CHAPTER FOUR

ONE TOWN BASED COMMUNITY: JUNJUWA VILLAGE

In the previous Chapter I described changes that occurred at Fitzroy Crossing between 1980 and 1985. I also discussed changes that affected the Aboriginal town population. It is clear that although the permanent Aboriginal population of Fitzroy Crossing dropped by nearly 1/3 between 1980 and 1985 (from approximately 900 to around 600, DCS Censuses), the town facilities, whose purpose was mainly to service the Aboriginal population, had increased a great deal. Most of the Aboriginal people had no alternative but to be recipients of social security benefits, since there were very few job opportunities available to them.

In this Chapter I concentrate on Junjuwa Community, the oldest and largest of the town based communities. I begin by examining the process that led to the creation of Junjuwa as an incorporated Aboriginal community then look at the Constitution and finally describe the village, the population and the living conditions.

4.1 The Origin of Incorporated Aboriginal Communities at Fitzroy Crossing

In the last section of Chapter Two I presented the successive moves of various Aboriginal groups towards the township of Fitzroy Crossing. These groups gradually settled in distinct areas of the town. The last and the most important
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migration of Aborigines to town was the result of the implementation of the Pastoral Award in the cattle industry between 1968 and 1972. Over this period award wages for Aboriginal people were phased in, resulting in most cattle stations dispensing with Aboriginal stockmen, who were encouraged to take their families with them to town. As a result:

Between 1969 and 1975,...the Aboriginal population of Fitzroy Crossing increased four-fold from 200 to 800 people. This in turn altered the socio-economic fabric of the town and how social services could be delivered (DCW 1976:4).

Neither the camps into which they moved nor the town were adequately equipped or serviced to deal with such a sudden influx of population. Moreover, these unemployed people had, from now on, to rely on Government for income in the form of various social security benefits. The situation deteriorated rapidly, until a ministerial visit to the Kimberley, in late 1974, recommended that the State Department for Community Welfare initiate Community development programs in the Fitzroy Valley, and more particularly at Fitzroy Crossing (DCW 1976:4). The DCW had been formed two years prior to this, after an amalgamation of the Department of Child Welfare and the Department of Native Welfare. Both had had a long involvement in the area, although their goals were different from those of DCW. Prior to 1972, they were concerned with enforcing regulations, mainly with regard to Aboriginal employment and health, and protecting the individual. Once formed, the DCW claimed new goals aimed at:

...helping people help themselves to reach the family and community goals which they select (DCW 1976:3).

Many recommendations in that document show that these programs were not aimed at meeting either the individuals' needs or those of the Aboriginal population as a whole, but their purpose was to strengthen family and to reinforce community ties (DCW 1976:9-10). DCW's first task was, therefore, to establish how many groups of the latter kind existed amongst the Fitzroy Crossing's Aboriginal population, because these communities required a legal status without which they could not have access to State and Federal funding. These communities also needed appropriate housing because existing facilities were overstretched.

I have already indicated that two surveys were conducted separately to cover the first aspect and to evaluate the second (Kolig 1975, McLaren 1975). It was concluded that there were seven distinct groups in Fitzroy Crossing. However, the nature of these seven groups varied widely and temporary residential units were confused with more coherent and established ones. Some examination of these various groups is important to demonstrate just how varied they were. At the time of the surveys, the group that was to become Junjuwa had a population of approximately 250. All these people lived on the Aboriginal reserve within the UAM compound. Most of them had settled there recently, between 1970 and 1973, although a minority had elected to live in this
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reserve for more than a decade. This proposed community lumped together speakers of at least six different languages (Bunuba, Walmajarri, Wangkajunga, Gooniyandi, Kija, Jaru), and the Aboriginal leadership, although not the majority of the people, had come under strong mission influence. The surveys identified two other town based groups: Kadjina and Yungnorra. Each of these groups had approximately 50 members. Both were coherent from a linguistic point of view, for their members were Walmajarri and Nyikina only. Moreover, these two groups originated from a split in 1973 within the Aboriginal population that had lived on Noonkanbah station until 1971 (Kolig 1987: 92-94). By contrast with Junjuwa, these two groups and their leadership were self-defined and relatively free of non-Aboriginal interference. Thus, the mission reserve group was quite different in nature, history and composition from these latter two groups. Despite these marked differences, each of the three groups, together with four others, became seven separate and autonomous communities, each an equal part of the DCW program.

Recording Kadjina and Yungnorra as two separate and distinct groups was surprising when they had so much in common. It seems that this was because:

The two groups made their camp at different spots on the bank of the Fitzroy River, thus clearly demonstrating that they did not form one coherent community (Kolig 1987:96).

However, it is one thing to say that residential patterns mark a distinction between groups, but quite another to assume that each camp is a single and coherent entity in itself. Although approximately 250 people lived in the mission reserve camp, the internal organisation was such that the residents distinguished at least five distinct sub-camps. This was pointed out to me on numerous occasions when I visited the old mission camp with various Junjuwa residents. At each visit people insisted on showing me the site of their former house or camping place and said that "at the mission reserve each language had its own boss and its own camp". I did not collect any data nor did I hear any statement that suggested people living at the mission reserve in 1975 saw themselves as one group prior to the start of Junjuwa as an incorporated community. People always showed full awareness of the circumstances that had brought them to the mission reserve and insisted on the temporary aspect of their settlement together there. Unfortunately, the internal organisation of the mission reserve was either neglected or seen as not significant, and thus the resident population was depicted as forming one community.

The future consequences of this arbitrary way of defining Aboriginal communities were certainly underestimated at the time. It appears that pragmatic factors played a large part in defining the communities, especially in the case of the overpopulated Mission Reserve which needed help rather quickly. In this context it must have seemed to the local advisers that a co-resident group of 250 people had more chance of being recognised as a
community and provided with decent housing than several separate sub-groups of this one residential group.

4.2 Junjuwa Community Incorporated’s Constitution

In this section I examine Junjuwa’s constitution with special reference to the administrative constraints that made it difficult for the Aboriginal groups to maintain their previous internal organisation once they had moved to Junjuwa village.

One of the two Fitzroy Crossing permanent DCW officers instigated the incorporation of the residents at Junjuwa as a ‘community’. He explained to people present at the first community meeting (2/5/1975), the steps required to be taken for the legal incorporation of the community:

- The Association needed to have a name
- A constitution should be drawn up to describe the Association’s activities
- A Council should be formed
- The Council should appoint a Chairman and officers (secretary, treasurer).

Then an application could be submitted to the Crown Law Department to have the group incorporated (JCCM 2/5/1975).

An unincorporated Aboriginal group is not eligible for access to government funding nor to receive a grant from other non-governmental sources. Furthermore, vesting a lease or sublease for a particular reserve or portion of land requires an incorporated Aboriginal group to hold it. Typical of the problems faced by Aboriginal groups that failed to understand these legal requirements was the experience of the Kurlku group.

The Department for Community Services had initiated in 1986 a statewide program in which it planned to hand over to Aboriginal groups all the reserves it was still controlling: at Fitzroy Crossing the Windmill Reserve came under the program. A prior agreement had been reached between leaders of the local Aboriginal communities to rename the reserve with its Bunuba name (Mindi Rardi), and for Junjuwa to obtain a 99 year lease to it which in turn they would sublease to Kurlku. This group was made up of about thirty people and was named after the area from which the people had originally come. In moving to town, the people had become split between various camps and were keen to be reunited at one spot. Unfortunately, on the day of the official handing over the Kurlku people failed to receive their sublease for they were not an
incorporated body. Although, this did not interfere with the agreement reached between the local Aboriginal leaders, the failure to receive the sublease document was a great disappointment. The group had been advised by the regional DCS officer, who had only been in town for 6 months, and thought that because Kurlku was a very coherent and well organised group, it was incorporated.

The residential group from the mission Reserve decided to be known as Junjuwa. Junjuwa is a Bunuba name of a particular area of the township of Fitzroy Crossing, delimited by a crescent shaped rocky ridge: the mission compound, DCS hostels and office, Fitzroy Crossing school, Junjuwa village and a part of the town air-strip fall within the Junjuwa area (See Map V). The agreement on the choice of the name Junjuwa as well as the use of the Bunuba term by non-Bunuba was a recognition of the traditional rights of the Bunuba over the area and of their position as 'boss' or leading group in Fitzroy, although they were a minority of the population. The use of the 'proper' name, that is to say the name of a place in the language of the original occupants of the area (or those seen as such), is a mark of respect that clearly indicates that the traditional rights over a particular area are not challenged, at least openly. The choice of a Bunuba term and the official unchallenged recognition of Bunuba people as the leading group in Junjuwa have led to several misunderstandings.

The same DCW officer who instigated the incorporation, wrote the constitution on the behalf of the community4. He stated in the minutes of Junjuwa's first council meeting that the constitution was explained to people and their comments included:

This followed a series of meetings at which the various points of the constitution were discussed at length (JCCM 2/5/1975).

Despite discussion, none of the Junjuwa people fully understood the content and the meaning of their constitution. Further, by the very nature of such a document it was inevitable that there was a great deal of input by the adviser, the significance and the subtlety of which escaped the Bunuba. For the Bunuba it was "Junjuwa law", and as Arthur (a former Junjuwa chairman) told me:

That Junjuwa law came from Whitefellows, they gave it to us just like that with that new place and the houses, altogether at the same time you know when the mission time was over.

A quick reading of the constitution suggests that the "document had been weighted in favour of the Bunuba" (McMahon 1984:8), but a deeper reading and knowledge of the community past and present shows that the influence of the constitution and 'privileges' it is said to have given to Bunuba people (McMahon ibid) have been overestimated.
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The constitution defines the aims of the Association in terms of the following purposes:

1. Development
2. Self-management
3. Education, job training, health and housing
4. Self-determination and land rights
5. Traditional culture
6. Relationship with other groups
7. Access to Government funding

It seems certain that the aims of the Association were inspired by the DCW and not defined according to the desires of any particular community. In fact, these headings appeared in the same order in a DCW report on future Community Development projects in Fitzroy Crossing (DCW 1976) and were included in each 'standard-type' constitution of further incorporated local Aboriginal groups. It is also interesting that the last priority is in fact the most important as none of the other goals could be achieved without Government funding. Clauses five and six define the conditions for membership of Junjuwa Community. The first of these two clauses is divided into two sub-clauses:

5 The members of the Association shall be those Aboriginals who are of the (a) Bunuba tribe, or are related, (b) other tribes of the Fitzroy Crossing area, or are related, and who are not members of any other Association, and who live by the rules of the Community (Junjuwa Community Constitution).

According to 5(a), any member of the Bunuba tribe is automatically a member of Junjuwa Community. This was always denied by all the Bunuba leaders I approached on the subject. That is to say that they did not and would not recognise an individual or a group as a Junjuwa community member, simply because they were Bunuba. Movements of Aboriginal population that followed white settlement in the area had scattered Bunuba people over a wide area, some groups settling in the Fitzroy Crossing area, and others ending up in various places such as settlements alongside the Gibb River Road or even as far to the north as Kalumburu (see Map 1). Others again, moved to town centres to the west (Derby), or further south (Broome, Port Headland). A few individuals did try to return to Bunuba country but they all failed mainly because none of these 'expatriate' Bunuba was ever recognised as a member of Junjuwa Community on the basis of being Bunuba, although Bunuba leaders in Junjuwa saw themselves as related to these people and their groups.

This clause also makes all Aborigines related to the 'Bunuba tribe' members of Junjuwa Community. It should be clear from what has already been said that there is a distinction between people who see themselves as
related to Bunuba people resident at Junjuwa and membership of the same community. Nearly all Aborigines living at Fitzroy Crossing are 'related' to the Bunuba people of Junjuwa in one way or another, therefore they could all be members of Junjuwa community. Interestingly, the constitution was drawn up by the same person who had distinguished seven distinct ‘community’ groups in the town. A distinction between membership and relatedness is essential because the latter is too loose and too complex to be taken as the basis of group membership. I believe this sub-clause is meant to make a distinction between speakers of languages who lived in the area prior to white settlement, and Walmajarri and other migrant groups from the desert who were in the Fitzroy Valley. But even this distinction is somewhat arbitrary because sub-groups of Aborigines from the river country had developed close links and ties with sub-groups of the desert migrants. This process has reached a paradoxical situation where in some cases differences are more clearly marked within the same linguistic unit than between members of linguistic groups of the same or even different background:

It did not take long for indigenes and immigrants to intermarry and soon they formed, on most stations, a tightly knit affinal fabric which over the years became an even closer consanguineous network (Kolig 1987:37).

This sub-clause emphasises difference between people who have traditional rights over a particular area, for which they were the original occupants, as opposed to migrant groups and denies the internal Aboriginal dynamic of the acquisition and transmission of rights to places through birth, intermarriage, and kinship.

The same notion is even looser in clause 5(b). If it were to be fully applied, it would give membership to Junjuwa Community to any Aboriginal person who had left his own community, anywhere in the northwest of Western Australia. It seems again that what should be understood here is that groups other than those originally from the Fitzroy area can be members of the community if they are recognised as such by the Council and abide by community rules (clause 6). The reference to dual membership is interesting because it has never been an issue. People have only left Junjuwa, either by choice or because they were forced to do so, for another group to which they were affiliated which represented a better opportunity for them. I could not find a single case where somebody who was a member of another community attempted to settle in Junjuwa and was then recognised as a full member.

The register of members, which according to clause 6 should be updated regularly, was initially made in November 1975 when it contained 140 names of adult people, officially members of Junjuwa Community. I was able to verify that this list is exactly the same as the previous mission reserve residents' register. The Junjuwa register has been revised twice. Firstly, when there were rumours that the Fossil Downs people, up till then members of Junjuwa, might be granted an excision on Fossil Downs Station (JCCM 24/5/1976). But these
people remained in Junjuwa for several years as the excision was not granted before 1983. Even when this block of land was granted to start 'Muludja' community, some of the people stayed in Junjuwa and were still living there in 1987, even though their names were deleted from the register. This was done for purely administrative and legal purposes in conformity with the Junjuwa constitution, and does not seem to have been an Aboriginal decision.

For a similar reason more names were deleted and some were added in late 1977 (JCCM 26/9/1977). The names added were not those of people new to Junjuwa Community, but those of people who were already considered community members but did not actually live in Junjuwa, who later on moved into the village. By 1977, Junjuwa village had been completed and it offered better facilities and better living conditions than those on stations, so people started moving into town. Since that time the register has no longer been updated. During my fieldwork I was approached several times by a DAA regional officer and Junjuwa Community adviser, and asked to make a new list of Junjuwa members. My lack of understanding of community dynamics at that time led me to be surprised at how complicated and difficult a task this was. I took the old census list, which I subsequently updated every second month, and visited all houses asking people who was or who was not a Junjuwa member. This was a confusing question for people to answer and depending on whom I was talking to names were added, deleted and omitted. People who had been living in Junjuwa almost since the community was started were not listed as members and others residing elsewhere, in town or in even other places, who had occasionally visited Junjuwa Village were given as members. It became even more complicated when the former chairman, a Bunuba, unanimously recognised as one of the founders of the community, stated that he belonged to another group:

Well, you know that place right here Junjuwa, my old man and myself started it. We told all these whitefellows that we needed houses, and land just for us for Junjuwa people. We had a hard time but we got it. My father, myself and all my mob we are really Junjuwa people. But my proper place the one I really belong to is Milliliinyi, you know that Pigeon Creek, my sisters and brothers an my kids all the lot we are properly Milliliinyi people, one day we will have a place on our own down there at Milliliinyi (Arthur).

For such an artificially formed community, a list of members has little sense for Aboriginal people, but because such a register of members is required, a list was made although it was no more than the register of recognised permanent residents.

The next clause in the constitution deals with the role, the eligibility for and the nomination to the Council of leaders. Clause 8 states that "any member may be a leader". This is a very democratic view of leadership but it does not coincide with the local Aboriginal perception of what a leader is. In Junjuwa a leader is first of all a spokesperson who has limited authorisation from some
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people to talk in their names on some topics, and whose leadership and representativeness is acknowledged by other leaders. Many factors come into play in the choice and the emergence of a leader and I will look at these in detail below (see Chapter Eight). For the moment, I shall only say that although every person has the right to talk in meetings, only few are seen as leaders and only what these few say is important. The way this clause is formulated could lead one to expect that over the years leadership would have been shared amongst a number of people. This was not the case. The first list of councillors (JCCM 9/5/1975), is almost identical to the one which resulted from the Junjuwa annual general meeting in late 1987 during which the council was elected for 1988. The only names missing were those of people who had died between 1975 and 1988. The new names that appeared on the list were names of young men who were 'given a go' by the leaders, but their leadership only had significance on paper. This monopoly of leadership was made possible by clause 9:

In the choice of the leaders there shall be an equal number of those chosen from the Bunuba tribe as the total of those chosen from the other tribal groups of the Fitzroy Crossing area (Junjuwa Constitution).

This again seems to give all the powers over the council of leaders to Bunuba. It sounds very much like a democratic European interpretation of the fact that all other groups recognised the Bunuba as the leading group. Therefore, there should be at least 50% of Bunuba on the Council. Bunuba people were in 1975 a minority in Junjuwa yet the constitution made them the majority (McMahon 1984:9-10). A closer look at the list of leaders shows that once more the Aboriginal people had organised themselves without paying much attention to the constitution. For example, amongst the 'Bunuba leaders' right from the beginning there was a Walmajarri man who, despite intimate kin and ceremonial links with Bunuba, never claimed to be a Bunuba and would not have been labelled as such by the Bunuba themselves. The group of leaders, labelled 'others' in the constitution (JCCM 9/5/1975), included three Wangkajunga men and two Walmajarri. Thus overall, the Junjuwa council of leaders was made up of four Bunuba, three Wangkajunga and three Walmajarri, that is to say there was no simple Bunuba majority on the Council.

The foregoing indicates the ability of the Aborigines to manipulate to their own end some administrative rules and raises several points about the government understanding of the situation. Firstly, it shows that white people involved in the DCS scheme had a poor knowledge of peoples' linguistic identity, and that their views on 'tribal' affiliation were rather limited. Secondly, that in 1975 the apparent affiliation of people to one language group may not have been as significant for Aborigines as it was thought by white people. What is more revealing about the Aboriginal leadership is that nine of the ten councillors (the tenth one was the son of the older leader) were already 'leaders' at the mission reserve. Each of them was the spokesman of a sub-
group organised on grounds other than linguistically defined tribal groups. It can therefore be said with some confidence that Junjuwa was never a single coherent unit in the Aboriginal people’s minds.

