

DUAL DEPENDENCE AND SEPIK LABOUR MIGRATION

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Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, this thesis is the result of my own research and analysis.

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ABSTRACT

Migration in Papua New Guinea has developed, over the past 100 years, primarily as a consequence of the migrant labour system (MLS). The central argument of this thesis is that a resulting migrant strategy of *dual dependence* has continued to affect contemporary migration patterns, promoting the emergence of a peasantry and hindering greatly the formation of a permanent urban proletariat.

The thesis argues from the outset that an understanding of internal migration in any Third World country requires an appreciation of the historical-structural setting; and that, from this perspective, approaches to migration which emphasise the role of the individual as decision-maker have a number of shortcomings.

The MLS, beginning in German New Guinea in the 1880s, operated within a specific set of legal, political and social conditions. The colonial state, through the MLS, sought to develop among male workers a *temporary* dependence on the wage economy, while at the same time it required the workers and their families to maintain a continuing long-term dependence on the village subsistence economy. Thus the migrant worker and his family, through their physical separation, were forced to cultivate a *dual dependence* on two economies.

After the second World War, the MLS, it is argued in Chapter Three, remained a dominant influence on both 'contract' and 'casual' workers. This involved a continuing separation of most



workers from their families: for at least two decades after 1945 the migrant group was dominated by single men under the age of 30, engaged in a pattern of circular migration.

From the early 1960s, and notably after self-government in 1973, changing political, economic and social conditions led to the growth of towns and to the need for a more educated and stable urban workforce. By the early 1970s many wage earners' families were coming to town to take up long-term residence. The need for migrants to maintain a short-term dependence has become much less evident, but the question remains whether migrants still retain a long-term dependence on the peasant economy.

The Sepik region is identified in Chapter Four as, historically, a major source of migrants. The effect of the colonial economy and the MLS on the spatial distribution of Sepik migrants is traced and evaluated. The historical background to migration from two groups of villages within the East Sepik Province is examined in Chapter Five. Labour migration was a key mechanism by which isolated villages were drawn into a peasant economy linked with international markets. An important feature of the peasant economy is the retention of non-convertible clan ownership of the land and its corollary, the retention of landrights by absentees.

The degree of commitment of East Sepik migrants to urban residence in 1973-74 is assessed in Chapter Six. From the evidence presented it is argued that a long-term dependence on the peasant economy remains necessary for most urban migrants. Nevertheless, there are definite signs of a small, permanent urban proletariat emerging.

These trends are complemented by a comparison of the migration profiles of the two sets of East Sepik study villages. Patterns of both circular and permanent migration are identified and explained (Chapter Seven). The continuation of a strategy of *dual dependence* is evident from the high level of return migration among those over 35 years of age, in the significant female bias in the sex ratio of the resident village population and in the greater tendency for unmarried men to migrate. The strategy is also evident at household level. The population pressure and limited resource endowment of the Sepik river villages appears, however, to encourage permanent outmigration.

The final question, addressed in Chapter Eight, concerns the costs and benefits of migration to the rural economy. Limited economic and social benefits have accrued to a small group of former migrants. But for the rural economy as a whole the conclusion is that migration, beginning and to a large extent continuing within a framework of *dual dependence*, has contributed greatly to the underdevelopment of labour-exporting areas such as the Sepik region.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Asian Development Bank
ADO	Assistant District Officer
AGS	Allied Geographical Section
ANGAU	Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit
ANU	Australian National University
ANZAAS	Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
BGD	Bulolo Gold Dredging Ltd
CD	Census Division
CNGT	Commonwealth New Guinea Timbers Ltd
IASER	Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
K	Kina
MLS	Migrant Labour System
NGAR	New Guinea, Annual Report
NGG	New Guinea Goldfields Ltd
NHC	National Housing Commission
PAR	Papua, Annual Report
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RSPacS	Research School of Pacific Studies
SPCA	Sepik Producers Cooperative Association
UHS	Urban Household Survey
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea

* * *

1 Kina = \$A1.25 (April 1979)

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Major changes in the designation of administrative units took place after Independence in September 1975. District became Province, Subdistrict became District and Patrol Post became Subdistrict. Bougainville District also changed its name to the North Solomons Province.

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CHAPTER ONEAPPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THIRD WORLD INTERNAL MIGRATION:
A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Migration is a dramatic indicator of the economic and social changes taking place in the Third World. Within any country, the full significance of migration cannot be understood without substantial reference to the forces of economic and social change, operating over time. It is the relationship between these changes and internal migration in one country, Papua New Guinea, that is the subject of this thesis.

Internal migration and the transformation of Papua New Guinea's economy and society have been inextricably linked since the advent of colonialism in the late nineteenth century. Migrant labour was the initial mechanism through which isolated subsistence economies were drawn into a wider economic system (Rowley 1972:93). The flow of migrants continues to be an important linkage between an economy based on subsistence agriculture and a wage labour economy. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the changing relationship of migrants to both of these economies and to examine whether the changes, introduced by colonialism, have divorced rural villagers from their means of production, creating a permanent wage-labour proletariat.

Migration is viewed in this thesis as a consequence of more fundamental changes taking place in Papua New Guinea and the Third World. Migration needs to be understood within the broader processes which led to the involvement of Papua New Guineans in the

capitalist economy. Questions of why, where and who migrates and whether it is temporary, long-term, circular or permanent migration can only be understood by explaining the relationship of those migrating, their household, village and region to, and the degree of involvement in, the introduced capitalist economy. The first and necessary task is therefore to provide an historical and theoretical understanding of the context within which migration takes place. This also necessitates asking questions about the structural arrangements within which migration takes place, the historical conditions under which they came into being and then to look at the political and economic conditions under which they are perpetuated or changed.

... one cannot study migration in isolation:
the total social structure has to be taken
into account and in particular (the) significant
transformations which this structure is
undergoing (Binsbergen and Meilink 1978:11).

This chapter argues the case for the importance of a broader understanding and appreciation of the context of migration by appraising critically the major theoretical approaches to migration in the Third World and Papua New Guinea. A number of inadequacies of existing approaches are identified and an alternative perspective is suggested. Details of data sources, their limitations and the definitions of migration employed in the thesis are also discussed.

The four social science disciplines which have shown a concern with internal migration in the Third World, economics, geography, sociology and demography, have each produced their own major theorists. Ravenstein (1885 and 1889) laid the foundations of the economists' approach to migration based on the assumption of an equilibrium existing between population and employment opportunities, maintained by the free movement of labour. The labour surplus model

of Lewis (1954), further elaborated by Fei and Ranis (1964), lies within the same tradition. The most recent and widely accepted economic model of internal migration within a Third World context is that of Todaro (1969 and 1976). Within the discipline of geography, Mabogunje (1970) and Zelinsky (1971) have put forward models of migration based essentially on an evolutionary view of society. The work of Mitchell (1959, 1969) in anthropology and sociology has emphasised mostly the group processes involved in Third World migration. Within demography, Caldwell's (1969) empirical study of migration in Ghana is based on a simple push-pull model of the forces affecting migration. These theoretical approaches have all contributed to the development of a general understanding of internal migration but they can be criticised for a number of shortcomings, as outlined in the discussion below.

Simple equilibrium theories: limited explanatory power

Ravenstein's (1885 and 1889) statement of the 'laws of migration' (cited in Lee 1969:283) covers the role of distance, migration by stages, streams and counterstreams of movers, urban-rural differences in the propensity to migrate and the dominance of economic motives. As such, they are broadly descriptive generalisations derived from nineteenth century England. Not surprisingly, they offer little help in explaining the causes of migration within the specific context and history of other countries. This genre of basically descriptive studies of the characteristics of the age, sex, marital status, education, origin and destination of migrants has continued (see for example the surveys of migration studies by Connell *et al.* 1976 and Simmons *et al.* 1977). Because of their descriptive nature and level of generalisation, most studies of this kind fail to offer a substantial

explanation which relates migration to the context within which it takes place.

In the same way, the rural push/urban pull model can be seen as little more than a tautology. Lee's (1969) plus and minus factors or Caldwell's (1969) pushes and pulls are often difficult to distinguish as either a push or a pull. Every factor labelled as a 'pull' to town can often be paralleled by an opposite 'push' factor from the rural area. As well, the model cannot explain why there may be low outmigration from poorer areas where economic push factors appear to be greater nor higher outmigration from more wealthy households within poor areas (Sabot 1979).

The fallacy of 'unlimited supplies of labour'

The labour surplus models of Lewis (1954) and Fei and Ranis (1964) suffer a number of shortcomings because of their debatable assumptions about the historical situation of most colonies concerning abundant supplies of surplus labour. They also give insufficient attention to the power relations involved in such activities related to migration as wage-fixing in a colonial situation. A common inference drawn from the economists' models was that economic growth could be achieved through the use of 'cheap' labour, which is paid a constant industrial wage only slightly higher than the value of the subsistence livelihood of the single worker.¹ A surplus could therefore be extracted from the traditional sector to fuel growth in the capitalist economy where the output per worker is much greater.

1 The Lewis formulation was suggested as the basis for determining rural wages in Papua New Guinea in two reports commissioned by the colonial authorities during the late 1960s (Isaac 1970:15, Cochrane 1970:46-47).

A questionable general assumption of Lewis' model is that in colonial territories there were plentiful supplies of labour available to work for a basically subsistence wage. Historical evidence from both Eastern Africa (Berg 1965, Arrighi 1973 and Sabot 1979:31-37) and Melanesia (Brookfield 1972:8,52,100) shows the opposite was the case in many colonial situations. Their studies illustrate the existence of a persistent shortage of labour for the capitalist sector at prevailing wage rates. The gradual development of alternative sources of cash income for some parts of the traditional sector, allowed subsistence farmers to acquire more money with less effort. In Papua New Guinea the colonial administration, backed by the European planters, insisted on maintaining wages at the subsistence level of a single worker until 1972. The result was an ever expanding labour frontier in search of 'unsophisticated' recruits willing to work for low wages.

The non-market forces operating to maintain low-wage levels, backed by direct and indirect coercive measures, were important features of the dominant-subordinate power relations existing between the colonial state and foreign economic interests on the one hand and the indigenous population on the other. Both Sabot (1979:37-42) and Arrighi (1973), in their historical investigation of the labour situation in what are today Tanzania and Zimbabwe, stress the role of the dominant economic interests in the colonial situation in holding down wage levels. Control over wages was also backed by force, head tax, land expropriation, strict regulation of indigenous cash cropping and the control of all market outlets against a background of extensive subsidisation of European enterprises (Arrighi 1973). The recognition of a constant shortage of labour at prevailing wage rates (see Chapter Two) provides an important starting point for an alternative

analysis of the historical factors affecting the flow of migrant labour - a theoretical perspective based on power and constraint rather than mobility (Newbury 1975a:247).

The Todaro model: a narrow focus on the individual

Todaro (1969, 1976) has offered a predictive model of rural-urban migration and urban unemployment. His model has achieved wide acceptance as an explanation of labour migration within development economics. A modified version of the model has been used to analyse migration in Papua New Guinea (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977).

The model aims to explain the rural-urban flow of employment-seeking migrants in terms of two variables: the rural-urban difference in income and the probability of finding employment in town. Based firmly on the premise of the individual as decision-maker, and assuming complete information, the model postulates that a potential migrant decides to move on the basis of the difference between the prevailing average rural income available to him and the level of the urban wage, together with the level of existing urban unemployment.

Against a background of high urban wages, Todaro considers it a rational decision for a migrant to move to town despite urban unemployment provided there is a significant rate of job turnover or that new jobs are being created. Rural-urban migration is therefore viewed as a symptom of the structural imbalance which exists between rural and urban areas, where high urban wages and capital intensive technology compete with considerable advantage against low rural incomes and labour-intensive methods.

Todaro's work provides an interesting model of policy variables, such as wage levels, amenable to short-term government manipulation, but neglects a number of the broader facets which constitute the context of migration. The underlying assumption of most equilibrium analyses, such as Todaro's, is that the existing strategy of rural-urban employment opportunities is already decided upon and seen as immutable. According to a critique by Samir Amin (1974:88-89), the movement of labour is envisaged in Todaro's model as a mechanism for maintaining the balance between immobile and often spatially concentrated factors of production such as capital and natural resources. But why does not labour remain stationary and capital become mobile? The effect of colonially induced economic development is to generate export production from a few concentrated locations. Consequently, the movement of labour is dictated by the location of the foreign enclaves. According to Amin, little or no attention is paid in Todaro's model to the ways in which the so-called rational choice of the individual of why, and where to migrate is heavily circumscribed by the existing pattern of economic development in the country. A study of migration should start from an appreciation of the spatial structures evident in a colonial economic system (Logan 1972).

Todaro does not explain why it is that only certain individuals (usually defined by specific sex, age and marital status characteristics) migrate and others do not. The model also fails to explain why there may be a low rate of migration from poor areas and from poor households. Finally, the model has nothing to say about why a number of people are return migrants, moving from the towns to

rural areas.¹ In Papua New Guinea where circular migration has been and continues to be the major pattern of movement, a more comprehensive explanation of the factors behind rural-urban migration is needed.

Criticism can also be levelled against economic models of labour migration, including Todaro's, for the assumption that the individual is a sole decision-maker making a rational choice (see Swindell 1979: 246-247, Garbett and Kapferer 1970). This criticism holds that individuals should be considered not as independent decision-makers, but be regarded as part of a wider context of social structures which surround the individual. In particular, the role of migration as one of the strategies for survival of the village household means that often the family and its needs, and not the individual, are crucial in the decision to migrate.

As well, the emphasis on the private returns to the individual leads the Todaro model to neglect the short-term and long-term impact of migration on both the source and destination areas. The causes and consequences of migration cannot be considered merely in terms of the private returns to an individual migrant.

In a recent critique of labour migration studies in sub-Saharan Africa, Swindell, a geographer, has pointed to the preoccupation with the individual of most conventional explanations offered:

... the social sciences have emerged by virtue of their discovery of social structures and regularities that confront the idea of individual man whether he perceives these structures or not. These fundamental structures largely determine man's social life, even if they do not enter into his conscious rational choices ... (Swindell 1979:249).

1 I am grateful to J. Clyde Mitchell (personal communication 1978) for making this point explicit to me.

Swindell argues that this preoccupation has produced only partial analyses of migration because the basic underpinning of the national economy by the global political economy is ignored. He (1979:255) suggests that labour migration should be seen as a continuing dialectic between the individual, his family and the local community on the one hand and the larger political economy on the other. The community and the individual are influenced by external factors operating at the macro-level which may be quite unknown to the individual migrant.

Does spatial change equal structural change? the assumption of evolution

The theories of Lewis (1954), Mabogunje (1970) and Zelinsky (1971) emphasised the spatial movement of population from rural to urban areas against the background of structural changes from smaller, mainly agricultural communities to larger, mainly non-agricultural communities. Mabogunje (1970) considers this movement to produce not only spatial changes in population distribution, but also changes in socio-economic structures. The latter involves, it is claimed, a permanent transformation of skills, attitudes, motivations and other behavioural patterns which cause the migrant to break completely from his rural background and to become entirely committed to an urban existence. Permanence of transfer is seen as the essence of the movement (Mabogunje 1970:2). Such a model is based on the unstated and questionable assumption that all economies are progressing along an evolutionary path towards high levels of industrialisation and urbanisation.

Similarly, Zelinsky's exposition of a hypothesis of mobility transition is based on the premise that an evolutionary path leads

from a pre-modern traditional entity through five stages to culminate in a 'super-advanced society'. The underlying assumption is that the demographic and mobility changes which have taken place in Western Europe and the United States will be mirrored in the underdeveloped regions: 'Such evidence as we have, indicates an irreversible progression of stages' (Zelinsky 1971:222).

This view of social change has been roundly dismissed by Bendix (1967), McGee (1971), Huntington (1972), Brookfield (1975:76-81) and others as one-dimensional and eurocentric. They have argued that the pattern of development in the Third World is essentially different from the historical evolution of present-day industrialised economies, precisely because Third World countries now operate in a world economy dominated by the industrial economies (McGee 1971:26, Brookfield 1975:201).

Zelinsky and Mabogunje do not anticipate a distinctly different mobility pattern in contemporary Third World societies. The mobility pattern is assumed to follow that of Western Europe in the nineteenth century. Against their assumption, it can be argued that the dependent nature of the Third World and the particular adaptation to this situation of many Third World economies and societies is likely to produce very different settings within which mobility takes place.

The response of many non-capitalist societies to the expansion of the capitalist world economy was not complete incorporation. In many cases, the non-capitalist mode of production was conserved, albeit in a subordinate and dependent relationship to the capitalist mode of production. Thus mobility in many Third World situations is not the movement of 'free' labour divorced from ownership of the means of

production, as it is in an entirely capitalist economy. It is the movement of many people who as in a peasant economy, retain some control over their own means of livelihood, the land.

Zelinsky envisages short-term, non-permanent circulation only as a concomitant of a more massive and permanent movement from rural to urban areas in the early transitional society.¹ The assumption is that an individual can have only one home, meaning that once migration has taken place, all important economic ties with the area of origin are severed. Such might be the case in a completely capitalist economy where current residence is within daily commuting distance of a person's workplace. But if it is accepted that some Third World countries have a substantially different structure of dual economies, then a migrant may well have two economic bases; first his current work residence in an urban area, mine or plantation and secondly, his rural village residence. He may have a home together with an economic source of livelihood in both locations. In this situation the pattern of internal migration may not just be 'circulatory', revolving on one focal point such as an urban residence. It could well be a long-term circular movement based on dual residence. Social scientists with a eurocentric perspective may well find it difficult to conceive of migrants maintaining simultaneously two households in two separate economies.

1 Ward (1980:20) has recently made a similar criticism: 'One effect of the different approaches in developed and developing areas seems to have been to create an impression that circular movement was a transitory characteristic of developing areas, which, in developed countries, was replaced by permanent one-way movement. This dichotomy, and the implied evolutionary sequence, seems to be an artifact of our imperfect data ...'.

Level of explanation: the distinction between *setting* and *situation*

Within anthropology/sociology, Mitchell has developed several theoretical statements based on his study of central African migration and urbanisation. More recently, Mitchell (1978) has reassessed his earlier work on group processes and the social networks of migrants because it neglected what he calls the 'setting'. In particular, he has criticised his earlier formulation (Mitchell 1959) of the necessary and sufficient causes of labour migration, because it argued that economic circumstances constituted the necessary conditions for the migration of people from rural areas but relied upon factors associated with personal circumstance to account for their return home. Mitchell states that:

What I had overlooked was that the legal and administrative arrangements governing the residence of Africans in town, or in white-owned plantations, were themselves a general set of conditions appropriately a part of the setting and thus contributed towards creating the necessary conditions for return migration (Mitchell 1978:17).

He goes on to claim that the lack of theoretical advance in the study of migration has stemmed from 'the disjunction between the fact of migration and the range of widely diverse circumstance which lead to its manifestations' (Mitchell 1978:7). He argues that perhaps there has been excessive concentration on the study of the physical movement of individuals between points of origin and destination:

Establishing the frequency of rate of migration, its direction and its pattern is an essential but only the first step in a general understanding of spatial mobility. The real analysis takes place when the observer seeks to show why the frequency of rate of migration is what it is, why people move in

some directions and not in others and why particular regularities crop up in what at first sight appear to be acts of pure individual decision-making (Mitchell 1978:8, emphasis in the original).

As he stresses, social scientists need to go beyond the descriptive facts of the physical event to its underlying dispositions.

Accordingly, Mitchell advocates two levels of analysis - a study of the *setting*, referring to the political and administrative structures bearing on the actual or potential migrant, and a study of the *situation*, referring to the particular set of circumstances in which the actual or potential migrants find themselves (Mitchell 1978).

To overcome the misplaced emphasis of most migration studies, Mitchell advocates paying attention, first of all, to the setting. Bedford (1980) endorses this view and emphasises how population movement is constrained in some way by political and economic forces operating at the international, national and local levels. While most research has been focussed on the local constraints on circulation, little attention has been given so far to the processes operating at higher levels. The emphasis in this thesis is primarily on the setting, or the social structural aspects of migration.

To summarise the discussion so far, a number of studies of Third World migration which have produced mainly descriptive generalisations about who migrates have shown a limited capacity to explain the factors underlying migration. An associated deficiency of some economists' models (Lewis, Fei and Ranis) has been the slight attention paid to the historical context and the power relations affecting the 'movement of people' in the situations the models are purporting to explain. Some models, particularly those of Zelinsky and Mabogunje,

are based on an unfounded assumption of an evolutionary path for all societies, providing little or no recognition of the fundamentally different nature of Third World economies existing within the capitalist world system.

A further shortcoming of many economists' models, such as Todaro's, is the narrow focus on the individual as rational decision-maker. Consequently, this emphasis leads to a neglect of the structures or setting within which migration takes place. In the same way, a concentration on the act of migration can lead to a situation where superficially similar patterns may well turn out to obscure quite dissimilar phenomena when classified not by the pattern itself, but by the underlying features of which the pattern is merely a symptom (Mitchell 1978). Dualist theories which give more attention to the context of migration, present, it is argued below, a deceptively simple dichotomy.

Dualism and its critics

The concept of a 'classic dualism' in its original formulation (Boeke 1953, Furnivall 1939) was used to explain the coexistence of traditional and modern economies within one country, each assumed as having little influence on the other. Subsequent interpretations, such as those of Lewis (1954) and Mabogunje (1970) stressed the need for the movement of the mass of the population from a 'backward' to a more efficient 'advanced' mode of production as a basic condition for the achievement of economic growth. Economists such as Fei and Ranis (1964) saw the transfer of labour from the traditional to the modern sector as a timeless, mechanical process with no reference to its social and economic consequences. Because of this approach, critics of dualism theory have complained of:

... interpretations which treat the problem (of underdevelopment) as the fault of 'backwardness' in the agricultural sector, and conveniently ignore the forces which have stood to gain from dualism - the metropolitan enterprise and a privileged minority ... the exploitative characteristics of dualism are quite insufficiently stressed in the literature (Brookfield 1975:69).

One of the foremost critics of dualism theory, for the reason outlined above by Brookfield, has been Frank (1969). He argued that not only has capitalism established an exploitative (i.e. extraction of an economic surplus) relationship with the traditional economy in a colonial situation, but that the process has gone a good deal further. Frank claimed, at least for the case of Latin America, that the metropolitan powers have destroyed and/or totally transformed the viable pre-existing social and economic systems of the indigenous societies. These are seen as being completely subordinated and incorporated into a world-wide economy dominated by the metropolitan centres (Frank 1969:225).

Frank justifiably criticised the concept of dualism which holds that the non-capitalist sector is stagnant and minimally connected to the 'modern' sector. Frank argued that the dualist view of an undeveloped economy neglects the subordination of the non-capitalist economy to the capitalist economy and underestimated the degree of commercialisation in rural areas, as well as the degree of capital accumulation which peasant enterprises can achieve. Thus the dualist view often greatly oversimplifies and minimises the extent of the relationship which exists between the two modes of production. The patent inaccuracy of the assumption of a spatial dichotomy between the sectors, for example, is graphically illustrated by Jackson (1975:29):

Far from being divorced from each other geographically, the dual economy is present through the system. A moment's reflection will show that almost every single colonial peasant with his copra and taro, coffee and sweet potatoes, cotton and millet contains within himself, on his own one hectare farm, the elements described by Boeke.

Theories of dualism have concentrated on socio-cultural or technological differences between the sectors and on how one of the sectors can or cannot be transformed. Frank however has suggested that the proper task is to study what relates the parts to each other, in order to explain the differences and then to change the relationships which have produced these differences: that is, to change 'the structure of the entire social system which gives rise to the relations and therefore to the differences of the dual society' (Frank 1969:61).

Frank has been criticised for taking this point too far, by developing a theory of dualism of his own: the supranational contradiction between the centre and the periphery within the international economy (Szentes 1971). But the characteristics of an economic and social dualism within any one country cannot be dismissed so easily (Brookfield 1975:57). For Papua New Guinea, one has only to look at the major studies offering an overview of the colonial society (e.g. Reed 1943, Rowley 1972, Wolfers 1975) to confirm this view. Case studies of the interaction between coloniser and colonised (Rew 1974, Stevenson 1968, 1973) add further weight to the commonly observed contrast between two economies and societies.

Some marxist critics (Laclau 1971, Amin 1976) have questioned Frank's assertion that all Latin American pre-capitalist economies (and by implication elsewhere in the Third World) have been penetrated

by capitalism and so incorporated into a global world economy. Laclau claimed that Frank's inability to distinguish between different modes of production causes him to believe that any production for a market must mean the establishment of a capitalist economic system. He argues, in turn, that different modes of production can coexist as distinct entities within a common social formation but that one mode, the capitalist, is dominant, while the pre-capitalist mode of production remains in a dependent relationship. Szentes, a Marxist scholar of underdevelopment, has criticised Frank's analysis for diverting attention away from problems within the national economy (1971). He argues, as Brookfield (1975:57) also does, that a recognition of the phenomenon of dualism if not of the theories that have tried to explain it, can be a major step towards understanding the processes of underdevelopment. Instead of studying superficial quantitative characteristics, the idea of dualism can call attention to the structural divisions within the national economy (Szentes 1971:85). The recognition of distinct modes of production coexisting within a social formation enables a study of migration to be placed within a broader structural context. This, in turn, leads to an understanding of its economic and social role in the development of a national economy.

Beyond dualism

Recently, much debate has been carried on within a neo-Marxist framework about the 'articulation' of modes of production within a specific society (see Foster-Carter 1978). The debate is a reaction to Frank's overly simple view of capitalism as being the dominant and pervasive mode of production throughout the Third World. Their focus has been on explaining how capitalism does not necessarily dissolve

pre-capitalist economies and may in fact coexist with them preserving their viability. Thus Meillassoux (1972:103) has described how pre-capitalist forms are 'undermined and perpetuated at the same time'. The impact of an external market in Latin America and in Eastern Europe, for example, has not dissolved feudalism, but sustained and even intensified the pre-capitalist relations of production, by incorporating them as an intrinsic and structured part of a wider system (Foster-Carter 1978:50).

A number of neo-marxist writers (notably Foster-Carter, 1978 and Binsbergen and Meilink, 1978) have argued that in many countries on the periphery of the world economy, the capitalist mode of production has not dissolved the pre-capitalist economy by separating the labourer from his means of production, the land. In most of Africa, South Asia and Latin America, it is argued that the capitalist mode of production while transforming and incorporating the pre-capitalist mode into the dominant world economy, has sought to conserve the subsistence base and social relations of production. This is not to return to the formulations of classical dualism. A neo-marxist analysis insists that the 'linkage' (or articulation) of the two modes of production are to the benefit of the international economic order. The major empirical question therefore becomes who is extracting labour power from whom and how? (Post 1972:237).

There has been considerable discussion of the theoretical issues involved in the concept of articulation of modes of production (vide Meillassoux 1972, Brady 1975), but little work has yet been done on empirical studies of how the 'linkage' or 'articulation' between the two modes of production operates (Swindell 1979:255, see also Harriss 1979:581).

Current marxist thinking on African migration sees the maintaining of a domestic sector, where labour is reproduced and the old and sick can retire without costs for the capitalist sector, as an essential feature of capitalism in Africa; so far, however, detailed studies are scarce which demonstrate the precise mechanism of the process through which capitalist interests lead to the active propagation of peripheral domestic communities (Binsbergen and Meilink 1978:14, my emphasis).

Wolpe (1972) has explained how the institutions of Apartheid and a system of institutionalised labour migration in South Africa serve to extract cheap labour from a non-capitalist economy (the Bantustans) as part of the process of capital accumulation. Burawoy (1976) has offered a comparative model of migrant labour systems, focussed on southern African and Mexican-American migration. His model explains the operation of Migrant Labour System (MLS) in these countries as an institution which enables a capitalist economy to transfer to an alternate economy and/or state, certain costs incurred in labour-force renewal which are normally borne by the employer and/or state of employment.¹

Burawoy's model of the functions and reproduction of migrant labour explains how the institution of the MLS serves to link the two modes of production to the benefit of the capitalist mode. The MLS arranges, over time and in a systematic way, the transfer of labour-power from one national economy or mode of production to another. The state, in the interests of the dominant economy, initiates and supervises the operation of the MLS to provide low-cost labour to employers while the alternate economy has to bear the full cost of what it takes to replace the worker in the next generation. Thus the

¹ The question of in what sense and to whom the labour is 'cheap' is considered in Chapter Two.

MLS, and the context it operates in, forces the migrant worker to develop a *dual dependence*. This comes about because, on the one hand alternative sources of cash income are restricted and labour migration becomes the only easily available means of earning money. Thus a dependence on the wage economy is instituted. On the other hand, the low bachelor wage, the terms of employment including compulsory repatriation, restrictions on occupational mobility against a background of the migrant workers' powerlessness at the workplace and lack of citizens' rights in the political system in general also make it necessary for the worker and his family to maintain a long-term dependence on his home economy. Thus the operation of the MLS requires the physical separation of the worker from his family. This separation is enforced through a set of legal, administrative and social controls which regulate geographical, occupational and social movement.

While Burawoy's model when applied to Papua New Guinea helps to explain the historical-structural factors which have hindered the growth of a wage-labour proletariat, his model says little about the legacy of institutionalised migrant labour on post-colonial migration patterns in terms of the relative growth of a peasantry and proletariat in a country like Papua New Guinea.

Migration studies in Melanesia: a criticism

A common feature of models of migration reviewed above and of the analysis of internal migration within the countries of Melanesia, and Papua New Guinea in particular, is a central focus on the individual as decision-maker to the general neglect of the setting or social structure. Studies of mobility in Papua New Guinea such as

those by Ward (1971), Garnaut, Wright & Curtain (1977), Harris (1973), Baxter (1973), Conroy (1976) and Young (1977a, 1977b), and elsewhere in Melanesia by Chapman (1976) and Bedford (1973), have started with the individual and tended to view the process of migration from his or her perspective. In the above cases, such a perspective tends to exclude a consideration of the pre-existing and changing social structure:

it is imperative that the assumptions being made about the setting are stated quite explicitly ... [because] ... in most of the micro level studies of circulation in Melanesia and South East Asia ... a narrow and rather naive view is presented of the macroscopic economic, political and administrative structures (Bedford 1980:14).

Ward (1971) and Conroy (1976), in particular, have presented labour migration in Papua New Guinea as a process whereby the individual rural villager weighs up the information available to him about his likely destination and judges whether it is likely to offer a higher cash income than his home situation. This emphasis on individual volition tends to assume the existence of and thereby overlooks the background pressures against which the individual's decision is made. Such pressures include head tax, the role of recruiters and the creation by the capitalist sector of the need for cash for a variety of consumer goods. In short, little attention is paid to the legal, administrative and social apparatus within which migrant labour is mobilised, employed and returned home, and the changes in these arrangements. Can the movement of labour migrants to the opposite end of the country, or the persistence today of migrant flows over long distances to these same locations be attributed merely to a differential spread of information? Similarly the study of individual motivations (Conroy and Curtain 1973, Harris 1973, Clunies Ross 1977b) can conceal or direct attention away from the central issues.

The method [the study of motives] obliges one to stay within the framework of the system, because people base their decisions (here the advantages and costs of the decision to migrate) on the reality of the limited alternatives that the system offers them (Amin 1972:91-92).

Attempts to discover an individual's motives, preferences and life-cycle situation are only valuable when the totality within which an individual operates, is also considered.

Ward (1980:13) has noted a number of limitations in the assumption of most migration studies in Papua New Guinea

that choice lies with the individual, making 'rational' choices in the sense of being based on considered decisions made by 'rational economic men'.

The first limitation he notes is due to the lack of attention given to the objective level of explanation:

... few of the migration studies give more than passing reference to the broader aspects of the objective level - the structure of the economy as it has been ... incorporated as part of the periphery of the capitalist world economy (Ward 1980:14).¹

In a similar vein, Bedford (1980) has criticised the premises of the migration studies of Chapman (1976) and his own work (Bedford 1973). He claims that Chapman's model is based on the role of centripetal and centrifugal forces operating on the individual, inducing him to engage in circular mobility. Bedford's own model of circular migration has been based on a view of the individual involved in a strategy of risk minimisation.

1 Ward acknowledges the exception of Curtin 1977 and 1978.

Both models have emphasised the circulation of migrants but have focussed on the *situation* of the mobility. Bedford agrees with Mitchell that such a focus has merely drawn attention to 'a number of commonsense aspects of movement', including the conclusion that migrants tend to view movement in a positive sense, otherwise why migrate? He stresses the need to adopt a perspective in which circulation is viewed as part of a wider process of labour exploitation resulting from the integration of Pacific societies into the international capitalist economy. Attention to the *setting* leads to different conclusions about the consequences of this movement for the participants: the process may not be so desirable and positive for the society as a whole. But such an inference cannot be drawn without first analysing mobility in its macroscopic setting.

The importance of pre-contact mobility?

A recent emphasis in migration studies within Melanesia has been to stress the importance of pre-contact systems of mobility for the explanation of contemporary mobility patterns. Chapman and Prothero (1977:5) have pointed out that 'circulation rather than being transitional or ephemeral is a time-honoured and enduring mode of behaviour, deeply rooted in a great variety of cultures and found at all stages of socio-economic change'. However, the question is whether the form mobility assumes in the colonial and post-colonial context is sufficiently different from its form in pre-contact times to warrant an entirely separate analysis. Bedford has supplied one answer:

... the social, economic and political fabric which defines the structures within which circulation occurs has changed radically over the past two centuries or more and while a particular *form* of

movement has persisted, the important reasons for its existence have not been constant. (Bedford 1980:11, his emphasis).

Knowledge of traditional social structure (at least as we can know it in the post-contact period) is important for a more complete explanation of current mobility patterns (see Chapter Five). But the radical changes to traditional society brought by colonialism make any attempt to explain current migration patterns in terms of the pre-contact mobility situation seriously deficient.

The role of the individual in explanation

One of the criticisms this chapter has made of a number of models is the narrow focus on the individual and the act of movement itself in many migration studies. As a research technique, however, a focus on the individual is the most obvious starting point as a source of data. It is the approach used in the questionnaires administered in the Urban Household Survey and Rural Survey, 1973-75, in Papua New Guinea, which have provided data used in this thesis. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight use the survey data extensively, but the level of explanation is not at the same level as the assumption of the importance of the individual made for data collection. For example, in Chapter Six the indices of the extent of permanent urban residence among East Sepik migrants are discussed within the general framework of the thesis - the interaction and linkage of the two modes of production - the peasant and capitalist. The same framework is used in Chapter Seven for the analysis of the extent of a sample of East Sepik migrants' dependence on their rural villages. Chapter Eight also uses this same macro-level framework by first rejecting the idea that the costs and benefits of migration can be considered merely in terms of the private

returns to an individual. This thesis is not primarily concerned with individual moves but with the study of the processes of peasantisation and proletarianisation, the part played by migration and the way in which individuals have been caught up in these processes.

