of sem onda, also have obligations to their "brothers" to contribute to the large group displays. Men may sometimes see transactions with their exchange partners as means to the end of formal group display, and sometimes value the latter over the former. For women, in contrast, "network transactions and obligations are ends in themselves because, regardless of how they value group activity relative to network activity, their active participation is confined to their networks. In Mendi, the male/female distinction can come at times to stand for this group/network distinction and, furthermore, to give group action a positive cultural value. It follows from this, then, that in formal contexts, not only are women ruled off stage, but so also are the "personal" identities of men. Men who bring up inappropriately personal issues at a meeting concerning tribal affairs are overruled or ignored. At the meeting in question, this was alluded to, for example, in the criticisms made by participants from outside groups concerning why only the Surup affines of one Suolod man had come. The significance of Oonda's speeches has to be seen in this light as well. Oonda's contribution was appreciated and consented to because he had skillfully framed his arguments in appropriate group terms.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THE SPECIFICITY OF EXCLUSION

As Irvine and others have noted, formal political meetings do not reveal much about decision-making processes in either egalitarian or hierarchic systems. As she wrote (1979: 782), formality "has to do with what can be focused in publicly", and so connotes the publicly recognized and legitimate social order. In her view, the "organization of these formal meetings reflects political ideology", and not processes by which decisions are made.

Individuals make decisions about action outside formal contexts in Mendi too. These decisions reflect compromises between the obligations and needs individuals have with respect to their exchange partners on the one hand, and their clansmen on the other. But while individuals are free
to make personal decisions about how to balance these obligations, formality is constraining in two ways in Mendi, and perhaps generally in the highlands. First, as Strathern notes it (1979a: 103), assertions about individual autonomy which highlanders make must be understood in their socio-cultural context of morality, judgment and ambition where they “inevitably involve a group context and an evaluation of individual achievement in that context.” Moreover, he notes (1979a: 104) that actions during public ceremonial exchanges—a central context for overt other-sex speaking in Mt Hagen—“mean something simultaneously and inextricably at both the group and the individual levels.” Wherever this duality exists, while a person is free to make personal decisions about an action on his own, he will not be in control of this second, group-level, sense in which his actions will also be understood unless he takes part in the process of shaping those understandings in formal meetings. There is some compulsion to participate. Not participating reduces the sphere of control a man exercises to his personal relations, and makes him more like a woman who also exercises control only over personal network relations. But not participating constitutes a choice for a man, because all men have access to the forum where group policy is discussed. Here, all men are on an equal footing, and are different from women.

This leads to the second way in which formality in Mendi is constraining. While there was no individual authority, all of the men at the meeting were acting quite explicitly to control who could and could not speak. That no woman tried to speak at this particular meeting reflects their passive acquiescence to the values expressed in the form of the event. This form both demonstrated and validated the (uneasy) dominance of the group meanings of action over those of the network in Mendi, a relationship most poignantly reinforced by gender symbolism. In this context of formalities, symbolism devalues both “feminality” and the individual network transactions of both women and men as it gives special weight to the male, corporate group significance that that action can bear. There is a compelling redundancy at formal events: talk concerning sem onda is reinforced by formality, by those features which focus attention on men, who actively constitute the groups which their “maleness” represents. The particular matters at hand are, in this way, suffused with a familiar and aproving glow. Reminiscent of the manner in which authority cannot be challenged in Melanesian society, this effect cannot be challenged because it is never explicitly articulated. It is implicit, veiled and implicit. What is left unsaid at the meeting is closely related to who could not speak.

It is ironic, then, that the most explicit and frequently reported (but least convincing) expressions of “male superiority” in the highlands come in those personal contexts where it does not, in fact, hold (where it is not reinforced formally), in Mendi: for example, in talk between husbands and wives. Reactions of Mendi women to these expressions vary greatly, from laughter and scorn to anger and even to divorce. But their reactions do not seriously challenge the cultural source from which expressions of male superiority issue, since they occur in the very same personal contexts in which these expressions are meaningless and inappropriate to begin with. Women in Mendi have no “legitimate” collective forum from which to challenge the existing male social structural ideology, and for the most part, do not express a need for one. Their frustrations over the way in which group events affect their lives are also acted upon in personal setting.