Clause 9 again makes a clear distinction between Bunuba and others, that is to say between the original occupants of the Fitzroy Crossing area and the migrants. The emphasis in several parts of the constitution on the 'traditional owners' is not a surprise. The document was written by a European, who probably had sympathetic views towards Aborigines, in the mid-1970s immediately before the 1976 Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 was passed. At this time many people involved in the implementation of the self-management policies thought that similar rights would be extended to the states. Therefore, the emphasis on the 'tribal group' which originally occupied the Junjuwa area is understandable, in the light of the possibility that people might be able to lodge land claims.Clauses 10, 11 and 12 are purely administrative and therefore do not need to be discussed here.

Clause 13 requires the Chairman of Junjuwa to be elected each year during the Annual General Meeting. In practice, things are done differently. The choice of a community leader is made by the councillors. In November 1986, Junjuwa Community held its Annual General Meeting. More than one hundred community members were present, as opposed to the average of fifteen to twenty people regularly attending fortnightly council meetings. I was asked by the community adviser and the chairman to take the council minutes. In the first part of the meeting, the chairman, who sought an extension of his position, nominated the councillors. His nominations were seconded by other councillors who, in doing so, supported each other, and the result was that nearly the entire council was re-elected for another year. Some Bunuba councillors who had been on the Community council for several years decided to step down, so that younger men from the same linguistic group, who often complained that the same people were leading the community for years, were offered an opportunity to be elected. Then the time came to elect the chairman. The chairman was challenged by a young Bunuba male who had the support of his peers. The two candidates stood up and faced the bough shade under which people had gathered. One by one the re-elected councillors stood up and lined up behind the candidate of their choice. Most of them supported the chairman, who had confirmed them in their positions. Then, the rest of those in attendance lined up behind their own leaders. Thus the choice of the Council was made by the chairman, who was in turn re-supported by most of those he had chosen and by their relatives.

Apart from an Annual General Meeting, Junjuwa council "shall meet for business as often as necessary at such time and place as it may fix" (Junjuwa Constitution, clause 10).

This became institutionalised as a fortnightly meeting. It took place every second Monday, during the afternoon while Junjuwa community members were
still living at the mission reserve, then it was organised on the same basis but in the community hall once Junjuwa village had been built. The reason for these 'compulsory' meetings was that prior to the incorporation of Junjuwa community business was discussed informally by community leaders without any external influence at all, decisions were taken and choices made with the same informality. An incorporated community is bound to keep minutes of all council meetings however (Junjuwa Community, clause 34, a/b/c). So in order to keep records of meetings, to expose community business to councillors and in some ways to influence the process of decision-making, MacLaren and all subsequent community advisers controlled the organisation of council meetings. This put a considerable pressure on councillors, not only when they had to take decisions but they all had to be present at the same time and place. Nonetheless, they met regularly and informally outside council meetings.

In order to receive government funds, and in accordance with clause 23, Junjuwa kept several bank accounts under its name, and official accounts kept for all money received and spent by the community. Prior to 1975, a very small minority of Aborigines in the area had any experience with finance or paperwork. In the cattle industry the Aborigines had certainly some autonomy over their life within the Aboriginal camp but they had had no chance whatsoever to acquire skills in fields other than stock work in the case of men and domestic work in the case of women. The life on mission reserves did improve the level of literacy amongst Aborigines of the older generation who happened to be those in control of leadership in the newly formed communities but still in Junjuwa, and for several years, administrative tasks, bookkeeping and paperwork were considered as 'whitefellow business' and left to European community employees.

Clauses 23 to 31 deal with financial matters and are complex enough to restrict the bookkeeping to a fully trained bookkeeper. These requirements together with the Administration of the Council and day to day business ensured the involvement of non-Aborigines in community business. This likelihood was recognised in clause 32 which states that officers (secretary and treasurer) do not need to be members of the Association. This involvement of whites in Aboriginal community affairs has not decreased over the years. Despite the fact that the expertise of non-Aborigines is no longer required in minute-taking or bookkeeping, for by now many Aborigines have acquired the required skills, European presence and control over community finance, councillors and management was, in the case of Junjuwa, much higher in 1987 than in 1975. There were differences with regard to the appointment of European Community employees: between 1977 and 1985 community advisers were either chosen or employed by Government bodies, but in 1986, Junjuwa chose its own 'project officer' who was also employed by the community.

In this section, I have shown that the constitution of Junjuwa community is not congruent with many Aboriginal views on important issues such as group membership, relatedness, leadership, decision-making and the conduct of
community business. It is clear that Aborigines have found ways to overcome this lack of congruence and remained in control of most issues. Nevertheless, they have remained dependent on non-Aboriginal professional help to run the council until recently.

4.3 Junjuwa Village and its Population

While the incorporation of Junjuwa as a legal body got under way, a DCW regional officer was involved in the planning of a new village for Junjuwa members. The State Housing Commission (SHC), was in charge of the housing of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley area. During the mid-1970s three villages were erected in the West Kimberley, one of which was Junjuwa village. The local consultant for SHC acted as a liaison officer between the Aboriginal population and the state body. The latter seemed to have been favourably impressed with her work for she became subsequently an adviser on Aboriginal village housing for SHC (McMahon 1984:8).

Two representatives from SHC attended a council meeting in mid-1975 as a part of developing plans for the new village. During this meeting Junjuwa elders took them to the site they had chosen for the village (JCCM 9/7/78). The spot selected was next to the airstrip, within the UAM area, on one of the few high spots in the town. There were several reasons for the choice amongst which two of the main ones were:

- the fact that the village would be within the mission area. People had been living on the mission reserve for the past fifteen to twenty years and did not want to cut their links with the UAM people by selecting a site at the other end of town

- the elevation of 'Junjuwa' ridge at this particular spot offered a safe place from Wet season floods when many places in Fitzroy Crossing were often submerged\textsuperscript{10}.

The SHC people collected information on family size and the estimated Junjuwa population. The community leaders made known their wish to have a community hall built in the centre of the village. Two months later, models of houses were shown to the council. The chairman called for a general meeting during which these models were displayed and accepted by everybody. A telegram was sent by the community leaders to SHC saying: "Houses very very good, people very very happy" (JCCM 11/9/75), and the construction started within a few weeks. It is not clear now how the general ground plan for the village was arrived at, although the SHC liaison officer consulted extensively with people at the mission. Somehow it was decided that Junjuwa should be divided in three parts: one for the Bunuba, one for the Walmajarri and one for
the Wangkjungu. I could not find out who initiated this particular decision, but it needs to be commented on. Firstly, it is evident that it does not fit with the community's constitution which only recognised two groups (Bunuba and affiliated vs others, cf previous section). Secondly, it appears as if the division was a fairly arbitrary one based on language difference. However, the people themselves acted within this tripartite framework on several occasions, such as when the council decided to have three women "one of each group" (JCCM 19/1/77), trained as camp nurses. Or when three lawn-mowers were purchased, each one for the exclusive use of members of the three groups (JCCM 10/4/78). Or again, when three second hand vehicles were purchased by Junjuwa Community. It was recorded in the council minutes that each vehicle was for the use of one "tribal group" only and should be driven exclusively by a member of that group (JCCM 11/1/82).

It was also a council decision at this time that Junjuwa would be represented at important meetings by three men, one for each of the three main language groups. Whether or not the division into the three main language groups was relevant prior to the move into Junjuwa village, it was one of the outcomes of the growth and stability in residential groupings.

It is apparent that there was confusion among the white people who administered and advised the Junjuwa community on its internal organisation. This was evident when some councillors were labelled as speakers of one language but affiliated to another, or when residents of one section of the village were systematically associated with this section's language even though they spoke another language and were living there for other reasons. All of the people who lived in a section attributed to one language were not necessarily speakers of that language. Although it was true that overall there was a predominance of speakers of the same language in the same section, some Walmajarri were living in the Bunuba side, and not all occupants of houses in the Wangkajungu row were identified as Wangkajungu. Those who occupied houses in the part of the village that was not congruent with their language affiliation had good and specific reasons to do so. Censuses and interviews made it clear that the reasons for co-residence are far more complex than simple language affiliation. Many factors such as marriage, childhood residence, non-Aboriginal parent, caretaking (as opposed to biological parenting), personal choice, ritual prominence, self-identification (as opposed to identification by others), death of spouse, mortuary customs, language affiliation (as opposed to language fluency), consequences of decisions made in previous generations etc., all influenced residence patterns. This suggests that the fluidity and change were more likely to be typical of residential composition than fixed residential patterns on the basis of any simple formula, further raising the question of how the tripartite division was arrived at. Movements within the village occurred differently for distinct linguistic groups. They were 'internal' for Bunuba (they moved within the Bunuba area), and 'external' for
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Walmajarri and Wangkajunga (they moved out of Junjuwa). Very few people moved from one section to another within Junjuwa.

Thus if the subdivision into three main sections was in some way more appropriate than the constitutional division into two groups, it still did not reflect very well the way people actually sought to group themselves. Further, as with the constitution, people tended to ignore the imposed divisions in their residential arrangements.

Fifty six houses were built in Junjuwa village, but this was twenty four short of the original number planned to house the whole population. The difference between the number of houses planned and the number completed was apparently due to insufficient funding of the project. Thus not only were the houses inadequately designed for Aboriginal families but there was a shortage of houses resulting in immediate overcrowding of most of them. Nevertheless, when they moved into the new houses people had facilities (electricity and running water connections) and living conditions that they never had had previously. The previous living conditions on the cattle stations were described as appalling (DNW 1948-1972), and the situation on the mission not much better:

On this part of the reserve there are about twelve small one-room houses, a three roomed house (type 111) and a five-roomed house. To house the remaining population, substandard dwellings such as bough shelters, tents and other old iron constructions are used. Community showers and toilets are used by the residents (McLaren 1975:4).

It was not surprising therefore that the Junjuwa people accepted enthusiastically the two, three and four bedroom houses as soon as models were shown to them (JCCM 11/9/75).

The village represented for them the first ever opportunity to live in decent houses with individual facilities. Since the original move the council has been trying to have the remaining twenty three houses built but all attempts have been unsuccessful so far.

The allocation of houses was decided by the leaders of each sub-group of the three sections. Once a decision was taken, it had to be approved by the entire council. To my knowledge, none of the leaders’ decisions was challenged by any of the councillors. There was a sort of reciprocal agreement between leaders and councillors not to interfere in decision-making within other areas of Junjuwa, even though some people such as the chairman’s closest relatives, and siblings of councillors were in a privileged situation as far as access to houses was concerned11. For example, the chairman and his two oldest married children were allocated one house each. In contrast, a less prominent Walmajarri man had to share his house with his three married children, their spouses and children, and two of his wife’s siblings. These privileges in access to facilities and over control of resources were in that case reinforced by the
fact that, while the total number of houses planned for the Bunuba section had been built, it was not the case for the Walmajarri section. This was not done on purpose but simply happened because the Bunuba side was the first one the builders worked on. The problem was that the tripartite division was made prior to the start of the construction program, and no changes were made despite the fact that, because of insufficient funding, fewer houses could be built for Walmajarri people although they were more numerous than Bunuba. These advantages were never discussed publicly by non-Bunuba, for to do so would have been a direct challenge to Bunuba traditional rights, something that neither Walmajarri nor Wangkajunga were prepared to do.

Each part of Junjuwa managed its own affairs internally. Each 'house's boss', that is to say the person to whom the house had been allocated, was responsible for its occupants. In case of trouble, such as drunks abusing people or fights between members of the household, the house boss was supposed to settle the argument. If it went on and seemed to get out of control, then the row boss or the leader from the sub-group formed by several households would intervene and try to settle the dispute. If this were not successful a few councillors, preferably from the same linguistic group as the occupants of the house where the trouble started, and the chairman would be called in. Some houses in each row were regularly the source of conflicts that extended within and sometimes between linguistic groups. These houses were likely to be occupied by single men only (each part of Junjuwa has its own single men's quarters), who often brought alcohol back into the village and caused disturbances that could potentially turn into big fights in which nearly all Junjuwa members were involved.

4.4 Living conditions

Though the models of the houses looked really attractive, once the people moved into their new homes, they soon realised they were not as appropriate as they had initially thought. The houses were wrongly designed both for the Aboriginal occupants and for the climatic conditions of the area. Moreover, it took several years before the SHC acknowledged its mistakes and in the meantime other villages were built and similar errors were repeated. It seems the well intended but personal interpretation of Aboriginal ideas and statements was the source of the misconceptions in the design of houses. For example, when the SHC officer had collected data on the size of families that would move into Junjuwa village she was working with a European notion of the nuclear family and accordingly proposed that two, three, and four bedrooms houses should be built. This ignores completely sleeping arrangements that can be observed in an Aboriginal camp, and which are quite different from European ones. Aboriginal parents sleep in the same room as their children.
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until they reach puberty; afterwards, male children sleep in their own room, and females in another room. Although grown up daughters usually do not live permanently in their father's house, they frequently take meals at their parents' house, sleeping with a father's sister or a mother's mother. Similarly for single men who leave their parents' house and live with other single men.

The houses had the living room separated from the sleeping quarters by an open breezeway (see Map 7, plan of 3 bedroom house), as suggested to SHC by their consultant. She recommended such a design on the basis of having observed Aborigines in the mission area who were taking their meals or resting during the day in a shady spot where it was possible to feel some breeze. The fact was that, given the facilities available on the mission reserve, people did not have much choice about having their meals outside their houses and picked a shady tree next to where they lived to do so. The idea of a breezeway was certainly good, but the project was poorly executed and the final result was not quite what was expected. The open breezeway did indeed provide a shady spot in the house, but the general orientation (north/south) of the village exposed it to the dominant winds in the area. What made things worse was that all natural protection (trees, scrubs), had been bulldozed to level the site of the village:

The central living area is open to the elements, especially dust and rain. Some families have attempted to screen this area off by growing creepers or hanging canvas. No maintenance seems to be done on the houses... The houses are practically impossible to keep clean because of the design. (McMahon 1984:22)
Junjuwa Village

This particular problem was about to be partially resolved in early 1987, ten years after the completion of Junjuwa village. DAA funded a project for an upgrading of Junjuwa houses. After several meetings, it was decided that there were two priorities. Firstly, an overall upgrading of the electricity and plumbing systems. Secondly, that the open breezeway should be closed off and the living area extended on both sides of each house by a slab of concrete protected by a verandah. Despite its poor design, the open breezeway had become the main living area, mainly because the bedrooms were too small, too dark and too hot. In almost every house beds and mattresses were taken into the front or back yard during the hottest months (October - March). Even when people slept inside the houses, it was not in the bedrooms, which were mainly used when it rained during the hot months or when nights were cold in the dry season (May - September). In many houses the cooking was done outside as well, usually on open fires and meals were taken next to the cooking spot. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, the wood stoves provided with the houses in 1977 were all derelict or out of order by early 1980. They were of poor quality and when used the heat was unbearable. Secondly, many households had acquired electric cooking stoves or electric fry pans, but electrical circuits were not wired to support such equipment so the fuses kept blowing. An upgrading of the electrical circuit was scheduled in 1983, but it did not take place when the technician from the State Electricity Commission sent to Junjuwa realised that most wires and appliances in many houses were infested with ants. This caused permanent short circuits and the entire village circuit needed to be redesigned and changed. Thirdly, people cooked large pieces of meat (legs of beef, occasionally hill wallaby), or large fish (sword fish, barramundi, sting rays) that in any cases would not fit into a conventional wood or electric oven. Finally, houses were badly ventilated and the heat created by cooking a meal took the temperature up to an unbearable level. Thus most of daily activities took place outside the house, that is to say in full view of at least three or four neighbouring houses. Junjuwa residents always complained that the houses had been built too close one to another (56 houses for a total area of 1.6 square kilometres), and that fences between them were too low. Fences were put up in 1980 but dogs or children could easily get over them. People had more privacy at the mission reserve, where tall and thick bushes were used to fence each house.

Other elements that caused living conditions to deteriorate in Junjuwa were the choice of building materials. Most materials were either inappropriate for the climate or too cheap to last for more than a few years. I will take only two examples. SHC builders decided not to use glass for windows because many Aboriginal kids and teenagers were expert in the use of slingshots and glass windows were one of their favourite targets. Therefore, window glass would have been costly for the community and dangerous for the residents. Instead of glass SHC building advisers suggested using a thick plastic material easy to cut to measure and almost unbreakable. The main problem was that this type of plastic did not resist the heat well, turned dark after few
Chapter Four

months and eventually cracked. This reduced the sunlight in bedrooms, where for reasons already mentioned electric lights could not be used. Most materials used in the plumbing of the kitchens, laundries, toilets and showers were very cheap and certainly not designed to last long under conditions of constant use by two or three times the number of people usually planned for. Blocked drains, leaking taps, and broken water pipes caused severe problems with the water supply as well as creating a constant health hazard. The village had its own water supply, for there was water ground next to the village site. One large tank was built and water was pumped into it by a diesel pump. The pump was not sufficient to cover the village water consumption because of the overpopulation and plumbing problems. In late 1980, Junjuwa was frequently without water for several days in a row. This was not because the diesel pump was not powerful enough, it could easily fill up the tank at night for the daily consumption, but because only one person, a local European appointed by the Water authority, had access to the pump. When the pump broke down or ran out of diesel at night or during the weekend, it meant no water in Junjuwa. The tank was enlarged in 1984 and an electric pump added. When the two pumps were running they could fill the tank up in twenty four hours. Theoretically, this tank at its full capacity, contained enough water for 500 people for a week, but because of the derelict plumbing a full tank never lasted more than two days. In February 1987, when the electric pump broke nothing could be done until the local SEC electrician in charge of the pump, who had the only key to it, could be found. As the diesel pump could not meet the consumption demands, Junjuwa was without water for two days at a time of the year when the daily temperature was in the mid-forties. The electricity bills for the pump when it was working were very high.

The design of the village, size of the houses, poor living conditions, overpopulated houses, heat and shortage of water were some of the factors that made Junjuwa village a difficult place to live in, but even so as many as 600 people made it home over the last decade.