This thesis seeks to explain the existence of two distinct, but linked, modes of production in Papua New Guinea and the role of a migrant labour system as one of the key mechanisms linking the non-capitalist mode of production to the capitalist mode of production largely for the benefit of the latter. But the important question is not only how these two sectors became linked, but whether and if so, why such a division between the two economies is still maintained, and the effect these processes have on the relative growth of a peasantry and proletariat.

In what follows, it is maintained that a peasant mode of production has developed alongside a capitalist-wage labour mode of production. The peasant economy is one in which the participants retain control over their own means of production, and through household production provide their own subsistence livelihood, but at the same time enter into market relations with an outside economy through labour migration and peripheral cash cropping. The wage labour economy is based entirely on capitalist principles of organisation and accumulation. Both internal economic systems are subject to an overarching political state.

A proletarian is a wage labourer who is separated from control over the means of production and therefore is compelled to sell his labour continuously for his and his family's survival.

Under capitalist production, the producer separated from his means of production is no longer master of the product of his labour and can live only by selling, that is, by making a commodity of his own labour-power, in exchange for a wage which enables him to acquire the means of life (Mandel 1968:119).

This definition implies that a wage labourer is *not* proletarianised on a permanent basis, if he still depends on a source of income from *outside* the capitalist economy to support himself and his family over his lifetime. A worker is not dependent on the sale of his labour over his lifetime to support himself, his wife and his non-working children if the peasant economy still supports the worker and his family before, possibly during and after wage employment. The proletariat refers to those workers and their families who are permanently divorced from control over the means of production and therefore entirely dependent over a lifetime on the sale of their labour and the provision of welfare services by the state for their survival.

Data sources

The ANU/UPNG migration project. The ANU/UPNG migration project was organised as a response to the demand for more policy-oriented research in a major problem area - rural to urban migration and the resulting urban unemployment. Between August 1973 and February 1975, some 9,350 people over the age of 14 years were interviewed in the UHS and 10,403 people were interviewed in the Rural Survey. The project altogether involved over 220 participants who acted as interviewers, local supervisors and coordinators.¹ Results of the UHS as a whole

1 A full listing of those involved and other acknowledgements for the UHS can be found in Garnaut *et al.* 1977, Curtain 1979, Curtain and May 1979 and for the Rural Survey Clunies Ross *et al.* 1975, Conroy and Skeldon 1977.

have been published in Garnaut, Wright and Curtain (1977) and of the Rural Survey in Conroy and Skeldon (1977).

The methodological approach of both surveys was that migration is a rational choice of an individual 'economic man'. The surveys attempted to establish what economic factors influence a person's choice between the village and the so-called modern sector, and how a person behaves if economic circumstances change. The concern was clearly with the 'policy' variables, which were considered to be those variables susceptible to change by government action. For the UHS, these variables were the level of urban wages, the size of the towns, the availability of urban jobs, the quality of government services in both the urban and rural sectors, the transport links between the village and the towns, the value of rural incomes and the relationship between education and migration (Garnaut 1974:71).

From the UHS, data on the village and area of origin of the urban migrants, particularly the districts of origin of the urban unemployed, were used together with other factors such as access to transport, cash cropping opportunities and educational facilities, to choose ten study areas for the Rural Survey. The sample of villages within the study areas chosen was selected purposively to allow a controlled analysis of the effects of key 'policy' variables (Clunies Ross *et al.* 1975:2-4). Data were collected on the dependent variables of age, sex, education qualifications and migration details of resident villagers and absentees. The independent variables investigated were cash incomes earned by resident villagers, their access to education and health facilities, their proximity to administrative centres, and availability of transport.

This limited view of migration as beginning and ending with the individual, and the narrow emphasis on 'policy' variables is the basis of a published study of the factors contributing to urban unemployment (see Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977). The analysis presented in the following pages attempts to go beyond such a view of the migration process and instead aims to explain migration as a group response to historical and structural changes. To amplify further the different level of analysis of the survey data, additional fieldwork was undertaken in the East Sepik and in various destinations of the study villages' migrants in the second half of 1976. Case studies of migrants and particularly of their early experiences of labour migration were collected. Data were also collected on the influence of institutional factors on migration such as urban housing conditions, the post-retirement economic situation of migrants assumed likely to become permanent urban residents, and the security of land tenure of those in urban migrant settlements. This different perspective is therefore an attempt to move away from a study of short- and medium-term government policy options to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the past and contemporary context of migration within the political economy of Papua New Guinea.

Secondary source data. Although I was involved in the design and data collection phases of the ANU/UPNG migration project, the large-scale collaborative nature of the project made it necessary for all users of the data from the project to consider them as secondary sources comparable with census data and other official statistics. This applies particularly to the data used in Chapter Six of this thesis, which is based on a subsample of 1,076 East Sepik migrants

derived from the larger sample of the UHS in 15 major and minor urban areas of Papua New Guinea.

The same attribution to secondary data is also necessary in Chapters Five, Seven and Eight of this thesis for the survey data from the 14 study villages selected as part of the Rural Survey in the East Sepik Province.¹ However my actual participation in the data collection as supervisor in two towns (Wewak and Madang) for the UHS and as one of the principal designers of the Rural Survey (see Clunies Ross, Curtain and Conroy 1975), and its supervisor in the East Sepik Province, has given me a great deal more familiarity with the data than is normally possible with secondary source material.

I have collaborated with several people in the analysis of the data from both surveys. For the UHS data as a whole, an analysis of the economic factors behind rural-urban migration has been published in Garnaut, Wright and Curtain (1977) and a study of Wewak and Madang has also been published (Curtain and May 1979, Curtain 1979). An overview of the results of the Rural Survey has been published in Conroy and Curtain (1978). My involvement with a number of other people in a large-scale research project makes it necessary to state the extent of my own analysis presented in this thesis. Some of the indicators of urban commitment used in Chapter Six of this thesis were first presented in Chapter Five of Garnaut *et al.* (1977), but in Chapter Six I introduce additional indicators dealing with East Sepik migrants only. Chapter Three in part discusses evidence from

1 The questionnaires and methodology of the UHS, as well as a full listing of those involved and other acknowledgements can be found in Garnaut *et al.* 1977, Curtain 1979, Curtain and May 1979. The same details for the Rural Survey are in Clunies Ross *et al.* (1975), Conroy and Skeldon (1977).

the Rural Survey on circular migration which was originally presented in an article under joint authorship (Conroy and Curtain 1978). Elsewhere, the data analysis and theoretical discussion are entirely my own work unless otherwise acknowledged.

Fieldwork. Before my own research for this study began at the Australian National University, I had supervised the administration of the UHS in Madang and Wewak during December and January 1973-74. After taking up the scholarship I was able to arrange secondment to the Economics Department, University of Papua New Guinea to act as full time coordinator of the Rural Survey for the period September to December 1974. I then resumed my scholarship to do fieldwork in the East Sepik, while supervising the administration of the Rural Survey there. I selected the villages studied using data, tabulated by hand, on the village of origin of East Sepik urban migrants previously interviewed in the UHS. In addition, village census data collected by government officers in the East Sepik between 1968 and 1971 were also used to identify areas of high outmigration. Of three potential study areas, two were selected (in the Pagwi and Yangoru subdistricts) because the third area's proximity to Wewak (the provincial capital) seemed to override all other factors in explaining its high level of outmigration. The choice of specific villages in the two areas selected was dictated by the available information on each's position in relation to factors such as access to roads, transport, schools and cash cropping opportunities thought likely to influence outmigration from the villages.

The availability of tertiary-level students to do the interviewing in or close to their home villages was also an important

consideration in the ultimate selection. However, a sufficiently large number of East Sepik students applied to allow a variety of villages to be selected. Fifteen villages were originally surveyed but one village on the Sepik River has since been excluded from the analysis because of incomplete and inaccurate data.¹

Subsequent fieldwork between September and December 1976 allowed me to collect additional data from the study villages in the Yangoru subdistrict, to record the narratives of the villagers' early experiences of recruiting practices, work experiences as migrants and the effect of the War. I was also able to locate migrants from the study villages in their current locations by visiting Wewak, Muschu Island, Madang, Rabaul, Lae, Wau, Bulolo and Kundiawa. Many of their narratives are recorded in Chapter Five and its appendix.

The limitations of survey data. The use of a survey approach to social research has both advantages and disadvantages. The down-grading of local cultural and historical differences can be seen as major limitations of a survey approach within the Papua New Guinea context. The justification is the policy 'usefulness' of the results which provide comparative data for a wide range of source areas and destinations of migrants. The attention given to problems of meaning and interpretation of the social reality in an anthropological study is lacking in a survey approach. This deficiency is all the more notable in a situation where the researcher is working outside his own class or cultural framework.

1 The interviewer was the only student not working in his own village amongst those surveyed on the River. In a village of very high outmigration (Malingai) he appears to have missed whole households which were absent.

In Papua New Guinea, with its very large number of languages and distinct cultural groupings, the problems of meaning and interpretation are further enhanced. These difficulties were greatest in the Rural Survey. An attempt was made to overcome them by employing tertiary students who would work in their home villages as interviewers. It was thus hoped that the local language barrier could be overcome and detailed local historical and cultural background information be provided. The language barrier and difficulty of interviewer-rapport was overcome, but the students were not in a good position to provide much background information about their village or area because all had been absent from early adolescence attending regional high schools.

The simplified, narrowly focussed questions of a survey may possibly distort a complex reality in a Papua New Guinea urban or rural context. Therefore I have omitted a number of attitudinal questions asked in the Rural Survey and used others with caution. Notwithstanding this warning, problems do exist with the interpretation even of so-called direct questions. For example, can one imply from the fact that a person has built a house in his home village that he intends to return home (see Chapter Six). Again it is difficult to know the significance of claiming land rights in the home village. Is it merely a generally acknowledged right or does it entail immediate access to land? The impact of the loss to the local economy of absentee adults was also recorded superficially by asking residents whether they were required to work harder because of an individual's absence.

The limitations of a survey research methodology are many, particularly when applied to a multi-cultural situation. Where possible

follow-up fieldwork tried to provide the necessary background information. Notwithstanding these limitations and possible distortions, the survey technique has allowed a broader analysis of the causes and consequences of migration for a larger number of people than would be possible using a more detailed and intensive research methodology. The survey approach is justified because, I believe, it provides insights not possible in micro-level studies. To paint a large canvas, a broad brush is needed. Perhaps only the outline of a landscape can be presented, with the finer details left to a cameo painter.

Definitions. A number of problems arise in defining an act of migration. To simply view migration as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence begs the question of the mover's subjective intention at any point during an absence from his home location. How does the investigator or even the migrant know whether the move will be permanent or temporary?

Migration is therefore defined minimally in this thesis as a movement from the rural village sector to the rural non-village sector (e.g. plantations, mining areas, administrative centres, mission stations or other rural settlements with a population of less than 500 people) or urban sector (a non-rural village settlement with 500 or more people). Having in mind the earlier discussion of the effect of colonially induced economic development and its influence on migration patterns, this definition thus focusses on colonial and post-colonial population mobility. There is no extended discussion of pre-colonial mobility or of contemporary movement within the rural village sector. The definition has the advantage of using the same residential sectors as the Papua New Guinea Censuses, but it excludes, because of the

difficulty of measurement, consideration of movements within the rural village sector which may be the result of colonial and post-colonial factors.¹

Several refinements need to be made to this politico-spatial definition of migration. To exclude people who are engaged merely in short-term circulation between the different sectors, the Rural Survey also included a temporal dimension. A migration in the Rural Survey was defined as a movement to the rural non-village or urban sectors for a period of a month or more. To exclude a move which was a response to an obvious exigency, trips for medical treatment were omitted from the definition of a migration.

In Chapter Six of this thesis, which is based on an analysis of data from the UHS, a migrant is defined as someone not born in town. This definition refers to people outside the rural village sector but says nothing about their length of residence. So the urban migrant as defined in the UHS also includes people involved in short-term circulation. In Chapter Four, an even broader definition of migration is used based on movement across district (later provincial) boundaries. In the early statistics on indentured labour, the term 'inter-district movement' refers to movement from the rural village to rural non-village or urban sectors for almost certainly more than a month. Employment within the indentured labourer's home district was also recorded. Using the 1966 and 1971 census data, a migration is defined simply as inter-district movement, thus leaving out intra-district movement between the three residential sectors and possibly including short-term circulators across district boundaries.

1 Howlett (1979) discusses the development of a rural proletariat, a section of which works for villagers using traditional land.

Therefore the minimal definition of migration employed in this thesis is a politico-spatial one based on the colonial and post-colonial organisation of the society. A migration is a movement outside the rural village sector. In dealing with data based on the Rural Survey (Chapters Three, Five and Seven) this definition is narrowed to include a temporal aspect (for a period greater than a month). Elsewhere migration refers merely to inter-district movement (Chapter Four) or to non-natal residence in town (Chapter Six), both without a temporal dimension.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has made a number of related criticisms of existing approaches to migration studies in the Third World and to Papua New Guinea in particular. The major shortcomings noted were the limited explanation offered by simple equilibrium theories, the denial of the importance of history and power in the labour surplus models, the narrow assumption of the individual as decision-maker of the Todaro model, the unwarranted assumption of an evolutionary path for societies and mobility patterns, and the denial of the importance of macro-level structures in explaining migration. Importantly, classic dualist models were seen to deny the exploitative nature of the relationship between the two economies.

From these criticisms the key elements of a more adequate explanation emerge. It is argued here that a better understanding of the significance of migration needs to transcend an approach merely based on the act itself and the individual as actor. Migration has to be seen within an historical-structural context. This level of

explanation also needs to incorporate an understanding of the power relations involved and be based on the questions of the movement of whom, by whom, for whom. Such a perspective is likely to recognise the distinctive characteristics of the interaction between the pre-capitalist and capitalist economies, producing a social formation very different from that found in the metropolitan capitalist economies.

It is the argument of this thesis that the migrant labour system was the crucial mechanism in linking the two economies. The MLS operated by introducing labourers to a monetary economy, but at the time sought to preserve a dependence on the rural non-capitalist economy. Thus migrant workers were required to develop a *dual dependence* on the two economies. The effect of this *dual dependence* on the development of a peasantry and proletariat is the dominant theme of the following chapters.

The questions the thesis sets out to answer specifically can be summarised as follows:

* Historically, what were the legal, administrative and social conditions within which population mobility took place? How did these conditions reflect a particular strategy of capital accumulation by the colonial state? (Chapter Two.)

* What continuing influence of the *dual dependence* cultivated by the migrant labour system can be seen in the age, sex and marital profiles, and circular movement patterns of migrant streams in the post Second World War period? (Chapters Three and Seven.)

* What effect did the migrant labour system have on determining the origins and destinations of migrants? What are the

continuing effects? What has been the role of the East Sepik region?
(Chapter Four.)

* What conditions among two groups of study villages in the East Sepik Province have contributed towards circular migration (reflecting continuing integration with the peasant economy) and, on the other hand have induced permanent outmigration leading to the growth of a proletariat? (Chapters Five and Seven.)

* Have the changing conditions in the towns produced widespread permanent urban residence among East Sepik migrants, thus indicating increasing levels of proletarianisation? (Chapter Six.)

* Do migrants continue to maintain a dependence on the rural peasant economy? (Based on a case study of two groups of study villages in the East Sepik, Chapter Seven.)

* To whom is migration beneficial? (The costs and benefits to individuals and more importantly its impact on the rural economy, Chapter Eight.)

* The major findings and conclusions of the thesis are presented in the final chapter (Chapter Nine).

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM: 1883-1941

Any theory of labour migration in the period of imperial control calls for a theory of *constraint*, as well as a theory of *mobility* ... market mechanisms and opportunity cost preferences are not enough in the historical world of penal sanctions for labour offences, deferred wages and labour tenancy with elastic obligations (Newbury 1975a:247).

This chapter analyses the development of the migrant labour system (MLS) within German and later Australian New Guinea, until the beginning of the Pacific war. It is argued here that the MLS was the instrument by which an interdependence between the subsistence economy of the villagers and the plantation/mining economy was initiated and reproduced. The MLS, it is contended, could operate only if self-sufficient villagers could be induced to work for wages without the destruction of the subsistence economy. The migrant labourer was to be only temporarily dependent on the wage economy; the continuing viability of the subsistence sector was necessary to support the worker's family in his absence, and the worker himself when his term of wage employment ended.

Maintenance of the two systems thus became the prime concern of the colonial authorities: both the German and Australian administrators professed a responsibility for the protection and 'civilization' of the indigenous people, and both administrations supported the plantation system. The effect on the villager of this dual policy was to lay the

foundation of the villagers' dependence on the two economic systems, and of the interdependence of the two systems.¹

As outlined in the introductory chapter, Burawoy's (1976) analysis of the functions and reproduction of migrant labour presents a theoretical framework with which to explain the operation of the MLS in its wider context. Burawoy sees a system of migrant labour containing elements of both economic necessity and coercive regulation:

On the one hand, renewal processes are dependent upon income left over from maintenance which is remitted home by the productive worker. On the other hand, productive workers require continued support from their families engaged in renewal at home, because they have no permanent legal or political status at the place of work. In other words the state organizes the dependence of the productive worker on the reproductive worker, while the economy organizes the dependence of the reproductive worker on the productive worker (Burawoy 1976:1053).

The role of the colonial state, it is argued, was the most important factor in ensuring a circulation of migrant workers between village and the plantation/mining economies. To this end the colonial state, through the MLS, sought to prevent the stabilisation of families in the capitalist wage economy. The separation of the worker from his family was enforced through specific legal and political mechanisms which regulated geographical mobility and imposed restrictions on the occupational mobility of migrants. These mechanisms, in turn, were made possible by the migrant workers' powerlessness in the place

1 The emphasis on structures in what follows should not be regarded as a denial of the role of the individual who, as will be shown in Chapter Five, had some degree of choice within a framework of imperfectly administered regulations.

of employment, in the labour market, and under the legal and political system engendered by the colonial state. The result of this separation was the need for the migrant worker to maintain a *dual dependence* on two economies.

This chapter explains how the colonial state sought to develop among villagers a dependence on the monetary and, more specifically, wage economy, but at the same time ensured that those in the wage labour force also remained dependent on the village subsistence economy to maintain their families and themselves after employment.

This study focuses on the former colony of German New Guinea which was administered by Australia under a mandate from the League of Nations in 1920. The territory of New Guinea continued to be administered separately from the Australian colony of Papua until 1942.¹ Although the two colonies came under a joint administration thereafter (military until 1946, after which civilian administration resumed), statistical data were compiled separately for each territory until the mid-1960s. Furthermore, the Territory of New Guinea faced a greater problem than Papua in respect of labour, with more extensive plantation and mining enterprises throughout the colonial period. By 1940, the Mandated Territory of New Guinea had over four times the area under plantation crops (110,500 ha) as Papua (25,500 ha; NGAR 1940:255; PAR 1941:26). New Guinea also had a large-scale gold mining industry from the late 1920s. The demand for large numbers of unskilled workers at low wages was thus a constant feature of the New Guinea colonial

1 The Mandated Territory became a United Nations Trust Territory in 1946.

economy (Rowley 1972:92). A major advantage of confining this study to the former colony of New Guinea is that migration from the Sepik region can be placed in its proper historical context.

Rowley has provided a comprehensive description of the migrant labour system in the colonial period:

... the long-term economics of the situation demanded that the village as the supplier of labour be maintained on the basis of welfare adequate for it to continue the supply. This required careful regulation of the movement and employment of the workers, out from the villages to the place of employment, and back again to the village; and with maximum limits to the term of service, and a minimum period to be spent in the village between terms; careful setting of minimum standards of payments in cash and in kind, so that the incentive to go out to work would be maintained; the fixing of limits to punishments for breaches of labour discipline for this reason; careful regulation of diet, health, and accommodation standards ... With a few minor exceptions, the story in New Guinea has been that of recruiting the man alone. The women should remain in the village and produce there the future generation of labourers. The village bore the costs of maintaining the wife and mother; and the wage was fixed in relation to the assumed needs of the 'unit of labour' only (Rowley 1972:102,104).

As Rowley points out, the MLS was a feature of the colonial plantation and mineral-extractive economies of tropical Africa and Melanesia wherever there was a problem of securing adequate numbers of low-cost workers from well-knit, integrated social systems which were virtually self-sufficient. A doctor employed by the German New Guinea Company in 1898 stated the problem:

Through contract labour it was hoped to develop a desire for comforts which could in turn develop into striving for individual wealth and

competition for material goods. Firstly, however the basic communalistic outlook of the population would have to be broken (cited in Moses 1969:51-52).

Ultimately, a dependence on the capitalist system was effected by the desire for imported manufactured goods and the gradual monetisation of local exchange systems which created a need amongst subsistence farmers for sources of cash, but initially it was necessary to create a need for a cash income. The situation in Melanesia paralleled that in Sub-Saharan Africa:

... from the beginnings of European production in Africa, until about 1930, European employers and governments in Africa did not wait for expansion of wants to incite Africans to leave the village for work. They pursued an aggressive policy of labour recruitment by 'artificially' creating needs for money income and by the use of force (Berg 1965a:402).

However once the need was established and other means of earning a cash income became available, wage employment was rejected. The case of the Gazelle peninsula shows this well.

In the Gazelle peninsula 34,200 ha were under plantation crops by 1914, but the German colonists quickly rejected the more demanding plantation crops such as rubber, coffee, cocoa and tobacco as problems in the supply of plentiful, cheap labour arose. One reason was that villagers living close to the plantations could easily sell their own green coconuts to European buyers for the cash needed to pay taxes and wanted to buy a few cheap trade goods. Furthermore, nearby villagers provided valuable supplementary supplies of coconuts while the plantations were establishing, or when copra

prices rose (Brookfield 1972:50-53).¹ The early achievement of a regular source of cash income meant that the Tolai had little incentive to seek arduous work on the plantations. A.L. Epstein refers to a report published in 1904:

For the Tolais, the blandishments of the recruiters had little attraction and when a little later they began to seek local employment, they would often run away after only a few weeks or months in service (Epstein 1969:20).

A second reason for adopting coconuts was that this crop is particularly suited to cultivation by an unskilled and irregular labour force (Brookfield (1972:52-53), such as the Germans were soon obliged to recruit.

The initiation and maintenance of dependence on the capitalist economy

Faced with a constant scarcity of men willing to work at the prevailing low rates of pay, the planters and mining companies had to go farther afield, or abroad, to recruit labour. Again, the history of the Gazelle Peninsula is illustrative of what happened in villages close to the plantations. The unwillingness of nearby Tolai people to enter plantation employment forced the Germans to import large groups of Javanese, Chinese, Malays and Ambonese labourers after 1890. Many of the Malays and Chinese were unskilled labourers (Biskup 1969:88). Chinese labourers were used even to unload cargo because Tolai labour was unsatisfactory (A.L. Epstein 1969:23). The German planters also looked farther afield within the colony, to areas where villagers had no sources of income.

1 T.S. Epstein (1968:38) reported that the Tolai on the Gazelle Peninsula earned £4000 from the sale of 100 tons of copra in 1884, and £6000 for 2000 tons in 1896. By 1913, the sale of 4000 tons of village-produced copra was recorded.

The Germans first recruited labour within the colony from areas close, but still inaccessible to, Rabaul (T.S. Epstein 1968:58). By 1906, however, Aitape on the mainland had to be opened as a government station to regulate recruiting from the Sepik, and by 1912, 22 per cent of recruited labour came from the New Guinea mainland (Brookfield 1972:51). In this process, 'recruiting in German New Guinea was transformed from a labour trade into systematic labour mobilization' (Firth 1976:52). The systematic mobilisation of labour became institutionalised, in New Guinea as in all the tropical colonies of the European empires from the late nineteenth century, by the adoption of an 'elaborate set' of regulations (Newbury 1975a:235). The overall aim of the colonial authority was to preserve the population as 'the most valuable asset of the state' yet at the same time 'the labour question was seen as the central problem of the colony' (Moses 1969:56,51). As there was growing evidence that large numbers were dying while working on plantations, the two aims seemed in conflict (Firth 1976:51). To reconcile these two policy aims, the MLS was established.

The MLS initially provided for the mobilisation of workers through recruiters, and for their direction to a pre-specified destination for a pre-determined employment period. Sanctions were provided to ensure that the migrant worker fulfilled the strict terms of his employment. The colonial government aimed to guarantee the reproduction of the labour force by limiting the period of indenture. This meant insistence on repatriation of contract-expired workers to their home villages, and prevention of over-recruitment by applying various levels of recruiting in specified villages (see below, p.57). Thus the colonial state sought to keep intact the viability of the subsistence economy.

As part of this concern, the 'invading' system, after the initial land alienation, preserved indigenous land ownership. In German colonial practice all land did not automatically become the property of the state. Indigenous land rights were to be respected, although it was not until 1902 that the new colonial authority of the German Reich forbade the sale of land by villagers. A 1904 Land Ordinance required the buyer to certify that the villagers living in the vicinity of the land which he had purchased remained in possession of sufficient land to guarantee their livelihood (Sack 1973:77,178; Biskup 1969:89). In German New Guinea only 3 per cent of the land was alienated by the colonisers, although it included the most fertile land. Forty per cent of the land of the Tolai on the Gazelle Peninsula was alienated for plantation use, but even here people had more land than was required to fulfil the subsistence needs of the population at the time when large-scale alienation ceased (Sack 1974:206).

The role of recruiters, kiaps and big-men. Recruiting agents played an active role in forcing or inducing¹ village men to become indentured labourers. Initially, removing recruits from their villages often required force, subterfuge and bribery; later, indirect pressure was applied through economic coercion. The recruiters' role in German New Guinea was sanctioned by legislation, dating from 1888, which nominally required all recruiting to be carried out by the colonial government, although employers frequently got permission to recruit (Mair 1970:179). Many recruits probably found it hard to distinguish between a government command backed by force, and a mere civilian's request for labourers. Recruits had to be brought before an official for a medical examination,

The Pidgin expression *pulim boi* covers both meanings.

but there was no stipulation that the official must inquire as to whether they had voluntarily agreed to sign the indenture (Mair 1970:179).

After the interregnum of the Australian military occupation, 1914 to 1920, an elaborate piece of labour legislation was promulgated by the new Australian civil administration in 1922. In place of the previous practice where recruiting was carried out by government officers, professional recruiters were used who were promised a price for each 'unit' delivered. Prices ranged from £3 to as high as £16, or £20 per recruit (Stanner 1953:46). Reed, an American sociologist in New Guinea from 1937 to 1938, has explained how the price of recruits had hovered around £5 per man, but then suddenly increased to £20 and £25 when the discovery of gold in Morobe in 1926 produced a great demand for labourers (see also Mead 1977:64). The cost to the recruiter of 'buying', outfitting, feeding and delivering a recruit from the Sepik averaged £3/10/-. The rest therefore was profit (Reed 1943:222). The pecuniary incentive to 'pull' labour was great as evidenced by Beazley's account of recruiting in the Sepik in the 1930s (see the Appendix to this Chapter, p.70).

Recruiting practices were seldom subject to government supervision because recruiters constantly operated on the margins of controlled areas. The 1922 legislation stipulated that 'fraud, wilful or grossly careless misrepresentation, intimidation or coercion' in recruiting was punishable by six months' imprisonment or a fine of £100 (Mair 1970:181). Nevertheless, at a time of high prices for recruits for the goldfields only two Europeans were convicted of unlawfully inducing a 'antive' to enter a contract. At the same time 414 New Guineans were convicted of desertion (NGAR 1927:23).

The payment of bonuses to village headmen to induce their young men to go with the recruiter was legally permitted until 1932, when it was admitted by the government that 'it has led to a great deal of extortion' (Reed 1943:183, see also Beazley's account of the role of big-men and elders in recruiting in the Appendix to this Chapter).

The village officials still expect a cut as their prerogative and may actually block the recruiter who tries to comply with the law. More serious breaches of the law are not at all uncommon in the practice of recruiting. Unscrupulous white men may misrepresent the type, place and duration of the work. They have also been known to pose as the *kiap* and remove boys by deceit. Cases of kidnapping arose as recently as 1937 (Reed 1943:183).

Government officers (*kiaps*) also played an important role by condoning the pressures used by the recruiters. Townsend, a patrol officer in the Sepik from the early 1920s, made the following comments on the responsibility of a signing-on officer to satisfy himself of the correctness of the details of the contract and on the willingness of each recruit to enter into the contract voluntarily (see also Beazley's account of how recruits were taught to 'sign on'):

The difficulties in the way of the conscientious officer were many. In the first place, it was odds-on that the recruiter had not himself visited all the villages where the natives came from, but had sent his boys in to do the recruiting. Secondly, ninety per cent of the recruits would be unable to speak or even understand any words of Pidgin English except the few that the recruiter's boys had drilled into them. His own name, a name for his village and the words 'me like work' were all that were required of a recruit.

If a native could not speak Pidgin-English the onus was on the recruiter to provide the interpreter. Invariably amongst his own four or five assistants, he always found an interpreter. Between them they could manage the several hundred languages in the Territory, which was naturally very convenient, if somewhat remarkable (Townsend 1968:52).

The involvement of government officers in recruiting was illegal, but according to Reed (1943) and McCarthy (personal communication 1976) several instances are recorded of *kiap* participation. In the German period forced labour was used to set up a new station. German officials sometimes kidnapped men from untouched villages which had steadfastly refused to provide recruits. It was argued that the end justified the means: the young men who could be taken away, taught Pidgin and given trade goods, would help greatly to break down resistance to recruiting in such a village (Reed 1943:146). Kidnapping for the same reasons was carried on in the inter-war period, although Reed (1943:146) also noted that 'there is more dependence on trickery today than outright force, but this does not always suffice'.

Head tax. To replace the direct methods of the recruiters, a more subtle and consistent pressure to sign on as indentured labour was applied through the collection of head tax. The Germans had forbidden the barter of shells, the traditional form of exchange, and the Australian administration continued to insist on the use of money and required all transactions above a shilling to be paid in cash. All head tax was to be paid only in cash (Biskup 1969:88, Reed 1943:149).

The Germans had imposed an annual head tax of five marks (then about five shillings) per adult male as early as 1907 for the Gazelle Peninsula. Three years later a graduated tax of five, seven and ten marks was introduced, according to the development of the region and opportunities to earn a cash income. All males over 12 years of age in areas specified as taxable were liable for taxation except those who had worked for Europeans. The period of work

was to have been at least ten months in the previous financial year (Moses 1969:57).

The use of head tax as a device to help create a stable labour supply was continued by the Australian administration. In 1915 the graduated assessments of the German period gave way to a fixed maximum of ten shillings per head for all areas. The tax collectors (Patrol Officers) had the power of exemption which J.K. McCarthy claimed was liberally applied by himself and others (personal communication 1976). The head tax was levied on all able-bodied males between the approximate ages of 15 and 40 years in the villages where it was possible to collect the tax. This referred to areas designated as 'controlled' (see Chapter Four). The following exceptions for individuals were made: men serving under indenture, men who were sick or otherwise incapacitated for work, members of the constabulary, village officials and teachers, students in school and men with four or more children by one wife.

Colonel Ainsworth from the Kenyan Colonial government devoted a section of his official report in 1924 to pointing out the absurdity of levying taxes from which the majority of wage-earners were exempt:

The underlying reason for such exemption is undoubtedly to induce the able-bodied males to go out into some service ... Such a practice had been requested by Kenya settlers and resisted by the Administration, on the grounds that tax should be linked to earnings - whether by wage labour or by sale of produce. In New Guinea it was linked to neither and the Territory had the dubious distinction of a unique fiscal system which was manipulated almost entirely for non fiscal ends (Ainsworth 1924:21-22, 35-36).

In 1937 the Director of Native Affairs reaffirmed the intention of the head tax, admitting that if it was ended or even lowered 'many industries of the Territory would be unable to carry on for want of labour' (cited in Newbury nd :9). The actual effect of head tax as a factor in inducing men to become migrant labourers in the inter-war period has been commented on by J.K. McCarthy (1963), Townsend (1968) and Viall (1938), all at one time field officers and tax collectors on the Sepik and in the Morobe district. For some villages close to government stations, it was possible to earn the necessary money by occasionally unloading cargo, selling shells to be used as currency by inland patrols or preparing building materials. Others on the coast could collect cowrie shells to sell to the government for use in the buying of food for inland stations. Others may have been able to sell coconuts, or marine products to European traders. These opportunities applied only in a few fortunate subdivisions 'but generally the only way a youth of 15 to 20 can earn money is to go away on contract' (Viall 1938:391).

The following table suggests a relationship between the amount of head tax collected and the number of men under indenture. Despite a considerable increase in the enumerated population between 1922 and 1940, the absolute number of men taxed (based on a constant tax rate of ten shillings throughout this period, Mair 1976:79) remained almost unchanged. In 1922, 22 per cent of the enumerated population were paying a head tax, but by 1940 this had dropped to only 6 per cent. The constant figure for those taxed, against a rising number of potential taxable population and greater numbers of men being indentured, strongly supports Ainsworth's

Table 2.1

Head tax collected and labour recruited in relation to
total population, 1922-40

Year ending June 30th	Tax collected ¹ (£)	Recruited labour employed all districts	Total enumerated population	Tax payers as a percentage of total enumerated population
1922	20,545	26,619	190,256	21.6
1923	21,550	24,701	197,258	21.8
1924	21,451	25,164	230,512	18.7
1925	22,035	23,421	257,551	17.2
1926	19,663	23,569	292,768	13.5
1927	22,092	27,002	304,069	14.6
1928	20,603	28,253	323,284	12.8
1929	21,435	30,325	339,841	12.7
1930	24,823	30,130	370,005	13.5
1931	22,764	27,708	392,816	11.6
1932	23,271	26,606	389,931	12.0
1933	22,069	28,242	401,129	11.0
1934	23,601	30,595	456,924	10.4
1935	19,805	33,993	478,686	8.3
1936	19,641	36,927	500,040	7.9
1937	21,859	40,259	542,259	8.1
1938	20,481	41,849	581,342	7.1
1939	21,417	41,675	627,283	6.9
1940	20,025	39,344	668,871	6.0

¹ The number of taxpayers is double the amount of pounds collected in any one year.