The literature of highlands exchange and politics has been dominated by descriptions of formal groups. This emphasis may accurately reflect explicit political ideology, but may not sum up the entire system of political meanings. If politics refers not only to the maintenance of a particular social order but also to the continuous process by which that order gets defined by both the people who control explicit ideology and people not in control of it (Thompson 1975), then the extent to which the dominant ideology is only passively acquiesced in by women, and not actively shared and supported by men, is significant. In Mendi, women can perhaps more easily leave vatorial and group ceremonies because their own sphere of activity is positively valued, informally. As I have noted, Mendi women are actively involved in exchanges and discussions which take place in informal, private settings, where networks are positively valued, and where the symbols of gender hierarchy are not relevant. In these informal settings, men and women, especially as brothers and sisters, have many interests in common. In Mendi—although perhaps not as clearly elsewhere in the highlands—these interests find formal, ritualised expression in the marriage ceremony, in which Mendi brides distribute their own marriage payment. The more balanced cultural emphasis on networks and groups in Mendi may partially explain the greater autonomy of Mendi women as compared with Hagen women, and may account for both the greater emphasis on network exchanges relating to marriage and death and the lower frequency of group-level exchanges in Mendi, also as compared with Hagen.

This particular Mendi situation may also be responsible for a less antagonistic relationship between the sexes there than elsewhere in the highlands. However, even those acts of personal rebellion, in which women actively oppose men’s definitions of the social order (such as M. Strathern describes, 1972), raise questions about the extent to which male ideology can be understood fully without appreciating how this ideology
is a significant obstacle to women's ideas, even when simply a positive, constructive contribution. The importance of formal, explicit political ideology cannot be overemphasized. However, the importance of informal, implicit political ideology, especially in gendered settings, is underestimated. Women's participation in political decision-making is often hindered by informal barriers such as stereotypes, discrimination, and gender hierarchies. These barriers can be multifaceted, ranging from subtle biases in policy formulation to overt exclusion from decision-making processes. To address these issues, it is crucial to understand the role of informal political ideology in shaping women's political participation.

However, the need to consider informal political ideology does not mean that formal political ideology is unimportant. Formal political ideology provides a framework for understanding the political behavior of individuals and groups. It is through formal political ideology that individuals and groups can articulate their goals and aspirations, and form a basis for political action. It is through formal political ideology that political concepts and ideas are developed and disseminated, and political discourse is shaped.

Thus, the two forms of political ideology are not mutually exclusive. Women's political participation is influenced by both formal and informal political ideology. It is through understanding the role of both forms of political ideology that we can better understand the political behavior of women, and develop strategies to increase their political participation.
SHORTER COMMUNICATIONS

ETAK AND THE GHOST ISLANDS OF THE CAROLINES

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Within the orally transmitted systems of navigational knowledge recorded from Puluwat by Riecken (1972), there are many phenomena listed that are hard to reconcile with the techniques used in oceanic sailing and orientation. These phenomena include the two "ghosts" or "vanishing" islands of Kafoer and Fasaokwakwe, as well as various items of "sea-life"—a category that includes such diverse items as two-headed whales, groups of umwole fish, and frigate birds. The problem under consideration in this paper is: what are the ghost islands and sea-life doing in the oral systems of navigational knowledge? The ghost islands may operate as a communication device, connecting the composite "map" of the world conveyed in the systems of knowledge to the world as it is sailed. The sea-life in one of the systems of knowledge will be shown to have a role in developing the navigational construct of eńat used during all voyages.

Carolinian navigation has been systematically studied since the major German expedition of 1908-1910, in which the three islands of Puluwat, Sasawal, and Woleai were found to have flourishing schools of navigation. As a consequence of this expedition, Sarfert (1911) and Dannin and Sarfert (1935) gave comprehensive accounts of the principles of eńat navigation on Puluwat, the sidereal or star compass, and the Nointum or "emergency islands" used in eńat navigation. They suggested that eńat was a method of measuring the relative distance between islands, and that it used a third island—the Noimte—moving backwards under the horizon stars used in the sidereal compass. The techniques of actually sailing the big ocean-going canoes (wa) were recorded by Thomas Gladwin (1970) and by David Lewis (1972), and it is from these two accounts that we have learned of the perceptual acuity of the Puluwanan pa'én navigators. It appears that training a paén begins more or less informally when he first sails on the wa of his relatives, goes through formal initiation, and culminates some 10 to 20 years later when he has mastered the techniques of sailing, orientation, weather prediction, and the associated taboos and chains. A large part of the paén's training involves the boning, clarification, and shaping of perceptual techniques. Using no external system of measurement, apart from the magnetic compass (a recent introduction) to maintain direction.