Even when Junjuwa was less populated, there was still an average of eight persons per house. For example, in April 1986 census figures show that there were 431 people in Junjuwa (see Table 1) and only 53 houses were occupied at the time: two were derelict, and two others empty because of mourning. Overall there were fourteen two bedroom houses, thirty three bedroom houses and ten four bedroom houses. Detailed censuses of each house indicated a wide variation in occupancy (for details, see Appendix 3). Figures ranged from one person (two cases) to fifteen persons (three cases) in a three bedroom house. But as indicated earlier, sleeping arrangements and constant movements of people between houses have to be taken into account before any conclusion should be drawn up from such figures. Further, groups of residents within one section of Junjuwa would be likely to cooperate and act on the basis of house clusters, therefore households as one single house were in many cases artificially delimited social units.
Legend:
Bunuba section: Houses 4 to 26
'mixed river people' section: Houses 27 to 33
Walmajarri section: Houses 41 to 54
Wangkajunga section: Houses 67 to 80
'border houses': 6,12, 19, 26, 33, 48, 72

MAP 7
Sketch map of Junjuwa Village in 1985
(not to scale)
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In Chapter Two, I described the mission reserve Aboriginal population that moved into Junjuwa village in mid-1977. I have already emphasised several factors such as linguistic and cultural differences, and the varied backgrounds to the moves to the mission settlement, that influenced the social groups which were combined to form a large residential group united only by their co-location. This residential unit became Junjuwa Community and moved to live in the newly built village. The move was not conducted without reluctance on the part of some. Some sub-groups within the mission reserve refused to move into the village. About sixty Walmajarri and Wangkajunga individuals, all strong Christians, only agreed to be displaced after promises that the SHC would build them a church in the new village (McMahon 1984:9). However, this did not eventuate and they built their own church with the help of local UAM people in 1983. When I asked some of these people why they refused to leave the mission reserve they gave me reasons other than Christianity. Firstly, they had brought with them from the desert their sacred objects. They were hidden on the top of a hill next to the mission reserve. People did not want to leave these objects behind and refused to store them with those from other groups next to Junjuwa village. Secondly, they argue that as the Bunuba would be the boss in Junjuwa they should be left behind. Thirdly, they thought that so many houses would attract a lot of people who would get drunk, and fight all the time. The two last points might be a retrospective analysis that goes with a nostalgic view of the peaceful and better life on the mission reserve. Nevertheless, they were quite right about the fighting and it seems that problems caused by alcohol abuse increased as soon as Junjuwa Community was created. Trouble within the community occurred even prior to the move into the village.

For example, in November 1976, a special meeting was organised to discuss problems caused by 'outsiders' (non Junjuwa members, non-permanent residents at the mission, or trouble-makers) who camped on the mission reserve. It was recorded in the minutes of the meeting that there were too many of them. They had brought alcohol into the reserve, and caused so much trouble (gambling, fighting and drinking), that the white missionaries could not tolerate it any longer (JCCM 2/11/76)\textsuperscript{14}. Although, it happened in the mission area, the UAM people insisted that it was the responsibility of leaders from Junjuwa Community to tackle the problem, for the mission was no longer responsible for the Aboriginal people.

It seems that many people who were attracted by the prospect of living in their own house in an 'autonomous' Aboriginal village, were attempting to move to the residential group at the mission reserve, in a bid to be incorporated into it. This, they appeared to believe, would secure them the allocation of a house in Junjuwa village. On the basis of kinship and social links people tried to become members of Junjuwa even if they were already members of another community. It was difficult to control the visitors and Junjuwa council organised several meetings with other communities' leaders to discuss this
particular problem (JCCM 24/11/75, 13/9/77, 10/4/78, 20/6/78). It was impossible for Junjuwa residents to deprive their relatives of the right to visit them: the difficulties arose because many attempts were made by the visitors to transform these visits into permanent residence. Visitors who were not members of Junjuwa Community but related to members were, of course, supported in their attempts by the Junjuwa Constitution (see previous section). The council did not have the power to expel visitors, nor did it want to, for it would have created more tensions between Junjuwa residents. Problems caused by 'permanent' visitors were discussed but no action was taken and consequently Junjuwa became even more overpopulated. Criteria upon which the allocation of a house to 'permanent' visitors could be made varied from one case to another.

For example, in May 1978 during a council meeting a Walmajarri woman, Weeda, was said 'to have been given a house by mistake' as she was 'not really' from Junjuwa Community (JCCM 25/4/78). At the meeting she established that her rights were legitimate and she was allowed to remain in her house on the assumption that her sons would abide by village rules. She was born near Lake Gregory but grew up and worked on Laurel Downs Station (Bunuba country). She had married a Nyikina man, now deceased, and her two sons were born in Bunuba country, although they did not speak the language. In fact, because her sons were heavy drinkers this was an attempt by the council to get rid of them on the basis that they were not Junjuwa members. Her life story did not make her a member of Junjuwa but nobody challenged her because many Junjuwa members themselves would have been embarrassed by having to prove their full right to live there. A few months later, a Walmajarri man, Jimmy, requested a house in Junjuwa for the third time and for the third time he was given a negative answer (JCCM 9/8/78). He was separated from his wife, a Wangkajunga, who lived in Junjuwa in her own house, but claimed he had a right to a house on his own for his life story was in many ways similar to Weeda's. Junjuwa council refused to let him move into Junjuwa because he would have been soon followed by all members of his group (Ngarandjatu) who had just settled in town. By contrast, all Weeda's relatives were already housed elsewhere and she left Junjuwa to join them not so long after. She could have done so earlier on but it seems that she attempted to secure a house in Junjuwa for her sons, but failed because they caused further trouble and she had to leave Junjuwa for the council pressed her to do so.
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**TABLE 1**

*Junjuwa population figures*

1985/1988

Censuses and interviews I conducted during my fieldwork showed that at some stages (1979/1980) there were more than 650 people living permanently in Junjuwa. Table 1 shows variations of Junjuwa population over a two and a half year period\(^{15}\). Apart from the regular movement of populations: concentration of people during the wet season, decreasing population during the dry months, two noticeable drops were recorded. The first one occurred in July 1985 when nearly 100 Walmajarri left Junjuwa to move into Kurnangki village. The other took place during July 1986 when the Kuriku people (approximately 30 Walmajarri people) shifted from Junjuwa to Windmill Reserve. Since Junjuwa village was built, all groups of people who left the place were either Walmajarri or Wangkajunga, who had a possibility of moving into a newly created outstation or another recently built village, in their respective country. This meant that their relatives still in Junjuwa could spend some time out of town during the dry season. The other side of the coin was that sections of Junjuwa village were town bases for groups that had land, houses, enterprises and outstations outside the town (McMahon 1984:19). People from remote settlements moved into Junjuwa either during the wet season when their own communities were not easily accessible or more casually when they needed to use town based amenities like the hospital and the pub. In contrast, Bunuba who had left Junjuwa did so on an individual basis because alternatives for living elsewhere, such as I have just described for other groups, just did not exist. This appeared clearly when I recorded movements of population within different parts of the village. In the Walmajarri and
Junjua Village

Wankgajunga sections all visitors were from other communities. When permanent residents were away from their own houses they were out of town, but in the Bunuba section people who had moved away from their own house were still within the Bunuba section and had just moved from one house to another.

The regular movements of population associated with the wet and the dry season seem to be inherited from decades of involvement with the cattle industry. On the cattle stations the rhythm of Aboriginal life changed from the traditional six to two seasons\(^{16}\). These two seasons were: the dry season, during which people worked hard as stockmen and received regular rations in return; in the wet season when rain and floods made work impossible the Aborigines were paid off with rations in advance and then left the station to live on 'bush tucker' for several months. It was at this time of the year that initiation ceremonies were held, people gathering from different stations to hold ceremonies. When Aboriginal people were no longer much employed in the cattle industry, they kept a similar rhythm of life although some new elements were incorporated. Firstly, there were less people employed in the cattle industry and most of the employment was casual work during the dry season. Secondly, people did not 'go bush' anymore during the wet season but regrouped in town centres in the vicinity of which they organised ceremonial activities. In the era of Aboriginal villages, remote Aboriginal settlements and outstations a few changes were added. People who lived in town-based villages visited relatives in remote places during the dry season. During the wet season, when access to isolated places was impossible and supplies difficult to get, there was a reverse move from bush to town-based villages where large ceremonial gatherings took place.

As far as employment in the cattle industry was concerned, there were still job opportunities in 1980 but they were very limited. Approximately 40 to 50 Junjua men were employed each year on stations during the mustering season (April/July). There were marked geographical differences between employment locations for different groups. Bunuba men were employed on stations located in the Bunuba country; people affiliated to other languages were recruited to work on stations within their country of origin or where their parents worked. People from different languages mixed only when they were employed on stations where in the past the permanent Aboriginal population was also of mixed linguistic origin (Noonkanbah: Walmajarri & Nyikina; Fossil Downs: Gooniyandi & Walmajarri). A similar difference could be observed in the location of foraging and hunting activities. Almost everybody could fetch firewood or go fishing anywhere within the town limit. But, when people went out for one or several days, they did it as close as possible to the precontact distribution of linguistic groups. For example, Bunuba went to the north and north-west of town; Walmajarri went south of the highway; and Gooniyandi went west of the Margaret river. The worst thing that could happen to somebody would be to have to spend the night in 'someone else country'. For
example, I was on a visit to significant places in Bunuba country in the company
of two Bunuba men and one Walmajarri. The car broke down next to a Bunuba
Dreaming place. We had everything we needed to spend the night on the spot.
The Walmajarri man was married to a Bunuba woman, worked for most of his
life in stations on Bunuba country, and was a leader in joint ceremonial
activities. Nevertheless he walked back to Fitzroy Crossing, more than 50 km
away, at night despite being told by the Bunuba men that he was welcome to
stay overnight.

Apart from the men employed at times in the cattle industry, there were
less than ten people employed by the community on a permanent basis in 1979.
The remaining residents depended on pensions and benefits from the
Department of Social Security. Since the social benefits were paid fortnightly a
new rhythm was introduced in the life of people; this new rhythm was the
alternate of 'slack week' (no pay) and 'pension week' (pay week). During
pension week, there were always more people in town and subsequently in
Junjuwa. Those from remote settlements had to come into town to cash their
cheques, gambling and drinking activities flourished, and large sums of cash
attracted many people. Pension week was also a period when food surpluses
were available, and it was easy to get a 'free' meal. In contrast, slack week saw
fewer people in town, there was a shortage of cash, less drinking and gambling,
and food was scarce. Those who had cash at that time, either because they
received unemployment benefit\(^\text{17}\) or because they were employed in town, were
not so lucky for they had to face relatives and peers who pressed them for a
loan. But, because food obtained from stores was scarce as a result of the
shortage of cash, slack week was the time of bush activities that usually
produced enough to survive on until the next pension day. The entire town of
Fitzroy Crossing, with Aboriginal people making up 80% of the population,
lived according to the rhythm of fortnightly paid social security benefits. Fresh
produce, as well as all sort of goods and items were delivered in town every
second Sunday, two days prior to pension day.

Each person who lived in Junjuwa and received a cheque from DSS had to
pay $35 to the community. That sum included the rent ($20), the 'chuck-in' or
individual participation in the Community ($10), and what was called 'tops'
($5). Tops were taken from each cheque to cover the levy (4%) that MWW
took for providing cash to Aboriginal communities. There was no bank in
Fitzroy Crossing and MWW was the only place where it was possible to obtain
cash on pension day. In order to have enough money on pension days to cash
all cheques for all Aboriginal communities, MWW wrote in advance a cheque
to a Derby bank for the estimated amount needed. The day before pension
day, the cash was delivered to MWW, then all cheques were collected and
cashed either individually or through a community. Finally, MWW vested all
cheques in its bank account. MWW did not receive sufficient funds from
government bodies to cover its wide range of activities, therefore it charged
Aboriginal communities for this service. There was always the possibility of

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Junjuwa Village

handing out cheques straight to individuals, who could cash them in several places in town. But then, it would have been difficult for the office workers to recover the fortnightly payment due for all Junjuwa residents. The sum taken from each cheque provided Junjuwa with a regular and substantial income.
A Bunuba man in front of his house. This is house 20, it is a three-bedroom house occupied at the time by eight people (the house boss, in the picture, his wife, their older married son and his wife, and their four other unmarried children). The beds in the front yard, the chairs in the breeze way and the blanket across one bedroom window indicate that it was the beginning of the cool season (May/June).
Endnotes - Chapter Four

1 Walmajarri people were the earlier converts in the area.

2 Prior to 1976, the Federal Associations Incorporation Act 1895/1962 was extended to Aboriginal Communities which were incorporated as associations. Afterwards, a Federal Act was passed especially designed for the incorporation of Aboriginal groups. This was the Commonwealth Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act of 1976.

3 For more details on how this agreement was reached see Chapter Nine.

4 Junjuwa Community Constitution is set out in full in Appendix One.

5 I shall not comment in detail on this but there is a confusion here between 'language group' and 'tribe'. It is also assumed that the latter existed as a cohesive, unified and distinct group which was almost certainly never the case.

6 See distinction between river people and desert people in Chapters Two and Three.

7 This was also the case prior to white settlement but presumably on a different scale.

8 When the constitution was written there were no community rules. They were gradually introduced by the Council following various incidents within Junjuwa caused by non-residents, however the councillors never had the power to enforce them. Junjuwa Community applied to have its own by-laws in mid-1987.

9 Councillors are also elected once a year during the Annual General Meeting prior to the choice of a chairman. These are all yearly positions, but the same people can be chosen several years consecutively.

10 During the wet season of 1985/86, Fitzroy Crossing was hit by the highest flood ever recorded. Junjuwa was the only place in town not under water.

11 Inequalities over access to housing between members of co-resident groups have been noted in other contemporary Aboriginal settlements; see, for example Anderson 1989:75-76.

12 See some examples of conflicts and their settlements in the next Chapter.

13 For a detailed account and a full discussion on the perception of housing by Aboriginal people from the East Kimberley, see Ross 1987.

14 They were probably similar problems before, but no record was kept.

15 Population data relating to the period prior to my arrival were obtained from the Community Health Centre.

16 Bunuba and Gooniyandi distinguished a cycle of six named seasons, all associated with a distinctive type of weather and foraging activities.

17 Unemployment benefits were paid fortnightly from six weeks after the application had been lodged. Only a few people received it on the same day, as opposed to pensions which were paid every second Tuesday. Therefore there was more cash available on pension day because all the pensioners received their cheques at once.
CHAPTER FIVE

JUNJUWA COMMUNITY AS ONE GROUP

I have shown in the previous Chapter that the residential unit, Junjuwa village, was made up of various sub-groups. These groups were, however, denied official recognition once Junjuwa became an incorporated body and were forced to behave and act as a single coherent group in several ways. The view of the community as a single entity was promoted by white advisers, mainly to attract government funding and to create a better structure for the implementation and development of community projects. Nevertheless, within Junjuwa village, the linguistic groups have preserved some of their internal organisation and leadership. They have also partially overcome residential constraints imposed upon them when moving into the village. At the same time, it seems that people were receptive to the idea of Junjuwa as one community, to the extent that it became gradually internalised by village residents. Indeed, despite their differences, Junjuwa residents had much in common, which facilitated the development of a community sentiment.

In this Chapter, I shall discuss the bases of group sentiments within Junjuwa and the circumstances in which these notions were expressed and operated. There are four aspects within which the notion of Junjuwa as a group can be explored. The first aspect corresponds to peoples' perception of their history. That is to say, how people experienced the origin of the community as a corporate body, the village, and the move from the mission reserve into Junjuwa. The second aspect has to do with the village as a group of people related one to another. Kinship ties and social networks form a complex and strong set of relationships between individuals and groups within Junjuwa. The result is a web-like structure of obligations, duties and solidarities among Junjuwa residents that reinforce the sentiment of the community as a group. The third and fourth aspects are concerned with several practical expressions of community sentiment: those contexts in which people act as a unified group that represents Junjuwa community. The third aspect consists of situations in
which members of Junjuwa supported each other and affirmed the unity and the coherence of their community. This was particularly significant when membership in Junjuwa community was marked through contrast with other communities: meetings where several Aboriginal communities were involved, certain types of joint ceremonial activities and when village residents dealt with outsiders within the community. Finally, the fourth aspect concerns those situations in which Junjuwa members acted to affirm their differences and to assert their autonomy from other Aboriginal communities and/or Aboriginal organisations.

5.1. "In Junjuwa we are one mob, all mixed, we all stop here for good long time ago" (Carol)

This statement was one of many that were made by some of the older people in Junjuwa, whom I had asked for their views on the causes of problems in Junjuwa and why, despite these problems, they remained so attached to the place. I had a lengthy discussion with Carol, a Walmajarri in her late fifties, during the course of which she summarised her entire life in a few minutes:

She was born south of Noonkanbah but said she had forgotten about her people and her country. She and many other "desert people were 'adopted' by river people when they had moved into this country" (the Fitzroy valley). Later she left the station where she had worked and together with other Walmajarri people, had settled and 'stopped for good' in Junjuwa. None of these people now in Junjuwa were keen to return to the desert, for they now belonged to the Fitzroy country.

This brief life history is typical of Walmajarri and Wangkajunga who had moved into and settled in areas previously occupied by groups of speakers from different languages. It is clear that only the points that support the migrants' claims to live in the Fitzroy country were highlighted. Even those of the migrants who had lived outside the Fitzroy valley for longer periods omitted these years from their life histories, and concentrated on the period of their lives spent on the mission reserve or at Junjuwa village. If I wanted to obtain details about the gradual move of these groups towards Fitzroy Crossing, I had to ask people about their place of birth, or in case of men about their initiation, as well as emphasising that I was interested to know on which stations they had worked. Nearly all the older people pressed the point that they had forgotten about their country and their people. People used this expression, to mean that they did not know any Dreaming stories or did not have any secret objects associated with their country of origin, because those who knew such stories or had such objects died without passing them on. Therefore, without a country of their own and with no relatives, they were in a position to be 'adopted' by local groups. Afterwards, they became actively involved in the processes that brought them from the mission reserve to Junjuwa village. The last comment
made by Carol about her belonging to the river country, as well as the fact that she had no intention of returning to a 'country' to which she did not belong any more, were the final words that completed many life histories of older people from Junjuwa who had migrated from the south of the Fitzroy valley. In some cases, people went on and emphasised that Junjuwa village was for all of the people who lived there without any restriction, for all the language groups were mixed together:

Look this one house (she points at a house in the Bunuba section of Junjuwa), well in that place Kija and Walmajarri people. Look now that side (she points at a house in the Walmajarri section of Junjuwa), that place Goonyiandi and Bunuba boys, them bin marry Walmajarri girls all the lot, now they bin livin altogether. Look again that Wangkajungara row, well here maybe they bin marry Walmajarri girls or maybe again Bunuba girls. We all the same, all mixed and Junjuwa is one place for us all, listen me my boy, it's just like I am tellin you right now, before we bin different, country, lingo, law, all different. Now, we are all here, all mixed, all one mob (Christine).