Source: NGAR: Specified years.

contention that the tax was not primarily meant for producing revenue because it largely encouraged the exclusion of its major potential tax base. Taking into account the amount of tax money collected and the number of men under indenture as the tax base, 61 per cent of the potential tax payers in 1922 were taxed. By 1940, only 50 per cent of the same tax base were taxed. Villagers were not taxed until they were fully under 'control', although their populations may have been enumerated. Also, recruiters often operated outside the fringe of the government's influence. So the three variables in Table 2.1 are not strictly comparable. Even with this qualification, the constant amount of tax collected over this period of 19 years, set against the large increase in the enumerated population and a similar but less dramatic increase in the number of indentured labourers, leads one to infer a connection between head tax and indentured wage labour, given the lack of alternative means of acquiring cash.¹

The regular collection of head tax backed by the threat of gaol must have, on the one hand, put a heavy strain on the deferred wages of returned labourers where no alternative sources of cash existed at home and a pressure for them to prolong their dependence on the capitalist sector (see Hogbin 1939:170). On the other hand, in those districts where there was an absence of local cash earning activities, it seems reasonable to conclude that head tax

1 The amount of tax collected failed to show any correlation with the rise in the enumerated population ($r = +0.072$) but the rise in the number of indentured labourers between 1922 and 1940 was highly correlated with the increase in the enumerated population ($r = +0.967$).

served to induce able-bodied men to enter labour contracts and to stay in the wage labour force.¹

By 1938 Reed was able to point to evidence of a widespread dependence on the European economic system. While stressing that few New Guineans were solely dependent on the introduced economy for their subsistence, 'a whole new generation is now rising which is thoroughly conditioned to the articles of European material culture' (Reed 1943: 263-264). Part of the evidence he presented was the drop in the number of professional recruiters by the late 1930s. The head tax and the desire for simple commodities were now of themselves inducing men to join the workforce, so head tax was not only effective in inducing men to make a contract, but was also part of that general constellation of factors that conditioned villagers to accept, use and need money.

Dependence on the subsistence mode of production

Alongside institutional pressures to move village men into work for the plantation and mining sectors, there was a parallel concern by the German and Australian colonial administrations to preserve the viability of the pre-existing subsistence economy. While planters were often merely concerned with a continuing supply of short-term labourers, the colonial authorities took the responsibility for ensuring the long-term reproduction of the labour force. In the

1 Even in areas close to the plantations where there was cash cropping, there were severe limitations in the inter-war period on marketing by the villagers themselves (see Chapter Four).

period of the German administration the fear that villages practising subsistence agriculture would become depopulated was of mounting concern. Half of those from the New Guinea Islands (including virtually all of the women) employed by the Germans up to 1903 were New Irelanders, which led Governor Hahl in 1910 to prohibit the recruiting of women in Northern New Ireland. He later extended the prohibition to the whole of the Bismarck Archipelago and closed a number of areas to recruiters. 'In the long term Hahl wanted to preserve the population as a workforce for the future' (Firth 1976: 64).

Specific studies of New Ireland and the north coast of New Britain were commissioned by the Germans (Young 1977a:342), leading to a report which was republished in the 1923 Australian Report to the League of Nations. The official analysis of the causes of depopulation gave two major reasons: the general insanitary conditions of the villages and the over-recruitment of adult men. The first Australian military administrator in 1915, Colonel Holmes, expressed the prevailing concern:

If ... the local labour supply is allowed to become depleted, we should find ourselves in exactly the same position as now obtains in the British Solomons and Samoa; and I certainly think we should look ahead and conserve for the colony's development such a valuable asset as native labour (quoted in Rowley 1972:110).

Another major reason for the emphasis on the preservation of the subsistence economy in the inter-war period was the terms of the League of Nations C class mandate. One of its injunctions was to safeguard 'the well being and development of the native peoples ... as

a sacred trust for civilization'. This high sounding phrase was repeatedly used in both legislation and the public press (Rowley 1972: 163). The League of Nation's Permanent Mandates Commission performed a supervisory role for its protectorate. Criticism was often forthcoming. Lord Lugard, the former British Governor of Nigeria and a member of the Commission, criticised the Australian authorities in the early 1930s: 'it is difficult to reconcile such a term of indenture [a possible seven years maximum absence from the village] with the declared object of the mandatory's policy to encourage village life' (quoted in Mair 1970:182).

In the inter-war and post-war periods a number of specific legislative and administrative controls encouraged a continuing dependency on the migrant's home economy. The following summary refers to the inter-war legislation:

Compulsory repatriation of indentured or 'casual' labour by the employer was required.

The statutory maximum period of employment under indenture was to be seven years.

Maximum of three years only (five years for Police and other government workers) was to be served before being returned to the home villages for a three months' minimum stay.

Non-indentured labour was initially permitted only for men working within 20 miles of their homes and only for periods of up to three months with a six months period in between. In 1933, the legislation was changed to allow anyone to be employed for an indefinite period without indenture but only within 25 miles of his home.

Breaches of contract by employers or labourers were treated as a criminal offence. Deserters were often imprisoned or heavily fined or both.

The minimum age of males for recruitment was set at 13 years by 1932.

The indenture tied the labourer to the sole service and hence location of his employer.

Two-thirds and later (after 1932) one-half of the labourer's pay was to be deferred and only repaid once he had returned to his home area.

Bachelor's wages: the stipulated minimum (and virtual maximum) wage was five shillings a month, plus keep, and ten shillings a month for those on the goldfields, with elaborate scales of rations, clothing etc.

Before 1935, wives who did not want themselves to become indentured were not permitted to accompany their husbands.

The legislation of 1936 required an employer to issue to a wife, free of charge, clothes, rations and other articles as prescribed for a labourer and to each dependent child half the food rations due to a labourer. The employer was also obliged to provide free medical treatment for dependent families, and to meet all the charges of recruitment and repatriation as well as married accommodation during the term of the contract.

The viability of the village economy was to be safeguarded by local officers being able to recommend the closing of specific villages or areas to further recruiting.¹

The withdrawal of male labour from the village was seen as threatening subsistence production. Colonial officials explicitly acknowledged the role of women in sustaining adequate gardens at home.

The position of the woman in native society has to be kept in mind. Her status, her value in the village economy, her ignorance and superstitions and the need always to ensure an adequate supply of food for men returning from indenture are considered important ... While women remain in the village, disintegration is controlled for the men will return and children will be reared in the natural environment (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:30 and 15).

The requirements of employers to provide food, shelter and clothing for families were seen as:

... real burdens and it is not difficult to see why many employers are unwilling to have wives accompany labourers employed by them (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:31).

1 Although the labour legislation was all-embracing and set out in meticulous detail, it was Reed's opinion of the inter-war period that it was observed to a 'remarkably high degree'.

Another aspect of the legislation which served to preserve the rural village economy against disintegration was the power of field officers to close villages or areas to recruiters when the number of women of reproductive age greatly exceeded the number of 'virile' men.

The proportion of fit adult males who are required to carry on the normal functions of the village and permit of a steady increase in the native population governs the number which may leave for indenture (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:10).

In the Mandated Territory of New Guinea before the Second World War, no official criterion was set for the maximum proportion of men who could be recruited. It was for the local patrol officer to decide what constituted over-recruitment. The villages were then closed by order of the Administrator and the public notified through the Government Gazette. There were three levels of restriction:

- (1) No one might be recruited from a closed village until further notice but exceptions might be made for employers who were situated locally;
- (2) No one might be recruited from a closed village without exception;
- (3) No one currently under indenture from a closed village might be signed on again at the place of employment.

In the Sepik area during the period 1928-39 the Government Gazette listed about 350 villages which were closed for 12 months, including 40 villages closed at least twice.

A continuing dependence on the subsistence economy was recognised as a basic element in the operation of the MLS. The

Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour was firmly opposed to the development of a plantation or mining proletariat entirely dependent on wages for its livelihood.

We are opposed to the establishment of native communities on plantations as a method of solving some of the native labour problems, since in our opinion the scheme might lead to the economic ruin of the natives concerned. From peasant proprietors as they are now, they would become landless labourers dependent for their living on the wages planters paid them (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:16).

In summary, it is clear that the inter-war system of labour recruitment was characterised by a high degree of government regulation, using the differential application of head taxes to ensure maximum supply, against the background of the absence of alternative sources of cash income.

The regulation of circulation

In both the German and Australian periods, the repatriation of indentured labourers became a vital part of the MLS. The Labour Ordinance of 1922 required all labourers to be repatriated to their home areas (Section 85, subsection 2). Three years was the statutory period of contract, but a new contract could be entered into within three months of the termination of the original one, provided that the worker received all wages due and returned home at the employer's expense for a month's leave for every year's service. After 1926 this provision for leave applied only to skilled labour and domestic servants. For others re-engagement without a break was permitted, but only with the original employer. In practice however, granting

the ordinary labourer a leave period after three years' service became fairly common. Any person employed continuously for four and a half years in the preceding five years had to be repatriated. Legally, a migrant worker could not be absent for more than seven years (Smith 1975:27).

The repatriation requirement of the Labour Ordinance was widely criticised by planters and open to considerable abuse. The Commission of Inquiry commented on Section 89 subsection 2:

There has been a strong opposition to this subsection since it became law (in 1922) and we are of the opinion that in some districts it has been rendered a dead letter by the manner in which it has been abandoned. We consider the failure of the administration to enforce this vital provision astonishing and regrettable (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:25).¹

Various stratagems were used to avoid the maximum period of continuous employment and hence compulsory repatriation at the end of that period. One stratagem was to give the workers 'holidays' so that they could never accumulate the maximum period of continuous employment (Stanner 1953:47). Workers on the Bulolo goldfields were given leave fares and a permit to visit friends and relatives in Rabaul and Madang and then returned to work for periods long beyond the statutory maximum.²

1 See also Natives - general - Native Labour Conference - Proceedings, December 1944. CRS A 518, L840/1/1 Australian Archives.

2 Fieldwork notes Bulolo, November 1976.

Failure in the past to regulate the period a labourer may remain under indenture resulted in natives becoming almost completely detribalized. Many labourers drifted from one employer to another, while others obtained continuous employment in the larger towns and settlements ... (Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour 1941:26).

Notwithstanding the comments made by the Commission of Inquiry, the vast majority of migrant workers returned to their home villages after one or two periods of indenture. The provisions for repatriation were often inadequate until 1930 when the Administration, for a set charge, undertook to return labourers to their home villages. A planter was fined in 1929 for not making proper arrangements for transport and food from Aitape to the expired-contract labourer's village, three days travelling time up the Sepik River. In response to the resulting complaints by planters, the Administration at first undertook to return expired contract labourers to the more remote areas. Then under Gazette 295 of 15 June 1931, the Administration, for a flat charge of £10 to planters and other employers per man, undertook to return all labourers to their villages.¹

Lack of skills and restrictions on occupational mobility

Other restrictions of the colonial situation also served to discourage the development of an established proletariat and hence further encouraged the migrant worker to maintain a continuing dependence on his home economy. Restrictions on occupational mobility and the migrant worker's general political powerlessness were important elements of the colonial situation which supported the maintenance of

1 See - Return home of time-expired native labourers (1926-32)
CRS A 518, AL840/1/3.

the MLS up to the late 1960s.

The use of migrant labour discouraged occupational mobility for two reasons. Firstly, the high rates of labour turnover made long-term and expensive training impossible. Secondly, the acquisition of advanced job skills for considerable numbers of workers was seen by the colonial authorities as giving migrant labourers a bargaining power based on a relatively scarce resource. These reasons for the lack of skill acquisition by the migrant labour force are illustrated by the following account of the events on the Morobe goldfields in the 1930s.¹

The need for skilled workers in the plantation economy did not arise because its operation was based on a simple division of labour. But a different situation applied in the complex gold mining industry in Morobe. The early use of indentured labour on the goldfields was either in carrying of supplies, or as labour gangs in simple sluicing, or later hydraulic sluicing. From 1932 onwards the Bulolo Gold Dredging Company (BGD) introduced large and sophisticated machinery into the area. The transition, starting in 1928 from hand-worked claims, meant an up-grading of skills required on the goldfields. The advanced technology introduced by both BGD and New Guinea Goldfield Ltd at their respective sites of Bulolo and Wau also resulted in considerable subsidiary employment in construction work, transport, site clearance and lower-category engineering and management. The semi-skilled and skilled positions were filled by expatriate workers.

1 The following account derives from Newbury (1975b).

But the demarcation line in jobs between the two groups was not a fixed one. Over time a growing number of New Guinean workers moved into semi-skilled jobs such as driving trucks, firing steam boilers and working winding gear, at times without European supervision.

This occupational mobility soon began to threaten the indentured labour system which was based on a low-fixed-wage and high-turnover. It was particularly appropriate to the simple-labour-skill requirements of the plantations, but proved inappropriate and expensive in relation to the complexity of the advanced technology of the mining sector. By 1935, New Guinea Goldfields Limited, to save on labour costs, began to experiment with a policy of replacing expensive white workers with trained New Guineans. But this resulted in two strikes by the white mine workers of the company. As a result of the strikes, the Administrator intervened, worried by the effects the example of the strikes might have on the indentured labourers. A compromise was reached. The company dropped its scheme for massive labour substitution, and in return the New Guinea Mines and Works Regulation Ordinance of 1935 was relaxed to permit uncertified drivers to operate winding machinery when these were not used for raising or lowering Europeans in a shaft. Thus, at the expense of the mining industry's more efficient operation, the colonial state acted in favour of the planters' interests to ensure the continuing powerlessness of the migrant labour force and the temporary nature of migrant employment.

The economic functions of migrant labour

The benefit of the MLS was primarily in the provision of

'cheap' labour. But the question is 'cheap to whom?'. The cost to the colonial state of administering and supervising the recruitment and repatriation provisions, together with a host of supplementary regulations was high. The Commission of Inquiry into Native Labour (1941:46) claimed that a large proportion of the Territory's revenue was spent directly or indirectly on the administration of the Native Labour Ordinance.

It would appear, therefore, that the cheapness of the labour force was solely to the benefit of the individual employer. By paying very low wages intended to provide merely for the subsistence of a single worker, the planter in particular was able to hold down his operating costs. In the early 1930s, the labour charges for an average copra plantation amounted to about 42 per cent of annual expenses which included marketing overheads, insurance, and the planter's notional salary and living expenses (Newbury 1975a:249). Thus labour costs were an important part of overall operating costs. But even the payment of a constant low wage did not mean that labour remained cheap. These same low wages required recruits to be drawn from increasingly more distant areas. As a result planters' recruiting and repatriation costs rose markedly, especially with the competition for labour after 1926 from the wealthier mining sector. Stanner (1953) and Reed (1943) have pointed out that recruitment costs moved from £3 per head in the early 1920s to £20 to £25 per head from soon after gold was discovered and continuing to the late 1930s. Similarly, repatriation costs varied greatly until the Administration undertook to return all time-expired labourers to their home areas for a flat

rate of £10 per head paid by the employer.

Recognising the ways in which the colonial administration subsidised the MLS, labour cannot be considered as cheap as the actual wages might suggest. Perhaps the major reason for the institutionalisation of a low-wage, male migrant workforce was the political benefit to the colonial administration. Its intention was to cultivate European enterprise, but not at the expense of the 'residential' economy. The colonial authorities:

insisted that village life must be the basis of political economic and social advancement and the government's labour policy has therefore striven to avoid that wholesale removal or depletion of indigenous groups which has led to 'urbanization' or detribalization' in much of Southern Africa (West 1958:89).

The dual dependence

To understand the current processes behind migration, it has been necessary to explain the historical background to internal migration and the original conditions under which people began to move from their villages to work in a wage economy.

The MLS set up a particular way of bridging the two economies. The impact of the capitalist economy on the subsistence economy was mainly through the demand for labour. But the intention of the colonial authorities was to prevent this demand from destroying the subsistence base of the villager. The result was that the MLS required the migrant worker to cultivate a dual dependence on two economic systems. On the one hand the worker was induced to seek wage employment through

recruiters, head tax and the desire for simple commodities, but at the same time he was compelled through low bachelor wages, as well as compulsory repatriation and lack of occupational mobility, to maintain close ties with his home economy which alone could provide a long-term livelihood for himself and his family.

The need for the vast majority of migrant workers to maintain a dual dependence affected profoundly the sex, age and marital status of migrant streams. It is a common approach in migration studies to note the selective characteristics of migrants. The conclusion is generally that it is the young single males who migrate because they have the least to gain by staying at home and the most to lose by not seeking out a new horizon. But this generalisation fails to relate the demographic profile of the migrant stream to the operation of the MLS in a particular period. The connection needs to be made between the operation of institutional factors accompanying employment arrangements and the effect these have on who migrates and the extent to which migration is temporary or permanent, short- or long-term.

The heavy male bias of the wage labour force in this period is demonstrated by the fact that women never represented more than 2 per cent of the indentured workforce. After 1935, when wives were allowed to accompany their husbands without themselves having to become indentured, only a small proportion of the male workforce took advantage of this provision. In 1938, the peak year for the number of persons under indenture in the inter-war period, only 1378 wives were with their husbands. Thus only 3.3 per cent of the men were

accompanied by their wives.¹

The short-term nature of the employment is demonstrated by the labour turnover figures provided by the New Guinea Annual Reports between 1931 and 1940. The data are presented in Figures 2.1 and 2.2. In the light of a legal maximum term of employment of no more than seven years and compulsory repatriation, the turnover was understandably high. New recruits averaged 28 per cent of the annual labour force in the period 1931-40. Thus, in broad terms, the workforce was renewed every three to four years. An average of 17 per cent of the workforce each year signed on for a further period of wage employment, mostly for a two year term.

It is difficult to know how many men were able to renew their contracts relatively free of pressures from their employers (see Stanner 1953:81). The temporary downward trend in the numbers reregistering in New Britain in 1937 and 1938 probably represents the upheaval following the eruption of the volcano in Rabaul in 1937. It suggests a certain element of choice amongst those offering to sign on for a further term. Similarly, the steady rise until 1939 of contract renewals within Morobe probably reflects a response to the introduction of improved working and living conditions, particularly in Bulolo from the early 1930s. Before 1933, the mortality rate amongst indentured labourers on the goldfields had been very high (Mair 1970:190),² but with the changed

1 Unless otherwise acknowledged, the data, tables and figures relating to labour statistics between 1923 and 1970 are based on the Annual Reports to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea (NGAR) 1914-21 to 1939-40, and the Annual Reports on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea to the United Nations (NGAR) 1946-47 to 1969-70.

2 In 1932, the mortality rate amongst labourers on the goldfields reached 43 per thousand (Mair 1970-190).

Figure 2.1 Proportion of Each Years Total Number Recruited who Renewed Contracts for 1, 2 or 3 years

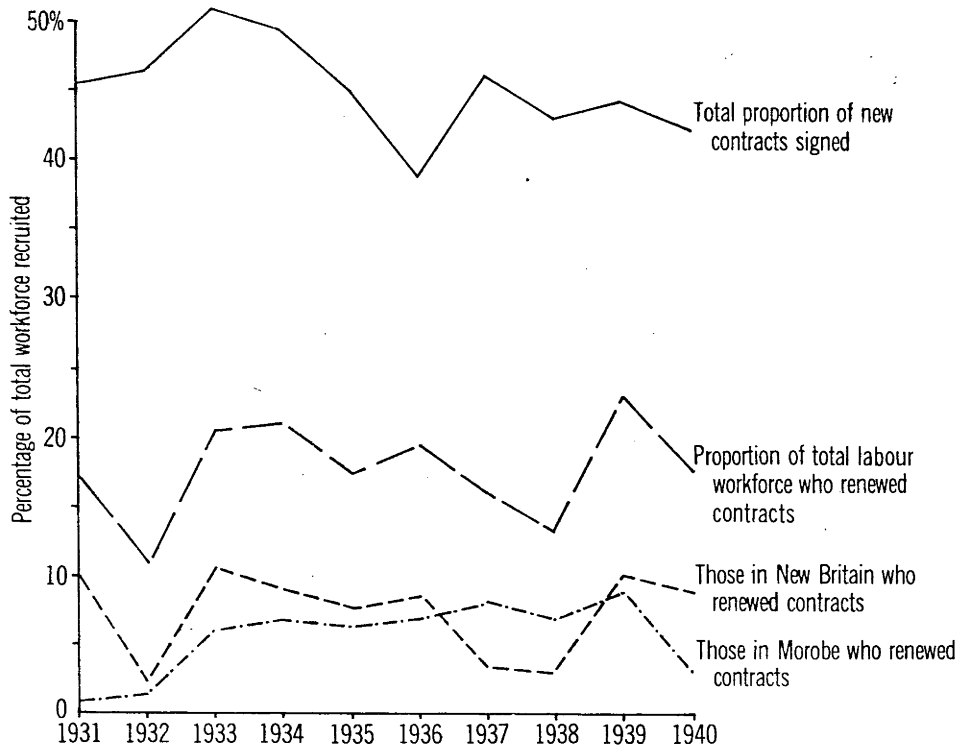


Figure 2.2 Proportion of Indentured Labourers who Renewed Contracts for Further Periods of Employment



conditions which included greatly improved health facilities, more men were prepared to renew their contracts.

Overall, by 1939, about one half of the new contracts signed in that year were by men who had already served a three year term. What these statistics verify is the increasing importance of one facet of the dual dependence: the need for increasing numbers of workers to stay on in wage employment for the maximum legal period. The need for a cash income had become established. For those from areas with minimal or no opportunities to acquire money and an awaiting head tax when they returned home, there was an incentive to stay in wage employment. This increasing integration into a cash economy led more and more workers after the war to move outside the stricter provisions of contract labour and to become casual labourers.

The conditions under which labour was mobilised in the German and Australian colonial era up to the start of the war in the Pacific in 1942 have been explained. Men from self-contained subsistence economies were often initially forced or induced to become migrant labourers and in time developed a dependency on the cash economy. At the same time, the colonial state through its legislation and supervision sought to keep the migrant worker firmly anchored to his village subsistence economy. The MLS could provide so-called cheap labour for the plantation and mining sectors, if the costs of a temporary unaccompanied male only had to be paid. The village was to bear the costs of maintaining other family members with the wage of the worker fixed in relation to his bare maintenance alone (Rowley 1972: 104).

Rather than circular migration resulting simply from a desire by rural villagers not to divorce themselves from their traditions, the circulation of migrant labour was institutionalised by the MLS because the colonial authorities insisted on the physical separation of the short-term worker from his family. This was done by legislation (until 1936), the payment of low bachelor wages and the provision of minimal accommodation facilities for the temporary single workers. The discouragement of long-term employment and the acquisition of job skills were also factors in forcing the migrant labourer to remain dependent on his home economy.

The institutional arrangements of the MLS such as the careful regulation of the employment and repatriation of workers, which were aimed at securing a future supply of labour, also served to produce a dual dependence on the two economies for the migrant worker. While the need for money became greater, total dependence on the wage economy was not possible under the conditions of the MLS.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER TWO

AN ACCOUNT OF LABOUR RECRUITING ON THE SEPIK RIVER
IN THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

A perhaps unique account of recruiting methods on the Sepik River in the late 1920s and early 1930s is provided by R.A. Beazley in an unpublished manuscript entitled 'New Guinea Adventure'. Although written in the third person under a pseudonym, Beazley comments in the margin that the manuscript is 98 per cent true.¹

In the following extract Beazley tells how he and another recruiter, Bill MacGregor, used the Sepik River as their main base of operations because it was the 'gateway to thousands of untouched villages'. They moved with a party of a dozen hand-picked 'gunboys' to protect themselves. They only recruited in an area at least two days further inland from the nearest government officer.

The deterrent against the use of violence was the risk of a three-year gaol sentence in Townsville. This, it seems, was sufficient to encourage the use of milder methods for much of the time. These methods included liberality with gifts of trade goods. When this failed: 'We'd scare hell out of them with dynamite especially when a crowd of painted and feather-bedecked warriors came at us waving spears'. Shooting exhibitions were staged with rapid-fire Winchester rifles.

To deeply impress and perhaps terrorize an extra large group that didn't look too friendly we shot at dynamite ... it was the use of dynamite more than anything else that enabled us to live among savage headhunters for such long periods. .. I have good reasons to believe that the authorities never heard of us using such methods. (p.148)

In the swamp country, villagers were taken to be timid and only the methods of intimidation and enticement were needed, but in the large villages on the opposite bank of the river, 'rough stuff' was sometimes needed. The following edited extract is from pages 192 to 213:

One has to admit that most recruiters were tough, and some pretty rough. Some may think it strange that a Government would issue a licence for a man to make money by dealing this way in human beings, but how else could workers be provided for industry? Content and no doubt happy in their normal village life - which meant plenty to eat,

¹ *'New Guinea Adventure' by Marta Bele (R.A. Beazley) Ms 1961, held in the Fryer Library, University of Queensland.*

little to do for the women made sago and did the gardening, an unbridled sex life, and the never ceasing excitement of killing and head hunting - what would induce a native to leave that for the unknown that he so greatly feared? Unless they were in a large party some were too frightened even to go a mile from their villages, especially in the Middle Sepik area where all warriors gleefully took the heads of all strangers.

Stories of white-skinned people who had natives working for them probably penetrated most areas, but also the natives would hear stories of some of the things that whitemen did. Under such circumstances then, there had to be a tough recruiter with his force of trained gunboys to persuade them to leave their villages, and to conduct them through enemy territory to the safety of the coast.

The only faults in the then system were in the methods by which some natives were recruited, and in the big mistake that the authorities made in not compelling plantation owners, and others who worked natives, to return their time-expired labourers to the safety of their villages.

It was the law that a boy had to be returned to within twelve miles of his village, and I hope that no one will tell me that this was always carried out. Some were let go on the coast many days journey from their villages, and on their way home they would be robbed when buying food at villages through which they passed, and again at every river where it was necessary to hire a canoe to cross. The result was that some returned home destitute after years of work. About those who had to travel home through hostile territory without the benefit of a recruiter's gunboy guard no one seemed to worry so very much, and in some areas a three mile limit would have been dangerous...

It was no life for a 'weak sister'. To recruit one had to be approved of by the Administration, put up a £50 bond, be issued with a recruiting licence and have orders for recruits. It was essential to have a team of sturdy, intelligent and well-trained servants and gunboys. My personal servant watched every batch of new recruits that we got from any area where we needed an interpreter, and where we had had trouble in getting one to accompany us from neighbouring villages. He would pick out a likely looking boy to be put into training. If that boy didn't respond, and our boys thought that he wouldn't make a good team mate, off he went...

Our boys were always well treated. They were hand-picked, their contracts-of-service might show their pay as 7/- or 8/- per month (plus food, clothing, tobacco, medical attention etc.), but they were well rewarded after every trip. Those remaining on the Sepik on 'duck shooting' trips were given all the trade goods that they required.¹ Those who accompanied us to Madang were given extra money, and could run up accounts against us at Chinese stores. The

1 'Duck shooting' trips referred to parties of gunboys going unaccompanied into villages to abduct and rape women.

Chinamen knew from long association what we would, or would not, let the boys charge to our account.

One must have a permit for each firearm owned, and another permit for its use. A native could not be issued with a rifle, and, as a matter of course, all firearms were registered for shooting game.

A boy is trained to speak pidgin English, look after his master's needs, clean and use firearms, paddle a canoe, wash a gold dish, and is trained and disciplined to feel that he is quite safe among hostile natives providing he sticks to his master.

Quite early we found a scheme that stood us in good stead. There were times when to avoid startling wild natives by the loud reports of shotguns when shooting game, a .22 calibre pea rifle was used. We practised shooting constantly with rifle and revolver. A film was forming over Bill MacGregor's right eye, at times this interfered with his ability to sight a rifle off his right shoulder, so he practised shooting off his left. One day he was doing this, shooting with the .22 at a detonator cape. I threw him a plug of gelignite, and when he hit it with a bullet it exploded with din and a cloud of smoke. From then on firing at gelignite was perhaps the main reason why we travelled extensively and lived so long in head-hunting villages without serious trouble.

Any rows that we had with natives beyond the controlled areas we kept to ourselves. Our boys knew that if they talked about such things it would bring them trouble, and we wouldn't keep them. Of course we realised that a boy away from his master was fair game, for any whiteman who understood natives, to gain information, and that was one reason why we sent most of our gunboys on 'duck shooting' trips into the swamps when we went on holidays, for this was one way of keeping them clear of official and police boys in the towns.

Beazley gives an extended account from his diary of an actual recruiting trip in 1927 through the swamp country near the Sepik River. He explains how he used a mixture of fear (shooting demonstrations), inducements (trade goods) and a special gift of a tomahawk and bush knife to each recruit's father to procure young men.

Such was a day in the life of a recruiter in the swamp country. Similar events might have happened in a hundred and one villages in that swamp country, but not in the large villages on the opposite bank of the Sepik River. The swamp natives were timid by comparison with those big, headhunting warriors, so that in the river villages and in those on the plains to the north of the river one never ran the risks that one was prepared to run in the swamps.

As to the actual recruiting of native labourers it was the law that no native was to be coerced into leaving his village. To deprive one of his liberty was a most serious offence, with Stuart Creek Jail, Townsville, looming on the horizon.

Though methods of forcing boys to leave their homes were spoken of among recruiters as 'rough stuff', some never used it.

Probably they didn't get as many recruits as those who did. A man new to the business would have been a fool to try it. He wouldn't have the trained boys, and wouldn't be hardened enough to force home whatever stunt that he put over the people.

In the past the recruiting of native labour has caused much comment. Most, if not all of what was said about it was hear-say based mainly on rumours. How could it be otherwise? Who other than recruiters would know the facts? What outside person ever went into the bush with one and saw him at work? To believe some of the stories that recruiters told would only confuse the issue. I met many recruiters in those early nineteen twenties, and every one that I knew had been a member of the old AIF, and there never was a better training ground than that for tellers of wild and wooly stories.

Let me, as a onetime experienced New Guinea bushman, conduct you on a recruiting trip to show you what might have happened.

Often recruiters sat around a case of beer to discuss new schemes, or to round off the corners of existing methods in their efforts to get boys in greater numbers. Some of the suggested schemes we will use on our trip.

I will need a good experienced mate. Let's call him Claude. He never lived, so that name will suit much better than some others. We will go to the Sepik River because we and our team of seasoned gun-boys know that country well. We will want a schooner to get there, so let's take 'Hotwater' Smythe's 'Wattle'. When we go into the bush she will be left tied up at some village near where we will begin operations. That area has yet to be determined. After this trip we will leave New Guinea as quickly as possible and not return. This leaves us prepared to run greater risks of fights with natives, and the schooner will be handy and ready for us to slip out of the river and away if some inquisitive ADO [*Assistant District Officer*] or Patrol Officer gets on our trail.

On the Sepik is an Acting District Officer whose post is at Ambunti, 200 miles upstream, and a young Patrol Officer stationed at the Marienberg Police Post, 40 miles from the river's mouth. The ADO has a fast launch to cover the river and its many tributaries. He is a good bushman, we are friends, but we know that he will 'make court' if he catches us playing up and breaking any ordinance.

On reaching the river our first job is to find out what work the ADO has planned ahead, so we hang about down stream at Marienberg until he comes along in his launch. Between drinks we casually ask where his next patrol will be. He tells us that he has sent word to the villages in behind Kandawanam (a river village a further hundred miles upstream) to expect him on a tax collecting patrol. That he will be travelling from village to village in that area for some weeks.

Now we know the area in which we will recruit. It must be on the opposite side of the river to Kandawanam and on its downstream side. We choose the little known country between the Yuat and Karriwarri Rivers.

Towing five canoes slowly we travel upstream in the 'Wattle', run up the Yuat River, the first of the two tributaries, and there tie up until word comes to us of the ADO.

A couple of days go past, and then comes the news we await. Boom ... Boom ... Boom Boom ... a garamut throbs in a riverside village. The booming signal travels to us over the swamp. The old man who pounds the drum has been well paid to let us know when the *Kiap* (ADO) passes his village going upstream. Now our recruiting trip begins in earnest.

The five canoes are packed with the necessary trade goods, boys are told off to handle them, and there is still plenty of room left in the canoes for the long line of recruits we expect to get ...

Slowly we travel onward. It is now early afternoon and everybody is in a cranky mood. The continual biting of swarms of mosquitoes and the stifling heat makes even the gunboys swear long and loud in pidgin English, and they know all the words.

Our sullenness is relieved by a startled piercing yell. Yell follows yell, and then comes a high toned screaming from just ahead. We guess rightly what is happening, although all that can be seen are cassowary plumes that decorate the top of a long handle canoe paddle. Backwards and forwards in quick movements the plumes are seen over the top of the long grass as a scout races his small one-man canoe along the winding canoe road making for his village and screaming of our coming.

We turn a bend in the road, and there bursts into view a large village a couple of hundred yards ahead. There we see at the foot of the ladders that run up to the houses canoes full of screaming and yelling families, and desperately they paddle for the safety of the dense tangle of long grass nearby.

The village houses are on high piles over the black water of the swamp. They are in two long rows, open water down the centre between the rows, and it is seen that long grass is growing right up against the rear of each house. At either end of the clear water is a large house, and from each gaily coloured decorations float out into the breeze from long lengths of lawyer cane tied to the high peaked fronts. We know that these are the House Tambarans (Spirit Houses) where young warriors sleep to help guard the village.

We don't worry about the kanakas that have fled to the grass, we just carry on and occupy the nearer Spirit House. So indescribably bad are mosquitoes, each warrior sleeps in a sleeping bag. These bags are very strongly made of plaited reeds, are held open by lawyer cane hoops inside, and each has a long fringe at the entrance that lies flat on the floor. This fringe helps brush mosquitoes from the shoulder and back of a native as he crawls in to go to sleep and it prevents the pests from entering. The position of each bag is carefully noted by boys who are assigned off for that particular job ... Within an hour of darkness we leave the village. This will give the people time to return to their houses, and for us to arrive at quite a large area of water clear of grass. This we noticed and marked on our way in.

With the approaching dawn quickly but silently we return to the village. Just as we reach the Spirit House pigs grunt in a nearby house, so hurriedly we slip beneath and for a few moments the silence is tense. But close by a dog howls, this is taken up by other dogs, and then as startled cries come from several houses. We rush up the ladder and into the Spirit House.

By the lights from our torches boys run to their allotted sleeping bags, grasp the fringe and hang on. Startled natives spring from sleeping bags not held and with terrified screams they drop through holes in the floor, far rather chancing crocodiles that may lurk in the water beneath than the unknown terror that awakened them. Screaming and shouting again the people take to their canoes, and in the dim morning light we see them desperately paddling for the safety of the trackless fastness of the swamp. Terrified yelling and struggling comes from the held sleeping bags, but the plaited reeds are strong. These bags are quickly dragged along the house floor and then handed down to the canoes. As we leave hurriedly shotguns blast into the breaking dawn to frighten warriors who may be planning to attempt a rescue.

When at a safe distance from the village the sleeping bags are opened and our catch is inspected, and is then distributed among the canoes. At the first opportunity ducks are shot. This we do not only for food, but also to impress on the new recruit the effect that shotgun pellets would have on their bodies if any were foolish enough to dive overboard in an attempt to escape.

It is an hour before sunset when we leave the cover of the grass and paddle across open water lying in front of a village. On seeing us the people are startled, then yelling in anger they run to their canoes and quickly disappear into the nearby sac-sac swamp. We land at a deserted village ... While our servants are making our beds and seeing to our food gunboys are busy outside preparing our first line of defence. They tie small packages - three or four plugs of gelignite wrapped in white paper - to trees at commanding points. A guard is mounted, and after a meal we settle down to try and catch up on the sleep that we missed the previous night and to while away the time until the countless millions of mosquitoes force the people to return from the swamp. We had timed our arrival so that we would come upon them suddenly late in the afternoon, knowing that on seeing us they would be so startled and in such a hurry to clear out to the safety of the sago swamp they would leave their sleeping bags behind...

As grey dawn breaks the following morning we hear yells coming from within the jungle off the far end of the village. We stand to arms. The yelling becomes louder and fiercer as the natives gain courage by working their feelings up to fighting pitch. Closer they come. Now dark forms are seen to dash from the jungle to handle their bows. Arrows swish. They thud into the thatched walls and roof of the house. Two boys are sent to mount guard and watch through the crack above the rear door of the house. The remainder of our gunboys are seated in a group smoking and chewing betelnut, and telling one another with fulsome oaths just how stupid kanakas can be. They are seasoned to such happenings as this and are quite unconcerned. Claude and I are standing behind the front door watching through the crack

above it. These house doors are made of the hard outer shell of sac-sac palms, and are much too tough for arrows to penetrate.

Every moment the kanakas are yelling louder, gaining courage and working closer. We don't show ourselves. We hope that this will lead them to think that we are frightened, bring them closer still and on to a position prepared for them. A number led by a much painted warrior who has two large boar tusks that are lashed to a piece of cane and gripped in his mouth is doing just that - leading his crowd of fighting men onto our first defence line. It is a tall, slim betelnut palm that has a white package tied to its trunk some twenty feet from the ground.

The kanakas arrive near this betel palm. Claude has been waiting for just this to happen. He thrusts the barrel of his Winchester rifle through the crack above the door and its report is drowned by a terrific explosion. The thundering report crashes and then rolls through the jungle and over the swamp. The top of the betelnut palm flies through the air as clouds of smoke billow into the surrounding trees, and terrified natives run screaming through the jungle away from this unknown monster which they think will destroy them. The rest of the day is peaceful, for bush kanakas do not savvy dynamite.

The following morning a plaintive voice is heard crying from the jungle and close to its fringe. Our interpreter calls and signals and an old man timidly shows himself. The old man is given presents, such wonderful things that he has never seen before. He jumps and capers about with joy, and then he excitedly calls to other old men who are now gathered at the jungle fringe. They hesitate no longer but hurry to us. Then they share their friend's joy as they greedily grasp the small trade goods that are offered to them. Quickly a change has come over the scene. Now we are good fellows, so they hail their people that all is well and to come close and meet us and make friends.

Sometime later we express our satisfaction at the large assembly of males of all ages. But they don't fully trust us. Their womenfolk, not even the oldest ones, haven't appeared, but the men are more than delighted at the presents that we have so liberally distributed - and so far all for nothing.

All is going to plan. I call to our interpreter: 'Give 'im all kanaka plenty grease me feller like buy 'im plenty boy.' The interpreter is getting well into his stride when an old man interrupts: 'What! Is my son a pig that I should sell him?'

Some of the old men stand their ground, but all the younger ones are slinking to the cover of the jungle. On seeing this the interpreter warns the gathering not to make the white masters cross, or the village will be burnt, maries raped, and pigs and dogs shot.

The old men hold a confab, and then ten boys are brought forward. We think: 'Not bad, but such a large village never previously having been visited will not miss twenty.' However the ten

boys are bought and paid for. A red lap-lap is given to each recruit, and an axe, large knife, and small trade goods such as looking glasses and beads are handed to their papas. Their mamas now come from the jungle and run about throwing lime over their sons' heads and shoulders to ward off sickness and evil spirits until they return.

Having settled for the ten boys and placed them under a gunboy guard who is holding our other recruits in the house, we deem it time to get the other ten. To do this we must stir them up again to almost a frenzy of excitement.

In this area bowmen carry shields that are made from a light corky wood. Six shields are now stood against the butt of a coconut palm leaning one on top of the other. Tied to the centre of the first shield is a paper package containing several plugs of gelignite - a mark at which to shoot. Bowmen are lined up about thirty yards from the target, and a large bush knife is offered to any warrior who hits the mark. Now Claude takes a bow and some arrows from a young warrior, breaks the arrows over his knee and throws the bow away all the time giving an exaggerated pantomime to show that they are just 'something nothing'. Then he holds aloft his Winchester rifle, and by signs tells the gathering: 'This is the weapon for a fighting man,' and with a quick snapshot he hits the mark with a bullet. As the crashing explosion is rolling away and smoke clouds are swirling higher it is seen that the shields are blown to the winds. Consternation reigns. Screaming natives flee to the jungle. Those too terrified to run are huddled together, clutching one another in their fear.

Our interpreter gets to work. He shouts to the kanakas: 'What a lot of fools you would be to defy these terrible white masters. Your arrows only stick into a shield. Look what one of his does to them. Where are your shields now? Be quick. Bring along another ten boys before they really get cross.' We get them.

The next village on our line of march is one on which we paid a visit some twelve months previously. There we failed to get boys, and now we know that the people are determined and tough. To get recruits on this trip we will have to put over them something new to frighten and bluff them.

Taking half a dozen gunboys with me I go on ahead, Claude is to come the following morning. We leave our canoes and walk a long mile through slopping jungle, and when we reach the village my half-top boots are covered thickly with leeches. I rouse a couple of kanaka dogs from a fire then sit there, take a brand from it and burn the tails of the leeches to make them drop off. While I am getting rid of the pests some old men gather near. They point to me, laugh and yabber away no doubt with memories of our former visit. I try many tricks, much bribery and persuasive talk to get them to sell boys, but I don't try any rough stuff - that is to be kept as a surprise for later. As was expected I don't get any recruits.

At sundown I send for the old men who run the village, and expecting more presents they come running. But I tell them that if ten boys are not brought forward at sunrise the following morning a

terrible long-long (mad) master will enter the village, shoot it up, burn the houses and make them 'savvy too much'. The old men laugh and cackle away in great glee, and tell the interpreter to tell me that they will call my bluff.

Sunrise, no boys, and the old men are standing in a group talking and laughing. I then fire a plug of gelignite. This is my signal to Claude, who is dawdling along the way, to hurry on and carry on with the good work. With my gunboys I then retire to the house that we had occupied the previous night, and beyond doubt the laughing old men are claiming a victory.

Sometime later a wild looking figure comes from the jungle and into the village with loud yells. This is Claude. With an old digger felt hat pinned back in front, shorts and top boots, and a two weeks growth of ginger beard he looks a ferocious figure indeed. He flourishes a heavy calibre revolver in either hand yells again, and then begins a slow march up the centre of the village. Any pig, dog, or fowl that shows itself is a target. Bullets ping through the fronds of coconut palms, war drums suffer, and the reports of revolver shots are punctuated by loud yells.

The old men who only a short time before were grinning over their supposed victory now are in a panic. They run to me and plead: 'This terrible master will destroy us and our village. He is long-long. What can we do to pacify him?'

'Give him ten boys quick time before he goes long-long true,' I tell them.

Well pleased with the success of our scheme we depart, and march in orderly formation to where we left our canoes.

We now have forty recruits. When we hand them over to a mining agent in Madang we will be paid for them £800. Now we reason it out. This will be our last trip. Luck is with us. So we won't play about but get another twenty boys quick time, and then clear out to Sydney.

On we go to a village named Pec. The people desert the village on our arrival, and two days pass before a couple of old men return to ask what we want. The delay makes us irritable. We must get clear of the river and away to Madang before the ADO finishes his tax collecting patrol.

To demonstrate our friendship to the old men we are lavish with presents. Their cries of wonderment and delight bring their people running from their hideout in the sac-sac. A half hour of present giving and talking to the gathering is sufficient time for them to get over much of their fear, so we call a council meeting. Eagerly the old men who run the village come together into a small group. Haven't we greased them up with presents? There may be more.

When these old village lpoons are seated our gunboys distribute themselves with them around the circle. All is so calm and

peaceful, and there is a look of excited expectancy on the face of each old man. A signal is given, and to each old man's surprise and fear he finds himself held tightly in the grip of a big strapping gunboy.

Immediately there arises a clamour. Women and children squall and flee for cover. Some warriors dash to the jungle closeby to grasp their hidden bows and spears, others just disappear. Fightmen now form up at the jungle edge screeching in their rage. War drums boom calling to all to gather at once. We just stand fast firing an occasional shot in the air to add to the confusion and uncertainty.

A painted and much bedecked warrior steps forward from his group, and cries out: 'Why do you hold our lpoons (old men). What do you want?'

We tell him: 'We want twenty boys or we will take the lpoons away with us.'

The anger of the people is thoroughly aroused at losing so many young men, and we waste no time in leaving that village. Claude and I travel in the last canoes as a rearguard in case trouble arises before we get well clear of that area, and quickly we swing in a half circle to leave this unknown swamp area and make for a small and friendly village named Gasindo that is on a tributary not far from the main river. We must find out as much as we can about the ADO's movements, so from here we send a Sepik gunboy on a scouting trip to make enquiries.

While awaiting his return the recruits are made to wash, their hair is cut and they are made to smarten up generally. Here, also, they have their first lesson in Pidgin English. My personal servant, Talato, is their tutor.

They are gathered together in a circle on the grassy river bank, and our gunboys are mingled with them. Then Talato speaks slowly:

'You...like...make...'im...papers? (a three year contract of services)'

Prompted by the gunboys the recruits are made to hold up three fingers and nod.

Talato: 'You...like...work...'long...white...master?'

Again the recruits are made to hold up three fingers and nod.

This will go on until they are taken before some official - let's hope that the ADO doesn't get back in time and it will be the young Patrol Officer on the Lower River - to be asked one of the two questions. They are the only questions I heard asked of a new recruit when he was being signed on. So, don't worry, it works especially if the recruiter stands behind the official's chair as he is seated at his table to nod and so give encouragement to the boy.

The gunboy scout returns. The ADO is still on his tax gathering patrol. Knowing well the area through which he is travelling

we work it out that it will be a further three weeks before he finished his patrol and returns to the river. That will give us plenty of time to get another, and our last, batch of recruits.

Some time previous to this a fight had occurred between the large villages of Tamburi and Guineambo. Tamburi, assisted by warriors from neighbouring friendly villages, gave Guineambo a hiding, took a large number of heads and so whittled down its fighting strength. To Tamburi I went. Tamburi's number one fighting man is a pal of mine.

My arrival at Tamburi is hailed with yells of joy, and I have to put up with a lot of hugging and mauling from my warrior mate. I have in a trade box gold-lip shell and a lot of coastal shell money. Shell is the prized possession of all inland natives, and with much palaver and ceremony I hang a gold-lip around my mate's neck.

I show the remaining shell, and a promise of some as a gift to other important old men makes them so excited there isn't anything they won't do for me. So having worked them into a frenzy of excitement I offer all the shell and trade goods that I have in my tradeboxes for a line of recruits from Guineambo.

These people raid far and wide to satisfy their lust to kill, for personal glory that brings fame and a greater say in village life, and heads for their Spirit House. So to raid their hereditary enemy, to be paid all that wonderful shell and trade goods for doing it seems too good to be true.

Two days later the raiders return with a dozen boys, each has his hands tied behind his back with lawyer cane. We haven't time to make inquiries or worry if any were killed in the raid, the boys are bundled into kanaka canoes and we leave immediately to paddle day and night on the fast flowing current to find Claude at the Lower Police Post all ready and anxious to put to sea. The moment the boys that I have brought are signed on we depart for Madang and then to Sydney.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POST-WAR MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM

In this chapter, the significance of the changes in the legislation governing the employment of labour in the post-war period is discussed. The shift from contract to 'casual' employment is considered within the general set of conditions fostered by the colonial state to regulate the wage labour force. The continuing need, in the two decades after the war, for migrants to maintain a *dual dependence* on two economies is evident from the data on the age, sex profiles and marital status of the paid workforce.

By the mid-1960s, a tendency towards a more stable urban workforce emerges. Changes in the policies of the colonial administration affecting urban conditions make it possible for many urban migrants to bring their families to town. However, the question of whether migrants still maintain a long-term *dual dependence* remains open. The evidence of varying levels of circular migration in different parts of the country is presented. The aim of most migrants appears to be an eventual return home.

The demands of the Japanese, Australian and American war-time armies meant that 'nearly all [New Guinean] labour was forcibly conscripted' (Stanner 1953:79). Some areas lost almost their entire adult male population (Stanner 1953:83). In October 1945, with the end of the War, all contracts were automatically cancelled because forced labour could no longer be justified. The vast majority of

workers immediately downed tools and returned home.¹ Of the 6703 labourers under the Production Control Board, no more than 5 per cent decided to continue working.² Men returned home to rebuild their destroyed gardens and houses. War compensation was gradually paid out and many were content to remain at home. But the demand for labour to revive a devastated plantation economy soon emerged. By 1953 the numbers in the wage labour force were almost equivalent to the immediate pre-war level. A dependence on the wage economy was soon reasserted for many villagers, after their home economies had been at least partially restored.

With the decreased production of the mining fields, the plantations emerged as the major employer of labour in the post-war period (see Figure 3.1). And with the requirements of the plantations went a vested interest in unskilled migrant labour. The pre-war pressures from the large mining companies for a modification of the high turnover, heavily male-biased, unskilled labour force were temporarily dampened.

Agreement labour

Reform of the indentured labour system was a major policy of the post-war administration, but despite a name change to

1 Omitted here is a discussion of the effect of the Pacific War 1942 to 1945 on the changed attitudes of Papua New Guineans to the pre-war colonial caste system, of which the MLS was a key manifestation. The impact of the war on one area in the Sepik region is examined in Chapter Five.

2 CRS A518, k213/3/2. Natives - Papua and New Guinea - native labour - duration of native labour contracts (1945-50).

agreement labour, the emphasis remained the same: to prevent the disintegration of the traditional social structures. The changes focussed on tightening up the loopholes evident in the pre-war legislation. Professional recruiting was abolished, the number of men recruited from each village or area was regulated more strictly by the administration, and stricter medical examinations were required. The scope of penal sanctions was reduced, with breaches by the labourer no longer treated as criminal offences. Provision was made for workers' compensation. While a worker could be employed without indenture anywhere within his home district, official approval was needed to employ casual labour elsewhere and the casual labourer was to be provided with his fare home.

The post-war labour code thus preserved the elaborate regulations of the pre-war days, made significant improvements and established a more elaborate supervisory machinery for its enforcement (West 1958:97).

After 1945, faced with the continuing shortage of labour and the high recruiting costs for labourers from remote areas, planters were able to persuade the Administration of the need to open up the Highlands for recruitment to coastal plantations (West 1958:99). Under the Highland Labour Scheme, the employer was relieved of a major source of the escalating cost of labour. Administration officers became official recruiters. There was no expense to the employer beyond the payment of an attestation fee of five shillings per recruit, later raised to ten shillings, which was intended only partly to cover the cost of recruitment (West 1958:102). This agreement thus ensured the cheapness of labour to employers in the post-war period.

'Casual' labour¹

The war had one major effect on labour migration in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, not envisaged by the revised legislation. Casual labour (that employed by verbal agreement only), insignificant before the war in New Guinea, accounted for at least one-third of the early post-war workforce. This was despite the fact that plantation sector employment had expanded in the post-war period, while employment in the mining sector declined. Before the war, the Labour Ordinance had limited this type of unindentured labour to a villager whose home was within 20 miles of the place of employment, for a period of only three months and with a six months' interval unless an indenture was signed. Casual labour was severely limited in the inter-war period because of the fear of competition for labour between various employers (Newbury nd:14).

The changed social climate in the post-war era most probably contributed to the transition to casual labour. But the migrant casual labourer was still dependent on his rural subsistence base because of his insecure position in the wage economy.

1 'Casual' labour was the legal term applied to all non-agreement labour. Thus the meaning of the term is far wider than the word 'casual' implies.

During the 1950s, under the strong direction of the Minister for External Territories, Mr (later Sir Paul) Hasluck, the policy emphasis continued to be on the preservation of the village economy. The major effect of this policy was to retard the development of a stable wage labour force and to maintain the casual worker in a highly insecure situation. Hasluck strongly criticised the way the provision for casual labour in the legislation was being used as the alternative to employment under 'agreement'. Hasluck wanted casual labour to be strongly discouraged wherever it led to the prolonged absence of 'low skilled and unsophisticated native' workers from their own villages and from their own families. His special concern was over the ...

, ... risk of building up a landless proletariat and over the congregation of foreign natives on the outskirts of the larger towns ... (Hasluck 1976:229).

He saw that casual labour, as it had evolved, was not 'free employment' (Hasluck 1976:232). As a consequence the 1958 Labour Ordinance provided for the 'free employment' of advanced workers able to work outside the usual labour code. They could command higher wages, and were permitted to work anywhere in the country. Wage-fixing machinery and a tripartite Employment Board were to be set up. But the major separation between temporary, locally employed casual labourers and 'advanced' workers failed to work. The effect of the

legislation was to increase further the insecurity of the unskilled worker employed by verbal agreement.

The legislation allowed for the termination of the employment of a casual worker without notice, thus expressly going against Common Law tradition relating to contracts of employment (Smith 1975:71).¹ The relationship between employer and employee continued to be one of 'master-servant'. Rowley, in an address to Administration officers in 1956, pointed out that labour disputes could be dealt with in the law only as individual differences between master and servant - 'there is no way of bringing to a court questions arising from collective action by casual workers' (Rowley 1958b:541). Without the opportunity for workers to demand better conditions through legally recognised associations, Rowley saw the casual worker faced with considerable instability:

... there is no action which the emergent wage earner may take to improve his lot except to add to instability by repeated trials by different employers and to add to the labour shortage by returning in discouragement to his village (Rowley 1958b:542).

The shift from contract labour migration to non-contract employment was not a move to an 'independent' status as an employee. Casual labour was not the equivalent to the status of a 'free' wage

1 A qualification was made, though. After six months' continuous service, one week's notice was required to be given by either party.

labourer in a metropolitan country. The casual worker's position was one of considerable insecurity, with just as much or even more of an incentive to preserve his ties with his village. His wages were based on a minimal subsistence rate and geared to supporting a single person only. He was not liable to sick pay if an illness arose outside of his employment (in contrast, the agreement worker received one month's sick leave). If food had been issued during the period of absence, the employer was authorised to deduct the cost from the wages due. Urban residence was still tied to employer-provided accommodation, rations and clothing. Because employers were required to provide similar conditions free of charge to a worker's dependants, accompanying families were strongly discouraged as a condition of employment.

Casual workers had no right to organise themselves to demand improved wages and conditions. Employment could be terminated at any time without notice within six months' continuous service. Repatriation of a casual worker was required, by a provision not repealed until 1975, if he had been employed on a ship or if his employment terminated at a place other than where he was engaged (Smith 1975:72). This meant that casual workers, for example, on plantations in the Gazelle Peninsula, initially brought from other districts as contract workers, were still entitled to full repatriation costs from their employers (personal communication: Labour Officer, Rabaul November 1976).

The situation of casual labourers was therefore not markedly different from that of agreement workers, and in one major respect, security of employment, they were in a worse position. Therefore

casual labourers although not under formal contract of employment, still operated within the framework of the MLS. In the post-war period men more willingly sought out wage employment but the conditions of employment meant that they could not afford to abandon their rural subsistence base.

Rowley (1958b:543) in the address cited above, went on to condemn the perpetuation of a high-turnover, unskilled labour force as 'socially and economically evil'. The workforce had to be changed, he argued, from temporary migrant workers, recruited in continually more distant and unsophisticated areas, to a more permanent wage-earning group drawn more from nearby sources. He saw the solution as making wage employment more attractive to people living near the centres of employment. Wages needed to be at a level to attract sophisticated people out of subsistence activities, to provide for the maintenance of families and to allow the unmarried to marry and raise a family. He urged the formation of trade unions as a stabilising influence on the workforce.

The rise of the towns and the development of a more stable workforce

While most Agreement labourers were employed on plantations, half the casual workers in 1957 were also located in the rural non-village sector (Brookfield with Hart 1971:266). Although non-agreement labour was almost the sole type of employment in the urban areas, there was little evidence by the early 1960s of a shift towards a more permanent stable workforce. Between 1956 and 1965, the percentage of women in the workforce increased from 1.1 per cent to 2.2 per cent.

The age structure in the same period was heavily biased towards young males, despite a broadening across age groupings from 71 per cent under age 26 in 1956 to 54 per cent in 1965. But 80 per cent of the New Guinean workforce in 1965 was still under 31 years of age (see Figure 3.2). Over the same period, 66 per cent of the males over 15 years of age were classified as single. As Table 3.2 derived from the 1966 census shows, 65 per cent of adult males in the rural non-village sector and 57 per cent in the urban sector were classified as single, while only 15 and 12 per cent respectively were married but unaccompanied by a spouse. Thus 80 and 69 per cent of adult males in the two migrant sectors were unaccompanied. The need to maintain a *dual dependence* on both the home and foreign economy was still important to large numbers of migrants at least up to the mid-1960s.

In 1966, only 11.6 per cent of the total population of Papua New Guinea was classified as resident outside the rural village sector. This figure is not much higher than the 1929 figure which showed 9 per cent of the then enumerated population of New Guinea in the wage labour force and hence resident outside the rural village sector. Although the absolute numbers of absentees had increased greatly since then, so had the number of people enumerated. The relatively low proportion of people outside the traditional village sector in 1966 after some three generations of a colonial presence may be a strong indication of how the whole MLS (including both agreement and casual labour) discouraged female migration and the permanent or even the long-term migration of men.

Figure 3.1

Distribution of Enumerated Workforce in New Guinea
Across Industries — averages for specific periods

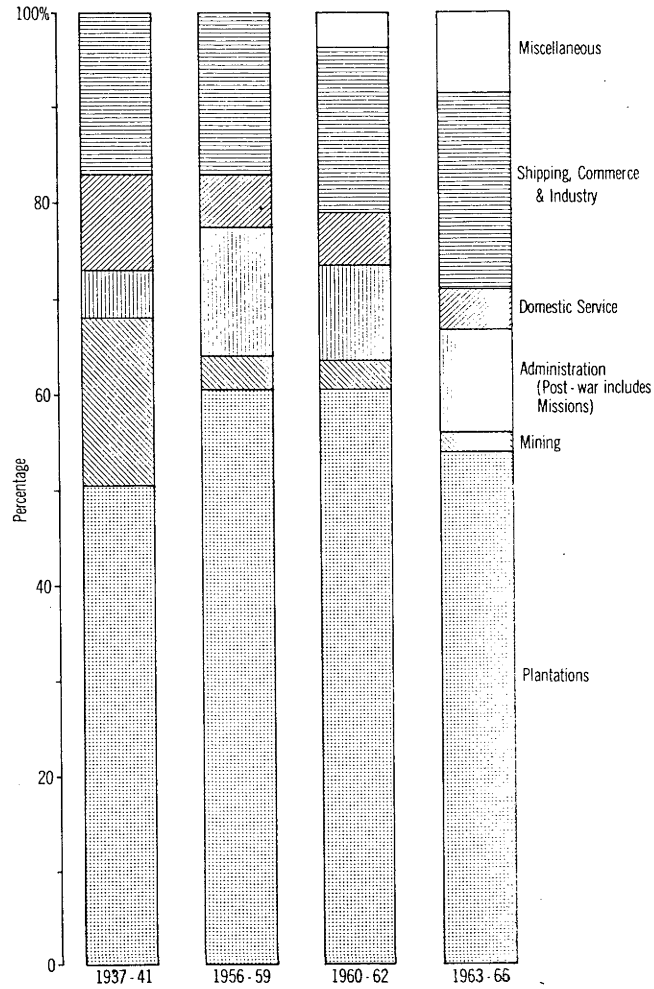
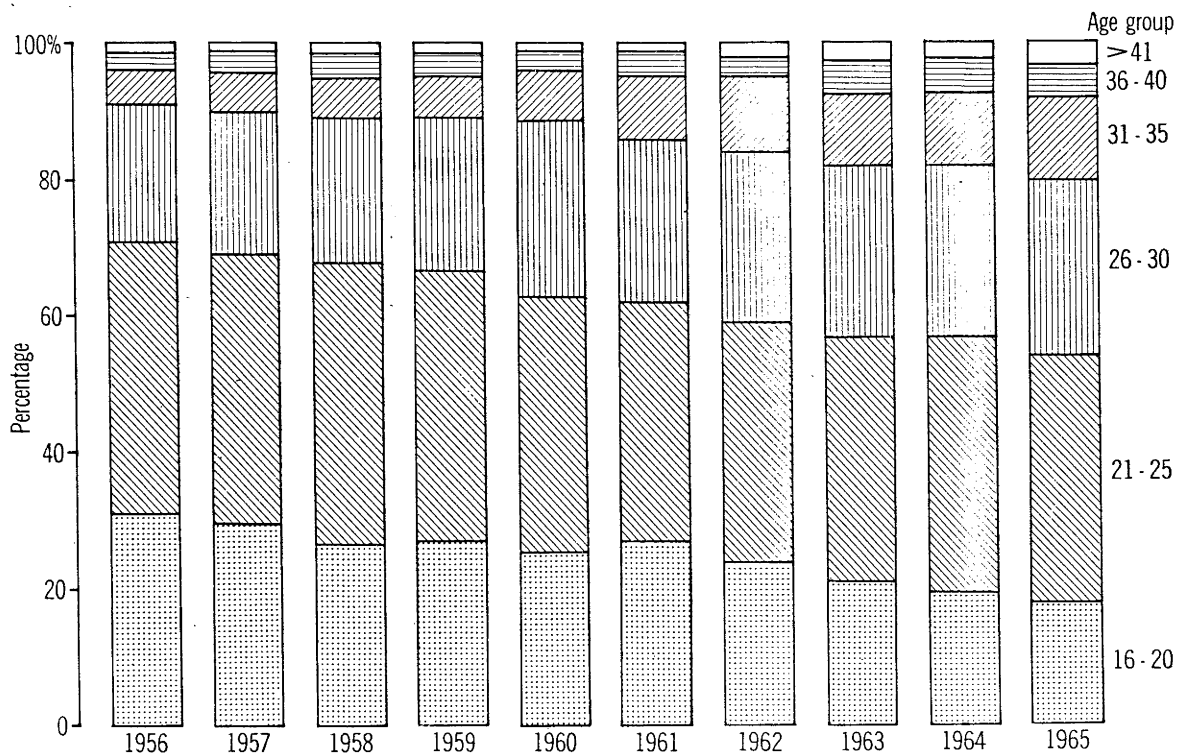


Figure 3.2 Adult Age Groups: New Guinea Workforce 1956 - 1965



The Minimum Wage: rural-urban differences. Until 1960, no distinction was made between urban and rural wages; all wages were covered by the Native Employment Act (Smith 1975:60). Even with the presence of new workers' associations, wages remained largely what employers wanted to pay (Maori Kiki 1970:619). Apart from a family allowance introduced by the Administration for a small group of Papua New Guinean public servants, there was no provision for any variation in the total wage which allowed for a married man's dependents (Rowley 1972:104).

... prevailing minimum urban wages for unskilled workers are clearly bachelor wages: it would be impossible to support a family on \$6.50 per week when prices for food are at least as high as those in Australia (and this takes no account of accommodation, clothing or transport requirements) (Langmore 1970:18).

The urban minimum wage remained constant for long periods. The minimum set at \$6.50 in 1965 remained at that level until 1970. A new Minimum Wages Board in 1974 decided to award a wage based wage' based on the assessed needs of a married couple. The method of calculation was based on the Public Service 'family needs' allowance. A new rural Minimum Wagesboard in 1974 decided to award a wage based on the needs of a married man. In the same year, the new urban minimum wage extended the 'living wage' to a family unit of three (a worker with wife and child). The actual money increases were quite large. The weekly minimum pay for plantation workers has risen by 120 per cent in six years from an estimated value of K4.50 in 1971 to K9.90 in March, 1977. The Port Moresby urban minimum wage rose by 251 per cent in the same period from K8 to K28.08. Between 1972 and March 1977,

the Consumer Price Index rose by only 60.7 per cent. So plantation workers' real pay was about 38 per cent higher than it would have been and that of urban workers about 119 per cent higher, had adjustments been made for consumer price increases only. Urban-rural wage inequalities had increased sharply and as a result, the relative economic position of urban workers improved greatly. This, in turn, allowed many to bring their wives and children to town and to view urban residence as a long-term prospect. The growing rural-urban income difference made the towns more attractive to migrants. The increase in real wages laid the foundation for a stable urban workforce.

Social conditions in the towns were also becoming more favourable to Papua New Guinea residents. A more lenient attitude by the Administration towards migrant settlements and urban residence without employment signalled the end of the role of the colonial state.

The end of the migrant labour system. In 1971, amendments to the Native Employment Ordinance virtually ended the regulatory function of the colonial state in maintaining the MLS. There was now no compulsion for the employee to be returned home. In fact he was given an economic incentive not to return. Previously the agreement worker had to be repatriated to his village without cost to himself. After 1971, a deduction was made from his weekly wages towards the cost of his return fare. If the worker decided not to return home, the deducted amount was reimbursed in full (Smith 1975:75-76)¹. An all cash wage was introduced and the practice of deferred pay was stopped.

1 The 1978 Employment Act reinstates the repatriation requirement on the part of employers.

The disengagement of the colonial state from the MLS was itself the result of the changing political and economic status of the Papua New Guinean workforce during the latter half of the 1960s. The growth of the towns together with an emerging political awareness and the new occupational mobility of their Papua New Guinean residents all served to weaken greatly the strict enforcement of the MLS and finally to end it.

Although plantation employment still accounted for 20 per cent (or 42,700 workers) of the wage labour force in 1976 (Lam 1978c: table 3) and short-term migrant workers still come from areas with few alternative sources of cash income, the government no longer involves itself in recruitment or repatriation as in the past. The other supporting conditions of the MLS such as restrictions on urban residence are also no longer enforced.

The major question considered in the remainder of this thesis is what effects of the MLS are evident in past and contemporary migration patterns and their likely impact on future migration trends. In particular, has the migrant's need to maintain a dual dependence on the two economic systems gone with the dissolution of the legal, political, administrative and economic arrangements that constituted the MLS.

The investigation of the continuing effects of the MLS on the demographic characteristics of post-war migrants, and its effect in the form of a continuing circular mobility between home village and the wage economy will be the concern of the remainder of this chapter.

Demographic changes. By 1971, 18.7 per cent of the indigenous population was outside the rural village sector. The census-defined urban areas had become as important as the rural non-village sector, parts of which were now proto-urban in nature (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Total indigenous population (1971 Census) by sector of residence and 1966-1971 average annual growth rates (per cent)

	Male	1966-71 average annual growth rate	Females	1966-71 average annual growth rate	Total	1966-71 average annual growth rate	Males per 100 females
Rural village	76.7	+0.4	86.0	+1.1	81.2	+0.8	96
Rural non- village ¹	12.0	+7.7	6.3	+12.8	9.2	+9.2	204
Urban ²	11.3	+15.8	7.6	+20.4	9.5	+17.5	161

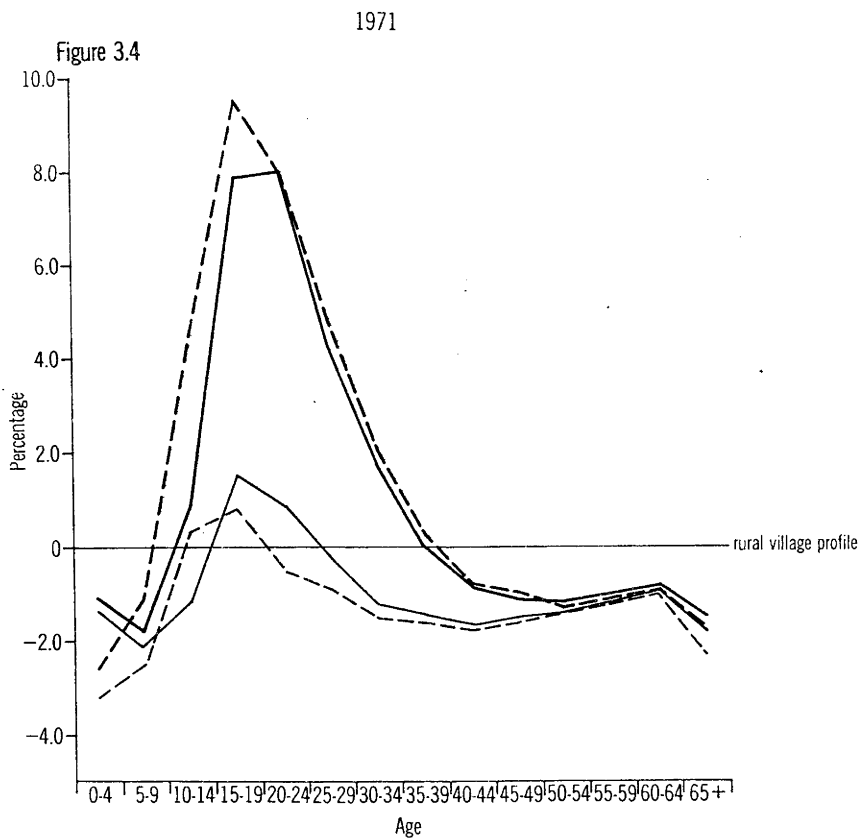
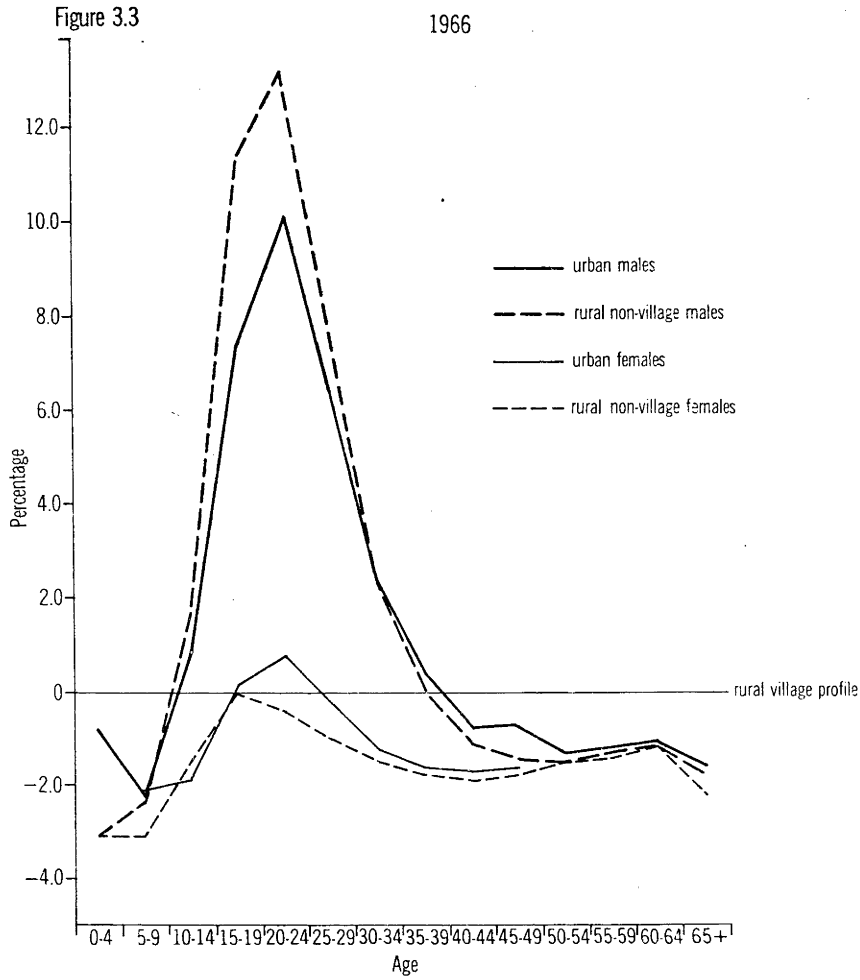
1 'Rural non-village' is defined for census purposes to include separately located schools, missions, plantations, rural settlements, defence establishments and centres with populations less than five hundred.