Christine, a Walmajarri woman in her mid-fifties, was explaining to me that people were not only of mixed origin within Junjuwa but had intermarried between groups and were living together in the same section of the village or even in the same house. For her, as well as for many migrants to Junjuwa, this demonstrated clearly the unity of the place. They all acknowledged that many differences existed between groups in the past, but they implied that eventually the differences disappeared as these groups experienced a common history during several decades on stations. There groups intermarried, and gradually merged to become members of the present community living at Junjuwa.

Bunuba and Goonyiandi people presented a different view of the history of the community residents. They agreed that those people who had not lived in the area prior to white settlement had developed and sometimes acquired some rights to country within the Fitzroy valley area, but gave a different account of the circumstances that led desert groups to migrate as well as the modalities of their settlement. For example, they insisted on the role of whites in the settlement of Walmajarri and Wangkajunga groups in the Fitzroy valley. It seems also from these statements that the acquisition of rights to this country was limited to those born in the country itself, that is to say birth rather than migration was the main factor upon which a person could claim to belong to the country. Later, when Junjuwa was built it became impossible for the Bunuba to send them all back to the desert for by now the groups had become mixed.

Them whitefella them bin comin with big mobs of sheeps and bullocks in Bunuba and Goonyiandi country. Us, Bunuba and Goonyiandi we helped them right through, we bin workin on stations, all them places in our country, proper Bunuba and Goonyiandi places too. Us mob we bin quiet people, but some of those Walmajarri and Wangkajunga people them really wild, proper wild bush fellas. You know, in that desert country, them wild fella they bin spearin that cattle and they bin stealin that tucker from the
homestead too. Them whitefella policemen and managers altogether them bin chasin them wild blackfella. Them bin catchin them too and them bin take them right up here to that mission place. Alright, these wild blackfella they sit down for good they like him that tucker from that mission mob. All of them, Wangkajunga and Walmajarri all the same. Big mobs of kids they bin havin too, some mixed one some proper desert people too, but them kids all bin born in that river country now. That river they love him too these kids, they belong to that place properly. Now them all big boys and big girls, and them don’t know nothin for their parents’ country. One day them government people them bin startin up that Junjuwa place, for us Bunuba, in Bunuba country. Us Bunuba we can’t send back these poor fellas to their [desert] country, them don’t know that place, anymore. Them all came down with us in Junjuwa, we are all mixed now, not like in the early days, we are altogether, Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Walmajarri, Wangkajunga all the same now. We all sit down here for good (Cyril).

From what Cyril¹ said, it is clear that Bunuba and Walmajarri have distinct views of the pre-mission period in Fitzroy Crossing but nevertheless agree that everyone has a right to live and to remain in Junjuwa.

One might think from these three examples that the idea of community as one group exists only in discourse. That is to say, Aborigines from Junjuwa were confronted with a situation they did not control and they had no alternative but to accept it, and that subsequently they developed a community sentiment as part of this new situation (see Trigger 1987). Consequently, they have incorporated Junjuwa in an historical discourse in which these constraints were included. This is only partly true, such a view is restricted and ignores other elements of the group formation process, and reduces it to a plain relation of facts. In other words, group sentiments that people shared within Junjuwa village were and are much more than simple sentiments. There are already hints of what these elements were in the examples presented. Marriages between groups occurred well before settlement in the mission reserve. Development of countryman sentiment inspired from similar experiences on cattle stations took place in the area long before villages such as Junjuwa were even thought of. Births of children to desert migrant parents were recorded in the Fitzroy valley well before the 1950s.

Differences remained between some linguistic groups, or between sub-groups of the same language, but stronger links bound individuals and families, and were extended to sub-groups or even to groups during the cattle station era. These links were of two kinds: some existed even before white settlement, such as intergroup marriages or ceremonial cooperation, and were intensified; others were new, for example, working experience or birth of children away from their parents' country. Both combined and contributed to an overall structure of relationships that could be developed into a more coherent form of group. This development was no doubt facilitated by the settlement in town of Aboriginal populations from various cattle stations of the Fitzroy valley, and their permanent association on the mission reserve which led to the emergence of a
loose form of community identity. At least this is how it was perceived by Junjuwa people who experienced it.

In Junjuwa we are mission mob properly. Some of us, Walmajarri people just like me, we bin bush people. Then that cattle station time came up and we bin cattle people; Other mob like Bunuba and Goonyiandi people, they bin proper cattle people all the way. But here now in that Junjuwa place we are mission people. All the way from that time we got altogether at the old mission reserve. You know just before we start him up that Junjuwa place (Sydney).

Sydney's summary of the last one hundred years of Aboriginal history in the Fitzroy area is particularly interesting. First, it confirms other statements already presented concerning clear distinctions, in the distant past, between desert migrants and local groups. Secondly, it shows the importance of the mission life as a period which brought people to live together. Finally, the Aboriginal involvement in the making of both Junjuwa community as an incorporated body and the village is highlighted. In my opinion, the village is where the sentiment of Junjuwa community as a group took its present form.

For all Junjuwa residents, and for many Aborigines in Fitzroy Crossing, Junjuwa community represents an achievement:

We have big mob of problems alright in Junjuwa. But, it's our place, for us all old people (here he named many Junjuwa residents), we bin fightin really hard for that place too. Government people came up all the way from Canberra to talk to us mob, and we bin tellin straight to that lot what we want: one place for us with proper houses. We made him up too that place you know; the same lot of us we bin buildin him up these houses. Then we bin workin hard: garden, rubbish, butcher shop and bread shop, all the lot again (the whole lot). It was a lot of work and proper hard work too: all them meetings, the money side, paper work and office work. Then we got that place for us all, Junjuwa people. All the time we bin in front, we bin the first one, all the way through. All them mobs, Kimberley Land Council, Marra Worra Worra, Kurnangki, all the same they all started after us, we show them the way first, us Junjuwa mob (Arthur).

It was one of the first Aboriginal communities in the West Kimberley to become incorporated, and was one of the first Aboriginal villages to be built in the Fitzroy Valley. Although white people initiated and controlled the entire process, Aborigines were involved in every step, which was new for them. In their historical perception of Junjuwa, Aborigines have concentrated on their role in the making of the place. They were consulted before any decision was taken, they attended meetings where white people listened to their views, they chose the location of the village and built the houses, and when community enterprises started they worked for themselves for the first time. Therefore, it is not surprising if for those Aborigines involved in this venture who still live in Junjuwa, the community is seen as a symbol of Aboriginal achievement.
Plate 4

'Handing out cash' at the Junjuwa office on pension day. All the people inside the office in the picture lived in the Bunuba section; residents from the other sections generally received their cash outside or in the office later.
Plate 5

Outside the Junjuwa office on pension day. Most of the people waiting outside are Walmajarri people, indicating that Bunuba were still inside the office. The public telephone booth had been put outside the Junjuwa office for residents’ use outside office hours. It was an STD phone but was mostly used for local calls to get a taxi that would wait at the village main gate, to call an ambulance or to contact the police station. STD calls were made to contact residents’ relatives living in distant settlements. Since the phone was installed the Junjuwa office’s telephone bills were substantially reduced.
FIGURE 1

Kin connections at the community level
Junjuwa Village 1986

Legend:
Numbers indicate houses
= indicates marriages
&/a deceased persons
Junjuwa community as one group

Peoples' sense of Junjuwa community as a group seems to have expanded and contracted according to circumstances during its short history. There were occasions when demands were made in the name of the community as a group. A particularly significant instance was when a delegation of the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission, led by Professor Rowley, visited Fitzroy Crossing. Its task was to evaluate the land needs of newly incorporated Aboriginal groups. It was approached by Junjuwa councillors, who told the delegation that the community wanted to run its own enterprises for a while, but in the near future Junjuwa would certainly be interested in acquiring some land in the vicinity of the township. None of this land had any special significance, but would be used to run some cattle and train young men in cattle work (JCCM 8/12/75). Despite all the different sub-groups and languages that formed Junjuwa, land claims were made in the name of Junjuwa community as one group.

5.2 "In Junjuwa we are one mob, all related" (Arthur)

The notion of relatedness was frequently used by people in their discourse about Junjuwa. The idea that Junjuwa people were all related was put forward in many circumstances. This was particularly the case during council meetings in the process of decision-making. It also played a part in the settlement of disputes within the community, or when Junjuwa people needed to assert the image of Junjuwa as a coherent group.

Genealogical links within Junjuwa are multiple and complex. Historical factors in the Fitzroy Valley extended links between languages, sub-groups and individuals. For example, marriage alliances between groups developed strong bonds and established reciprocal duties between spouse-recipients and spouse-givers, and contributed to the dynamic of group formation (Trigger 1987:231). Prior to white settlement, marriage exchanges were restricted to a few neighbouring groups also involved in joint economic and ceremonial activities. As part of their involvement in the cattle industry, Aborigines were grouped in larger residential units, and groups either became involved in larger circles of matrimonial exchange or were condemned to be left out.

Within Junjuwa, there were alliances of two types. Several groups of kin co-resided at various stages on different stations, and therefore had many opportunities to intermarry; for other groups, their association was more recent as was the development of genealogical links between them. It is possible to 'link' all residents of Junjuwa as shown in Figure 1. This diagram is a sketch of the kin connections that exist within the Junjuwa population. The main point is to show that all houses within Junjuwa are interconnected through kinship. Therefore, it was my choice to show the connections that existed between houses and not individuals. Thus, only the deceased individuals appeared on
Figure 1 since they were part of the people's discourse on the relatedness of Junjuwa's residents as one group. In some cases several ties exist between two houses but I have only selected one in order to simplify the diagram. In Figure 1, two houses are connected if at least one person, who lives permanently in one of the houses, is related to one or several occupants of the other house. It also needs to be made clear that to make this diagram I took the notion of relatedness in a large sense, and that I did not differentiate between actual, close and distant relatives. The nature of a relation between individuals goes together with a specific set of duties, obligations and responsibilities that are usually extended to the households.

It is clear, for example, that the occupants of houses 11 and 16, will have different responsibilities towards each others than the occupants of houses 18 and 69. In the first case, the two households are related through consanguineous links for two of their occupants are siblings; in the second case the relationship is affinal.

Although, the entire population of Junjuwa is related through kinship links, it remains true that the nature and the degree of intensity of these links differ and vary to such an extent that sub-groups are created, and some of them do not seem to have much to do with one another (Anderson 1989:69). This fact can split the cohesive image of Junjuwa as a kin group:

Here, in Junjuwa, it's like one big mob, you know us, all us related. Me, myself, big mobs of relatives in here: this side, that side, all the way. This side, my sister, proper way one mother; that side, my in laws, they are alright, I call them uncles too. Here again, one mother, not properly my mother but skin name way. All the way, all my relatives in Junjuwa. But truly, we are different mobs too, even us Bunuba, we are three mob properly, from three sisters, long time ago, but them bin finish now. Before, we bin different, we can't call each other uncles or brothers, this time all different again. That skin name business, it was all different again. We had different 'kings' too but now it's all the same, all the way from Yuendumu right up to Darwin. Here in Junjuwa we all know how to call each other, anybody, them boys, girls, old fella, old women, babies too, we all know how to call them all the lot (the whole lot) (Arthur).

Arthur's statement on Junjuwa as a group of people who are all related one to another can be interpreted in several ways. It conveys the impression that kin relationships at the community level are as divisive as they are cohesive. It also shows people's awareness of the dynamic of their kinship system. For example, Arthur first acknowledged that Junjuwa is a place where everybody is related. Second, he made a clear distinction between consanguineal and affinal kin. Third, he mentioned the subsection system through which each person is assigned to a specific category and makes possible the use of kin terms between individuals of each category for whom genealogical links are too distant. Fourth, Arthur said that the "skin name way" was different in the past for it was not applicable to all groups. This was a reference to the differences that existed at the level of social organisation.
between various linguistic groups: the Bunuba had four section system and the Walmajarri eight subsection system (see Elkin 1932). But now the latter one is used by all linguistic groups of Fitzroy Valley, it gives a framework within which people can relate one to another far beyond the limit of Junjuwa. Within the community, the subsection system overlays the set of kin relationships and is used to reinforce the overall sentiment of unity. Frequently, people switched from one system to the other according to the context. For example, during a council meeting, Arthur needed the support of a man married to one of his parallel cousins (a classificatory sister) to get the approval of his expenses by the entire council. When he addressed that man, he called him wardu ('brother-in-law'). This underlined the man's indebtedness to Arthur from whom he had received a 'sister' for wife, and was clearly a deliberate choice because the man's subsection affiliation did not correlate with that in which a sister's husband would normally be found. Arthur used the kin term whenever he needed the support of this man. A few weeks later, Arthur had a successful fishing trip and brought back to Junjuwa three large barramundi. He called the same man over and this time addressed him in the following way: "Uncle, uncle, come over here to my place; Uncle, uncle I have something for you". This time Arthur was giving something to the man and consequently he used the kin term 'uncle' which was appropriate according to their respective subsection categories. This was a way to make public his generosity, as well as his ability to 'pay back'.

The combination of the kinship and subsection systems was noticeable during most council meetings. Firstly, seating arrangements were organised according to links between consanguineal and affinal kin. People sat next to each other if they were close from a consanguineal point of view: siblings, then cousin-brothers, then mother's brothers and father's brothers, and finally affines. There were many similarities between these types of spatial organisation and the overall spatial organisation of kin groups within the village. Secondly, in the course of the meeting political alliances were made either through the same channels or through the subsection system, whichever was the more appropriate. In the course of the meeting speakers would make their intentions clear while addressing others by using the kin term most appropriate to the situation. I found that a speaker could gain or lose the support of an individual on a single issue only by using a different term of address. As one would expect numerous attempts were made by each speaker to gain the maximum of followers for his view according to this strategy. But, if those in attendance did not seem to reach a common agreement and were really divided, the chairman or a senior community leader would ultimately intervene in the debate. He would remind the people how closely related they all were, and how important it was for the sake of their respective families that the cohesion of the community not be threatened by internal divisions between leaders.
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I attended more than thirty council meetings in Junjuwa. On several occasions I witnessed very heated debates and powerful arguments between community leaders. Even when the situation seemed beyond hope of agreement, I never saw a single leader maintain his opposing view once a call for a common and unified decision had been made on the basis of the councillors’ relatedness. It is at this level that the notion of Junjuwa as a kin group was really efficient: when the cohesion of the group was jeopardised. Kin relationships represented a way for the group to reaffirm its unity. Two cases where there were profound internal divisions will illustrate this.

The first case started with a domestic dispute between a husband and wife, such as were commonplace in the community. However, this one turned into a fight in which many people became involved. Glen was looking for his wife Eva. He went to Sydney’s house, where Eva was likely to be, for Sydney is married to Eva’s sister, Karen. But Eva was not there; instead of visiting her sister she had gone drinking in the bush with people visiting town. It was not long before Glen was told where she was. He decided to go and get her. Glen was a violent man, and Karen convinced Sydney that they should follow him to help Eva if need be. As soon as Glen spotted Eva he ran to her and started to hit her. At first, Karen and Sydney remained neutral, but soon Eva screamed for help. Karen grabbed a stick and hit Glen on the head from behind and knocked him unconscious. Sydney and Karen took Eva to their home. Glen recovered quickly, and was furious. He rushed to Sydney’s place, where he was met by Sydney and his two older sons. They would not let somebody walk into their house armed with a fighting stick and a boomerang. Glen very quickly found himself on the ground with three men hitting him. At this point Merrilee got involved. Merrilee was Karen and Eva’s deceased father’s sister, and she was also Glen’s adoptive mother since his parents had been sent to the Derby leprosarium. A healthy old woman in her late seventies, Merrilee arrived behind Sydney and hit him from behind with her walking stick. Sydney turned instantly, and in a reflex action hit her back and broke her arm. Realising who she was, and that she was badly hurt, he sent his oldest son to call for an ambulance. Sydney was upset by what he had done, but said that Merrilee should not have interfered for she was like a ‘mother’ (classificatory) for both him and Glen. The fight was about to expand. Merrilee is the classificatory grandmother (mother’s mother’s sister), of three siblings, who lived in the house next to Sydney’s, and they were keen to avenge her immediately. Glen, still unconscious on the floor of Sydney’s house, had two married sisters in Junjuwa. Their husbands and sons wanted to ‘back him up’ in the fight, and had already started their own fight with Sydney’s son, who had passed next to their house on his way to the telephone booth. Two of Sydney’s son’s cousins (sons of Karen’s brother), when they saw him in trouble, came to his rescue. At this stage the fight could have easily developed into an all-out brawl in which nearly the entire community could have been involved, for each person in Junjuwa had good reason to support or avenge a relative. This was when the chairman, accompanied by three senior leaders, arrived on the scene. They agreed that
every person involved in the fight so far had the right to be because they were close relatives to other people involved earlier on. But, they also pointed out that everybody in Junjuwa would be soon fighting each other, for they were all related one to another (here they named many people including themselves and described their genealogical links). Then, they added that their responsibilities and duties were to preserve the unity of Junjuwa as a group, as well as to avoid fights that would create 'bad feelings' and divisions within the community. After about half an hour of discussion the responsibility for the entire fight was attributed to those who had attracted Eva to drink with them in the bush. They were from out of town, and none of them was related to any of those involved in the fight.