2 'Urban' is defined to include centres with populations of five hundred or more but excludes rural non-village groupings and rural villages.

Source: PNG Census 1966 and 1971.

Apart from the change in the direction of movement from rural non-village to urban areas, the age and sex composition of the extra-rural-village population also changed significantly (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4). The clear bias of young males aged 15 to 24 in the rural non-village sector in 1966 had receded somewhat by 1971, although the same

Age Differentials Between Rural Non-village and Urban Male & Female Populations
Compared to the Rural Village Population Distribution



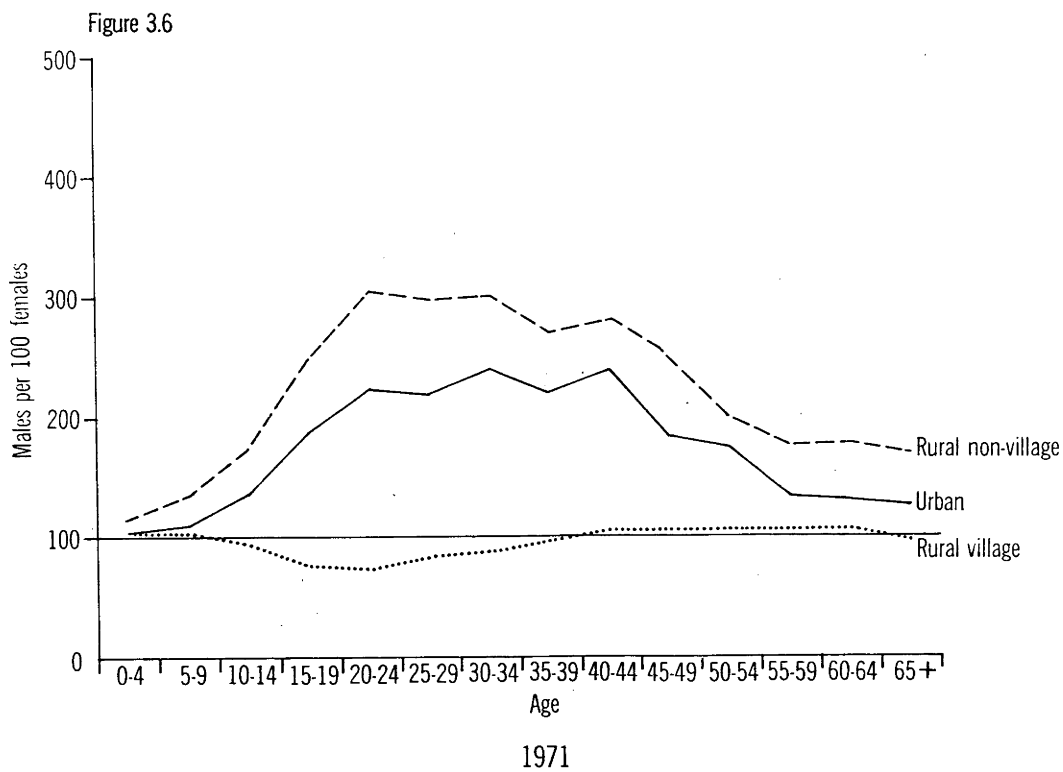
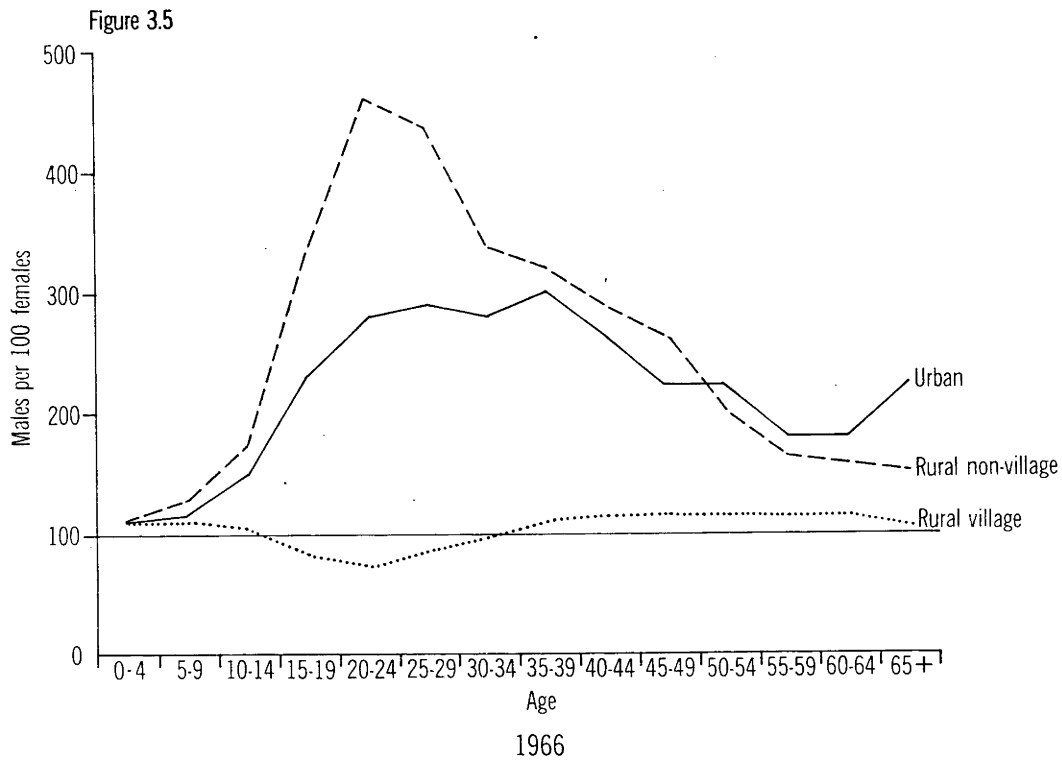
age group was still the most prominent. The slight over-representation in the proportion of younger males and females (10 to 14 years) in the rural non-village sector compared with the distribution of the population in the rural village sector may be attributed to the new importance of education which was often only available at regional centres. Of the women enumerated in 1966, the only age group to be slightly over-represented was the 20 to 24 year old urban women. All the women in other age groups were considerably under-represented. By 1971 a broader age grouping had become over-represented and for the first time women in the rural non-village sector were over-represented, but only in the 10 to 19 age group, a reflection of the number attending regional high schools.

In 1970, the official *Inquiry into Rural Minimum Wages* claimed that planters were becoming favourable towards the settling of family units on their estates:

Time after time we were impressed with the statements of employers that the married workers were the really stable part of their workforce. Even the representative of Burns Philp Co Ltd. stated that he was in favour of increasing the number of married workers on plantations (Cochrane 1970:114).

But a balanced male-to-female population ratio was still far from reality in both the rural non-village and urban sectors in 1971 although the sex ratios in both sectors had become somewhat less imbalanced since 1966, particularly for young males in the rural non-village sector (see Figures 3.5 and 3.6). The situation of an urban employee in the mid-1960s is described by Polansky (1966) in his

Males Per One Hundred Females For Each Age Group for the Indigenous Population Living in the Rural, Rural Non-village and Urban Sectors, 1966 & 1971



Source: L. Lewis and A. Elek, unpublished census tabulations. Reproduced in table 5, Bathgate 1978 : 7

assessment of workers' accommodation facilities in Rabaul at that time:

Since employers are legally required to provide accommodation for their workers, there has been some reluctance to employ married men. When an employee marries he has the choice of leaving his wife in her village, staying with relatives who have a house (in most cases already over-crowded) or of building a dwelling for himself in one of the shanty towns ... insufficient accommodation for married Papuan and New Guineans is the greatest social problem with which Rabaul has to cope (Polansky 1966:45-46).

A report on the *Structure of Unskilled Wages in Papua New Guinea* gave the following figures on the provision of accommodation for the urban workforce in 1968 (Isaac 1970:46,47). Of the private sector employers, only 32 per cent provided combined married and single quarters (although the relative proportions are not known), with as much as 40 per cent of employers providing single accommodation only and the remaining 28 per cent providing no accommodation. The Administration was more amenable to providing both married and single quarters although no indication is available on what proportion of facilities were for married couples.

Under these conditions, and given the considerable effort needed to build a house in a new migrant settlement, it is little wonder that men were still reluctant to see towns as places of long term residence for themselves and their families. With 58 per cent of all employee-accommodation provided by the employer (Isaac 1970:46 table 3.4) the worker was in an ambiguous and precarious position. Cheap, employer-provided, accommodation was available to him (for 34 per cent of employees it was free) but it was mostly single quarters only and provided only while he continued with the same employer.

Analysis of data from the 1966 and 1971 censuses on marital status by sector of residence shows the degree of physical separation still required of the worker from his family and the reluctance of urban workers to marry.

The most obvious difference between the sectors is the low proportion of single men resident in the village compared with the high proportion in the other two sectors. This is partly explained by the large number of 15 to 24 year old males outside the rural village sector. [Since of this age group only 20 per cent were married in the national population as a whole (Bathgate 1978:41)] Nevertheless, of the total adult population in the two non-traditional sectors in 1971, only 26 per cent in the rural non-village section were married with accompanying spouses and 37 per cent in the urban sector. The substantial difference in the proportions married with accompanying wives between the two sectors is a good indication of the continuance of the earlier patterns of plantation employment. The decrease in the proportion of unaccompanied married males in the urban sector between 1966 and 1971, while the proportion of single males remained constant, is a sign of the changing urban conditions which now increasingly permitted the male worker and his family to become entirely dependent on the urban economy, at least as long as he was employed.

The age-dependency and child-dependency ratios in 1966 and 1971 show that the two non-traditional residential sectors still basically catered only for work-age people, although by 1971 there was more evidence of nuclear families. But the proportion of people over 45 years old was low in both years.

Table 3.2

Marital status¹ and proportion of males 15 years and over with or without accompanying spouse for the three residential sectors 1966 and 1971 (per cent)

	1966			1971				
	Single	Married without wife	Married with wife	Total	Single	Married without wife	Married with wife	Total
Rural	33.9	-	66.1	100	31.3	-	68.7	100
Rural non-village	65.1	14.9	20.0	100	62.4	12.0	25.6	100
Urban	57.1	12.0	30.9	100	56.7	6.5	36.8	100
Proportion of men aged 15-24 in total adult population	24.8	57.8	52.4	-	23.9	53.4	52.4	100

¹ All couples recognised as married or otherwise cohabitating were listed as 'married' by census enumerators (Bathgate 1978:37).

Source: Bathgate 1978, Tables 14 and 29.

Table 3.3

Age dependency ratios for the three residential sectors
1966 and 1971, total indigenous population

Sector	1966	1971
Rural village	0.494	0.496
Rural non-village	0.059	0.088
Urban	0.093	0.115

Age dependency ratio = $\frac{\text{Persons aged 45+ years}}{\text{Persons aged 15-44 years}}$

Source: PNG Census 1966 and 1971: Bathgate 1978, Table 14

Note: the denominator refers to those adults most likely to be engaged in wage employment. The age dependency ratio is an indicator of the proportion of non-productive to productive persons.

Table 3.4

Child dependency ratios for the three residential
sectors, 1966 and 1971, total indigenous population

Sector	1966	1971
Rural	0.811	0.846
Rural non-village	0.450	0.655
Urban	0.520	0.600

Child dependency ratio = $\frac{\text{Persons aged 0-14 years}}{\text{Persons aged 15-64 years}}$

Source: PNG Census 1966 and 1971

Note: the denominator refers to those adults most likely to have charge of children. The child dependency ratio is an indicator of the proportion of children to responsible adults.

The growth of the towns. Under the influence of the plantation and mining enclaves the towns, except for the two colonial port capitals, Port Moresby and Rabaul¹, were little more than administrative centres housing largely expatriate populations until the early 1960s. The growth of the major towns is shown in Figures 3.7 and 3.8. The first figure graphs the growth of the estimated population figures of Port Moresby and Lae starting from 1947 and 1954 respectively. The non-census figures may be suspect. The data are presented merely to indicate a trend. Figure 3.8 presents cumulative frequency graph lines for the three major towns using the year of arrival of migrant residents up to 1972 based on the samples interviewed in the UHS. The year previous to the survey, 1973, has been excluded because of the distortion caused by short term visitors, mostly in town for three months or less.

Port Moresby and Rabaul, the long established centres had only marginally longer term migrant population than Lae, which was little more than an aerodrome during the 1930s and in the immediate post-war period. The other towns' growth patterns, not shown, are similar, with the newer Highland towns following the same trend as Lae and the older coastal towns resembling Rabaul's and Port Moresby's pattern.

1 Rabaul had a population of 3786 persons in 1914, 1600 of whom were Europeans, 236 were Japanese, 1450 were classified as 'non-indigenous natives' [sic] and 500 were Papua New Guinea police and contract labourers (Wolfers 1975:75). By 1941, Port Moresby could claim a European population of only 400, 'a handful of Asians and mixed-race people, and some three or four thousand Papuans' (Oram 1976:26). Lae's population as late as 1935 numbered only 80 Europeans (Lucas 1972:260).

Figure 3.7 Actual Growth in Port Moresby and Lae's Indigenous and Non-indigenous Population, 1947-1977

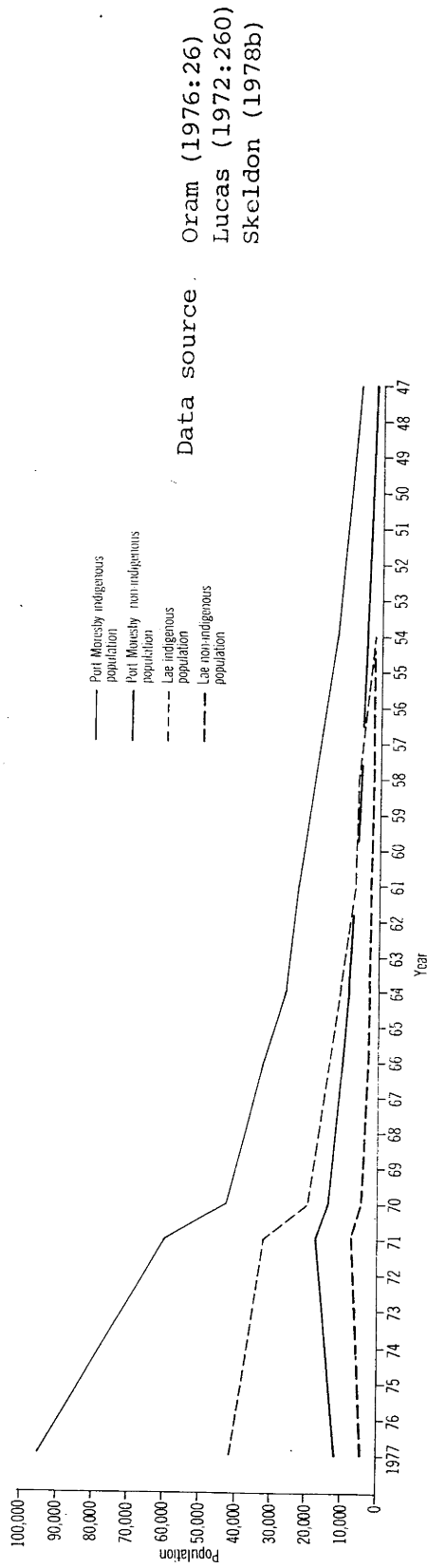
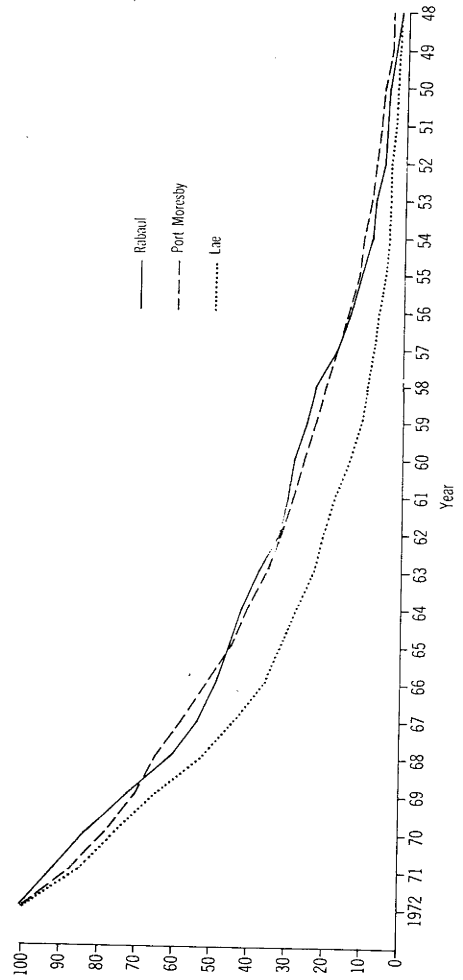


Figure 3.8 Cumulative Frequency of Total Current Resident Population for the Year They Arrived in Town



The very recent expansion of long established towns can be partly attributed to the successful operation of the MLS. Repeal of the laws dealing with curfews, residence location, vagrancy, prohibition of alcoholic beverages and other discriminatory legislation had begun in 1958. The curfew and absence-from-quarters regulations were repealed in 1959 (Wolfers 1975:135). A more lenient attitude towards unrestricted movement to the towns followed. The prohibition on remaining in town for more than four days without employment or permit was lifted in 1964, although the vagrancy laws were still to be enforced¹.

Although Port Moresby has had a long-term resident migrant population, it was limited to certain groups who could make adequate accommodation arrangements. All early migrant groups were not able to be housed by their employer. According to figures cited by Oram (1976: 97), only about half the indigenous population of 12,000 in 1956 were accommodated by employers. Urban restrictions meant that very few long-distance migrants attempted to settle without employment in town. Until the early 1960s all migrants to Port Moresby were from the immediate region and, with the exception of two groups, were able to obtain land to settle on through traditional or kinship ties with the customary land owners. Therefore until that time most migrants were

1 The vagrancy law has continued to be enforced. For Port Moresby '... over the years a large number of people have been imprisoned for short periods and ordered to return to their villages. In 1963, an average of twenty-five people a month were being charged in courts as vagrants ... In 1967 vagrancy cases constituted 5.7 per cent, and in 1970 28 per cent, of cases heard in Port Moresby district and local courts ...' (Oram 1976:169). As late as December 1973, the District Court Magistrate in Madang encouraged the activities of a Vagrancy squad. In the previous six months, 276 men were repatriated by order of the court (Curtain 1979).

able to arrange to build a house in a traditional village within the town's boundaries. The migrant settlement population was estimated to be 15 per cent of the total indigenous population in 1956; it was still only 17 per cent by 1964, but by 1970 it was said to have jumped to 28 per cent (Oram 1976:99).

By the late 1960s, the Administration had begun to reverse its earlier hostile attitude towards 'shanty towns'. In 1968, a comprehensive plan was prepared to settle all migrants although the all-embracing scheme was later abandoned. By 1969, the Assistant Administrator for Economic Affairs stated his belief that 'the squatter problem is inevitable, we are only seeing the start of it' (cited in Oram 1976:201). In reply to a House of Assembly resolution in August 1969, calling for the re-introduction of restrictions on movements to towns, the Administration declined to impose legal restrictions and announced instead four quite different policies. Urban local government was to be set up in the major towns. A Rural Development Fund to help reduce urban drift was to be expanded. No-covenant housing for urban areas was to be encouraged and finally a restrictive approach would be used by 'toughening' the existing vagrancy laws to permit courts to send people back to their home villages (O'Neill 1976:3-4).

At the same time that urban residence was becoming easier, employment opportunities in the urban economy were rapidly becoming available. Localisation of the Public Service gathered momentum from 1962¹. Between that date and 1964, the number of Papua New Guinean

1 'Localisation' refers to a policy of replacing expatriate employees by Papua New Guinean employees.

public servants rose by 40 per cent. This 40 per cent increase compared with an increase of only 25 per cent over the previous decade. Localisation and public service employment have grown rapidly since.

Private sector employment was extended under a five year development programme commenced in 1968. The period was characterised by greatly expanded private investment in mining (the copper mine on Bougainville), construction, manufacturing, commerce, tourist facilities and other urban based activities. The public sector accounted for about half the employment growth in most of the large towns, the private sector being more important in Lae (with an expanding manufacturing sector), Mt. Hagen (providing services to a fast growing region) and the towns on Bougainville, which were closely associated with the mine (Garnaut 1977:72).

In Port Moresby, more rapid growth from net in-migration began in 1964 and gathered momentum after 1966, with particularly strong growth in numbers arriving and staying on in 1970, 1971 and 1972 (see Figure 3.8). In Lae, the 'takeoff' in the growth of the resident migrant population very clearly began in 1967; the rate of growth reached a peak in 1969 and then ebbed somewhat until it rose again in 1972. Rabaul's migrant population growth showed a much earlier but slower growth reaching a peak in 1969 and 1970, with a fall-off in the rate of growth after that. Growth in Lae and Port Moresby was rapid in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Port Moresby's growth rate has been sustained during the 1970s but growth in Lae has been slower.

The growth of the urban population by 17.5 per cent between 1966 and 1971, according to the adjusted census figures, is almost

certainly an over-estimate. Results from the UHS (Garnaut *et al.* 1977: 37) and the recent urban population survey's figures confirm this assessment (Skeldon 1978b). The following table derived from Skeldon (1978b:5) presents the growth rates based on the unadjusted figures for 1971.

Table 3.5

Growth of towns in Papua New Guinea 1966-77 average annual growth rates indigenous/citizen population using unadjusted census figures for 1971 (per cent)

	1966-71	1971-77	1966-77	Total 1977
Port Moresby	10.5	10.5	10.5	95,249
Lae	16.0	6.9	10.4	40,992
Rabaul	3.7	6.2	4.7	11,520
Madang	10.0	5.4	8.7	18,667
Goroka	9.6	6.9	8.2	8,593
Popondetta	-	7.1	-	5,739
Kavieng	6.5	9.4	8.1	4,134

Source: Adapted from Skeldon (1978b)

Urban growth rates since 1971 for the above-mentioned towns except for Port Moresby have shown a decline. If a natural rate of population increase of between 2.8 and 3.1 per cent per annum is assumed, then migration has been the major factor in urban population growth between 1966 and 1977 of all the cited towns except Rabaul. Despite the slower rate of migration after 1971, the urban growth rates for the 1971 to

to 1977 period are still very high by the standards of other Third World countries.

Part of the explanation for the recent decline in the rate of rural to urban migration is likely to be the growing level of urban unemployment since 1974. Between July 1971 and December 1973-January 1974 the male 15 to 19 age cohort showed the largest decline in its relative presence in the major towns, although the 15 to 24 male age group was still the most prominent. Amongst the adult women, the 20 to 24 year old group experienced the most significant increase in its relative presence (see Table 3.6). Across the seven major towns (excluding the Bougainvillean towns) the process of 'normalisation' of the population was proceeding rapidly. The proportion of the male work-age group (15-44 years) in the total population of those towns fell from 34.7 per cent in 1971 to 32.3 per cent in 1973-74 over a period of some 30 months. The proportion of women of the same age group in the total rose from 18.7 per cent to 20.4 per cent. The Bougainvillean towns focused on the copper mine were quite atypical although the proportion of work-age males also fell (from 78.2 per cent to 61 per cent). The proportion of women in this age group, 13.5 per cent, was considerably below that of the other towns and that of the national population distribution (see Table 3.1 in Garnaut *et al.* 1977: 21). Children (0-14 years) across the seven major towns were still under-represented compared with the national population, but the youngest age group (0-4 years) was the closest to the national proportion, reflecting the growing number of women of reproductive age now in town.

The 'normalisation' process across the major towns has continued as shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.6

Age/sex profiles of the major towns for three periods with the National Census, 1971
indigenous population only

Age	Seven major towns National Census June/July 1966		Seven major towns National Census July 1971		Seven major towns UHS Dec 1973/Jan 1974		Indigenous population National Census July 1971	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	8.13	7.21	9.17	8.25	9.41	8.94	9.53	9.01
5-9	5.42	4.59	7.11	6.04	7.42	6.19	8.64	7.56
10-14	4.59	2.73	5.58	3.77	7.28	3.87	5.79	4.99
15-19	10.71	4.07	9.60	4.80	6.84	4.22	4.82	3.88
20-24	12.20	4.30	9.34	5.22	8.53	6.26	3.92	4.17
25-34	17.2	4.94	11.32	6.13	11.23	7.29	6.96	7.21
35-44	6.26	2.19	4.46	2.50	5.66	2.64	5.29	5.38
45-54	2.18	0.95	2.24	1.35	1.60	1.04	4.10	3.72
55-64	0.56	0.32	0.68	0.63	0.52	0.41	1.87	1.56
65 +	0.18	0.10	0.35	0.23	0.34	0.40	0.90	0.64
	67.43		59.85		58.83		51.85	

Source: PNG Census 1966, 1971 and UHS.

Table 3.7

Sex ratios of indigenous urban populations 1966-77
(males per 100 females)

	1966	1971	1977
Port Moresby	185	158	139
Lae	202	174	152
Rabaul	338	214	149
Madang	228	163	135
Goroka	222	176	152
Popondetta	-	148	139
Kavieng	226	158	152

Source: Skeldon (1978b:13)

This process has been the result of a trend towards the reunion of migrant families in urban areas, associated with a substantial increase in the level of urban wage employment in the 1960s and with the high level of real urban wages in the 1970s. At the same time, social and economic changes, among them the expansion of formal education, have probably increased the propensity of unaccompanied females to migrate.

Despite the more balanced sex ratios and the greater number of children in the major towns, factors which illustrate the extent of the changes in the context within which migration now occurs, there were still very few older people in the urban population. The age dependency ratios in 1966 and 1971 for both urban and rural non-village

populations showed low proportions of the elderly. Between 1971 and the UHS in 1973-74 the proportion of people 45 years and over appears to have dropped from 5.5 per cent to 4.3 per cent. Part of this fall may have been associated with the rapidly increasing numbers of children and younger women. The small absolute numbers of people involved and difficulties in the UHS in interviews with old people call for caution in pointing to a change here. But the fact remains that this age group appears to be quite markedly under-represented in urban areas compared with the national or rural village population (see Table 3.6 and Figure 3.4). The important role of employer-provided accommodation, the lack of an adequate pension, and the intention (or necessity) of many work-age adults to return home before or on retirement will be discussed at length in Chapter Six when the situation of the urban East Sepiks will be examined. The tendency even of those with a long experience of urban employment to maintain a strong attachment to the rural economy and to eventually to retire to the home village has been noted for the Tolai men employed in Rabaul (A.L. Epstein 1969:67-68; Salisbury 1970:168-9).

Against a background of expanding employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers, together with increasing real urban wages and a fall in returns from coffee (important in the Highlands and the East Sepik, see Lam 1978a:9-10), the urban areas achieved a meteoric rise in population between 1966 and 1973. But since 1974, the total urban demand for labour has stagnated. Against a background of widespread fears about the place of foreign investment in the economy, few projects were started by the private sector after self-government in December 1973. After a cutback in Australian Aid

and a sharp increase in urban wages in late 1974, governmental expenditure was reduced mainly by lowering the number of unskilled labourers on the payroll.

While there has probably been some slight (and, by past levels, very slow) growth in total wage employment, there has been very little or no growth in the number of jobs for people with little or no formal education. Despite a very large rise in real urban wages since 1972, the low level of job creation from 1974 seems likely to have greatly reduced the townward migration of adult males with relatively little education. The tendency towards increased unemployment for these single young men is likely to have been checked after a period by a return to the village (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:187).

Preliminary results on employment from the 1977 Urban Population Survey, conducted by the PNG Bureau of Statistics, show that the proportion of males 15 years and older outside formal employment has increased significantly in Lae, Madang and Rabaul since the UHS in 1973-74. This deteriorating employment situation in the intermediate towns in the mid-1970s may well have discouraged potential migrants, especially young unskilled men, from moving to urban areas. The lower urban growth rates since 1971 probably reflect this slow-down in employment growth (Skeldon 1978b:14).

The increases in the level of urban wages and continuing growth in the Public Service are likely to have continued to encourage those with educational qualifications in demand to migrate. For those already in urban employment, the higher levels of unemployment are likely to have markedly reduced job turnover thus producing a more

stable workforce, while at the same time the higher urban wage levels would enable more workers to establish families within town.

The current situation has changed substantially from the conditions dictated by the MLS. The composition of the migrant flow has changed from being almost solely young, unskilled, unaccompanied males on short-term contracts for minimal pay to a more balanced male to female migrant stream in which higher educational levels are increasingly important. Employment for many is now likely to be long-term with married accommodation provided and wages geared towards a family livelihood.

There has been a shift from a short-term *dual dependence* shown most dramatically in the ending, for many urban migrants, of the physical separation of the worker from his family. But the question of whether it is necessary for urban migrants still to maintain a long-term dependence on the rural economy is explored, in detail, in Chapter Six. The evidence presented in the next section suggests that eventual circular migration to the home village has been the aim of most migrants.

Some evidence on circular migration

The period-of-residence data included in the 1971 Census provide interesting information on migrant flows for people from each of the provinces¹. Much of the movement continues to be short-term. Just over one-third of total outmigration of those then absent from the village sector occurred during the year immediately preceding the census, and three-quarters had occurred in the previous five years (Skeldon 1978a:15). Between the provinces there were important

1 The following census data on migration are based merely on inter-provincial movement without any reference to a specific minimum time period. Movements within a province are excluded.

differences, with some areas having long-term absentees and other areas having a relatively quick turnover of outmigrant population. For example, almost one quarter of the absentees of the Gulf province had been resident outside their province for ten years or more and only one-fifth had moved during the year prior to the census. On the other hand, about 45 per cent of the absentees from the Western Highlands, Southern Highlands and Chimbu had migrated during the year before the census and only 3 to 7 per cent of the total number had been away for longer than ten years (Skeldon 1978:15).

Skeldon (1978a:15-18) used length-of-residence data from both censuses to derive an index of the volume of circular mobility. He compared the 1971 outmigrant population of five years' or more residence outside the rural village sector from a particular province with the total absentee population for that province in 1966. The result is a ratio for the number of 1966 outmigrants who survived the intercensal period outside their province of birth and were still resident in the same location in 1971. The others who did not survive the five year period are assumed to have died, moved to another destination or returned to their home province. Skeldon makes the assumption that 'the vast majority will return to their province of birth'. Young (1977a:179) on the other hand, claims that urban migrants are more likely to move to other towns rather than return home¹. So it is more accurate to see the ratio as an indication of stability of residence rather than circularity.

1 However, Young (1977a:150) admits that some migration histories culled from the UHS may have omitted to mention return visits to the home village. This is likely, as the questionnaire asked for a listing of the migrant's destinations only.

Table 3.8

Proportion of 1966 interprovincial migrants still resident in the same province in 1971

Western	52.5	Morobe	44.6
Gulf	67.1	Madang	41.5
Central	36.4	East Sepik	43.1
Milne Bay	44.1	West Sepik	27.2
Northern	30.8	Manus	33.6
Southern Highlands	14.5	New Ireland	31.9
Western Highlands	16.6	West New Britain	36.5
Chimbu	29.6	East New Britain	37.5
Eastern Highlands	23.1	Bougainville	36.4

Calculated from raw data presented in Table 7, Skeldon (1978a).

Overall, a low proportion (36 per cent) of inter-provincial migrants in 1966 survived to be counted again in the same province in 1971. The surviving population five years later is lowest for migrants from the Highlands provinces and the West Sepik (in other words over 80 per cent of the migrant population from each of these areas had changed residence by 1971, most having probably returned home). The proportion of surviving migrant population was highest for the coastal Papuan provinces. The New Guinea coastal provinces were in between.