The second case was far more serious. In the end, one man died and another was accused of being responsible for his death; both were from Junjuwa. Harry was originally from the west coast of the Kimberley, near Broome; he came to the Fitzroy Valley as a teenager and worked in stations located in the Bunuba country. He married a Bunuba woman and was identified as a river person even though he originally came from the coastal area. Harry had been drinking at the pub on a Friday night on his way home, he had to cross Brooking creek, which was flooded. His body was found two days later one kilometre downstream from where he had drowned. He had been a heavy drinker but had always managed to walk home no matter how intoxicated. Once his body had been recovered, several Bunuba men searched the area next to where he drowned. They found evidence of a fight (this type of track was not uncommon next to the pub), and had some ideas about who had left the footprints. The dead man had come to the area on his own when he was a youth and did not have any brothers in Fitzroy. In the case of a suspicious death, brothers of a deceased person were usually in charge of the enquiry to find out who was the murderer. In this case Arthur was in charge of the enquiry for he was the closest kin of the deceased. Arthur had not participated in the search but was very well aware of who the main suspect was. For the Bunuba, there was no doubt that Bobby was responsible. Harry had had a fight with one of Bobby's sons a few days before his death which had sent him to the hospital for a week. Moreover, on the night of Harry's death, Bobby had been seen drunk and arguing with Harry. Those who saw this were Harry's step-sons; They led the Bunuba men and demanded immediate revenge. Arthur was in a very difficult position. He had to control the young men whose responsibility was to grieve and not to take revenge. His daughter was married to the brother-in-law of Bobby's parallel cousin (Mervyn). Therefore, he was in too delicate a position to accuse Bobby openly. Finally, Arthur, himself a Bunuba, was married to a Walmajarri woman and Bobby was a Walmajarri as well; therefore he had to do his best to avoid the conflict degenerating into an opposition between linguistic groups. Nevertheless, the tension grew rapidly, for several reasons. Harry's step-sons accused Arthur of slowing down the enquiry because of his relationship to Bobby. Mervyn warned Arthur that any direct accusation made against Bobby would be made against him as well; other
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Bunuba men accused Arthur of being a traitor and called for action after the funeral: a raid against the Walmajarri section of Junjuwa where the culprit was hidden. None of this was discussed publicly and this probably reinforced the tension within the community. Then, one night outside Junjuwa's main gate, one of the deceased's stepsons publicly accused Bobby of the murder. Almost instantly, a group of Walmajarri men, heavily armed with fighting sticks and boomerangs, gathered in Bobby's house. The young Bunuba man who made the accusation was scared and ran away, but other Bunuba men prepared themselves for the fight. By now the conflict opposed two groups of people within Junjuwa on the basis of their linguistic identity, although most of these people were related. The fight did not eventuate but the tension was extremely high during the entire week-end. On the following Monday, a meeting was organised. It was chaired by Kurnangki’s chairman because people did not want someone from Junjuwa, who was involved in the dispute, to do it, and nearly all Junjuwa residents attended. I was not authorised to attend the meeting, but was told afterwards how things went. Basically, it was said that all Junjuwa people should be 'sorry' (observing mourning behaviour) rather than fighting each other, for they were all related to the deceased. Then it was pointed out that Junjuwa was not made up of two groups: Bunuba and Walmajarri, but was one single group of people, all related. Harry's step-son was forgiven on the basis that he was too upset to really know what he had done. The meeting went on for about two hours, and all the speakers insisted on the fact that in Junjuwa people were all related and therefore "one could not kill one of his relatives". Finally, Arthur talked. This is how he afterwards summarised what he had said

I've bin tellin them all those fella that my uncle (Bobby) did not kill him that wardu - brother-in-law - (Harry) of mine. The policeman him bin tellin me, that mob from Balgo, them fella them bin in Fitzroy, that night. They gotta drunk too, and them bin stealin one motokar. They bin drivin to Derby, run away too, but they rolled him over that motokar and them bin all dead now. I know that Balgo mob they are proper mean them fella, real wild one too, I reckon them bin killin my wardu poor fella. I bin knowin all the way nobody from Junjuwa bin done this, we are all related we don't kill each other in here. Well, it's all over now, but them young fella Bunuba they bin givin us a hard time. Them bin gettin mad a little bit, but them bin sorry proper way, you know really sad and that sadness make him no good longa his head. Now we gonna get all together all Junjuwa mob and we will give him, a proper good funeral to that wardu of mine, we gonna all cry for him (Arthur).

Once again the blame for trouble within Junjuwa had been attributed to outsiders. This was a very frequent strategy when problems started in Junjuwa because of drinking, gambling, or extra-marital affairs. As soon as they threatened the unity of the community, outsiders were blamed. Then the community through the mediation of some leaders had regained its unity around the concept of one group of people all related. When such divisions
arose they were controlled and eventually annihilated through the use of genealogical links as a basis of a compromise and as a mode of reconciliation.

5.3 "In Junjuwa, we all stand up for each other" (Joe)

It is one thing for a group to affirm its unity in historical terms, or to maintain it through genealogical links between group members, but it is another thing to be recognised by other groups as one entity. If Junjuwa wanted to be seen as one unit, it had to act accordingly. In the previous section, I suggested that the strategy of blaming outsiders represented a way for Junjuwa to overcome internally divisive problems. I have noted other circumstances in which Junjuwa people acted as one unit and showed other Aboriginal communities that they were a coherent group. In this section I concentrate on concrete cases in which the community acted as a unit. I have selected three different contexts in which Junjuwa presented itself a coherent group. These context were very different situations that indicate Junjuwa's willingness to affirm its coherence in a range of circumstances. The first context was the Annual General Meeting of the KLC, organised in March 1986 at Bow River Station. The second was internal to Junjuwa village, for it concerned the handling of outsiders within the physical limit of the community. The last context relates to the participation of the entire community in ceremonial activities.

Since it was formed in 1978, the KLC has organised an Annual General Meeting. From 1980, Junjuwa has had a love/hate relationship with the KLC, and in 1985 finally separated itself once and for all from the organisation. In 1986, the KLC decided for the first time to hold its Annual General Meeting jointly with the Kimberley Law and Culture Centre (KLCC) that had existed for several years. The idea of a joint Annual General meeting had the advantage for both organisations of limiting their expenses; it was also possible for the KLC to attract more people than it had done in previous years.

In 1984 and 1985, the KLCC Annual General Meeting had attracted two to three time more people than the KLC one. One of the reasons for this was that the KLCC Annual General Meeting was a cultural festival with dances and performances. Groups came from many different communities, all located within an area delimited by Yuendumu, Port Keats, and La Grange. Meetings were also held to discuss the collection of artifacts within a specific area, the opening of local sales outlets for artifacts, and the control by Aborigines of the entire artifact regional market. All these issues, combined with a dance festival, attracted far more people than the political agenda of the KLC Annual General Meeting. Moreover, many Aboriginal people from the Kimberley had withdrawn their support from the KLC when they realised that the outcome of
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the Seaman enquiry would be far from what they had expected⁴. The KLC needed to regain people’s confidence and support.

Junjuwa council was divided on the issue of whether or not to participate in the meeting and send a delegation to Bow River (500 km from Fitzroy). On the one hand, Junjuwa did not have much to do with the KLC, but on the other hand the community was well represented at the previous KLCC Annual General Meeting at Kalumburu, and those who went had enjoyed it. A decision was eventually reached: it was agreed that Junjuwa would send a community bus. The final decision regarding who should go was left to group leaders. When they prepared their swags early in the morning of the departure day I could see that about twenty men were undertaking the trip. Approximately half of them were older men, representing nearly all sub-divisions of Junjuwa. Each of these old men was accompanied by a younger one from his group. The older men, chosen to represent Junjuwa, thought it was an excellent opportunity for these ‘young fellows’ to learn how their leaders were acting for their community in a big meeting.

Soon us old buggers we will be finish. Them young fella they do nothin but drinkin, sit down and drinkin again. They know nothin about runnin that Junjuwa place. We have to give them a go, they have to see by themselves, to learn. That meeting business is big business, we have to show them. This time they gonna learn only, them young fella, they stay quiet, behind, and us old fella we gonna stand up for Junjuwa. Still, they gonna go and learn that’s the only way (Joe).

The KLC and KLCC had notified participants that food would be provided during the four day meeting, but Junjuwa council had decided that the Junjuwa delegation would take sufficient food for the duration of the entire trip. In doing this Junjuwa council indicated that community representatives would not be dependent on Aboriginal organisations for food and thereby affirmed Junjuwa’s autonomy. Moreover, each representative of Junjuwa was allocated $30 ‘pocket money’ per day. According to the Junjuwa chairman, this was done for two reasons. First, it would show representatives from other communities that Junjuwa was a good and strong community where people were well looked after. Second, it would allow the Junjuwa people to play cards as well as to give money to relatives they would meet at the meeting.

I had decided, well before Junjuwa council, to attend the meeting and I took the opportunity to travel in my own vehicle in convoy with the Junjuwa bus. On the way to Bow River we stopped twice. Each time, young people fetched firewood, lit the fire and cooked the meal. People sat together according to languages and only the older men, who had previously attended similar meetings, talked. They told others, especially the young men, about their experiences. They warned everybody against women from other places, who could "use magical powers to seduce men" and against some groups which were "still cannibals not so long ago". We reached Bow River station at night.

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The camping ground was located next to the station homestead, but the older men refused to set up their camp at night next to other groups. We camped in the bush a few kilometres away from the homestead so that the following morning a choice of camping spot could be made in the light of where different groups were camped. While we were setting the camp up, we could hear people singing, as the KLCC festival had already started. After a few minutes one old man said:

It's the Red Hill mob from Halls Creek, they're singing a corroboree. I know, it's alright for us to go and look him. Careful you young fella, you stay quiet and with us all the way (Herbert).

The next day they moved the camp to the appropriate location on a spot selected by the older men. During the two and a half days they stayed at Bow river, Junjuwa people remained constantly together. They sat together during all the various sessions of the KLC and KLCC meetings, they took their meals together in their camp and they slept next to each other under the tarpaulin set up between the Junjuwa bus and my vehicle. At each meal the older men sent the younger ones to get the food provided by the organisers of the meeting: damper, tea and chunks of beef. The extra supply given by the Junjuwa council enabled them to vary the meals, but were equally popular amongst other people. Rapidly, Junjuwa bus became a place where one could go whenever one was short of anything such as powdered milk, tins of fish, soap, sugar. Junjuwa people were very generous with their own supplies. I estimated that about three times more was given away than we actually consumed; the older men never failed to mention that every time they represented Junjuwa in a meeting they were provided with extra supplies and pocket money.

During sessions of the meetings, each time one Junjuwa representative spoke, he spoke in the name of Junjuwa community. Whatever the statement or question was, it started in the following way: "We in Junjuwa we don't agree for ...", or "Us Junjuwa people we agree...", or again "In Junjuwa it's different...". Although I noted that certain issues raised by some Junjuwa people were personal, they were nevertheless presented as 'community business'. For example, George wanted to sensitise representatives from the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC) to his financial problems. George had started a mustering team a few years ago and had been promised financial assistance from the ADC, but so far he had not received any money and did not understand why. He employed several of Junjuwa's young men in his mustering team, but it was a private enterprise. When he spoke, he presented his enterprise as a community project. His problems with ADC and financial difficulties became Junjuwa's. Several decisions were taken during these meetings, and in order to reach a decision, votes were organised. For each vote, all the Junjuwa people voted for the same proposition. The young men waited until the older ones had decided which proposition they would support, and put their arms up whenever the older men did.
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The best example of Junjuwa as a coherent group was given on the third morning of the four day meeting. The previous night, Junjuwa chairman (Andrew) and his father (Arthur), the community spokesman, had arrived at Bow River. They camped in the bush for they did not know where Junjuwa people had set up their camp, and joined Junjuwa people in the morning. Arthur and Andrew talked with Junjuwa people about what had been said and decided during the first two days. On that morning, a very important discussion of land rights issues in the Kimberley was scheduled. The KLC chairman (Adrian), opened the meeting and presented the agenda. He insisted on the importance of the KLC as an Aboriginal organisation representative of an entire region. Adrian added that in order to be successful in its policy, the KLC should have the support of all Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley. At this stage Arthur stood up and talked about Junjuwa's situation regarding the land rights issue. His argument was clear and simple: Junjuwa people were about to have the Mission Reserve handed back to them. This would be done without any outside interference or assistance; the entire matter would be dealt with between Junjuwa and the UAM. As far as Arthur was concerned, the land rights issue in the KLC terms was not an issue at all for the Junjuwa community; therefore Junjuwa would not support the proposed KLC policy on land rights. Adrian was very upset. He said that for many years Junjuwa had failed to give any support whatsoever to the KLC, and added that the Junjuwa community attitude was not a good example for the others to follow. His answer offended Arthur who then said:

Listen Uncle, I bin comin to listen and you bin lookin for argument. This country, I don’t know him, you don’t know him too. You fella, me fella we belong to other country, we can’t argue in this country, him belong to other fella not me’n’you. I bin comin with my mob to listen not to argue, those Junjuwa people, old fella, young fella, they bin comin to listen too not to argue. Well, I’m proper sorry but I can’t stay now, you have bin givin us bad feelings and we can’t argue on that place, we have to go, I am sorry Uncle, but we have to go (Arthur).

Arthur left the meeting followed by all the Junjuwa people. They went back to their camp, and in a few minutes had packed everything up and were ready to leave. Adrian came to apologise, but Arthur and the other older men refused to talk to him. Immediately, the Junjuwa bus headed back to Fitzroy Crossing followed by Arthur's vehicle. They stopped only once on their return trip. After a light meal Arthur gave his version of the events:

I know that fella, he is a proper cunning bugger. But you see, I stood up and I told him. I stood up not for myself but for Junjuwa people. I stood up for you fella: Walmajarri, Wangkajunga, Bumuba, all you mob. Then you back me up and stood up for me fella, all you lot again, that’s the proper way. This is us way we Junjuwa mob, we all back up each other (Arthur).

Once back in Junjuwa, the incident was commented on at length, then discussed. It was on the agenda of the following council meeting. Every one in
Junjuwa community as one group

Junjuwa agreed that what Junjuwa representatives did was right. When Junjuwa community had been criticised, these men had 'stuck together' and had 'stood up for each other', this was what the entire community expected from them: they gave a coherent image of Junjuwa to others and acted accordingly. Nobody commented on the actual decision of whether or not the Junjuwa community should have supported the KLC on the land rights issues, but everybody agreed that what the Junjuwa representation did was the right thing to do.

The way in which Junjuwa councillors got together in support of the community chairman to handle a problem posed by a group of outsiders within Junjuwa village provides another concrete example of when and how the community acted as one coherent group. As already noted, 'outsiders' were regularly accused of causing trouble within Junjuwa. First of all, it is necessary to describe briefly what Junjuwa people mean by 'outsiders', and to specify in which cases such people represented a danger to the community. The heterogeneous nature of Fitzroy Crossing Aboriginal population makes it clear that an Aboriginal person from the town was not likely to be considered as an 'outsider' in Junjuwa village, because nearly all Junjuwa residents had relatives living elsewhere in town who visited them regularly. I shall show that this was not the case all the time. In contrast, one might expect that an individual or group, from a distant Aboriginal community, with no close relatives in Junjuwa would be perceived as an 'outsider'. Again, this was not as systematic as one might think. For example, a local Aboriginal with close relatives in Junjuwa would be described as an 'outsider' if he attempted to bring alcohol into Junjuwa village, or started an argument between two families, or if he challenged a leader's authority. In these cases a person who became a threat to Junjuwa, and did not live permanently in the community, was declared an 'outsider'. Aboriginal visitors, regardless of their usual place of residence, could be tolerated for a few days in Junjuwa providing they notified the council of their visit and received approval for their stay. In such a case outsiders would be treated as visitors, as long as they abided by community rules. Therefore, being an 'outsider' was due more to specific actions than to the fact that one was not a resident. It was when people threatened Junjuwa's integrity that they put themselves 'outside' the community as a group for they were a source of tensions within Junjuwa. I have examples of permanent Junjuwa residents who caused trouble but, having created divisions within the community, were classified as 'outsiders'. Still, there were more cases in which 'outsiders' were people from a distant place who visited Junjuwa.

In order to limit trouble within Junjuwa village, there were two councillors posted at the main gate at night time. They checked that no one brought alcohol into the village, and prevented well known trouble-makers, drunks, and strangers from having access to the place. This control was far from efficient for several reasons. It was organised only for a few nights following each pension day. Some Junjuwa residents refused to be checked by councillors from
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another group on the basis that these men 'had no right' over them. Relatives of councillors on duty at the main gate were not controlled at all. Finally, the fence around Junjuwa was damaged in many places and one side of the village was not fenced at all, so it was easy to get into Junjuwa without going through the main gate.

A group of young men from Yuendumu had been in Fitzroy Crossing for a few days. They were all members of a 'Rock and Roll' band on its way to a music festival in Katherine. They had came up to the Kimberley through the Tanami road and had run out of petrol on the Great Northern Highway near Halls Creek. One of them knew he had a distant relative in Fitzroy Crossing, and they managed to reach the township. In Fitzroy, they expected to find some help that would enable them to continue their trip to Katherine. The distant relative was a female Kokatja, whose two 'cousins' lived in Yuendumu. She was married to a Wangkajunga and lived in Junjuwa. Her husband, together with other Wangkajunga leaders, were away attending a ceremony. The Yuendumu men put a lot of pressure on the woman, and she gave them food and money. Eventually, the band managed to move into her house and set up its camp in her backyard. The men had promised her not to cause any trouble and kept their promise the first night. The following night, they got drunk, abused the councillors at the gate, and brought alcohol into the community. Once in the Wangkajunga house they started a fight with a group of young Wangkajunga men who attempted to stop them from smashing a car's windows.

At this stage none of community leaders wanted to interfere, although they realised that the visitors were breaching community order. The main reason was that, so far, trouble was limited to the 'Wangkajunga row'; therefore it was the Wangkajunga leaders' responsibility to settle the problem. Unfortunately, they were all away. The Junjuwa chairman went to the police station. According to him, his intervention in Junjuwa could have been misinterpreted by the Wangkajunga leaders and this might have created divisions within the community. He was not very successful at the police station: when he reported the problem, he was told that Junjuwa was a 'private property', and that as long as these men were not causing public disorder there was nothing that the police could do without interfering with internal community affairs.

On the third evening of their stay in Junjuwa the Yuendumu band organised a rehearsal session. This event attracted a lot of people, mostly single women, in the Wangkajunga part of Junjuwa. The rehearsal turned into an improvised party that went on for hours. There was alcohol available, many single women got drunk, and some of them failed to return home that night. It was remarkable that the 'party' did not degenerate into a fight between the band members and the women's boyfriends, for women were regularly at the origin of fights between groups of men. The most likely reason was that Aboriginal people in Fitzroy Crossing feared those from the Northern Territory. For example, the young men from Yuendumu were said to be all
expert in martial arts and the older ones in sorcery. So, even if many of
Junjuwa's young men were keen to put their martial arts knowledge to the test,
there were as many older men to discourage them from fighting because they
feared some magical retaliation from the Yuendumu old people. Andrew, the
chairman, contacted the town electrician who cut the power off from the house.
After a while things returned to normal.

Very early the next morning, a group of Junjuwa leaders got together to
discuss the problem. Luckily, two Wangkajunga leaders had returned to
Junjuwa a few hours earlier. Sydney, a Walmajarri, explained to them what
happened and encouraged all the leaders to act together.

Them fella from Yuendumu, them proper no good, big trouble too.
That Yuendumu mob and them music them bin attractin big mob of
single girls. Too much single girls them bin attractin. Them fella
might take them away them girls, for good too. Us poor fella we
gonna lose them girls for good. This is wrong, us uncles and fathers
for them girls we have to be strong: them girls them gotta get
married right here, proper way too. All of us, Wangkajunga,
Bunuba, Walmajarri, we bin havin daughters, all of us, we gonna
look after them girls, right? Well we gotta help each other,
altogether like one man, altogether behind that Jangala (the
chairman). All of us like one man we gonna get rid of them
Yuendumu boys, we gonna chase them for good. alright we gonna
chase them, but quiet way we gonna do it, we are quiet people in
here. We can’t giv’im them Yuendumu old fella bad feelings, we
gonna do it proper way, let’s go now, all of us like one man we gonna
talk quiet way to them boys (Sydney).

Subsequently, a meeting was organised with the Yuendumu men and
leaders from all the groups in Junjuwa. Andrew contacted Yuendumu
community by radio telephone and reported that the Yuendumu people were
ashamed of the band’s behaviour. An agreement was reached between the two
communities: Junjuwa would give enough money to the band to allow it to
reach Katherine, and in return Yuendumu would take some money from the
band members’ unemployment cheques and forward it to Junjuwa.

The band left Fitzroy Crossing soon after. Once the ‘outsiders’ were on
their way everyone in Junjuwa commented on how the leaders’ behaviour had
shown the strength of Junjuwa and the solidarity of its members. In this
example, leaders did not get together spontaneously as they had done at the
Bow River meeting. In fact, as long as trouble is limited to one part of Junjuwa,
it is not a community problem, and the Yuendumu men were only ‘trouble
makers’. It was only when the problem was phrased as one in which unmarried
women from the community could have been taken away and married
elsewhere that the entire community reacted. Then the ‘trouble makers’
became ‘outsiders’. There was then a threat to the unity of Junjuwa: if these
women had really been taken away and married elsewhere, prearranged
marriages contracted within Junjuwa would have been broken, and as a result
internal divisions within the community would have emerged. Another element
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that could have stimulated cohesive action on the part of Junjuwa leaders was the fear of 'magical retaliation'. Such powers are easily directed towards one individual, but may be difficult to direct against an entire community. Therefore, when Junjuwa leaders acted they used the broadest basis possible (the community), because of the potential danger of acting on an individual basis in that situation.

The last context in which Junjuwa community was involved as a coherent group was ceremonial. Prior to white settlement, the West Kimberley area was a crossroads of trade routes and ceremonial activities (Ackerman 1979a). As a result of white settlement, a few townships, because of their geographical location and the diversity of their Aboriginal population, have become centres where these activities developed and intensified (Ackerman 1979b). At Junjuwa it was possible to distinguish three main types of ceremonial activities. There were ceremonies held elsewhere in which individuals or sub-groups from Junjuwa took part. There were also rituals controlled and organised by people from Junjuwa in which only those concerned were involved. Finally, there were initiation ceremonies during which several youths from Junjuwa were circumcised. The participation of Junjuwa community as a whole occurred in ceremonial activities of the latter type.

Many ceremonial activities were held at any time throughout the year, the only constraint being that people had to be 'ready'. By being 'ready' for a ritual people meant that everything was organised: all participants were present, there was sufficient food and cash available for all those involved, and no one in town was opposed to the ceremony. By contrast, initiation ceremonies were held mainly during the wet season and people had to be ready when ritual parties passed through Fitzroy Crossing. During the years prior to my first field trip in the Kimberley, there was a revival of ceremonial activities in the area and many ritual parties visited Fitzroy Crossing (Ackerman 1979b:236-237). These ritual parties came from different places and each of them travelled according to a pre-established itinerary. Over the years privileged links have developed between some ritual parties and specific communities. That is to say, when boys reached an age that community leaders agree to be appropriate for initiation, one of the ritual parties was contacted and told that a community had boys ready for circumcision. Then the community would be visited during the next ritual party trip to the area.

In the case of Junjuwa, initiations held in Fitzroy for the village's youths were performed either by a ritual party from Port Keats, or by one from La Grange. Ritual parties' members were not necessarily all from these places, but included men and women from places visited on the way and local people. For example, the Port Keats ritual party, or 'Wangka mob', was mainly made up of Port Keats people, who had been joined by Turkey Creek and Halls Creek people. It included, as well, a few individuals from Fitzroy Crossing. 'Wangka' is a generic term for a wide range of ceremonial activities but was used in that particular case to differentiate the Port Keats ritual party from the La Grange
one. The latter was called 'Walungari mob' and performed initiation ceremonies in which deeds of ancestral beings who lived in the lower part of the Fitzroy River formed the mythical basis for the rites. Walungari is also a generic term applied to myths and rites related to ancestral beings from the Fitzroy River. Thus, the two generic terms were employed to distinguish the initiation ceremonies performed by ritual parties coming from the north and the north-east, from those under the control of groups who came from the west and the south. The difference was important because, according to their linguistic identity, Junjuwa boys were initiated either by the Wangka mob or in the Walungari ceremonies. Bunuba, Gooniyandi and Kija youths went through a Wangka ceremony; Walmajarri and Wangkajunga novices were circumcised during a Walungari ritual\(^6\). The content of each type of ceremony was completely different but as they were initiation rituals the overall structure of the two was similar. For example, in a pre-ceremonial stage, boys were 'lost' to Junjuwa in both Wangka and Walungari rituals but it was done in a different way. In the case of Wangka, teenagers were sent away in the bush and were said to have lost their way. Then the ritual party would rescue them and bring them back to Junjuwa. The boys' parents were told that their children would be given back to them not as boys but as men. The ritual party in charge of the Walungari ritual raided the village at dawn and abducted the boys. Then the boys' brothers would tell their fathers and mothers that the abductors were prepared to return the boys to their families but they would 'cut' them first, i.e. they would circumcise them and 'make them men'.

I attended both types of initiation ceremony, during each of which four boys from Junjuwa were circumcised\(^7\). Each ritual was held on a different ceremonial ground and in each case the boys' extended families played a major role in the ritual. But, in both rituals, the entire population of Junjuwa was present when the boys, painted with ceremonial designs and wearing ceremonial ornaments, were brought back to their parents by the ritual party. All the people would remain until the ritual party members finished eating the food prepared by the boys' sisters and given by the parents in 'exchange' for their sons. After a while, people not directly related to the boys would leave the ceremonial ground.

Once the boys were circumcised they remained in the bush for a period of seclusion. Meanwhile, the ritual party went on to its next stop. After three or four weeks, it returned to Fitzroy Crossing and the initiates were handed back to their parents and to the community. Once again food had been cooked by the initiates' sisters for the ritual party. In both types of ceremony, the entire population of Junjuwa attended this final stage. Each time, once the ceremony was over, the chairman thanked the ritual party. He thanked them in his name, on the behalf of the parents, but mainly on the behalf of Junjuwa, and he insisted on how everybody in Junjuwa was grateful to those who had brought back the 'lost boys'. Moreover, Wangka men and Walungari men had turned these boys into men and this was for the benefit of the entire community.
Plate 6

Part of the Walungari initiation ceremony. This initiation ceremony was held in Kurnangki for four boys from Junjuwa in January 1987. This particular dance occurred when the boys were 'returned' to their parents during the first stage of the ceremony prior to the circumcision. The boys had been abducted from their parents' houses the previous morning at sunrise by their older brothers (full and classificatory). They had spent all night in the initiators' camp located near the circumcision ground. The initiators were mostly Nyikina and Walmajarri men from Noonkanbah, Looma, La Grange, and Bayulu. The boys had been painted with ceremonial designs before they were shown to their parents and relatives who sat in the middle of Kurnangki village. All Junjuwa residents were present to witness that the boys were genuinely returned to their families. The men dancing in large circles around the novices' relatives were full and classificatory brothers-in-law to the boys. In an inner circle, each boy was accompanied by three sisters (full and classificatory) who held his hands and covered his head with bunches of green leaves. The novices joined their parents briefly while the brothers-in-law and the initiators ate the food prepared for them by the novices' sisters. Then the people moved onto the ceremonial ground.
Walungari initiates on the ceremonial ground behind Kurnangki village. The four boys are resting prior to the start of pre-circumcision stage of the Walungari which includes dancing and singing all through the night. The three men who can be seen on the picture were looking after the novices; they were classificatory brothers-in-law. The four boys were of mixed linguistic origin but each had one Walmajarri parent. They were nevertheless identified as Bunuba (the boy second from the left) and Gooniyandi (the other three) after the two languages of their non-Walmajarri parents. The paintings on their chest are associated with the two mythical snakes who, during the Dreamtime, swam up the Fitzroy river. On their way upstream the snakes circumcised all creatures they encountered, which subsequently followed them. When the snakes reached Geikie Gorge, they attempted to circumcised the freshwater crocodile but it resisted; it flicked its tail and threw them in the water. The three fought and the snakes died and sank in the deep waters of Geikie Gorge. Because the boys belonged to different sub-sections (one Jangala, second from the left, and three Japaljarri), they had different motifs on their chest associated with various creatures the snakes initiated. Each of the boys was circumcised by a different man chosen by the boy’s older brothers and classificatory mother’s father. This man as well as the two others who held the boys during the operation were classificatory fathers-in-law to the boys.
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The only other type of ceremonial activity in which the entire community participated was mortuary ceremonies. In Fitzroy Crossing, for several decades, Christian burials have taken over traditional methods of disposal of the dead, but some specific mourning rites were maintained. For each death in Junjuwa, only some of the deceased relatives would be under mourning restrictions. But all of the Junjuwa population went to funeral services held in the village church as well as to burial ceremonies at Fitzroy Crossing cemetery.

As I have stated there were other ceremonial activities in which individuals or sub-groups from Junjuwa took part. Their involvement remained at the individual or sub-group level, and people did not act as a representative of Junjuwa or in the name of the community. According to people from other Aboriginal communities from the area, as well as to many Junjuwa residents, "Junjuwa was not a Law place". That is, the community as a group was not involved in any particular type of ceremonial activity that would contradict this statement. The community took part in burial ceremonies because of their Christian aspects. The participation of Junjuwa in initiation ceremonies was a public statement of what type of ceremony a 'non-Law' community was prepared to be involved in. Also, in funeral and initiation rituals, a group, in that case Junjuwa community, loses (death) or gains (initiation) members, and this was represented as something with which the community as a whole was concerned.

5.4 Conclusion

I have shown in this chapter that Junjuwa exists as a group in several respects. The first is the level of discourse in which Junjuwa people expressed their view of the historical circumstances that brought them together in Junjuwa village. Statements about the unity of Junjuwa as a 'mob' were directed to both Junjuwa residents and people outside. For both audiences these statements provided a basis upon which the coherence of Junjuwa as a group could be established. The second aspect is as a group of people related to each other. This aspect is mostly internal and reinforces community cohesion when needed. When division started to appear between sub-groups of Junjuwa residents, as manifested in conflicts, they were often settled through the tightening of kinship and other social links. The third aspect is that of situations in which Junjuwa community acted as a group. These acts, made on a community basis, were generally directed towards outsiders. They constituted concrete proof to residents and to other Aboriginal communities that Junjuwa was a unified group and acted as such. It seems that Junjuwa people acted as a group whenever it offered the possibility of displaying Junjuwa's cohesion. By contrast, people were reluctant to be involved in collective acts that exposed
Junjuwa community as one group

divisions within the community. It was important for Junjuwa people to affirm, reinforce and demonstrate as frequently as they did that Junjuwa was one group because everybody, inside and outside Junjuwa, was aware of the internal divisions and the varied aspects of organisation within Junjuwa. For their own well-being, as members of a particular group, Junjuwa people had to affirm and demonstrate the unity of their community, which was constantly challenged both internally and externally.
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1 Cyril, a Bunuba, moved into Junjuwa Village in 1979. He was Community chairman between 1980 and 1982.

2 It was under this generic term (kings) that Aboriginal people of the area classified important religious and ceremonial leaders from the past.

3 The KLCC is based in Broome and deals with a variety of Aboriginal cultural activities, from collecting and retailing of artifacts to financial support of some ceremonial activities.

4 The Seaman enquiry report was published in 1984, but none of the recommendations about need for land made by Aborigines through the KLC submission was taken into account by the government. Many individuals, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal organisations had put a lot of effort into this enquiry for almost no result. This lack of results was a reason for some people in the Kimberley blaming the KLC, because in their view the Aboriginal organisation failed to support their claims.

5 There were other types of initiation ceremony, for example those during which initiates were subincised, but they were restricted to a small number of participants and therefore are not relevant to this Chapter.

6 The same distinction between linguistic identity and types of initiation ceremony existed in the past, although the old men who confirmed that information added that before the ritual parties came from different places.

7 I attended a Wangka initiation ceremony in December 1980 and a Walungari ceremony was held at Fitzroy Crossing in January 1987.
CHAPTER SIX

VARIOUS KINDS OF GROUPINGS WITHIN JUNJUWA

In Chapter Five I discussed four ways in which the coherence of Junjuwa as a group was expressed, affirmed and operated. I also briefly referred to the fact that they were factors which at times threatened community cohesiveness. The purpose of this Chapter is to show that the same elements upon which people draw to create and maintain community coherence can also produce stresses that fracture the community into smaller groups.

6.1 In Junjuwa, there are too many people from different mobs, they don’t listen (James).

Differences between the sub-groups in Junjuwa were always present in everyday discussion but became salient when problems arose either between two particular sub-groups or within the community at a more general level. Apart from the general statement that “too many people were mixed”, with a clear implication that a place like Junjuwa was bound to have problems, people always blamed those “from another mob” for Junjuwa’s problems. The idea of ‘another mob’ could apply to any form of grouping of which the speaker was not a member and thus was highly context dependent, but in general the notion applied to three basic kinds of groupings:

- large groupings defined in terms of cultural differences as they were perceived by Junjuwa residents; for example, desert people as opposed to river people
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- groupings of variable size defined in terms of linguistic differences, such as Bunuba, Walmajarri, Jaru, Kija

- small groupings defined in terms of historical differences; for example, all the people born on the same station as opposed to the people who migrated together or who have specific links to the same country of origin

Generally speaking, problems in Junjuwa were presented, in public discourse, as resulting from the historical processes that had gradually brought so many different groups to live permanently together in the same village. People justified the differences that existed for each various kinds of groupings by referring to their own past and added that if there were so many problems in Junjuwa today it was only because all these people had to live together and such things would have never happened in the past.

6.2 Cultural divisions within Junjuwa

The broadest form of groupings that people distinguished within Junjuwa was based on cultural differences: river people as opposed to desert people. Under the category river people were grouped Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Kija, Nyikina and Jaru people; Walmajarri and Wangkajunga were grouped together under the label desert people. This division is entirely arbitrary as far as clearly marked cultural differences are concerned. Although it is a fact that both Walmajarri and Wangkajunga people lived originally in the desert, and there were and still are cultural differences between them and the river people, there are also internal differences between these two desert groups. Cultural differences were not always obvious between linguistic units from one category vis a vis another. For example, the Jaru people were culturally closer to the desert people (see Chapter 2), but those who lived in Junjuwa were a small minority and had elected to be classified as river people, probably because they were all born on cattle stations within the Fitzroy Valley. This is where the main difference between desert and river people lay: the place of birth. The desert people in Junjuwa were those who were born in the 'bush', and subsequently were brought on to cattle stations throughout the Kimberley, together with their children and grandchildren. By contrast, all the river people were born and reared on cattle stations. Personal histories of Junjuwa residents show that all the Walmajarri and Wangkajunga people over 45 years of age were born in the 'bush' and people affiliated to other languages, even when they were older, were all born on stations. For example, the older Bunuba people were born in the following places: Old Leopold Station (two men, born in 1924 and 1926), Old Oscar Station (one person born in 1919), Fairfield Station (a man born in 1911). A Kija man was born at Louisa Downs in 1911, a few Gooniyandi people in the early 1920s at Fossil Downs, and several Jaru in the late 1920s at Flora Valley (DNW files on cattle stations in the Fitzroy Valley). All these people
confirmed, during interviews, that their parents had already been working on these cattle stations for some time. Another element was added to the place of birth to distinguish between river and desert people: it is a fact that the river people were 'mixed'. That is to say, from as far as river people could remember, they were of mixed linguistic origin, they intermarried and held joint ceremonial activities, and many of them resided on the same stations.

The broader distinction has been partially preserved in the residential organisation within the village:

Well, myself I'm a proper Jaru, river people alright, like them Bunuba, Kija and Gooniyandi fella, we're all mixed, all the way right through from the beginning. Them, desert mob, they're different again, those Walmajarri and Wangkajunga, they're from the other side, desert way. Just like in Junjuwa them fella camp on the other side, them different all the way, them don't mix right through, only little bit, they're different people altogether from us river mob (Ronald).

What Ronald was referring to was the two sections within Junjuwa village: one for the river people, in which people associated with that category lived, and the other one for the desert people. This second section of the village was subdivided into two distinct parts: one for the Walmajarri and the other for the Wangkajunga. Even though this tripartite division was planned since the start of Junjuwa, people kept using the broader division in two sides when they wished to refer to river and desert people.

Exogamous marriages between river and desert people were insignificant compared to marriages within each one of these broader categories: out of 84 marriages recorded in Junjuwa in 1986, 58 were endogamous to these groupings (29 each), and 19 were exogamous; the remaining marriages were not taken into account because they concerned people who did not belong to these two categories. When a person married into the other 'side', they had to make a choice, often expressed in residential location, as to whether they remained on their side of origin or passed into the other one. The commitment of an individual who passed into the other side was not limited to residence, but included social and economic as well as ritual activities to be carried out with the people of the category that had been married into. Overall, there were more individuals from the desert group that had passed into the river side than the other way around. Only three men (one Bunuba, one Gooniyandi and one Walmajarri), amongst those who had married into the other side had preserved a dual identity (desert and river people), which gave them an influential position within Junjuwa. All three were ritual leaders on the side they had belonged to prior to their marriage and none of them had lost this important position, even though they had married into the other side. They lived in three houses all located as near to both sides as possible, and many occasions acted as brokers between desert and river people (see Map 6). The fact that two were from the larger linguistic units in Junjuwa had probably contributed to their prominent position. The third one, the Gooniyandi man, was from a family
closely linked to the Bunuba for several generations and this factor was important in his acquiring a privileged position between the two sides. By contrast, members of language units with few members in Junjuwa who had married into the other side and had 'passed' into it as well did not retain a dual membership but were merged with the side into which they had married. This factor could have been important in the decision of the Jaru to mix with the river people. As a smaller linguistic unit, its members could only acquire some recognition if they were amalgamated into a larger and more dominant one, which in the case of Junjuwa was the Bunuba. Thus Jaru, even though they are culturally and geographically closer to the desert, are amalgamated with river people because of their co-residence with the Bunuba in the appropriate section of the village. This particular association gave Jaru people living in Junjuwa some say at the community level, whereas on their own they would not have held a significant position at all.