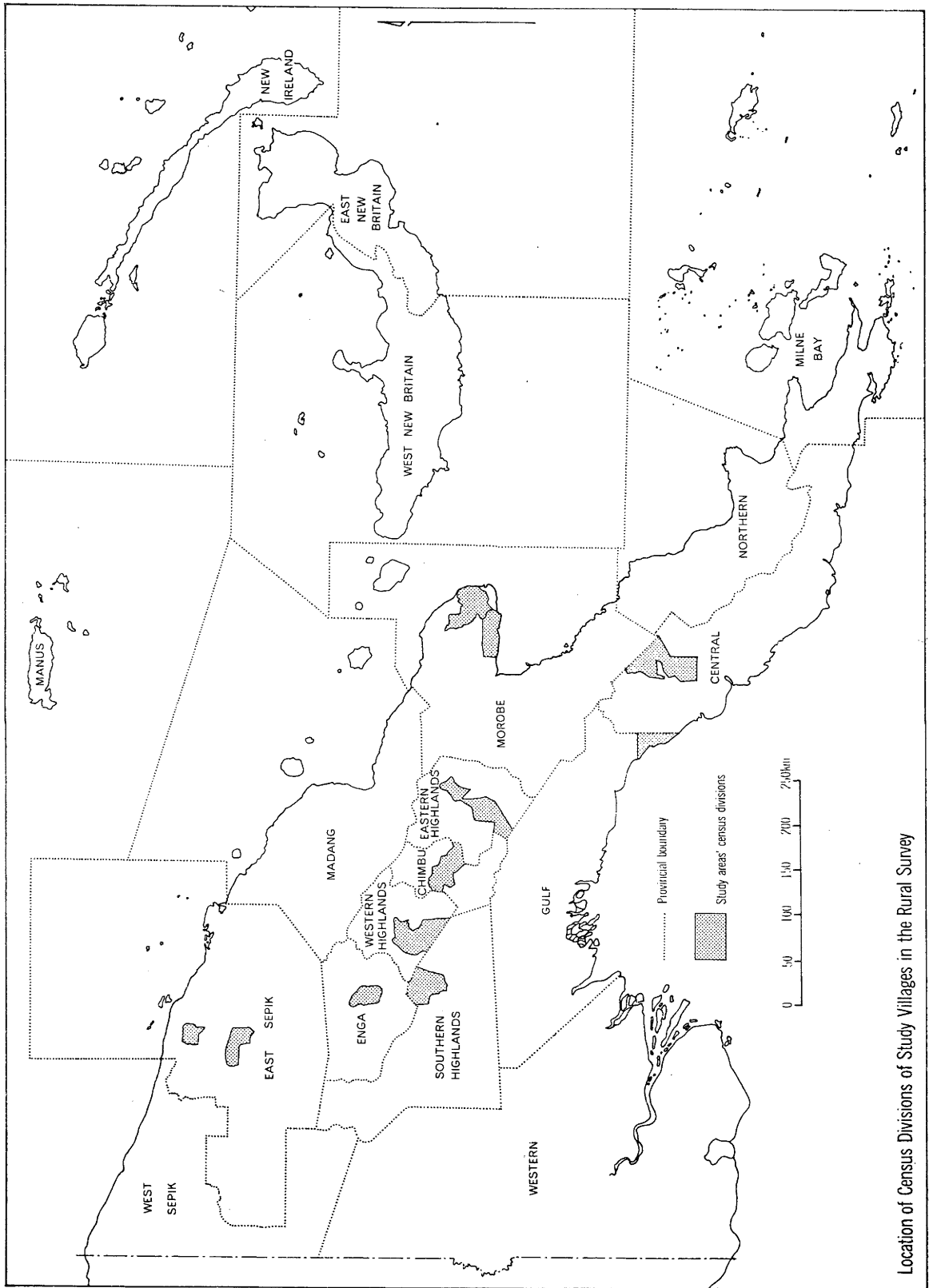
More conclusive evidence of circular migration over a lifetime can be obtained from the Rural Survey conducted in 1974-75. The following is a summary of the evidence as presented in Conroy and

Curtain (1978).

A migration continuum for Papua New Guinea. The data in appendix 3.1 concern the ten districts (formerly called subdistricts) in which the rural survey was conducted and describe three important criteria for an assessment of patterns of migration (see Map 3.1). These criteria are the proportion of total population which is now or has ever been migrant, the proportion of such migrants which has returned to the home village, and the masculinity ratio among those who were classified as absentees from the villages at the time of the survey. The first two measures are given separately for males and females, and are further subdivided by age cohorts.

The ordering of districts in Appendix 3.1 reflects a continuum with Malalaua and Ambunti at one extreme and Mt Hagen at the other. The continuum (Figure 3.9) may be conceived as ranging from lower (Malalaua, Ambunti) to greater (Mt Hagen) circularity of migration, and from a higher to a lower general propensity to migrate. Fine-tuning, in the sense of deciding the exact order of districts on the continuum, was done by reference to the patterns of migration and return shown in the age cohorts. Despite a possible difficulty in arranging a precise ordering, a clear-cut continuum is evident in the terms described above. The range is from coastal districts at one extreme to highlands districts at the other with the Gollala district acting as a sort of bridge or link in the middle.

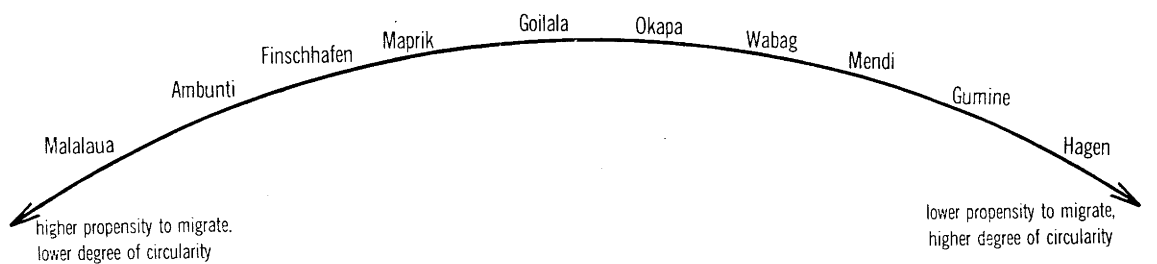
Several of the coastal districts included in the survey have been subject to external influences, such as proselytising, trading



Location of Census Divisions of Study Villages in the Rural Survey

Map 3.1

A MIGRATION CONTINUUM
Ten Rural Survey Districts in 1974/75



Source: Conroy and Curtain (1978)

Figure 3.9

and administration since the late nineteenth century (Malalaua, Finschhafen) while in other lowland areas (Maprik, Ambunti) such influences began later, but were evident by the 1920s and 1930s. The greater extent of labour recruitment in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea before the Pacific War is reflected in the time-pattern of outmigration as described below. The highlands districts, from Okapa to Hagen, at the right-hand end of the continuum were brought under administrative control in the late 1940s and early 1950s, for the most part. The Goilala district is an intermediate case of a highland region relatively accessible to the coast (and to Port Moresby, in particular) and with a history of contact well before the Second World War.

It is also possible, by reference to the proportions in each age cohort which are, or have ever been migrant, to distinguish a time-pattern of outmigration. Thus, one may list in order the districts in

which significant outmigration appears to have commenced (on the assumption that the age of first migration is broadly similar from district to district). Such a chronological listing is as follows:

1. Finschhafen
2. Ambunti (women out much earlier than Yangoru)
3. Maprik
4. Malalaua (women out much earlier than Okapa)
5. Goilala (women out earlier than Okapa, men perhaps slightly later)
6. Okapa
- 7-10. Gumine/Mendi/Hagen/Wabag (inseparable on the basis of the simple indicator used here).

To what extent does this chronological ordering correspond with the continuum from lesser to greater circularity, from higher to lower propensity to migrate? The persistence of circular migration is to some extent related to how recently people from each particular district entered the national migration stream in significant numbers. In other words, late entrants (ie from the highlands) show the strongest degree of circularity. But Malalaua (and to a lesser extent, Ambunti) has been relatively quick to move to a situation of significantly reduced circularity or (to look at the other side of the coin), an increased degree of long-term or even permanent absenteeism from the home village. Interestingly, and perhaps significantly, both Malalaua and Ambunti are swampy lowland districts in which sago is the staple food and in which the extent of provision of capital infrastructure and services by government has been relatively slight. By contrast, Finschhafen, from which district significant outmigration

appears to have commenced first, still evinces quite a high degree of circularity.

Circular migration over a relatively short time period within an individual's life-cycle, evident in the study villages in the Highlands, points to a clear continuation of a *dual dependence* for the migrant. The patterns of circular migration in the coastal study villages show the more ambivalent position of migrants, with two areas, Malalaua and Ambunti, clearly tending towards a permanent dependence on the wage economy. Nevertheless, even for these two study areas, close contact was still maintained through a greater number of return visits than for the other study areas. The extent of a continuing dependence on the rural-peasant economy for the Ambunti districts study villages is discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

Conclusion

Data in this chapter have demonstrated how, in the post-war period, the age/sex profile and the marital status of the migrant stream were influenced by the institutional arrangements under which employment was organised and how that profile changed markedly as those conditions altered. The growth of the towns in itself would have meant little change in the age and sex composition of migrants if it had not been accompanied by major political and economic changes. Some of the new factors were the development of job opportunities for an educated, skilled workforce against the background of a toleration by the colonial administration for urban migrant settlements which could provide free accommodation regardless of employment status. Higher real urban wages

after 1972 also encouraged workers to bring their families to town. Recent high levels of unemployment may further change the former single-male bias by discouraging the short-term job seekers from staying in town and encouraging those with jobs to retain their present employment, bring their families to town and to remain there as long as the employment lasts.

Despite this shift from a short-term migration pattern in which single men were predominant, towards a more family-oriented, longer term urban residence, a continuing need for a dependence on the rural economy appears to be evident in the absence of older people in the towns. The pattern of circular migration over a life-cycle, based on the home village, is still evident in most rural areas of Papua New Guinea. Even for those areas showing signs of permanent absenteeism, the level of contact maintained by migrants with their home village is high.

The extent of the continuing dependence of urban dwellers on the rural economy will be analysed in more detail in Chapter Six. The following chapter continues the assessment of the effects of the MLS, concentrating on the spatial distribution of migrants.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER THREE
The Migrant Status of the Populations of Study Villages in the Rural Survey, 1974-75

District/Age	'Migrants' (absent and returned) as a percentage of total population				Returned 'migrants' as a percentage of total 'migrants'			
	Male	(n)	Female	(n)	Male	(n)	Female	(n)
Malalaua								
15-24	83.7	(227)	63.4	(175)	14.2	(190)	27.9	(111)
24-34	91.9	(123)	72.3	(119)	29.2	(113)	34.9	(86)
35-44	67.5	(80)	32.8	(67)	66.7	(54)	63.6	(22)
45-54	36.7	(49)	29.1	(62)	61.1	(18)	72.2	(18)
55+	22.5	(49)	16.0	(50)	90.9	(11)	87.5	(8)
Total	73.1	(528)	51.8	(473)	30.3	(386)	38.8	(245)
M ratio (absentees) 1.79								
Ambunti								
15-24	89.3	(159)	57.7	(137)	14.8	(142)	25.3	(79)
25-34	93.8	(112)	61.6	(86)	28.6	(105)	32.1	(53)
35-44	83.6	(128)	45.1	(133)	42.1	(107)	35.0	(60)
45-54	61.3	(80)	26.6	(79)	63.3	(49)	52.4	(21)
55+	36.7	(60)	25.0	(44)	77.3	(22)	81.8	(11)
Total	78.8	(539)	46.8	(479)	33.9	(425)	34.8	(224)
M ratio (absentees) 1.93								
Finschhafen								
15-24	68.9	(206)	84.3	(251)	24.7	(142)	25.6	(86)
25-34	87.9	(174)	44.0	(157)	36.0	(153)	31.9	(69)
35-44	85.1	(94)	37.3	(102)	53.8	(80)	42.1	(38)
45-54	83.5	(85)	20.2	(94)	54.9	(71)	47.4	(19)
55+	63.8	(94)	14.1	(64)	86.7	(60)	66.7	(9)
Total	77.5	(653)	33.1	(668)	44.3	(506)	33.9	(221)
M ratio (absentees) 1.93								
Maprik								
15-24	73.4	(286)	41.6	(214)	23.3	(210)	51.7	(89)
25-34	84.7	(202)	50.3	(165)	43.7	(171)	43.4	(83)
35-44	83.7	(172)	29.3	(181)	65.3	(144)	64.2	(53)
45-54	72.7	(165)	11.6	(121)	84.2	(120)	64.3	(14)
55+	37.3	(67)	14.0	(50)	92.0	(25)	71.4	(7)
Total	75.2	(892)	33.7	(731)	51.6	(670)	52.8	(246)
M ratio (absentees) 2.83								
Goilala								
15-24	62.9	(132)	27.0	(115)	31.3	(83)	29.0	(31)
25-34	69.6	(138)	29.8	(104)	36.5	(96)	48.4	(31)
35-44	67.0	(91)	25.4	(59)	70.5	(61)	46.7	(15)
45-54	41.7	(48)	12.8	(39)	60.0	(20)	20.0	(5)
55+	13.6	(22)	10.0	(10)	*	(*)	*	(*)
Total	61.0	(431)	25.4	(327)	44.1	(263)	38.6	(83)
M ratio (absentees) 2.88								

Okapa	'Migrants' (absent and returned) as a percentage of total population				Returned 'migrants' as a percentage of total 'migrants'			
	Male	(n)	Female	(n)	Male	(n)	Female	(n)
15-24	77.4	(133)	14.3	(92)	43.7	(103)	53.9	(13)
25-34	69.5	(118)	11.6	(155)	67.1	(82)	33.3	(18)
35-44	68.1	(72)	4.9	(61)	89.8	(49)	*	(*)
45-54	36.7	(60)	-	(28)	90.9	(22)	-	(-)
55+	19.2	(26)	-	(17)	80.0	(5)	-	(-)
Total	63.8	(409)	9.6	(353)	64.4	(261)	44.1	(34)
M ratio (absentees) 4.90								
Wabag								
15-24	63.4	(175)	26.2	(145)	43.2	(111)	39.5	(38)
25-34	71.4	(119)	18.6	(129)	64.7	(85)	58.3	(24)
35-44	35.9	(106)	9.7	(93)	79.0	(38)	44.4	(9)
45-54	6.1	(115)	1.1	(89)	57.1	(7)	-	(*)
55+	-	(27)	2.8	(36)	-	(-)	-	(*)
Total	44.5	(542)	14.8	(492)	56.8	(241)	45.2	(73)
M ratio (absentees) 2.60								
Mendi								
15-24	63.5	(167)	15.3	(137)	35.9	(106)	42.9	(21)
25-34	59.8	(92)	2.1	(141)	67.3	(55)	*	(*)
35-44	32.6	(95)	-	(108)	77.4	(31)	-	(-)
45-54	12.5	(80)	-	(61)	80.0	(10)	-	(-)
55+	6.3	(32)	-	(12)	*	(*)	-	(-)
Total	43.8	(466)	5.2	(459)	53.4	(204)	45.8	(24)
M ratio (absentees) 7.31								
Gumine								
15-24	57.1	(84)	15.0	(107)	50.0	(48)	6.3	(16)
25-34	61.5	(122)	3.0	(99)	65.3	(75)	*	(*)
35-44	44.6	(74)	3.8	(52)	75.8	(33)	-	(*)
45-54	23.9	(46)	-	(35)	100.0	(11)	-	(-)
55+	3.1	(32)	-	(6)	*	(*)	-	(-)
Total	46.9	(358)	7.0	(299)	65.5	(168)	9.5*	(21)
M ratio (absentees) 3.10								
Mt Hagen								
15-24	27.1	(214)	13.7	(161)	53.5	(58)	77.3	(22)
25-34	21.9	(155)	7.2	(166)	82.4	(34)	75.0	(12)
35-44	32.0	(100)	3.2	(93)	96.9	(32)	*	(*)
45-54	12.1	(59)	1.6	(64)	100.0	(7)	*	(*)
55+	-	(26)	-	(33)	-	(-)	-	(-)
Total	23.7	(554)	7.4	(517)	74.1	(131)	76.3	(38)
M ratio (absentees) 3.78*								

1 A 'migration' was defined as an absence from the rural village sector for a period exceeding one month but not including absences for hospital treatment.

* Asterisk indicates n=4 or fewer persons, or (when attached to a figure) that the figure is the resultant of a calculation involving very small numbers of persons.

Source: Conroy and Curtain 1978:Table 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MIGRANT LABOUR SYSTEM AND THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF EAST SEPIK MIGRANTS

The overriding influence of the MLS on migration patterns extended to the determination of the origin and destination of migrants. To explore the spatial impact of the MLS, it is necessary to return in historical time to the German colonial era. The orientation of the colonial economy had a decisive effect on the spatial organisation of the country which, in turn, affected migration streams. The impact of the MLS on the origin and destination of contemporary migrants is the theme of this chapter. The focus is on migration from the Sepik region.

The spatial impact of an enclave economy

The spatial effect of the plantation enclaves, and from 1926 the mining enclaves, serviced by a cheap migrant labour force, divided the colony into five non-contiguous zones. Each of the five types occurred in a wide scatter of locations.¹ Enclaves catering for large-scale export production (the plantations and mining) were surrounded by a small indigenous cash-crop-producing sector. Servicing the first sector with unskilled manpower were the labour reserves. This sector was in turn

1 The following typology is a modification of similar typologies outlined by Amin (1974) and Cliffe (1977).

backed up by auxiliary labour reserves, which could be drawn upon once labour became difficult to recruit in the more established labour reserves. Finally, there was a fifth residual zone which can be called a frontier region¹. This region remained largely closed and unexplored by outsiders.

Areas given over to large-scale export production. A major prize for the Australian Government, which assumed control of the colony in 1914, was its large and growing plantation economy. The first Australian Annual Report for New Guinea in 1921 showed the growth of the plantation area during the German era (Table 4.1).²

Table 4.1

Total area of European plantations in New Guinea 1885-1918

Year	Hectares	Year	Hectares
1885	60	1911	23,629
1890	272	1912	25,422
1895	864	1913	29,106
1898	2,716	1914	33,931
1909	18,098	1918	53,800

Source: NGAR 1921.

The German planters had greatly expanded the area under crops during their enforced residency under the military occupation, in the expectation

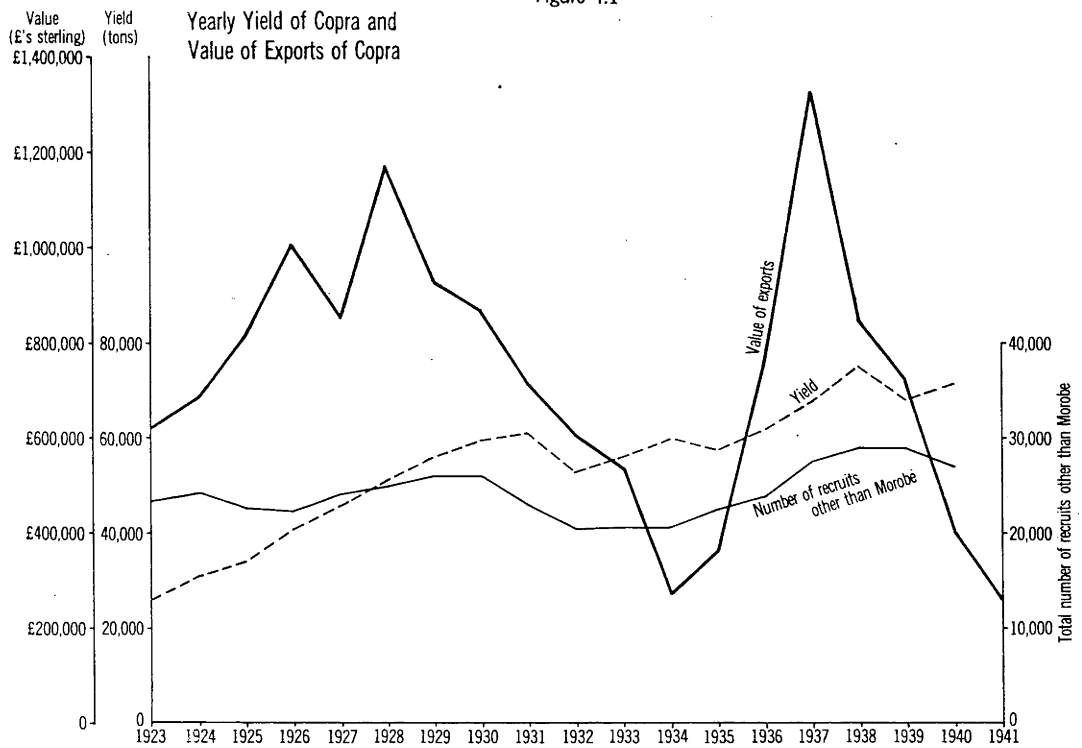
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- 1 Cliffe (1977:201) uses the concept of 'frontier area' differently. He refers to areas opened up by the spread of the indigenous population.
 - 2 Unless otherwise noted, the data on the numbers, source and destinations of the wage labour force have been extracted from the Annual Reports for the Territory of New Guinea for the various years specified.

of larger compensation payments from the new civilian authorities. As a result, only one-third of the plantation area in 1918 had coconut-bearing trees, with the remaining two-thirds containing newly planted trees.

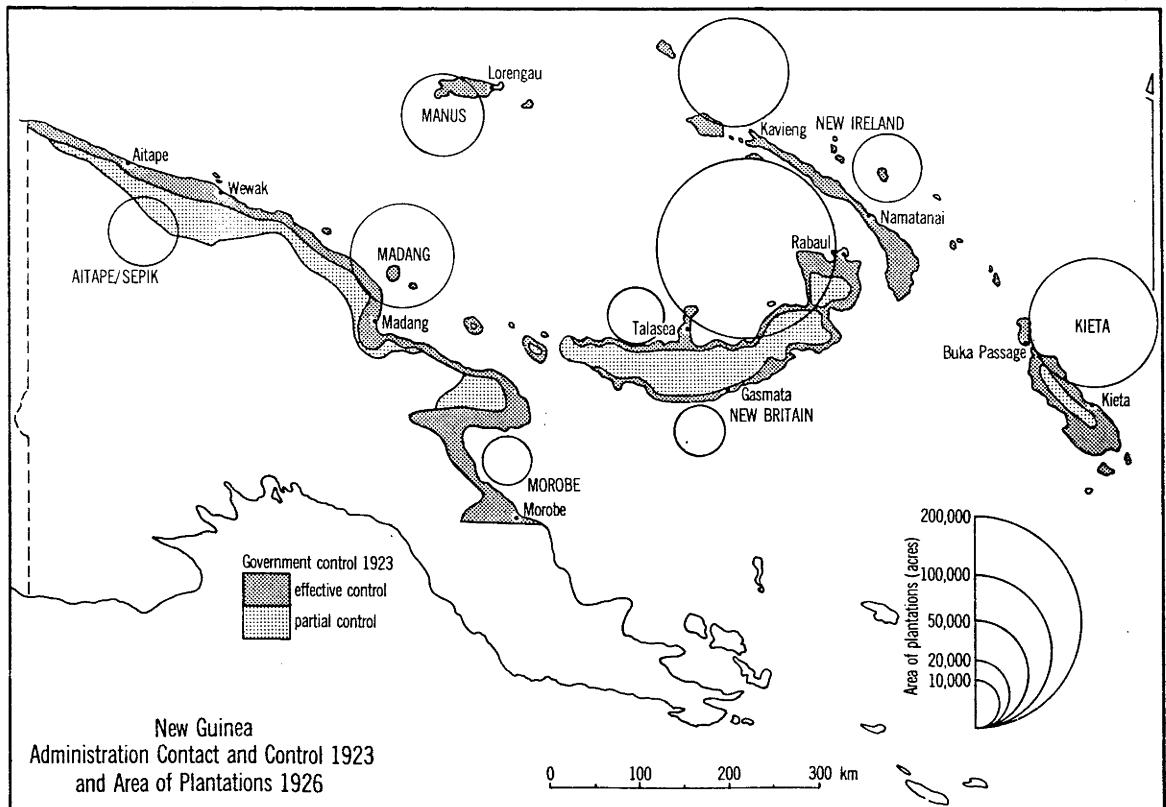
The plantations were concentrated in a few areas, mainly around the administrative centres of Rabaul and Kokopo on the Gazelle Peninsula (Eastern New Britain), Kavieng and Namatanai (New Ireland) and Kieta (Bougainville). These enclaves *in toto* accounted for 76 per cent of the area under plantations. Other locations were around Madang (central New Guinea mainland), Talasea and Gasmata (western New Britain). Some plantations had recently been commenced near Aitape (northern New Guinea mainland) and Morobe (southern New Guinea mainland). The location and size of the plantation sector in 1926 is shown in Map 4.1 below. The Morobe goldfields, focused initially on Mt Kaindi, then on Wau and Bulolo, began operations in 1926. The inter-war period saw the copra plantations increase 95 per cent in area (from 53,800 to 105,100 ha) and the area actually producing copra increased 378 per cent (from 17,700 to 84,724 ha). This sector was the destination of the migrant labourers and explains their concentration in a small number of locations.

Indigenous cash-crop-producing areas. Situated close to the plantation enclaves, cash-crop-producing areas were cultivated by villagers. These areas were used by the planters to supplement their own supplies of copra during the initial establishment of the plantations, and later during boom periods. As mentioned in Chapter Two, in 1913 the Tolais on the Gazelle Peninsula were producing 4000 tons of copra themselves (T.S. Epstein 1968:10). By 1918, villagers were said to

Figure 4.1



Sources: NGAR (1926), Ward and Lea (1970)



Map 4.1

own 19,680 hectares of coconut groves (NGAR 1921), but they were restricted to selling green coconuts which had fallen to the ground. Sales could be made only to the local planter and/or trade store owner. Villagers were forbidden to dry copra themselves and they received only a minimal price for their produce (McCarthy 1963:79-82). Subsistence production in these areas remained predominant, but the need for money (the only form of payment allowed) to pay the head tax was satisfied through the sale of agricultural produce.

Labour reserves. These were areas which for reasons of physical unsuitability and poor accessibility did not develop plantation economies, or indigenous cash cropping. The subsistence economy was to be preserved, but modified, by attaching it through labour migration to the cash nexus. The plantation labour force in German New Guinea grew from 869 persons in 1890 to 17,529 in 1914 (NGAR 1921). As mentioned in Chapter Two, planters soon found they were unable to attract labour at low wages from their immediate vicinity because local villagers were able to acquire sufficient cash income through other means. Rather than raise wages to secure a regular local labour supply, planters turned instead to the populated areas farther afield. Of the 9268 workers recruited in 1912, 67 per cent came from the Bismarck Archipelago, the Admiralty Islands and Bougainville, 22 per cent from the New Guinea mainland and 11 per cent from the Micronesian Islands to the north (Brookfield 1972:51). This phenomenon of an ever expanding labour frontier has been noted by Brookfield with Hart (1971: 264) for the Pacific in general:

A 'labour frontier' in which there was little or no cash cropping, and in which recruitment provided the only reliable means of gaining cash, can be recognized at all dates from the 1860s.

With the expansion of the plantation area and production in the inter-war period, the demand for labour also increased. Figure 4.1 shows the increase in the plantation workforce, compared with the increase in the copra yield and the fluctuations in the value of exported copra. In the early post-war period, proportionately greater numbers of labourers were needed for the yield produced. But, as the plantations became more established and more efficient (the Expropriation Board had handed over most of the confiscated German plantations to private planters by 1926), the number of labourers per ton of copra declined. From 1930, a more constant relationship appears between the copra yield and the size of the workforce, with the numbers of recruits falling and rising in parallel with the yields. The dramatic fluctuations of the export value of copra are reflected in a more muted fashion in the movements of output and workforce. The fall in the value of exports from 1929 is shown clearly in the drop in the plantation workforce in 1930. But the severe slide to the trough in 1934 and 1935 is only partially reflected in the workforce figures. The abrupt rise in the fortunes of copra in 1936 and 1937 produces a less dramatic but significant rise in the plantation workforce. One can fairly say that the demand for labour (except on the Morobe goldfields) in the inter-war period appeared to be closely related to the level of production and value of exports of the plantation economy.

The total number of labourers under indenture during this period is shown in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.2. Between 1923 and 1940, the number of indentured labourers had risen 59 per cent. The largest number employed in any one year was 41,899 workers in 1938, a rise of 69 per cent on the 1923 figure. The fluctuations in the numbers of

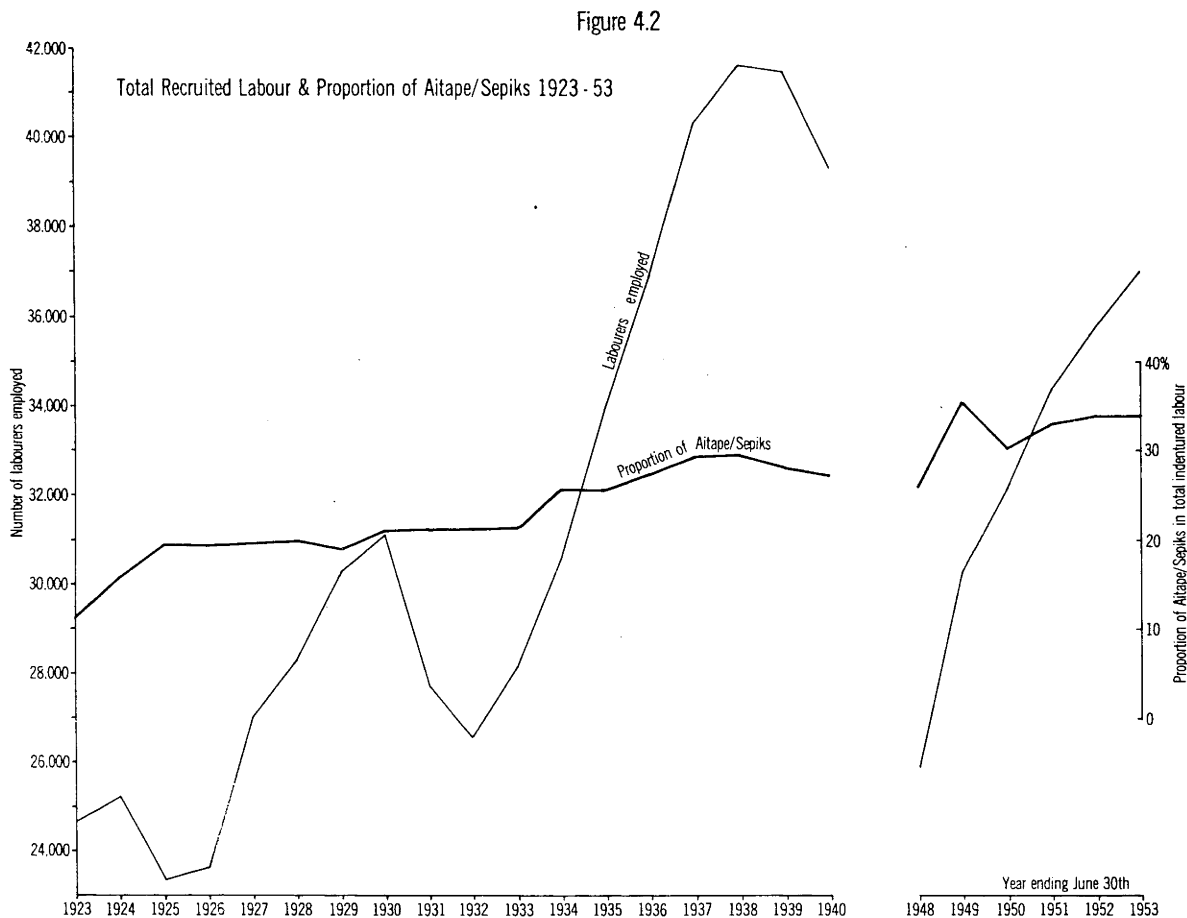


Table 4.2

GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY OF INDENTURED LABOUR

Year Ending June	Recruited Labour Employed All Districts	Labour Transferred Between Districts	%	Labour Contracted Within Districts	%
1922-23	24,701	7,682	31.09	17,019	68.9
1923-24	25,164	8,191	32.55	16,973	67.45
1924-25	23,421	8,377	35.76	15,044	64.23
1925-26	23,569	9,092	38.58	14,477	61.42
1926-27	27,002	10,096	37.39	16,906	62.61
1927-28	28,253	10,442	36.96	17,811	63.04
1928-29	30,325	10,802	35.62	19,523	64.03
1929-30	30,130	10,931	36.28	19,199	63.72
1930-31	27,708	10,401	37.54	17,307	62.46
1931-32	26,606	9,267	34.83	17,339	65.15
1932-33	28,242	9,730	34.45	18,512	65.55
1933-34	30,595	11,715	38.29	18,880	61.71
1934-35	33,993	13,848	40.74	20,145	59.26
1935-36	36,927	15,641	42.36	21,286	67.64
1936-37	40,259	17,161	42.63	23,093	57.37
1937-38	41,849	17,241	41.20	24,608	58.80
1938-39	41,675	16,919	40.60	24,756	59.40
1939-40	39,344	15,813	40.20	23,526	59.80

For the purpose of the Table, 'District' means New Britain, New Ireland, Kieta, Manus, Morobe, Madang, Aitape/Sepik. There was also transfer of contracted labour between administrative Districts of New Britain and New Ireland for which detailed statistics are not available for the whole period.

Source: Newbury (n.d.)

labourers currently under indenture were due to the fall in copra prices in 1929. The beginning of large-scale mechanical mining on the Bulolo goldfields from 1932 caused a sharp increase in the numbers under indenture from 1933 onwards. Table 4.2 also demonstrates the gradual expansion of a labour frontier. The proportion of labourers working within their home districts decreased from 69 per cent to 60 per cent of the total indentured workforce between 1922 and 1940.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show the emergence of the Sepik as the major source of manpower after 1930, although the area was amongst the top three areas supplying labour before that date. Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 show the seven regions of origin and destination for the inter-war New Guinea indentured workforce (and an eighth region, the Highlands, in the post-war period). The shaded section of each bar in Figure 4.5 refers to the proportion of recruits who were 'exported' to another district as part of their indenture. The Sepik, having the largest source of migrants in the inter-war and immediate post-war periods and the largest proportion of labour 'exported' to other districts, can claim the archetypal role of labour reserve. An average of 83 per cent of all Sepik recruits were sent to other districts between 1924 and 1940; the same percentage also applied between 1948 and 1953.

New Britain in the early pre-war period was the major 'importer' of migrant labour. The district was also a major source of labour in its own right. Several other districts were also major sources, as well as employers of labour in the pre-war period (Morobe, New Ireland and, to a lesser extent, Madang and Bougainville). This can be explained by the fact that these districts included large

Figure 4.3
Sources of Indentured Labour from Specific Districts
as a Proportion of the Total in Each Year

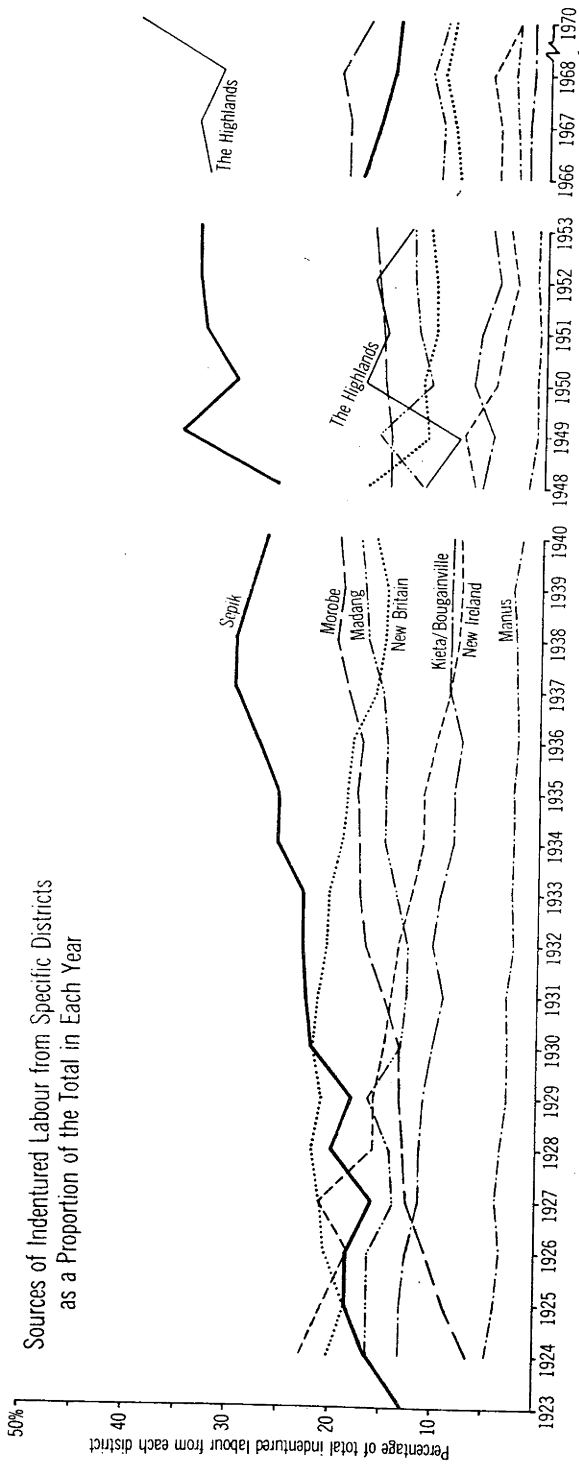


Figure 4.4
Employment of Labour by Districts

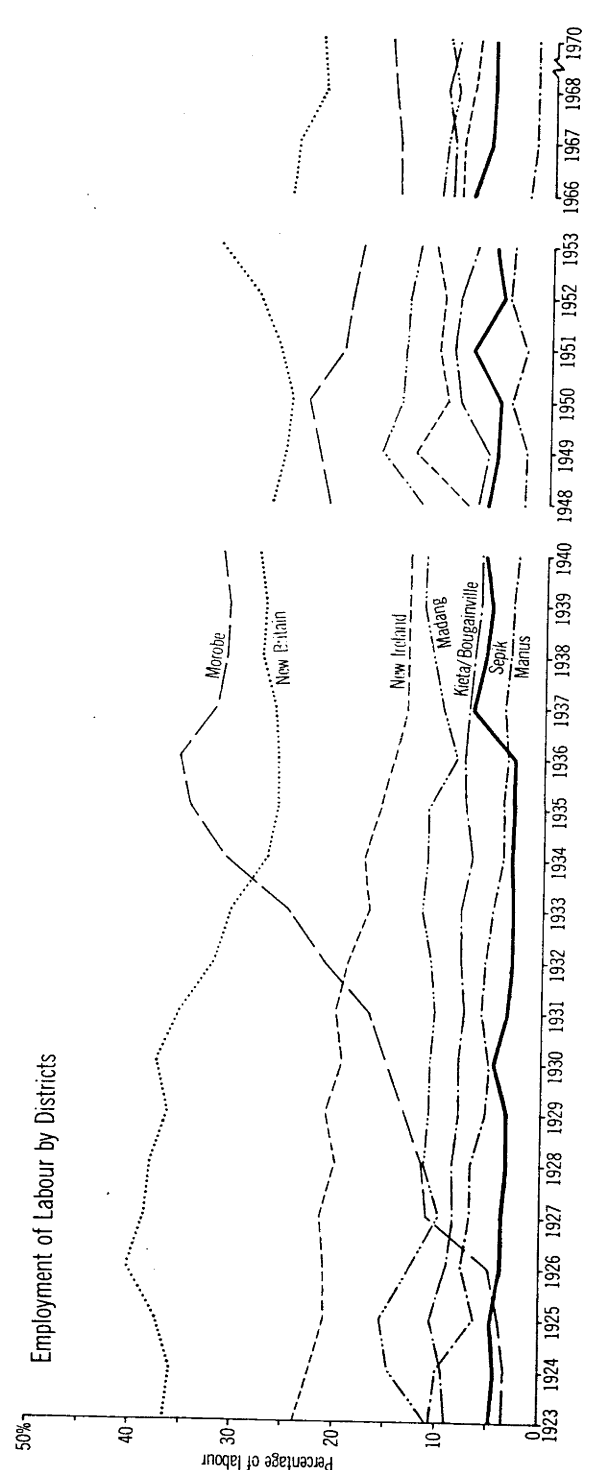
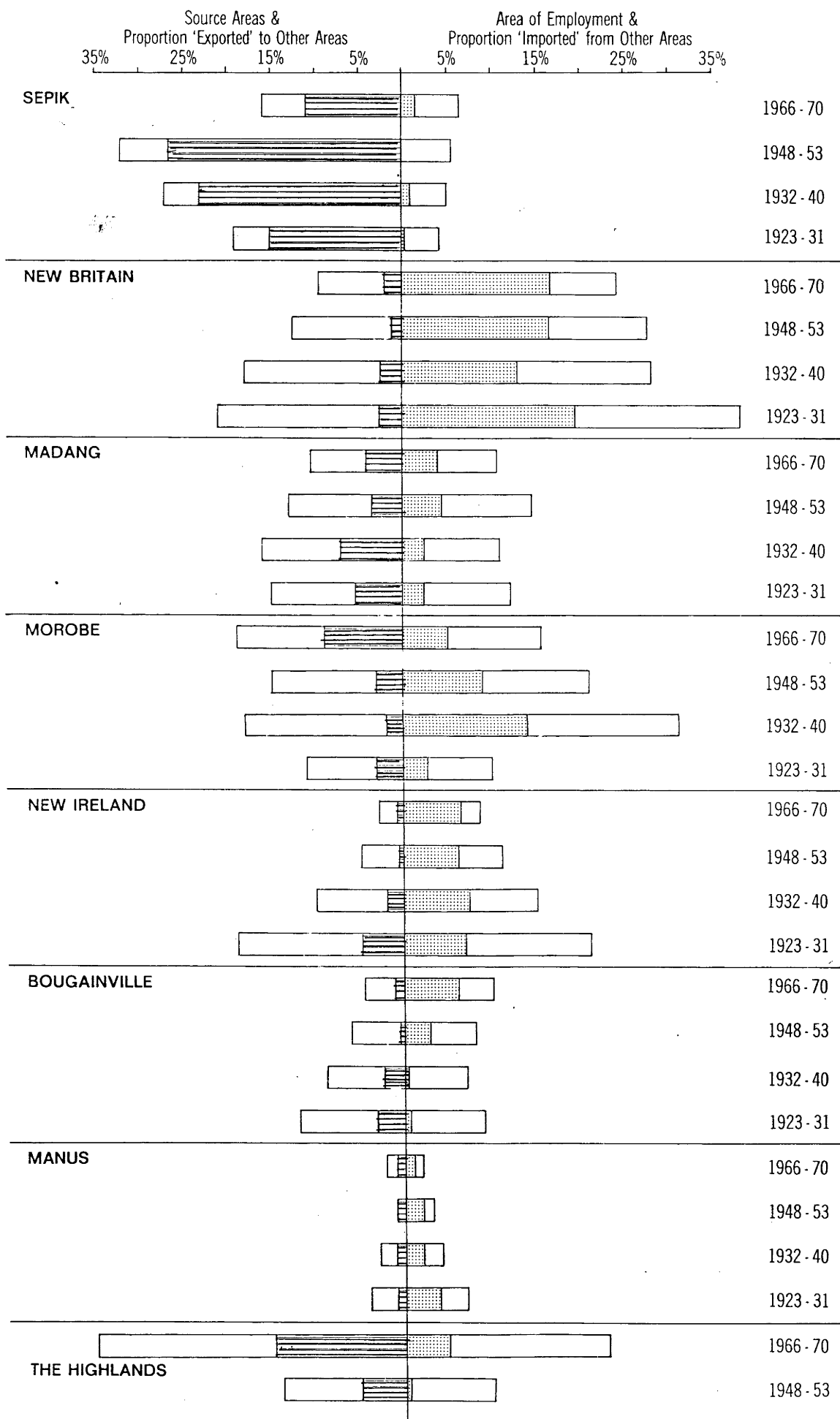


Figure 4.5

Origin and Destination of New Guinea Enumerated Workforce, 1923-70



populated expanses. As Map 4.1 shows, the plantations were clustered in 1923 in a few concentrated locations with vast hinterlands which, in most cases, were classified as only under partial control.

The main centres of employment were initially able to recruit from their hinterlands, but over time these hinterlands became less important while the Sepik grew in importance. In the inter-war period New Ireland and Manus soon became dependent on labour recruited from beyond their own district. These two areas had been heavy suppliers of labour in the German period. New Ireland, in particular, was the subject of official German investigation because of its decreasing population. Recruitment of people for contract labour from New Ireland was prohibited after 1953 (Young 1977:340).

The shift over time to more distant sources of labour was due to a number of factors. The poor work conditions, low wages and restricted term of employment encouraged a high turnover among workers. In these circumstances, planters were inclined to use distance as a means of social control. Being entirely dependent on employers for repatriation, deserters found it difficult to obtain a passage home.

Auxiliary labour reserves. These were zones where access was restricted to outsiders, except under certain conditions. While labour reserves were those areas labelled in successive Annual Reports from 1925 as under 'effective' or 'partial control', the auxiliary labour reserves were situated in 'uncontrolled areas'. Recruiters, traders and missionaries were denied access unless they had the written permission of the Administrator and the provision of an armed guard. On the other hand, official prohibition did not stop recruiters from making trips

into these areas. Furthermore, the demarcation line between a labour reserve and an auxiliary labour reserve often changed quite rapidly as government patrols moved ever farther afield.

Frontier regions. These were areas not only closed to outsiders but also inaccessible. This applied to the Highlands which remained largely unexplored before the Second World War. After the war, in contrast, parts of the Highlands which were earlier a frontier region, became successively labour reserves, auxiliary labour reserves, large-scale export production areas and indigenous cash-crop-producing areas. Similar frontier regions have existed, for example, in the upper reaches of the Sepik River, and elsewhere in the West Sepik.

The Sepik as a labour reserve

Although the German colonial station of Aitape was established in 1906, only 24 plantations were developed along the coast between Aitape and Wewak by 1940. Covering 2619 hectares in 1938-39, they represented only 5 per cent of total plantation area in New Guinea, and employed only 527 labourers (AGS 1943). The local plantations never threatened the functional role of the region as a supplier of labour. Instead, the area consistently provided other districts with a very high proportion of the labour recruited within the Sepik (see Figure 4.6).

The very high densities of population within parts of the Sepik were not necessarily a hindrance to the development of a plantation economy, since the Gazelle Peninsula also has a high population density. Fertile volcanic soils, an excellent harbour and easy

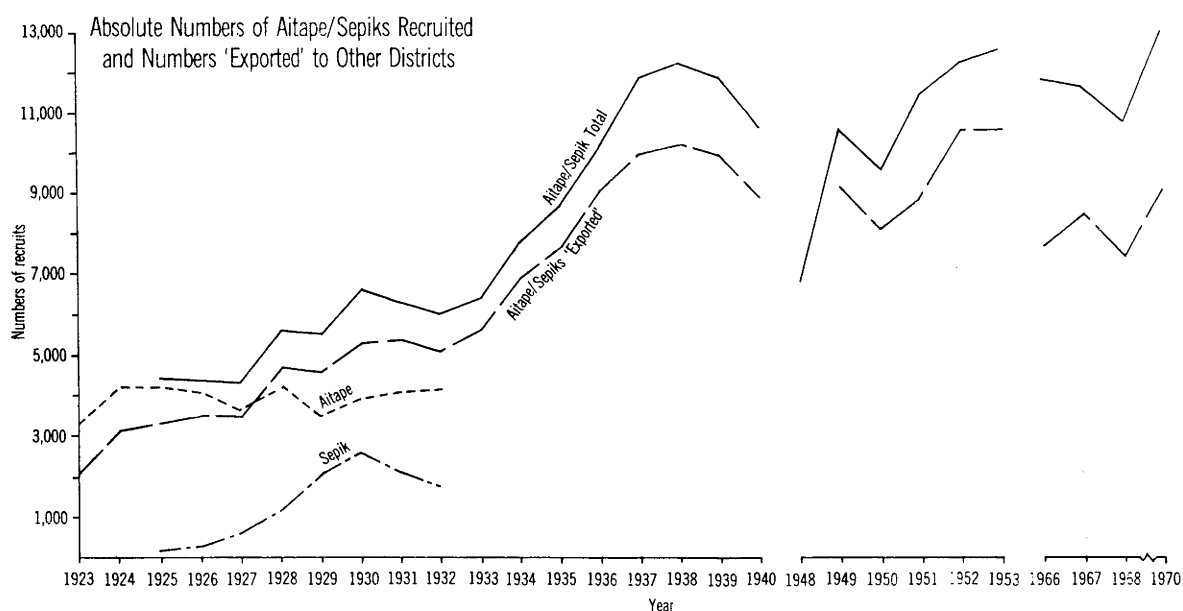


Figure 4.6

accessibility to arable land were obviously major considerations for the siting of plantations on the Gazelle. In the Sepik, the lack of adequate harbour facilities anywhere west of Madang until the early 1970s made even the choice of a site for an administrative headquarters difficult during the inter-war period. Easy road accessibility to the now economically productive hinterland became available only in the late 1960s. The access afforded by the Sepik River was to minimally productive swamp lands with heavily populated villages existing on virtual islands of productive land. In fact, the Sepik River and its numerous tributaries provided a unique opportunity for labour recruiters by making possible deep penetration into an unproductive but densely populated interior. The main river is navigable for at least a thousand kilometres for vessels up to 200 tonnes. The lack

of alternative cash-earning opportunities meant a readily available workforce once initial resistance had been overcome and the relative attractiveness of work conditions on the Bulolo goldfields had become known in the mid-1930s.

With the operation of two administrative districts in the Sepik between 1924 and 1933, it is possible to see the beginning of development of the riverine basin as an important source of indentured labour. Figure 4.6 shows that the number of recruits from the administrative unit called the Sepik District, centred on the river (with Ambunti as headquarters), rose rapidly from 1926 to a peak in 1930 (an increase of 780 per cent over five years). Since the major destinations in this period were the plantations of New Britain and New Ireland, the changed fortunes of copra in 1929 were reflected in the drop in the numbers recruited in 1931. From 1929 to 1932, the Morobe goldfields accounted for only 20 per cent of the river's recruits. But with the introduction of huge dredging machines to Bulolo in 1932, the number of Sepik recruits going to the goldfields increased rapidly to a peak in 1936 when 41 per cent of the Sepik recruits were located in Morobe (see Figure 4.7). This contrasted with a fall in the number of recruits to the other major destinations of New Britain, New Ireland, and within the home district. The position of the Sepik River as a special labour reserve for the Bulolo goldfields is discussed below.

The spatial distribution of the enumerated wage labour force in New

Guinea 1948-66. The gaps in the available data for this period allow only a piecemeal picture to be presented. The immediate post-war pattern (1948-53) is shown in Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. The cancellation

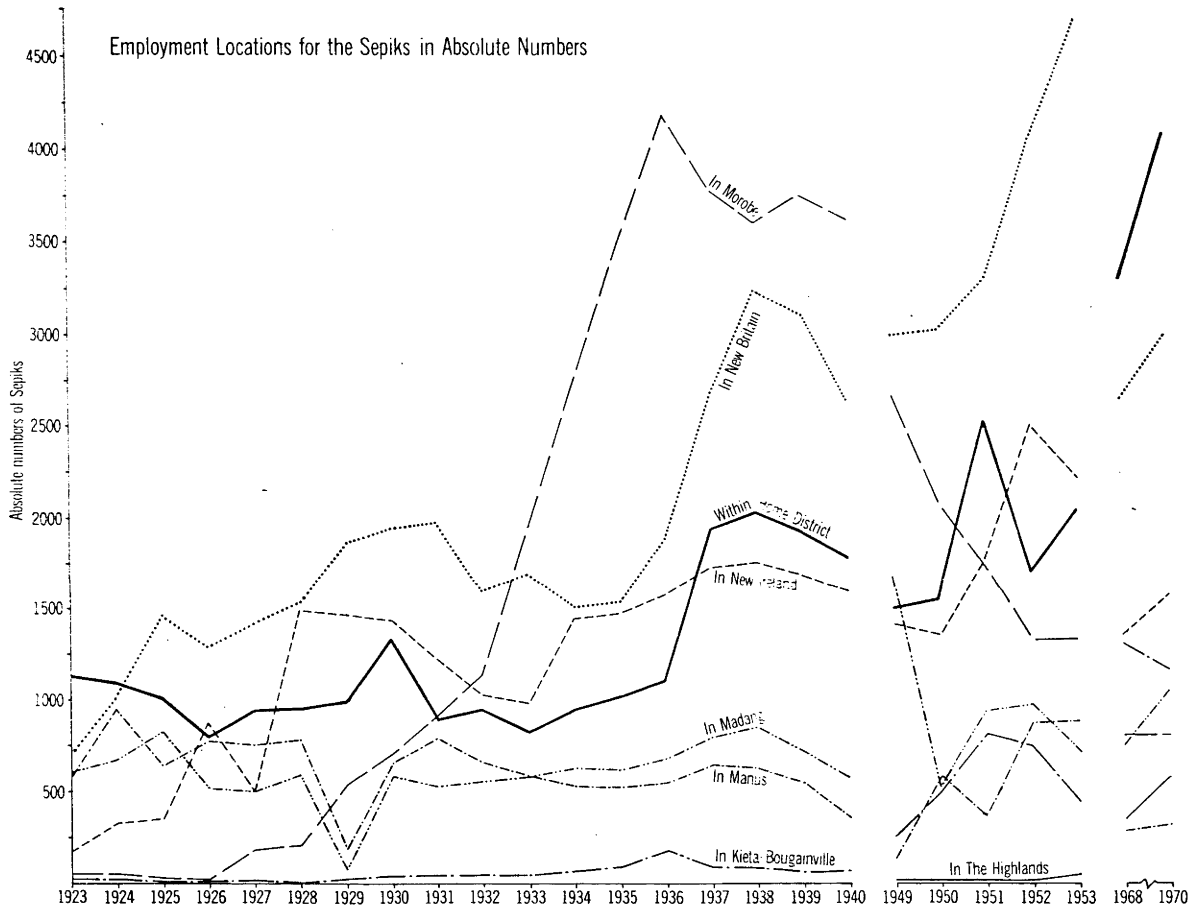


Figure 4.7

of all indentures in October 1945, and the return of workers to their home villages, meant that most of the wage labour force had to be recruited afresh. Several areas, notably parts of New Britain and Bougainville, had suffered serious population losses during the war. The wage labour force recorded in 1948 was, not surprisingly, much lower than the pre-war figure. The need to re-establish rural gardens and the assistance from war damage payments kept many men at home.

In the period 1948-53, the same pattern of pre-war source areas re-emerged, with the important addition of the Highlands region. By 1950 the latter area had assumed second place as a source area. The Sepik region retained its premier position as a labour reserve, but New Britain continued to decline as a source area, while Morobe remained constant. Among the destination regions, New Britain again became the most important employment centre, resuming the position it had held until 1933. Morobe, the former leader in the later pre-war period, declined in its demand for labour, due mainly to the reduced level of mining operations after the war. Table 4.3 presents the situation in 1962-63.

In 1962-63 the Sepik remained the most important source of the New Guinea workforce, but the combined Eastern and Western Highlands region (20.7 per cent) was not far behind. By 1966, the situation had changed markedly with the Sepik now in third place. The Highlands had emerged as the paramount labour reserve. The rapid decline for the Sepik shown in the official statistics may have been due merely to the failure of employers to provide data on casual labour. As Figure 4.8 (p. 130) shows, the number of agreement labourers from the Sepik declined from 1964 onwards.

Table 4.3

Source regions of wage labourers for the New Guinea workforce
1962-63 (per cent. for each source region)

N = 55,925

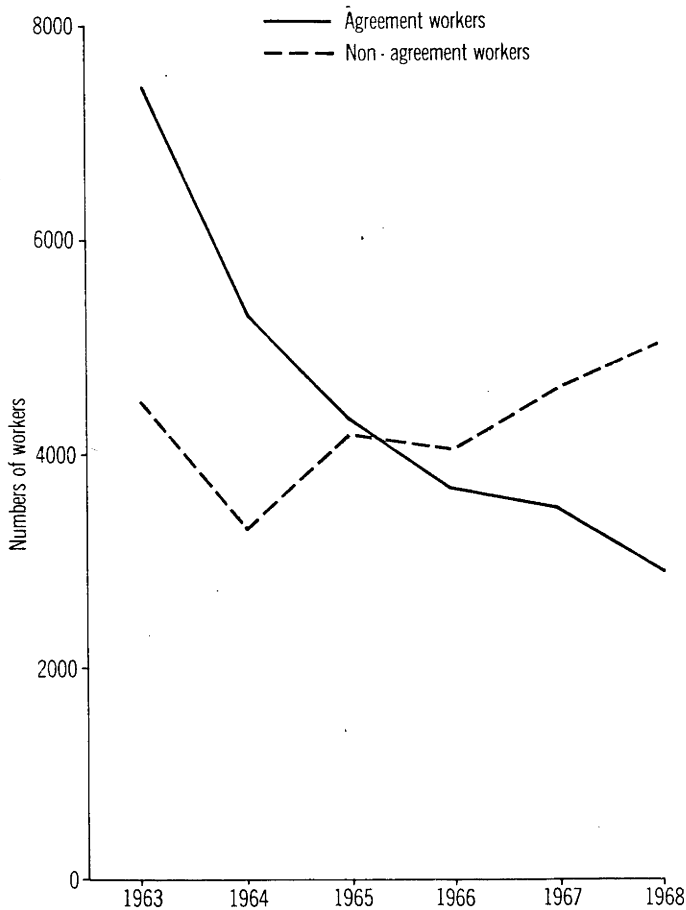
Source region	Proportion from each area	Proportion exported to other areas
Sepik	25.6	83.5
Madang	17.4	68.1
Morobe	19.1	49.4
Eastern Highlands	14.0	72.3
Western Highlands	6.7	46.5
New Britain	9.1	17.3
New Ireland	3.2	36.1
Bougainville	3.4	24.7
Manus	1.5	60.9

Source: *PNG Industrial Review* 1963:43.

The pre-war spatial pattern had re-emerged in the decade after the war, as is clear from Brookfield's study of the situation in 1957:

The principal source areas emerge clearly as the Sepik District, the Highlands and the Morobe and Madang Districts - the most populous parts of the Territory. The Sepik stands clearly as the main source of labour for the plantations of the Bismarck Archipelago, especially the Rabaul-Kokopo area on New Britain. This movement has been going on since German times, though only for some 25 years have the inland areas of the Sepik been greatly affected. The Maprik, Lumi, Ambunti and Angoram sub-districts stand out clearly. Today [late 1950s] by far the greater part of the wage-labour of the Bismarck Archipelago is drawn from the mainland - including in the total, not only agreement workers, but also the locally employed casual workers - and about half

Number of Workers from Sepik Districts
Employed Outside their District of Birth



Source: Ward (1971)

Figure 4.8

of this whole labour force is drawn from the mainland - including in the total, not only agreement workers, but also the locally employed casual workers - and about half of this whole labour force is drawn from the Sepik. Large numbers of Sepik natives have been living and working in New Britain and New Ireland for ten years and more, though most of them are still working as unskilled labourers at minimum wage (Brookfield 1960:239).

But the agreement labour recruits were not drawn from the same locations within the Sepik as they were during earlier periods. Other data on the origins of some agreement labour from the Sepik for the period 1962-65¹ showed that 42 per cent came from what was to be known after 1966 as the East Sepik and 58 per cent from the West Sepik.

¹ Data made available by R.G. Ward.

Within these two administrative units, the source areas had moved from the coastal and main river villages to the more remote and inaccessible villages. The 'labour frontier' was expanding.

The spatial distribution of Sepik workers to 1966. The major destinations for labour recruits from the Aitape and Sepik Districts during the inter-war period were the Morobe goldfields and the plantations of New Britain and New Ireland. New Britain, with about 40 per cent of the plantation area, employed the highest number of Sepiks until the Depression years. From 1933, the Morobe goldfields became the largest employer. New Ireland as a destination maintained third position together with the home region of the Sepik (see Figure 4.7). Other less prominent destinations were Madang, Manus and Bougainville. The sharp rise in the number of labourers employed within the Sepik from 1937 was a result of the opening up of goldfields at Yamil and Maprik which employed some 900 labourers. Previously, labourers working within their home district were mainly employed by the missions and the few plantations on the coast.

In the two decades after the war, large-scale mining declined and the plantation sector came back into its own. For the Sepiks, this meant decreasing numbers going to Morobe. New Britain was the most important destination. New Ireland and the home district continued to vie with each other for third place. Bougainville assumed a new importance after the war at the expense of Manus. Madang district maintained its position as an important lower level destination.

During this period, up to the mid-1960s, agreement labour was drawn more and more from the former auxiliary labour reserve of

the interior of the West Sepik, because of the advancing labour frontier, while at the same time agreement labour became less common for Sepik migrants. For the agreement labourers from the West Sepik between 1962 and 1965, the destinations for plantation employment had not changed. The plantation enclaves which were prominent in the German period (Kokopo, Talasea, Kavieng, Namatanai, Buka and Kieta) were still the major employers some 50 years later.

Destination and origin of some agreement labourers from the Sepik

1962-65. The following data, drawn from a record book kept by Sepik Air Charters, provide a good indication of the destinations of Sepik migrants in the early 1960s. They cover the operations of the company called Sepik District Labour Services Limited started by a group of recruiters in 1962. The records give details for 1059 recruits despatched from Wewak between 4 July 1962 and 28 August 1968. Most (90 per cent) of the records cover the period to the end of 1965. The data are not a complete list of all labour recruited in the Sepik at the time and are not likely to be representative of the region as a whole because the destinations are likely to be biased by the particular contractual arrangements of the recruiters concerned. On the other hand, as up to nine recruiters were involved, the data are worth consideration, while keeping in mind the likely bias.¹

The only data available for this period from the Department of Labour showed that the three principal destinations for the Sepik labour migrants were New Britain 28 per cent, New Ireland 16 per cent

1 The raw data and coded computer cards were kindly made available to me by Professor R.G. Ward. The tabulations and analysis are my own work and hence my responsibility.

and Bougainville 9 per cent. These three destinations are represented in the Sepik Air Charters data, but not in the same order. Bougainville accounted for 40 per cent, New Britain 29 per cent and New Ireland 25 per cent. Ninety-nine per cent of the labourers were sent to copra plantations.

The change from agreement to 'casual' labour in the Sepik over the period 1963 to 1968 (shown in Figure 4.8) is reflected in the source of migrants. Fifty-eight per cent were from what was formerly the auxiliary labour reserve area, the West Sepik. A detailed breakdown of destinations for what were to become two separate districts in 1966 is given below.

Table 4.4

The destinations of some agreement labour from two areas of the Sepik 1962-65 (per cent)

Originating from the West Sepik (n = 614)

Subdistrict	District	Percentage
Kavieng	New Ireland	22.2
Kokopo	East New Britain	18.4
Talasea	West New Britain	14.2
Buka	Bougainville	10.3
Namatanai	New Ireland	10.3
Rabaul	East New Britain	6.9
Kieta	Bougainville	6.0
Wewak	East Sepik	5.5
Madang	Madang	3.6
Lorengau	Manus	2.6
		<u>100.0</u>

Originating from the East Sepik (n = 444)

Subdistrict	District	Percentage
Kieta	Bougainville	68.1
Kokopo	East New Britain	13.7
Kavieng	New Ireland	11.0
Buka	North Solomons	3.6
Namatanai	New Ireland	3.6
		<u>100.0</u>

Source: Sepik Air Charters Records.

Among the destinations for those from the West Sepik, the most important were the plantation economies of New Britain, New Ireland and Bougainville, accounting for 88 per cent altogether. These three destinations were the same as the ranking for the 1962-63 Department of Labour's figures for the Sepik as a whole, but they accounted for only 53 per cent of the total number (Industrial Review 1963:43). For those agreement labourers from the East Sepik, a clear bias arising from an arrangement between specific employers and recruiters appeared to be operating.

The lack of correspondence between the two sets of destinations illustrates the differential demand from certain employers for migrants from particular areas. Plantation managers often expressed preference for certain areas based on their experiences with labourers they had employed in the past (R.G. Ward personal communication: 1976). An expanding 'labour frontier' was created not only by the decreased response from areas gradually acquiring cash crops, but also by the desire of plantation management for less sophisticated, more compliant workers.

The Sepik region as a whole continued to maintain its importance although the Highlands region had become the major source of wage labour. At the 1966 Census, the East and West Sepik ranked equal third and fifth with the Gulf and Eastern Highlands, respectively, in their proportion of outmigrants. If the West Sepik had not been created three weeks before the census, the total number of inter-provincial migrants from the Sepik region would have provided the highest percentage (14.8 of all inter-provincial outmigrants) compared with the Chimbu District's 12.6 per cent of the total. By the 1971 census, the

East Sepik ranked second behind the Chimbu, while the West Sepik was far behind. The combined Sepik Districts' proportion of the total number of inter-provincial outmigrants was 14.1 per cent, only slightly less than the proportion for 1966 and ahead of the Chimbu District, with 12.7 per cent.

Changes in the rural-urban distribution of the population

The connection between casual employment and urban centres is shown in the following table adapted from Brookfield with Hart (1971:266). The data are based on a 20 per cent systematic sample of the official statistics on the Papua and New Guinea wage labour force.

Table 4.5

Type of employment arrangement and sector of residence,
1956-57, Papua New Guinea workforce (per cent)

N = 69,126

	Contract workers	Casual workers
Rural non-village	39.9	28.0
Urban	3.6	28.5
Total	43.5	56.5

Source: Brookfield with Hart (1971: Table 11.1).

Thus the growth of casual employment was clearly associated with the fact that jobs were becoming more centred on urban areas. The proportion of 'casual' labourers in the workforce was much lower in the New Guinea Islands because of the continuing dominance of the plantation

economy there which required cheap unskilled labour provided by the agreement labour system. Two-thirds of the Bismarck Archipelago's workforce in 1957 were under contract, contrasting with only 43 per cent of the workforce on the New Guinea mainlands. The larger proportion of casual labourers could be attributed to the greater number of major urban centres on the mainland. In assessing the spatial distribution of migrants over time, it is important to note this overall tendency for the non-agreement labour force to move from the rural non-village sector (mainly the plantations) to urban locations.

By the mid-1960s, the growing availability of schools, together with the first moves towards opening up higher-level positions for Papua New Guineans in the colonial bureaucracy, meant the beginning of an important change in the composition of migrant flows. The development or expansion of cash-cropping opportunities in many areas, along with the first attempts at political activity through the Local Government Councils, also meant that alternatives to outmigration were becoming available. Movement to plantations for employment by men from the old labour reserves dropped significantly. In 1966, 11.7 per cent of the East Sepik population were recorded as living outside the rural village sector, and by 1971, 20.0 per cent were living outside the sector.¹ The greatest change had taken place in the growth of the towns in the intervening period. East Sepiks living outside their province of birth in 1966 were 5.9 per cent of the total population. By 1971 this proportion had reached only 9.3 per cent. Much of the increase in extra-rural-village residence appears to have taken place within the home province

1 Unless otherwise acknowledged, the following tables, using PNG census data, are based on special tabulations prepared by Mr H. Weinand, formerly of the Department of Human Geography, ANU.

of the migrant (see Appendix 4.1 and 4.2)¹. This is supported by evidence from the UHS which found that between one-third and two-thirds of the populations of the major towns had originated from the immediate province (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:33).

In 1966, the major destination for all inter-provincial out-migrants was the rural non-village sector. This accounted for 47 per cent of total outmigration distributed amongst the three residential sectors. By 1971, the principal destination for inter-provincial out-migrants was the urban sector (46 per cent). The rural non-village sector, while it had grown in absolute terms, had declined relatively from 47 to 42 per cent of the total movement (Skeldon 1977:21,61,63). The village sector remained constant in numbers, reflecting a stable population interchange across provincial boundaries.

The rural non-village and urban distribution of migrants varied greatly between provinces. While one area of sustained high outmigration, the Gulf province, had a very high proportion of its inter-provincial migrants residing in urban areas (72 per cent in 1966 and 78 per cent in 1971), half the inter-provincial migrants for the East Sepik went to the rural non-village sector in 1966. The proportion was still 47 per cent in 1971. One notable feature of the movement of the East Sepiks to the rural non-village sector in 1971 was that nearly one-third of those migrants went to the Resettlement Scheme at Cape Hoskins in West New Britain. If this movement is taken into account, together with the number of migrants in urban areas, then only 32 per cent were resident in the rural non-village sector

1 In 1975, districts became provinces, and former subdistricts became districts. To avoid confusion, the new designation is used from this point.

Table 4.6

Distribution of outmigrant population for the East and West Sepik Provinces by sector of residence for 1966 and 1971 (per cent)

	Rural village	Rural non-village	Urban	Total	Total population
1966					
East Sepik	8.7	51.0	40.2	100	9390
West Sepik	10.0	52.2	37.8	100	7559
1971					
East Sepik	6.0	46.8	47.2	100	17,793
West Sepik	11.0	53.1	35.9	100	7415

Source: PNG Census 1966 and 1971.

(as plantation labourers or public servants such as policemen on government stations) with 62 per cent in the urban areas or the Resettlement Scheme. The census data show that, between 1966 and 1971, the number of East Sepiks resident outside their home province increased from 9388 to 17,793 people. But the situation of the West Sepik remained static both in absolute numbers of migrants resident outside their home province and in their relative proportions in each of the residential sectors. This suggests that an early history of labour migration from the coastal areas around Aitape in the West Sepik has had little effect on recent rates of outmigration.

The level of outmigration from the West Sepik. The census figures, however, need to be adjusted to take into account the transfer of a census division (the 'Upper Sepik') from the West to the East Sepik. This census division was one of the most important source areas of outmigration for the West Sepik: its transfer deflated the recorded

level of outmigration for the West Sepik in 1971 and inflated the level of outmigration from the East Sepik (Skeldon 1977:8).¹ The adjusted figures lower the 1966 figures for the West Sepik from 7562 to 6544 and raise the East Sepik's from 9388 to 10,377. For the two Sepik Provinces, Young has calculated growth rates which have been adjusted to take into account the transferred census division.

Table 4.7

Adjusted annual rate of population growth
(1966-71) for migrants resident outside
their province of origin (per cent)

Province of origin	
East Sepik	11.4
West Sepik	1.7

Source: Based on Young's calculations;
Howlett *et al.* (1976:39,68).