Marked differences existed between desert and river people in ritual activities. The river people, for various reasons, had abandoned many of their traditional ritual activities; by contrast, the last desert migrants who settled in the Fitzroy Valley in the mid-1950s had preserved a strong and active ritual life. This factor was in some ways stimulating and had contributed to an increase and a revival of ritual activities in the Fitzroy Valley in the mid and late 1970s (Akerman 1979a). But it was also perceived as a threat by many river people, who saw the desert people's 'Law' as a direct challenge to their rights over the country around Fitzroy Crossing, because these rights could not be established as effectively as in the past since many ceremonies were no longer performed. At least this is how it was interpreted by some people who consequently took the necessary steps to prevent such a situation eventuating.

Behind the UAM compound in Fitzroy Crossing there are two hills, called Burawa in Bunuba. In these hills were hidden some sacred boards and 'secret stones' associated with the cherrabun, the barramundi and the freshwater crocodile dreaming places located alongside the Fitzroy river between Geikie Gorge and Fitzroy Crossing old crossing. Other boards had as well been stored in a nearby spot. The former sacred objects were the property of Bunuba people, some of the latter had been associated with deceased Bunuba men but most of them belonged to Kija, Nyikina and Gooniyandi men who had been long settled in the Fitzroy Crossing area. When Walmajarri people settled permanently on the mission reserve and subsequently were joined by Wangkajunga, the river people in charge of these objects decided to move them to safer places. The Bunuba stones and boards were taken to a storehouse in the Oscar Range (30 to 60km north west of Fitzroy), and the others objects were taken to various appropriate places, that is to say to locations directly associated with members of the languages they belonged to. According to the river people who took the decision to move them, these objects would have been stolen by the desert people and used in their ceremonies to make them boss of the river country, if they had not done so. I was given several similar
examples of sacred objects being moved to a different location or simply hidden, to stop the desert people appropriating the country:

My brother and mefella we got them sticks for our country. They’re somewhere in a proper place in that Leopold Range, we don’t look them anymore and we can’t take him out too, you know. Well, I tell you what, them desert people, they’re mean alright, they might steal them sticks for us fella and give him away to other desert mob. Then you proper finish, you bin losin your country for good, no sticks, no country. Well, we don’t use them now, but we still got them sticks for us fella (Ralphie).

A further sign of the river people’s desire to maintain a ritual autonomy from the desert people was clear in initiation ceremonies. Circumcision ceremonies for river people were different from those for desert people; they were performed on distinct ceremonial grounds and involved different participants. For example, when a young Bunuba boy and a young Gooniyandi boy had reached the required age for circumcision, the ritual took place at the river people’s ceremonial ground next to the old crossing and Bunuba, Gooniyandi, Nyikina, Kija as well as Jaru were involved in the ceremony. By contrast, Walmajarri circumcision ceremonies were held behind Kurnangki village, and Walmajarri and Wangkajunga people participated in the ritual. Although, these initiation ceremonies were held by different groups and in distinct places, desert people required the approval of the Bunuba to hold theirs, because the Bunuba were the group which ‘owns the country’ and therefore had the final say as to whether a ritual could be held in the area. This represented an extra chance for river people, and particularly for the Bunuba, to emphasize their links to the country and to resist ritual predominance from desert people. It was pointed out to me on one occasion in which the river people’s ceremonial ground was threatened that the Bunuba people had reacted strongly and were extremely distressed when the prospect of that particular site being destroyed soon was made known to them.

In mid-1986 the Fitzroy Crossing Progress Association (FCPA) had planned, without consulting any local Aboriginal groups or organisations, to build a ‘go-kart-track’ next to the old crossing, right on the river people’s ceremonial ground. When the project was brought to their knowledge, the Junjuwa people insisted that I map and record the site in order to show its significance to the FCPA people. Three Bunuba men accompanied me to the old crossing and told me about their forefathers, Bunuba, Gooniyandi and some Kija who were circumcised on this site. They described the various parts of the ceremonial ground and pointed out to me the importance of some trees in the area, which are seen as the guardians of the site and should not be cut or the site itself would lose a lot of its significance. They insisted that I record everything because they wanted to show the non-Aboriginals from the town that the project could not take place and should be abandoned as soon as possible. Luckily, this is what happened once the importance of the place had been
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pointed out to the FCPA council. But, before we left the ceremonial ground one of the three men summed up the situation:

This is the place now, you gotta to get everything on paper. I tell you again: our father and grandfather, big mob, all them bin cut right here now. This is the place for river people where we make them boys men properly, us we do it on our own, between us mob all river people, not like them desert mob, them askin other people to cut them boys this is no good. Now look, we bin losin a lot: country, people, places, too much we bin losin, but if we gonna lose this one place too, we gonna be nothin, we gonna have no place to cut them boys and them desert mob them gonna cut us boys their way. We can't lose him that place, if we lose him us river people we gonna be finish, for good we gonna be finish (Colin).

When Colin mentioned that desert people ask other people to circumcise their teenagers he meant that other groups of desert people (from outside the Fitzroy Valley) acted as ritual leaders during initiation ceremonies for Walmajarri and Wangkajunga boys. In contrast, the river people also relied on other groups for the same purpose, but these groups were from places within the Fitzroy Valley, that is to say, from the river country people. Colin stressed that river people could not lose that particular site otherwise they would lose everything (control over circumcision ceremonies). I clearly recall how determined he was as long as the ceremonial ground was under threat: it was clear that one of the last elements of river people's cultural distinctiveness was about to be taken away from them and neither he nor the other river people's ritual leaders could accept the idea.

6.3 linguistic divisions within Junjuwa

The second form of 'mob' to which people referred was defined in terms of linguistic differences. These 'mobs' corresponded to the linguistic units in the broader sense of the term, that is to say, for example, all the people identified as Bunuba, whether or not they could speak the language, were from the Bunuba mob. People within the same linguistic unit identified variations that existed within Bunuba language and formed dialects which were spoken by various sub-groups of Bunuba. Similar differences were identified for other languages which all seemed to have local variations (Walmajarri, Wangkajunga, Gooniyandi), but these differences were not taken into account when people referred to one linguistic unit as a group. As far as the strength and the influence of a language unit were concerned, it was again the number of people affiliated to one particular language that was determinant. Smaller linguistic units such as Kija (16 people), Jaru (17 people) and Nyikina (five people), although they were identified as separate and distinct mobs, as far as grouping according to linguistic differences was concerned, did not have much influence within Junjuwa, let alone Ngarinyin and Warlpiri (one person each). The
stronger and more influential linguistic units were the larger ones: Walmajarri (166 people), Bunuba (150 people), Wangkajunga (66 people) and Gooniyandi (31 people), with the predominant role within Junjuwa for the two former languages. During the entire period I spent in Fitzroy Crossing there were numerous arguments between Bunuba and Walmajarri and relationships between them were extremely tense at times. What initially caused these constant disagreements was Junjuwa community itself: it is located on Bunuba land, but because of the local historical events, Bunuba were always a minority in Junjuwa. It was only since July 1985, when about one hundred Walmajarri people left Junjuwa and moved into Kurnangki village, that the number of Walmajarri and Bunuba become almost balanced. Since that time there was a definite move by some Bunuba men, mainly those who were not intermarried with the Walmajarri and had limited contacts with them, to assert Bunuba control over Junjuwa council. They acknowledged that the Walmajarri had been allowed to settle in Bunuba country several decades ago, but for them this was only a temporary agreement and now that Walmajarri had opportunities to 'start places on their own in their own country', the feeling was that they all should leave Junjuwa:

I tell you straight my boy, these Walmajarri people they should go now. You know, my grandfather, poor bugger he passed away long time ago, well he was proper king for us Bunuba mob. He bin tellin them Walmajarri people, yeah alright, you fella can camp and sit down in Bunuba country, this side of the river, but you fella gonna listen us Bunuba people, we boss for that country. He was proper good fella mine grandfather, you know them Walmajarri people he bin give them a home, poor fella, no more country they bin havin, them Gardiya [=European] him bin chasin them and pushin them this side of the river. They sit down in Bunuba country alright, quiet fella them old fella too. But now look, they're running wild, just like that bullock in the bush, wild one. Them Walmajarri don't listen us anymore, them bin too much of them fella too, everywhere all over the place. Now they gotta their own place too: Noonkanbah, Millidigidee, Warrimbah, even Kurnangki right in Bunuba country for them fella too. Well, I respect them old fella them can stay but all them young ones them should go now, leave the place, there are no more trouble with Gardiya [=European] now, well they should go back to their country (Ned).

There are several interesting points made by Ned related to the main complaints that Bunuba addressed regularly to Walmajarri. Firstly, there is little doubt that there was a feeling of great frustration amongst Bunuba as a result of several Walmajarri groups getting villages on their own whereas they themselves still had to co-reside with other language groups in their own country. Secondly, there were still Walmajarri visitors coming to Junjuwa in increasing numbers without prior approval from the Bunuba people. Finally, some ritual activities had been held by Walmajarri on Bunuba land without any notifications to the Bunuba ritual leaders. All these elements combined with others (such as the nomination of the first non-Bunuba chairman in November 1985) and the subsequent appointment as community advisor of a former UAM
As a result Bunuba always blamed Walmajarri for all Junjuwa's problems:

- Walmajarri councillors were accused of being either too slack with young Walmajarri men or too tough with young Bunuba men

- Walmajarri women were said to cause domestic disputes between Junjuwa married couples or to seduce single Bunuba men for whom Bunuba spouses had already been chosen

- Card games in the Walmajarri side attracted many Walmajarri from other communities who subsequently caused a nuisance in Junjuwa

- Young Walmajarri men were accused of verbal abuse of older Bunuba men as well as of bringing alcohol into Junjuwa

- Walmajarri 'gangs' were said to incite Bunuba youths to fights and violence

This list could go on for ever, as in everyday life most accusations were formulated by Bunuba against Walmajarri. Some Bunuba, mostly those who had married Walmajarri-speaking wives or husbands or who had close kin who had, were more moderate in their accusations and attempted, in periods of crisis between the two sides, to channel the anger and frustration of the other Bunuba towards the Wangkajungaw:

Them Walmajarri people, they're alright, they're my mob too, I bin married one of them Walmajarri girls. They listen to us, they're quiet. But look this side, in the Wangkajungaw row, it's a different story altogether, you know them mob, they're proper bastards, they want to boss us now. Them old Wangkajungaw boss scared us young fella, and them Wangkajungaw young fella them bin bringin grog every night, big mob too them fella bin bringin. Well I reckon they should all go back to their country, Christmas creek way, more better for us Bunuba (Arthur).

Nevertheless, these attempts did not ease the tension that existed between Bunuba and Walmajarri, and the situation deteriorated badly at some stages. I have already presented a case study in Chapter 5 in which a Walmajarri man had been accused of the murder of a Bunuba man, but many other similar incidents occurred. For example, in September and October 1986, what I then called 'the Bunuba coup' took place. A group of young Bunuba men stirred up the Bunuba people against all the Walmajarri on the basis that they were 'running' Junjuwa. During an informal meeting with older Bunuba men, the leader of the 'coup' repeatedly attempted to win their support:
Figure 3

Kin connections in the Walmajarri section
Junjuwa Village 1986

Legend:
- Numbers indicate house numbers.
- Equals indicates marriage.
- Indicates a classificatory relation.
- Indicates deceased persons.

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Groupings within Junjuwa

Oscar: What are you?

Ralphie: Bunuba!

Oscar: Me too! What land is that land! (he pointed to the ground)

Ralphie: Bunuba!

Oscar: Alright, Who makes the rules here?

Ralphie: ...... (no answer, but he obviously knew to whom Oscar was referring)

Oscar: Well we have to take them over right now and get rid of the Walmajarri and the Mission people too.

The whole purpose of this coup was to vote in the coup's leader as chairman and to sack the current community adviser. The young Bunuba men almost succeeded in their attempt, as the coup's leader missed the chairman's position by only a few votes. Although he was appointed as vice-chairman because he came second, he was later dismissed and subsequently left Fitzroy Crossing. His constant challenges to the Walmajarri people and the chairman had gone too far and gradually the Bunuba withdrew the support that had allowed him to reach the vice-chairman's position. He found himself isolated and fell into disgrace when he challenged the leaders of his own language group for their lack of commitment to his cause.

The Walmajarri also had plenty to say against the Bunuba. Basically, Walmajarri people denied they had taken over the Bunuba people by controlling Junjuwa, because the Bunuba said they were still listening to them and they were still the 'boss' of the country. In turn, Walmajarri accused the Bunuba of having too many privileges (use of community vehicles, employment within Junjuwa, easier access to community loans), and argued that although the Bunuba were the boss of the country it should not give them all these advantages.

These criticisms were addressed mainly to the younger Bunuba men and women, most of whom were not involved in any ritual activities. Ritual activities were still considered by the Walmajarri as the basis of leadership within local Aboriginal groups, but nevertheless these young Bunuba openly challenged the Walmajarri leaders (swearing, alcohol brought into Junjuwa, failure to observe some kinship rules and obligations towards relatives). Therefore the older Bunuba were accused either of weakness or of complicity with the younger ones. Both attitudes reinforced the Walmajarri's negative feelings towards the Bunuba, to the point where on many occasions Junjuwa was more like two distinct communities rather than a single one. For example, card games were organised by the Bunuba on their own side and vice versa for the Walmajarri, although people from different linguistic units did gamble together outside Junjuwa. Similarly, people on the Bunuba side ignored fights as long as they involved only Walmajarri people and were contained on the
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Walmajarri side. Further, I recorded several cases in which injured or sick people who needed urgent treatment at the hospital, had either to walk or to be taken by a police patrol to the hospital if no vehicles were available from among their own side (either Bunuba or Walmajarri), even though transport facilities were available on the other side. Furthermore, during the dry season, the community truck was used either by Bunuba people for firewood collection for their side or by the Walmajarri for the same purpose. In one instance, the community adviser, in order to reduce fuel costs and to make the truck available for other duties, tried to organise a trip with people from both sides. All those who asked to take part in that trip found good excuses to decline the offer, when usually there was never enough room in the truck to take all those who were willing to go for a 'ride'. This particular trip was eventually cancelled and the following day two separate trips were organised as usual.

One of the main advantages for the Walmajarri was that in terms of sheer numbers they had the majority in the context of the town as a whole. There were Walmajarri people in all the town based communities as well as in the surrounding area, and the fact that they were a majority gave them an edge in several situations. As a result, if Bunuba and Walmajarri were in conflict over any issues, the Bunuba always limited the extent of the dispute to avoid an open conflict between all members of the two linguistic groups (Bunuba vs Walmajarri) which they were bound to lose.

The fact that the two main linguistic groups were almost constantly opposed resulted in advantages of all kinds made available only to them. For example, two cars were allocated for emergencies at night on the following basis: one for the Bunuba, the other for the Walmajarri. Similarly, mob opportunities within the community were firstly offered to Bunuba or Walmajarri. Consequently, people from smaller but significant groups like the Wangkajungu had to struggle to be recognised, and blamed the two larger linguistic units for their lower status in Junjuwa:

This side we got nothin, us Wangkajungu we got nothin. Them side (she pointed towards the Bunuba and Walmajarri sections), they got plenty: motokar, firewood, tucker, everything. Here we got nothin, only us old people, big mob of widow and oldwomen in that camp. Them Bunuba mob him don't look after us properly, Walmajarri all the same. All them young fella (Walmajarri and Bunuba), him do nothin but drinkin, him come at night too, him bin scare them oldwomen them drunk fella him bin makin humbug for old people tucker and money. Them Bunuba and Walmajarri boss them bin say nothin, too slack them mob, him don't think for us mob, him think for them mob that's all. This is no good, we gonna leave him that place one day (Amy).

The main problem for the Wangkajungu, as pointed out by Amy, was that they were mainly elderly women, either widows or separated from their husband and school age children. There were only four Wangkajungu men who lived permanently in their section of Junjuwa but they were frequently out of
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town, visiting other Wangkajunga communities in the Christmas creek area. The women's older children were living in these communities, usually with their father's families, while the women stayed in Fitzroy to take advantage of facilities available in town that did not exist at Christmas creek (supermarket, hospital, church, adult education centre). Nevertheless, the Wangkajunga formed a distinct unit and affirmed their identity as well as their differences towards both the Bunuba and the Walmajarri.

The situation was different for the Gooniyandi. Although they had a different linguistic identity which was recognised by others, they associated themselves very closely with the Bunuba even though some Gooniyandi had married Walmajarri. The Gooniyandi in Junjuwa were not a coherent group on the basis of the language distinction only, possibly because of their small numbers (31 people) but more likely as a result of their merging into a larger linguistic unit.

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**FIGURE 4**

Kin Connections in the Wangkajunga section
Junjuwa Village 1986

Kinship connections were more diverse and more cohesive within each of the three sections of Junjuwa than they were at the community level. They contributed to consolidate grouping at the level of language units and enable members of lesser represented languages to be incorporated into larger ones. This appears in Figures 2, 3 and 4 as well as the main difference that existed between the three main languages: Bunuba people's kin connections were limited to Junjuwa whereas both Walmajarri and Wangkajunga's kin connections were directed outside the community.

Some of the living individuals on Figures 2 and 4, have no house numbers because they did not live at Junjuwa on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, they were all considered members of Junjuwa community, because they had been involved in the setting up of the community, had lived within Junjuwa for several years, and had moved out of Junjuwa only recently. The numbers of
people included in genealogies in Figures 2-4 do not match the population figures I gave earlier for Junjuwa; There are two main reasons for this discrepancy; first, the Figures include adult persons only; second, I focus on kin connections that existed between houses' occupants within one section of the village, therefore not all occupants of each house appear on the Figures.

6.4 Sub-groups within linguistic units

The third kind of grouping was based on the sub-division of the language on any of three main criteria:

- in terms of 'country' of origin: that is to say where members of a sub-group of a particular linguistic unit had a close association (through birth, through descent, through initiation), with a specific part of the area occupied or perceived as belonging to the linguistic unit

- according to the various waves of migration: in the case of sub-groups of only a few individuals who had lived together prior to the their migration.

- as a result of employment on the same cattle station: long periods of co-residence on the same cattle station(s) formed coherent and distinct sub-groups. Members of these subgroups were usually of mixed linguistic and cultural backgrounds and had developed close links with one or several areas within the cattle-station on which they co-resided.

Sub-group identity was put forward either when people wished to distinguish themselves as a sub-group from other sub-groups within the same language or when there was a need for people, as in the case of people from a smaller linguistic unit, to assert their identity with a more coherent and better recognised form of grouping. These sub-groups represented at times internally marked divisions that split the coherence of one linguistic unit (cf 'Bunuba coup' initiated by a sub-group of Bunuba). Tensions existed between sub-groups and in public discourse these were expressed similarly to those mentioned earlier between linguistic units. Bunuba people argued that although they were all from a distinct language unit, there were differences between them because in the past they lived in smaller groups and in different locations, and only recent historical events had brought them permanently together:

You see us Bunuba people from Junjuwa, we're not one mob properly. Really we are four mob from three place: Brooking, Oscar and Leopold country. Well, the Gardiya them bin closin that Oscar homestead, first one long time ago. Them Bunuba fella from Oscar now them bin go Old Leopold. Now again that manager, different
Groupings within Junjuwa

one, him bin finishin that Leopold place too. Poor fella this one my country too. Well him bin say "you all go Brooking way now, all you lot". All us Oscar and Leopold people we bin know that Brooking mob and them country little bit, you know for business and Law, all them thing. Then that citizen time came up, and all us Bunuba we bin comin to the UAM place, old camp Bunuba country that place too. Right, now all of us we bin sittin here in Junjuwa. But him no good, too much Bunuba people in here: humbug, humbug all the time we bin havin, too many relatives too, and all them young fella, we can’t make him quiet, too much young fella them don’t listen. I reckon us Leopold mob we gonna go to a proper place for us in Leopold country, more better that way, old way like in the early days all them four Bunuba mob bin sittin in their place properly, that’s the way alright (Colin).

Colin’s account is particularly interesting as it almost combines the three criteria that led to the formation of sub-groups. The older people from the four Bunuba groups were all born in different areas of Bunuba country which was then already occupied by white settlers. Therefore Colin did not mention the specific places with which each of the four groups were associated but linked each group with a cattle station on which people were born and worked. Oscar Range Station was abandoned in the mid-1920s, and later on in the 1940s the old Leopold homestead was relocated and Leopold Station purchased by the same company which owned Brooking Springs and Fairfield. Subsequently, the four Bunuba groups either co-resided on Brooking stations or moved from one of the three stations to another (Leopold, Brooking, Fairfield). But, for the Bunuba, the new location of the Leopold homestead was not in Leopold country anymore as it was a part of Brooking country, therefore although some Bunuba lived on Leopold station until 1971, they described this period as spent on Brooking country.

These four sub-groups were also based on kin networks: there were six distinct kin groups amongst Bunuba who resided in Junjuwa, four had intermarried in pairs and presented themselves as coherent groups whose members lived together for many years. It can be seen from Figure 5 that kin groups 1 and 2 were linked by marriage A, and that groups 3 and 4 by marriage B. Thus the four sub-groups within Bunuba language described by Colin were 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5, and 6. Later on these four sub-groups did intermarry among themselves and co-resided at Brooking Spring Station and later on at the mission reserve. Alliances between these sub-groups materialised in clusters of houses in the Bunuba section of Junjuwa, but members of these sub-groups differentiate between kin networks formed around a core of cognatic kin and those based on agnatic relations. I am aware that more inclusive regional groupings based on patrilineal relations to country at a lower level that of the four cognatic groups described above, existed among the Bunuba, but I do not have enough data on this type of grouping to discuss it in details. Figure 5 includes only a small proportion of the Bunuba living in Junjuwa because these people only were identified as members of the 4 sub-groups by my informants.
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Other Bunubas were either of mixed linguistic origin, or belonged to sub-groups whose most members lived outside Junjuwa.

In another account about sub-groups, Colin stated that his mob (one of the two sub-groups of Bunubas from Leopold Range) and the 'Oscar mob' were the only "real Bunubas in Junjuwa". His statement was based on two facts: first, none of the men of these two 'mobs' had married into another language; second, all the older people from these sub-group were of 'full' Bunubas descent (both their parents were Bunubas). Indeed, in the third Bunuba sub-group several men had married into other linguistic groups (including Walmajarri), and some of the older people were of mixed linguistic origin (Goonyandi/Bunuba, Kija/Bunuba, Nyikina/Bunuba). As a result, there were strong divergences between the Leopold and Oscar group on one side and the Brooking one on the other. For example, the leader of the latter, married to a Walmajarri woman, was often accused by people of the former of caring more for the Walmajarri than for his own people (Bunuba). There were numerous subjects of discord between Bunuba sub-groups; in fact, there were more frequent and deeper disagreements between them than between any other sub-group from other linguistic units. This was probably caused by the closeness in terms of country of origin, ritual activities and kinship links that existed amongst these sub-groups, despite all the differences emphasised by their members. The consequences of this closeness were that in their widest demand and activities members of the Bunuba sub-group competed with one another for similar things: leadership in the same ceremony, land excision within the same cattle station, fishing and foraging trips in the same area, and the same core of relatives to borrow food and money from. As a result, there was never any cooperation between them and the actions initiated by one sub-group were rarely supported by the others, for it would have given the former an edge over them. The competition was so strong that Bunuba sub-groups rarely achieved anything either at the community or at the town level. For example, the first West Kimberley dance and music festival was organised in Broome in late 1986, in which Junjuwa community had elected to participate. A community bus was allocated to the Bunuba for the trip; only two Bunuba men held the required licence to drive a bus: Colin and Arthur, leaders of two distinct Bunuba sub-groups. Colin agreed to drive the bus if one of his brothers and two other men from his sub-group were part of the trip. All the remaining seats had already been allocated because the trip had been planned long in advance and the participants had registered well ahead of the departure day. Arthur for his part said that he was happy to let Colin drive if Arthur's oldest son, his daughter's husband and another male relative went in place of Colin's relatives. Each leader refused to take a firm decision one way or another. Eventually they both declined to drive the bus which was thus allocated to Walmajarri people who were in need of transport facilities but to whom the use of the bus had been denied on the basis that the Bunuba had a priority with community's vehicles.
Groupings within Junjuwa

Legend:
Numbers on the top of each kin group refer to the text
= signs indicate where the kin groups intermarried
Numbers under or by individuals are the house numbers in which people lived

deceased persons

FIGURE 5
Bunuba kin groups
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FIGURE 6

Figure 6a
Walmajarri kin groups

Figure 6b
Wangkajunga kin groups

Legend:
Numbers on the top of each kin group refer to the text
= signs indicate where the kin groups intermarried
Numbers under or by individuals are the house numbers in which people lived
? indicates a classificatory relation
dead deceased persons
Groupings within Junjuwa

Walmajarri distinguished many sub-groups within their language. The distinctions were not based on the same criteria that defined Bunubia sub-groups, each of which has a separate identity and estate. Walmajarri who lived in Junjuwa originated from a residue of kin groups that had scattered over a wide area (Fitzroy Valley and beyond). These kin groups were not formed around a relatively well defined cognatic core of kin but privileged birth place (country of origin). Even though there were four distinct kin groups I identified amongst Walmajarri from Junjuwa (see Figure 6, 6a), they did not constitute sub-groups per se but reflected patterns of migration into the area (pairs(s) of siblings). Growing up together on the same station is in fact the criterion that under-writes Walmajarri co-resident kin groups: people perceived and defined themselves as Cherrabun, Noonkanbah or Gogo 'countrymen', although these places were far away from their original birth places. Sometimes it happened that people were born in the same country and grew up together on the same station(s), in which case they were likely to form a more cohesive sub-group (Kurlku).

Several white employees from MWW and DCS, who had had a long working experience with both Walmajarri and Bunubia sub-groups, agreed on the fact that amongst the former there was a greater sentiment of solidarity not only within each sub-group but between them, whereas the latter lacked both. This different attitude may well have been reinforced by the fact that since the early 1980s several sub-groups of Walmajarri had been granted excision on cattle stations or leases on vacant crown land, simply because the areas to which they wished to move were located in poor cattle country and therefore unoccupied. By contrast, the Bunubia country is probably the richest in the West Kimberley and consequently cattle stations' managers and owners have so far refused all applications for excision from Bunubia sub-groups.

This difference in attitude between Bunubia and Walmajarri can be interpreted as resulting from a difference in social organisation between them. Bunubia social organisation is centred around cognatic descent groups, and alliances between them are not sufficient to give someone any rights over the 'country' of the group they have married into\(^{11}\). By contrast the Walmajarri social organisation is inclusive, like that of many desert groups (Myers 1986:194); it lacks descent groups and the terminology is different from that used by the Bunubia. The dynamic of the Walmajarri social organisation is the expansion of the notion of relatedness that in turn makes possible negotiations of country boundaries on the claim of a shared identity, this is made possible through bilateral filiation rather than by marriage per se. The Walmajarri system sought to widen its network through inclusion whereas Bunubia privileged the exclusiveness of the descent groups\(^ {12}\).

The Walmajarri sub-groups shared one element in common: they all had kin in more then one community either, in Fitzroy Crossing or in the Fitzroy valley. Thus the other advantage available to Walmajarri sub-groups was that in the case of serious disputes between sub-groups, they always had the
opportunity to move to another community to join other relatives, until things
eased up. Indeed, the constant movement of people in and out of Junjuwa often
prevented conflicting situations between Walmajarri sub-groups getting out of
hand so that at the community level they offered a more harmonious image and
achieved their goals more easily than the Bunuba. Nevertheless, conflicts did
occur between Walmajarri sub-groups within Junjuwa, mainly caused by alcohol
related problems and extramarital affairs. For example, members from one sub-
group of Walmajarri had had enough of living in Junjuwa and they decided to
live 'on their own' elsewhere in town. They obtained a sub-lease from Junjuwa,
for the Windmill reserve, largely because of the support they received from
other Walmajarri sub-groups when the case was discussed at one Junjuwa
Council meeting. This Walmajarri sub-group was known as Kurlku and had
members living in four different communities (Junjuwa, Kurnangki, Kajina,
Windmill Reserve) although the majority were Junjuwa residents. This is how
one of Kurlku's leaders explained the decision to move:

In Junjuwa we bin havin too much trouble: grog, gidjigara, biggest
fights all the lot. Us Kurku people we're proper strong, last pension
night I bin knockin down two fella, him bin comin night time longa
my camp, drunk one too them two fella, him never sing out nothin
him bin walkin straight away. Well, I knock him down them two
fella. Now we bin havin big trouble with them father and uncle for
them two fella. No good, too much humbug [=trouble] we bin havin
now with that argument. I bin tellin straight that old man, him bin
drunk too "look out uncle I gonna spear you in the leg", poor fella
him my uncle too. Well we bin tellin them mob to be quiet, but he
can't listen us them people, too much mob in here too much people
from different place, this is no good. Well, we finish with that place
now, we bin leavin that Junjuwa place now, you know might be one
night him bin comin longa my camp and him bin killin me too, we
can't stay in here too much humbug, too much mob. In my mob, they
listen alright, in Junjuwa him can't listen all them mob, too much
people, too much mob, proper no good (James).

What seemed to have decided the Kurlku people to move was not so
much the alcohol related disturbances, since once they moved to Mindi Rardi
they kept having similar problems, but rather a growing conflict between two
Walmajarri sub-groups. Once the cycle: offence / fight / retaliation, had
started between the two sub-groups, people were very distressed, as in James' 
case, because such conflicts led to fights between close relatives (in this case
involving a mother's brother), threatened sub-group coherence and could easily
result in a death which would bring even further conflict. In the case example,
James and the other Kurlku people elected to re-affirm sub-group solidarity by
moving elsewhere on the basis of their sub-group structure rather than
jeopardize the unity of the entire Walmajarri group and possibly Junjuwa's too,
through a conflict that opposed them to another sub-group.

Sub-group divisions within the Wangkajunga were similar to those within
the Walmajarri (see Figure 6, 6b). Here again the sub-groups were oriented
toward the outside rather than within the community. Wangkajunga people had
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links over an even wider area than the Walmajarri. For example a Wangkajunga man described his sub-group as formed by people from Jigalong, Billiluna and Balgo (see Map 8 for the location of all 'countries' associated with Junjuwa sub-groups). The Wangkajunga who lived in Junjuwa had either come to the Fitzroy Valley through Christmas creek in the late 1920s or arrived at the UAM reserve in the mid 1960s after having spent a short period on stations. In the first category were three brothers who had been captured by the native police on Bohemia Downs Station. The oldest brother was about ten years old at the time and the youngest a few months old. Their parents belonged to a group that lived in the vicinity of the Canning Stock road west of Billiluna, but themselves never lived in this country, which is now 'lost', according to one of them:

My country him finished, all the people gone, passed away, us we know nothin, him got nothin left that country of mine, no people nothin, only wild dogs he got now, properly finished that place (Henry).

These people had developed links with the country in the Christmas Creek area, which was regularly visited by various Wangkajunga sub-groups based in Junjuwa. The sub-groups of the second category had strong associations with people and places far away from the Fitzroy Valley and sub-group activities were essentially directed towards these places. Even though these people did not participate actively in community life and were frequently absent from Junjuwa, they were still highly respected within the community mainly because of their involvement in ritual activities which Fitzroy Crossing's Aboriginal people considered highly secret and dangerous. For example, a Bunuba sub-group leader wanted to 'start' a Bunuba corroboree but could not do so because a leader from a Wangkajunga sub-group would not allow the dancers involved in the rituals to wear head-decorations (See Chapter Nine). This opposition to his corroboree forced the Bunuba leader to engage in a long and delicate negotiation process with Wangkajunga ceremonial leaders in order to get their support. Once again a conflict was avoided between sub-groups, this time from different linguistic units. Consequently, it seems right to argue that all sub-groups were given recognition within Junjuwa regardless of their linguistic affiliation, and that the sub-groups played an important part in community life.

Sub-groups of mixed linguistic origin for which shared working experience was the criterion of identification, and their association with a particular area of a cattle station, were also given recognition in Junjuwa. There were only a few of this kind of sub-group and their members shared one thing in common: they had cut off most of the links they had with other sub-groups of their own linguistic group with which they were previously associated, either on their own initiative (personal choice) or because of particular circumstances (descent, place of birth, initiation). For example, Robin, a Bunuba, married Lucy, a Gooniyandi associated with a sub-group of people of mixed linguistic origin that
Chapter Six

had worked on Brooking Springs station for more than a decade. Robin was born on Leopold station and remained there until his late teens. His father had been a Wangkajungka who died when Robin was still a baby. Robin had been circumcised by members of a Bunuba sub-group, his mother’s linguistic unit, from the Brooking Spring area, and had never been to his father’s country. Later on he married Lucy, also of mixed linguistic descent (father Kija, mother Gooniyandi), who was from a sub-group from the Halls Creek area. They had a lot of trouble because according to the sub-section system she was his niece (his sister’s daughter) and therefore their marriage was considered as ‘wrong’; consequently, they had to stay away from their respective sub-groups from Old Leopold and Halls Creek. The couple went to Brooking Springs where they stayed until they moved to Junjuwa in the late 1970s. Robin did not take part in any ritual activities while I was in Junjuwa, neither with the Bunuba nor with the Wangkajungka. He claimed to be a Bunuba and was recognised as such because his mother was Bunuba and he was initiated by a Bunuba sub-group in Bunuba country, but he was not associated with any particular Bunuba sub-group. The Wangkajungka people attempted many times to involve him in ritual activities associated with his father’s country to which, in their view, he belonged, but Robin had rejected all these attempts because he feared some retaliation as he had not married the Wangkajungka woman promised to him. Robin was caught in a profound dilemma which he seemed to have partially overcome by cutting all the links with both the Bunuba and the Wangkajungka. For example, the older of his two sons was circumcised at Derby hospital because several distinct sub-groups disputed the right to ‘cut’ the boy (from Robin’s mother’s side, his father’s side but also from Lucy’s parents’ side). Robin intended to do exactly the same thing with his youngest son. I lived in Robin and Lucy’s house during my first field trip to Fitzroy Crossing and many times Robin exposed his situation with distress:

You see, I gotta no country, some fella say I belong this way (he pointed to Leopold), some fella say I belong that way (he pointed to Christmas creek). Well, I reckon I belong Brooking Spring way like them all mixed people who bin workin on that place same like us Lucy and my mob. Same stories with my boys, all them mob, this way, that way and Lucy way, they bin wantin to cut them boys of mine. Well, Lucy and I we bin takin the old one to hospital, more better less humbug. You know if you pick up the wrong mob to cut your boy you end up in all sorts of trouble and your boy too, he could die poor fella. I reckon I’m gonna do the same with the second boy of mine, more better for him too. You see when you’re a mixed people, I reckon you have to go your own way, if you gonna go too much father way or too much mother you gonna get too much trouble that’s all (Robin).

Not all members of sub-groups of mixed linguistic origin were as marginal as Robin, but all seemed to alternate their association from one sub-group to another (either between their parent’s sub-groups or between theirs and their spouse’s one) whenever the pressure was too strong from one side or the other. The sub-groups of mixed linguistic origin were characterised by higher levels of fluidity compared with those of a single linguistic origin. They did not play an
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important part in the running of Junjuwa but they have probably contributed to maintaining links between other sub-groups and linguistic units.15

6.5 Conclusion

In this Chapter I have presented the different kinds of groupings that people distinguished within Junjuwa. I have firstly described the larger ones, defined according to cultural criteria, then presented groupings based on linguistic units and finally shown that smaller units existed, defined according to historical circumstances. I have given many examples of how people expressed their belonging to each type of grouping as well as how they differentiated themselves from other groupings. The differences were part of a public discourse in which it was argued that people were different today because they were different in the past (culturally, linguistically, geographically, residentially). People from Junjuwa argued that these differences had been maintained, despite the fact that all of them were 'mixed' and had many things in common (lifestyle, living conditions, use of Kriol, similar initiation ceremonies). Kinship was a further cohesive element on which people drew to sustain each form of groupings discussed in this Chapter, depending on which kin connection people privileged each time.
MAP 8
'Countries' of origin of all sub-groups that lived in Junjuwa (approximate location)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GREAT SANDY DESERT

Derby

Broome

Halls Creek

Wadjemup

Kumunurra