It is also possible that West Sepik migrants were under-enumerated in 1966 because the area had only been declared a separate district some three weeks before the census was taken. Long-term absentees from the West Sepik may have regarded themselves as East Sepiks in 1966. But assuming that the mistake was corrected in the 1971 Census, this would only have produced a fictitious increase for the West Sepik in the intercensal period. The very small growth in the number of people

1 There is some slight discrepancy in the census figures taken from tabulations produced by Herbert Weinand and the figures given in Skeldon's table. Skeldon's figures for 1966 are 9364 (a difference of 24) and 17,805 (a difference of 13). The differences are merely due to the rounding of figures based on a sample. They are not statistically significant (Skeldon 1977:5 fn).

from the West Sepik resident elsewhere in the intercensal period seems to imply that a long history of labour migration has little influence on the current tendency to migrate. The official statistics for the period 1925-32 when the region was divided into two districts, one of which (Aitape) approximated the current West Sepik Province plus a large part of the area north of the Sepik River, showed a high proportion of the total New Guinea indentured labour force coming from Aitape District (see Figure 4.6). During that period, Aitape District alone accounted for an average of 15 per cent of all recruited labourers. In the late 1930s, the Aitape area continued to be heavily recruited as shown by the notices in the Annual Reports up to 1940, restricting access to over-recruited villages.¹ The very small growth in the numbers of West Sepiks living outside their home province between 1966 and 1971 may be evidence that, given the lack of access to cheap transport facilities and to cash-earning opportunities to pay the costly air fares, migration will decline despite a long history of pre-arranged movement.

The emergence of new destinations

The period 1966 to 1971 was a time of major changes in the Papua New Guinea economy. The growth of administrative, service, manufacturing and large-scale mining sectors in the New Guinea coastal area and on Bougainville Island, and the increased localisation of the more skilled and semi-professional positions, all contributed to rapid

1 The Annual Report of 1939-40 closed three villages inland, south-west of Aitape, 17 villages in the Wapi area on the southern slopes of the Torricelli Mountains and two villages south-east of Aitape. The Annual Report for 1934-35 closed 13 villages within five miles of Aitape to general recruiting. In 1933-34, eight villages near the coast, west of Aitape were closed.

urbanisation. How did these changes affect the destinations of the East Sepiks over this period? Table 4.8 presents the average annual growth rates of each of their major destinations. Between 1966 and 1971 the overall number of outmigrants grew from 9390 to 17,793, or by an average of 13.6 per cent per annum.

Table 4.8

Average annual growth rate for the East Sepiks resident outside their province of birth by sector of residence, 1966-71 (per cent per annum) in order of prominence in 1971

Province of residence	Rural village	Rural non-village	Urban	Total
East New Britain	*	+9.7	+9.7	+8.1
Morobe	*	-4.1	+19.7	+14.8
Madang	+5.6	+9.2	+18.2	+15.0
West New Britain	*	+76.1	-	+73.2
New Ireland	+13.9	+3.4	+2.9	+1.2
Bougainville	*	-0.6	+80.1	+12.1
Central	-	+3.2	+23.9	+16.9
West Sepik	*	-0.5	+16.5	+0.8
Manus	*	-1.0	+12.4	+4.4
Western Highlands	*	+12.1	+15.4	+15.2
Eastern Highlands	*	+23.1	+17.2	+20.4
Total for all districts	+5.6	+12.9	+14.0	+13.6

* Denotes numbers too small to be meaningful.

- Is a negative growth rate; + is a positive growth rate.

Source: PNG Census 1966 and 1971; special tabulations, Human Geography, RSPacS, ANU.

This table indicates nothing about the relative proportions of East Sepik migrants in each district of destination. These can be found in Appendix 4.3 and 4.4, and Figures 4.9 and 4.10 for 1966 and 1971. It merely shows the growth of each major destination. The most rapidly growing destinations, because of their small base in 1966, were the Bougainvillean mining complex of Arawa-Kieta-Panguna, and the re-settlement scheme in West New Britain. Port Moresby, primarily a destination for the educated East Sepik migrants, was next. The longer established destinations showed growth rates above the average, but the shift was to the urban areas. In Morobe Province, the East Sepik migrants were mostly to be found in Lae, reflecting the greater job opportunities created by its expanding manufacturing base and its new role after 1966 as the entrepôt for the highlands. Madang town, a major urban destination for the river Sepiks also showed a rapid growth rate. With the loss of interest for the East Sepiks in plantation employment and the stagnant nature of Rabaul's economy, East New Britain was no longer a prominent destination for current male migrants. The only major growth (from a small base) which took place there was in the number of Sepik women, both of those migrating to Rabaul (+19.8 per cent per annum) and those going to the surrounding plantations (+14.7 per cent per annum). This movement of Sepik women to East New Britain reflects a reduction in the male imbalance which had been encouraged by the MLS. The strong male bias for East Sepiks was still evident in 1971 (452 males to every 100 females).

The age-sex profiles of East Sepiks in each of their major districts of residence in 1971 is shown in Appendix 4.5. In Madang province the peak age grouping was the 15 to 19 year olds, perhaps

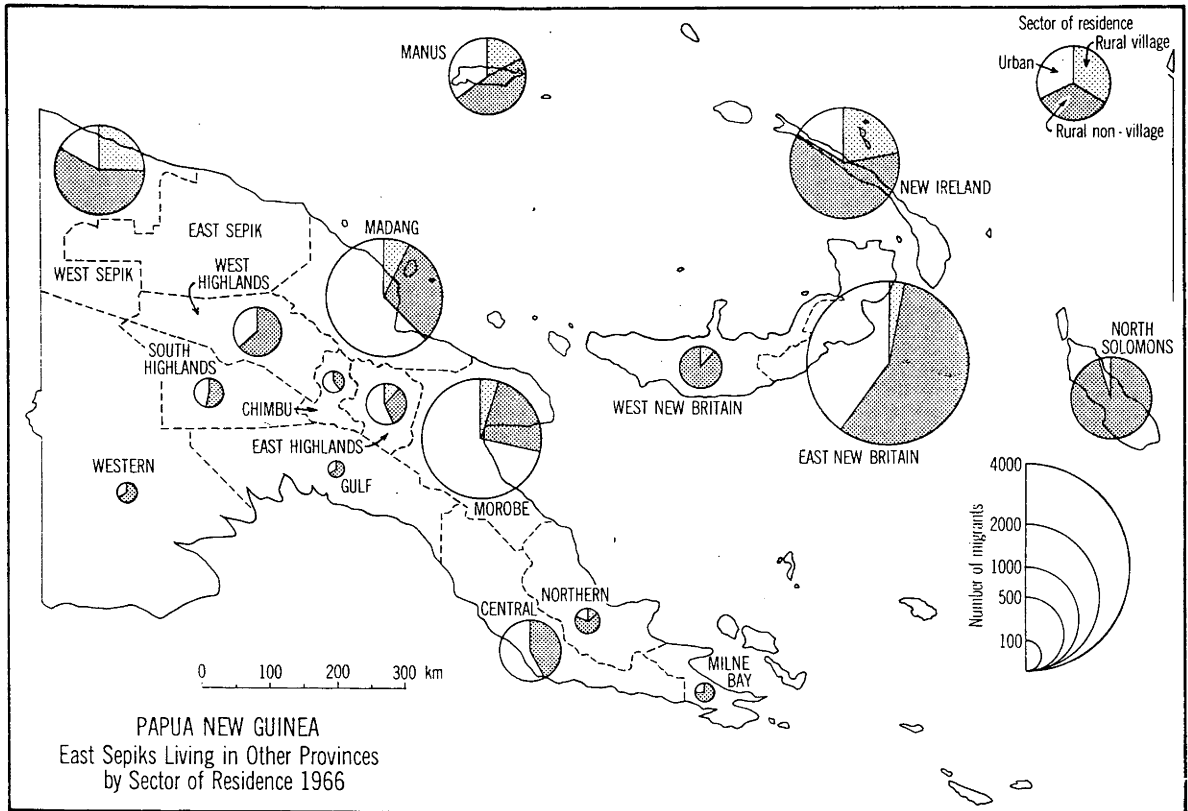


Figure 4.9

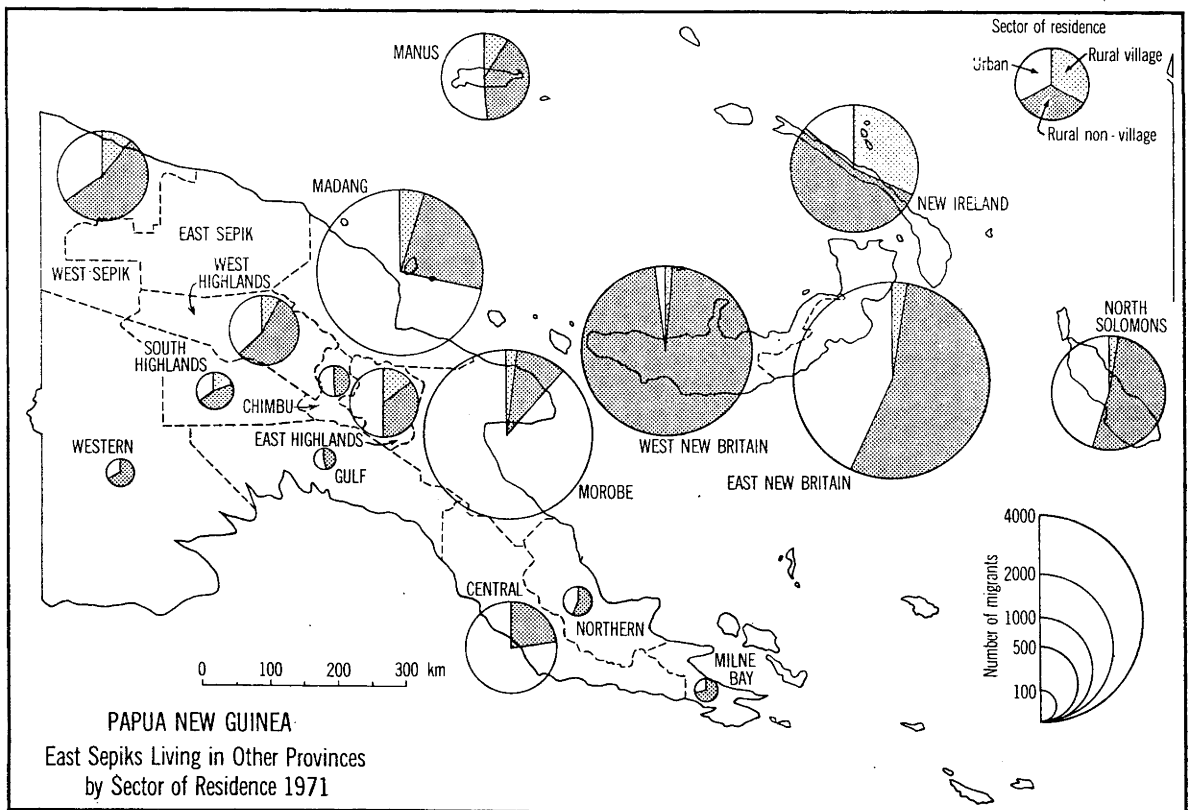


Figure 4.10

reflecting its cheap and easy access for those from the river. In Morobe, the peak age group was the 20-24 year olds. The greater distance and cost of transport to Lae or Bulolo may mean that the younger men have to wait to accumulate enough money at home, or in a closer town such as Wewak or Madang, before finding their way to a major employment centre. The higher proportions of 10-14 years males in Madang, Lae and Wewak in 1971 compared with the national distribution, suggest that male children were being brought to town by older relatives to take advantage of the better education facilities (see Oram 1968:132).

Migration to West New Britain represents the movement to the Hoskins Oil Palm Project and Resettlement Scheme which started in 1967, and on which 1560 smallholder households were established by 1972 (Longayroux 1972:5). Preference for blocks was given to those people from areas with severe shortages of land and general inaccessibility (Ploeg 1972:30). Meetings were held in the Sepik, Chimbu and on the Gazelle Peninsula. In addition, applicants were signed up from the major towns. From a very low base in 1966, the population in the Resettlement area grew at an extraordinary rate (73 per cent per annum), to a position where Cape Hoskins accounted for 14.6 per cent of the East Sepiks resident outside their home district in 1971. The male to female ratio was the most balanced of any East Sepik migrant group (176 males to 100 females). This was due to the stipulation that blocks would only be allocated to families.

The East Sepiks in New Ireland, Manus and the rural non-village sector of the North Solomons Province (formerly Bougainville) are remnants of earlier contract labour migration to plantations.

Contemporary movement to this sector has almost stagnated. The 32 per cent of East Sepiks in New Ireland who reside in the rural village sector are almost entirely men. The overall East Sepik male to female ratio of 1017 to 100 in the rural village sector of New Ireland points to extensive local intermarriage and permanent settlement by former plantation workers. The major concentration of New Ireland's East Sepik population in the male 30-34 years old age group in 1971, adds further confirmation of a long-term resident population. Manus, with a slightly higher growth rate compared with New Ireland or the North Solomons plantation sector, had a spread across the 15-34 age groups with the peak amongst the 20-24 year olds. The sex ratio was 414 males to 100 females. Fifty-one per cent of the East Sepiks were in Lorengau, the provincial capital, but the one-sided sex ratios may again point to local intermarriage and permanent resettlement. Movement to the old plantation sector in the Islands region, apart from the Gazelle Peninsula, had virtually ceased by 1971.

The North Solomons contained two very different communities of resident Sepiks: the rural non-village group with a typical plantation labour profile (978 males to every 100 females) and a group of urban residents in the rapidly expanding economy associated with the early construction phase of the copper mine. Here, young single men (20 to 24 years) were overwhelmingly predominant with a heavy male bias (the actual numbers were 529 males and 20 females). Port Moresby, the major centre for tertiary education and public service employment, has acquired a very high proportion of young (15-24 years) East Sepik men and the highest proportion of 15-19 year old women in any adult age group. Distance is of little consequence to those whose travel is paid for by government warrant.

The number of East Sepiks resident in the West Sepik remained virtually the same over the five year intercensal period. The age-sex profile was evenly balanced in the 20-34 age grouping with a fairly high proportion of children, suggesting the presence of skilled or semi-skilled workers associated with government employment which entails the provision of married housing. Two new destinations during the 1960s were the Western and Eastern Highlands. Most of the East Sepiks in the Western Highlands were in the rural non-village sector with its extensive tea and coffee plantations. In the Eastern Highlands, 50 per cent were in an urban area (mainly Goroka), 35 per cent in the rural non-village and 15 per cent in the rural village sector. The movement to the Highlands partly represents the employment by the government of people with skills not widely available among Highlanders.

Within the East Sepik Province itself, the growth in the population in the rural non-village and urban sectors between 1966 and 1971 (13.0 per cent per annum) was equal to the high growth rates of the other, more dynamic destinations of Madang and Morobe. Growth was evenly spread between the two sectors and between males and females. The overall sex ratio was a relatively even 137 males per 100 females. Two-thirds of the extra-village East Sepiks in their home province were in the urban sector. This compared with only 47 per cent in urban areas outside the province.

Perhaps the most significant change in spatial pattern of the migrant population for the East Sepik from the days of the MLS was the transition to short-term and short-distance mobility. If a migrant is defined as someone resident outside the rural village

sector, in contrast to the definition of interprovincial movement employed in this chapter, then 55 per cent of all East Sepiks so defined as migrants were resident within their home province in both 1966 and 1971. This very large number partly reflects short-term visits to the towns and other smaller centres. But this itself was a form of mobility not possible earlier because of the strict controls of the MLS and lack of easy access to centres within the province. The Sepik Highway from Wewak into the hinterland was not completed until 1968.

The current destination of East Sepik migrants

The spatial pattern of some regions at a broad aggregative level becoming more clearly marked out as labour reserves supported by auxiliary labour reserves sending workers to the former centres of large-scale export production has been maintained over time although the location of the labour reserves and auxiliary labour reserves have changed over time. Some provinces emerged clearly as major migrant source areas while others became important destinations. In terms of net migration between regions, the Sepik in 1966 ranked second as a net 'exporter' (with -9667 migrants), behind the Highlands (with -12,740 migrants). In 1971 the Sepik could still claim second place (with -16,003 migrants) behind the Highlands (-20,753 migrants). In 1966 the destinations which saw the greatest gains in numbers of migrants were the Islands region (+18,932 migrants) and Central Province (+18,221). In 1971 the pattern was the same. The Islands region was still gaining the most migrants (+30,318 migrants), ahead of Central Province (+27,377 migrants). By 1971 Madang and Morobe were both high 'importers' and 'exporters' of migrants (Skeldon 1977:Tables 8 and 9).

The sex ratios of each region's resident population in 1971 through a male bias indicate the direction of migrant flow. Taking only those 12 years and over, the even male to female ratio for the Highlands region was below the national average (108 males to 100 females), reflecting the widespread absence of men. For the coastal provinces, the sex ratio was equivalent to the national average but for the Islands region, the main location of the plantation and mining enclaves, the ratio of men to women remained high (172 to 100) (Bathgate 1978:10).

The most important destinations of East Sepik migrants by 1966 were very different from the major destinations of the inter-war and immediate post-war periods (Table 4.9). Although the island of

Table 4.9

Location of migrants from the combined Sepik Districts
for the specified periods (per cent)

	1923-40	Rank	1949-53	Rank	1966	1971
New Britain	30.8	1	39.0	1	29.2	30.3
Morobe	28.4	2	19.4	2	11.8	12.4
New Ireland	19.3	3	19.5	2	16.1	11.6
Manus	10.3	4	6.0	5	6.6	3.6
Madang	10.2	5	10.2	4	16.6	13.8
Kieta/Bougainville	1.0	6	5.9	5	9.5	7.3
Elsewhere	-	7	-	7	10.2	21.0
Total	100.0		100.0		100.0	100.0

Source: NGAR, specified years; PNG Census 1966 and 1971.

New Britain remains in the first position in 1971, this is largely due to the recent immigration of settlers to the Cape Hoskins Oil Palm scheme. By 1971, destinations other than the six most common ones of the earlier era accounted for as high as 21 per cent of all destinations. These major changes reflected the demise of the old plantation and mining sectors, together with the rapidly growing urban demand for the relatively more skilled East Sepik migrants (see Table 5.4).

The data on the growth in migration between 1966 and 1971 (Table 4.8) show more clearly the declining importance of the older centres and the move to the new areas. The plantation economies of New Ireland, Manus and rural Bougainville no longer attracted East Sepik migrants. The growth in Sepik migrants to East New Britain over the recent period was mainly due to women moving to accompany or join their husbands. The expanding and more accessible urban economies of Lae and Madang attracted people in considerable numbers. The willingness of migrants to forsake old destinations and to seek out new ones is shown in the very rapid growth rates of the migrant flows to the Cape Hoskins Resettlement Scheme, the urban complex focussed on the mine in the North Solomons, and to Port Moresby. The first type of movement also illustrates the versatility of the migrant stream. Within a two-year period, 28 per cent of all those East Sepik migrants who moved between 1966 and 1971, had moved to West New Britain. The most significant change in the destination of East Sepik migrants has been the huge expansion in numbers engaged in short distance movement to the provincial capital, Wewak, and to the other small centres within the province. This change in

the migration stream from mostly long-distance, directed migration of men to a short-term, short-distance mobility of large numbers of both sexes, is perhaps the greatest departure from the organisation of migration flows under the MLS.

Conclusion

Although the destinations of current Sepik migrants have changed, the legacy of the MLS is still to be seen in the continuing role of the Sepik as a major source of migrants. Alongside the emergence of parts of the Highlands, in the post-war period, as the most important labour reserve, the East Sepik retained a prominent position. The expansion of cash cropping areas, starting from the mid-1950s, as an alternative source of money was not enough to eradicate the historical legacy of the region's role as a labour reserve. Some of the forces operating within the East Sepik which initiated and maintained this role are explained in the next chapter. The question of whether the role of labour reserve has contributed to the underdeveloped economy of the region is examined in Chapter Eight and the Conclusion.

Appendix 4.1

EAST SEPIKS BY PROVINCE, SECTOR OF RESIDENCE AND SEX, 1966

	RURAL VILLAGE			RURAL NON VILLAGE			URBAN			MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PROPORTION OF TOTAL EXC. EAST SEPIK RURAL VILLAGE
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total				
Western				15	4	19	6	3	9	21	7	28	0.13
Gulf				9	5	14	4	3	7	13	8	21	0.10
Central				128	22	150	173	31	204	301	53	354	1.68
Milne Bay				13	5	18	6	-	6	19	5	24	0.11
Northern	7		7	28	6	34	12	-	12	47	6	53	0.25
Southern													
Highlands				27	13	40	23	13	36	50	26	76	0.36
Western													
Highlands				110	28	138	68	12	80	178	40	218	1.03
Chimbu				11	5	16	20	5	25	31	10	41	0.19
Eastern													
Highlands	20		20	44	10	54	81	16	97	145	26	171	0.81
Morobe	37	28	65	234	79	313	800	158	958	1,071	265	1,336	6.32
Madang	77	17	94	324	68	392	569	245	814	970	330	1,300	6.15
East Sepik	70,768	68,624	139,392	2,385	1,388	3,773	4,525	3,344	7,969	7,010	4,732	11,742	55.57
West Sepik	81	106	187	273	153	426	70	54	124	424	313	737	3.49
Manus	58	34	92	251	11	262	169	23	192	478	68	546	2.58
New													
Ireland	254	-	254	683	16	699	171	17	188	1,108	33	1,141	5.40
West N.B.	12	6	18	137	11	148	-	-	-	149	17	166	0.79
East N.B.	70	9	79	1,273	142	1,415	851	147	998	2,194	298	2,492	11.79
North													
Solomons				643	12	655	26	3	29	669	15	684	3.24
TOTAL	616	200	816	6,588	1,978	8,566	7,674	4,074	11,748	14,878	6,252	21,130	100
Proportion of Total	2.9	0.9		31.2	9.4		36.3	19.3		70.4	29.6		

Appendix 4.2

EAST SEPIKS BY PROVINCE, SECTOR OF RESIDENCE AND SEX, 1971

	RURAL VILLAGE			RURAL NON VILLAGE			URBAN			MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PROPORTION OF TOTAL EXC. EAST SEPIK RURAL VILLAGE
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total				
Western				32	9	41	18	5	23	50	14	64	0.16
Gulf				7	9	16	12	7	19	19	16	35	0.09
Central				138	38	176	451	146	597	589	184	773	1.96
Milne Bay				14	15	29	10	1	11	24	16	40	0.10
Northern				31	8	39	22	8	30	53	16	69	0.18
Southern													
Highlands	16	8	24	41	12	53	30	12	42	87	32	119	0.30
Western													
Highlands	35	-	35	188	56	244	130	34	164	353	90	443	1.12
Chimbu				29	13	42	32	12	44	61	25	86	0.22
Eastern													
Highlands	29	36	65	121	32	153	170	45	215	320	113	433	1.10
Morobe	42	10	52	198	56	254	1,819	540	2,359	2,059	606	2,665	6.76
Madang	102	22	124	485	126	611	1,321	557	1,878	1,908	705	2,613	6.63
East Sepik	75,533	76,494	152,026	4,790	2,606	7,396	7,699	6,524	14,223	12,489	9,130	21,619	54.85
West Sepik	32	49	81	295	126	421	160	106	266	487	281	768	1.95
Manus	47	12	59	238	37	275	261	83	344	546	132	678	1.72
New Ireland	435	52	487	770	56	826	188	29	217	1,393	137	1,530	3.88
West N.B.	31	-	31	1,554	956	2,510	47	-	47	1,632	956	2,588	6.67
East N.B.	63	25	88	1,721	282	2,003	1,223	362	1,585	3,007	669	3,676	9.33
North													
Solomons	28	-	28	577	59	636	529	20	549	1,134	79	1,213	3.08
TOTAL	860	214	1,074	11,229	4,496	15,725	14,122	8,491	22,613	26,211	13,201	39,412	100
PROPORTION OF TOTAL	2.2	0.5		28.5	11.4		35.8	22.5		66.5	33.5		

Appendix 4.3

EAST SEPIKS LIVING OUTSIDE PROVINCE FOR BIRTH BY PROVINCE, SECTOR OF RESIDENCE AND SEX 1966
 [Proportion in each sector for each Province and proportion of total population in each Province]

PROVINCE \ SECTOR	RURAL VILLAGE			RURAL NON VILLAGE			URBAN			Grand Total	Percent of Column Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Western				53.6	14.3	67.9	21.4	10.7	32.1	28	0.30
Gulf				42.9	23.8	66.7	19.0	14.3	33.3	21	0.22
Central				36.2	6.2	42.4	48.9	8.8	57.7	354	3.77
Milne Bay				54.2	20.8	75.0	25.0	-	25.0	24	0.25
Northern	13.2		13.2	52.8	11.3	64.0	22.6	-	22.6	53	0.56
Southern											
Highlands				35.3	17.1	52.4	40.3	17.1	47.4	76	0.81
Western											
Highlands				50.5	12.8	63.3	31.2	5.5	36.7	218	2.32
Chimbu				26.8	12.2	39.0	48.8	12.2	61	41	0.44
Eastern											
Highlands	11.7		11.7	25.7	5.8	31.6	47.4	9.4	57.0	171	1.82
Morobe	2.8	2.1	4.9	17.5	5.9	23.4	59.9	11.8	71.7	1,336	14.23
Madang	5.9	1.3	7.2	24.9	5.2	30.1	43.8	18.8	62.6	1,300	13.85
West Sepik	11.0	14.4	25.4	37.0	20.7	57.7	9.5	17.3	16.8	737	7.65
Manus	10.6	5.2	16.8	46.0	2.0	48	31.0	4.2	35.2	546	5.82
New Ireland	22.3		22.3	59.9	1.4	61.3	15.0	1.5	16.5	1,141	12.15
West New											
Britain	7.2	3.6	10.8	82.5	6.6	89.1	-	-	-	166	1.77
East New											
Britain	2.8	0.4	3.2	51.1	5.7	56.8	34.1	5.9	40.0	2,492	26.54
North											
Solomons				94.0	1.7	95.7	3.8	0.4	4.2	684	7.29
TOTAL	6.6	2.1	8.7	44.8	6.3	51.1	32.5	7.8	40.3	9,388	100

Appendix 4.4

EAST SEPIKS LIVING OUTSIDE PROVINCE OF BIRTH BY PROVINCE AND SECTOR OF RESIDENCE AND SEX 1971
 [Proportion in each sector for each Province and proportion of total population in each Province]

PROVINCE \ SECTOR	RURAL VILLAGE			RURAL NON VILLAGE			URBAN			Grand Total	Percent of Column Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Western				50	14.1	64.1	28.1	7.8	35.9	64	0.38
Gulf				20	25.7	45.7	34.3	20.0	54.3	35	0.52
Central				17.8	4.9	22.8	58.3	18.9	77.2	773	4.34
Milne Bay				35.00	37.5	72.5	25.0	2.5	27.5	40	0.22
Northern				44.9	11.6	56.5	31.9	11.6	43.5	69	0.32
Southern											
Highlands	13.4	6.7	20.1	34.4	10.1	44.5	25.2	10.1	35.3	119	0.27
Western											
Highlands	7.9	-	7.9	42.4	12.6	55.0	29.3	7.7	37.0	443	2.42
Chimbu				33.7	15.1	48.8	37.2	14.0	51.2	86	0.48
Eastern											
Highlands	6.7	8.3	15.0	27.9	7.4	35.3	39.3	10.4	49.7	433	2.43
Morobe	1.6	0.4	2.0	7.4	2.1	9.5	68.3	20.2	88.5	2,665	24.28
Madang	3.9	0.8	4.7	18.5	4.8	23.3	50.5	21.3	71.8	2,613	14.88
West Sepik	4.2	6.4	10.6	38.4	16.4	54.8	20.8	13.8	34.6	768	4.32
Manus	6.9	1.8	8.7	35.1	5.5	40.6	38.5	12.2	50.7	678	3.31
New Ireland	28.4	3.4	31.8	50.3	3.7	54.0	12.3	1.9	14.2	1,530	8.00
West New											
Britain	1.2	-	1.2	60.1	36.9	97.0	1.8	-	1.8	2,588	14.55
East New											
Britain	1.7	0.7	2.4	46.8	7.7	54.5	33.3	9.8	43.1	3,676	20.66
North											
Solomons	2.3	-	2.3	47.6	4.9	52.5	43.6	1.6	45.2	1,213	6.22
TOTAL	4.8	1.2	6.0	36.2	10.6	46.8	36.1	11.0	47.1	17,793	100.00

Appendix 4.5

AGE AND SEX PROFILE FOR THOSE EAST SEPIKS OUTSIDE THEIR PROVINCE OF BIRTH (IN ORDER OF PROMINENCE)

	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	TOTAL
East New Britain	75	176	126	407	539	595	429	274	166	103	53	29	13	23	3 674
	2.0	4.8	3.4	11.1	14.7	16.2	11.7	7.5	4.5	2.8	1.4	0.8	0.4	0.6	male
	51	93	38	66	99	141	96	33	21	9	8	9	-	2	female
	1.4	2.5	1.0	1.8	2.7	3.8	2.6	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	-	0.2	
Morobe	94	108	171	349	447	294	219	125	88	79	33	21	16	13	2 822
	3.5	4.1	6.4	13.1	16.8	11.0	8.2	4.7	3.3	3.0	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.5	male
	51	95	64	64	91	85	64	35	19	14	10	8	1	6	female
	1.9	3.6	2.4	2.4	3.4	3.2	2.4	1.3	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.3	-	0.2	
Madang	84	155	204	416	278	234	181	124	73	75	28	17	23	18	2 675
	3.2	5.9	7.8	15.9	10.6	8.9	6.9	4.7	2.8	2.9	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.7	male
	78	112	73	57	99	100	65	47	27	21	5	11	6	4	female
	3.0	4.3	2.8	2.2	3.8	3.8	2.5	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	
West New Britain	194	256	150	147	166	218	201	114	69	62	17	72	6	16	2 522
	7.5	9.9	5.8	5.7	6.4	8.4	7.8	4.4	2.7	2.4	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.6	male
	178	192	99	68	78	130	104	44	18	13	19	9	6	3	female
	6.9	7.4	3.8	2.8	3.0	5.0	4.0	1.7	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.1	
New Ireland	39	20	8	108	218	276	290	134	97	27	41	45	30	55	1 522
	2.6	1.3	0.5	7.0	14.3	18.0	19.0	8.8	6.3	1.8	2.7	2.9	2.0	3.6	male
	21	6	17	21	28	21	5	11	3	1	-	2	-	2	female
	1.4	0.4	1.1	1.4	1.8	1.4	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.1	-	0.1	-	0.1	
North Solomons	22	21	19	240	300	246	155	56	41	10	7	-	1	-	1 351
	1.8	1.8	1.6	20.1	25.1	20.6	13.0	4.7	3.4	0.8	0.6	-	0.1	-	male
	9	12	4	6	10	17	12	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	female
	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.4	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	
Central	39	19	24	167	182	75	34	20	12	7	4	1	1	-	772
	5.1	2.5	3.1	21.6	23.6	9.7	4.4	2.6	1.6	0.9	0.5	0.1	0.1	-	male
	44	22	10	48	27	22	7	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	female
	5.7	2.8	1.3	6.2	3.5	2.8	0.6	0.6	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	
West Sepik	48	57	45	75	64	59	63	32	18	8	10	1	1	1	765
	6.3	7.5	5.9	9.8	8.4	7.7	8.5	4.2	2.4	1.1	1.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	male
	46	74	33	12	34	27	25	4	4	16	3	1	1	1	female
	6.8	11.0	4.9	1.7	5.0	4.0	3.7	0.6	0.6	2.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	
Manus	7	31	27	89	109	89	86	41	15	15	18	4	6	2	825
	1.0	4.6	4.0	13.1	16.1	13.2	12.7	6.1	2.2	2.7	2.7	0.6	0.9	0.3	male
	20	25	14	10	24	19	9	9	1	4	-	1	-	-	female
	6.0	3.3	1.8	1.3	3.1	2.5	1.2	1.2	0.1	0.5	-	0.1	-	-	
Western Highlands	23	14	21	52	103	50	41	17	10	8	7	-	2	-	445
	5.2	3.1	4.7	11.7	23.1	11.2	9.2	3.8	2.2	1.8	1.6	-	0.4	-	male
	16	8	10	21	12	5	11	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	female
	3.6	1.8	2.2	4.7	2.7	1.1	2.4	1.6	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	
Eastern Highlands	24	27	18	65	66	34	40	15	14	9	2	1	-	-	429
	5.6	6.3	4.2	15.2	15.3	7.9	9.3	3.5	3.3	2.1	0.5	0.2	-	-	male
	10	23	19	22	12	8	10	-	2	-	3	2	-	3	female
	5.3	5.4	4.4	5.1	2.8	1.9	2.3	-	0.5	-	0.7	0.5	-	0.7	
Six remaining provinces	19	34	23	40	39	46	50	11	7	8	1	4	-	1	405
	4.7	8.4	5.7	9.9	9.6	11.4	12.3	2.7	1.7	2.0	0.2	0.1	-	0.2	
	32	26	6	14	12	11	6	1	1	2	-	8	-	-	female
	7.9	6.4	1.5	3.4	3.0	2.7	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.4	-	2.0	-	-	
Total	668	918	836	2 155	2 511	2 216	1 789	963	610	411	221	135	98	130	13 661
	3.8	5.2	4.7	12.1	14.1	12.4	10.1	5.4	3.4	2.3	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	male
	558	687	398	411	526	585	414	201	102	83	48	51	14	20	4 088 (female)
	3.1	3.9	2.2	2.3	3.0	3.3	2.3	1.1	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	17 749

CHAPTER FIVE*PULIM BOI: LABOUR MIGRATION AND THE
EMERGENCE OF A PEASANT ECONOMY*

The preceding chapters have explained the broader historical-structural setting within which labour migration has taken place. In contrast, this chapter focuses on a detailed historical account of the immediate factors associated with labour migration in one area and its role in the incorporation of isolated village societies into a peasant economy.

The migration histories of two groups of villagers from within the Sepik, a region profoundly involved in labour migration, provide the data base for examining when and why migration occurred. The account of the often sudden impact of a small number of foreign intruders, the dramatic impact of the War and the post-war responses to the process of increasing incorporation into the international economy is drawn from oral histories collected mainly from the Yangoru area (see the Appendix), together with other primary and secondary sources such as patrol reports, anthropological studies, wartime geographical studies and other military records.

The study areas comprise four villages on the Sepik River and nearby Chambri Lakes (hereafter referred to as 'the Pagwi villages') and ten villages in the foothills of the Prince Alexander mountains,

east of Maprik (hereafter referred to as 'the Yangoru villages')¹
 (see Maps 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

Before colonialism: the traditional economy and society

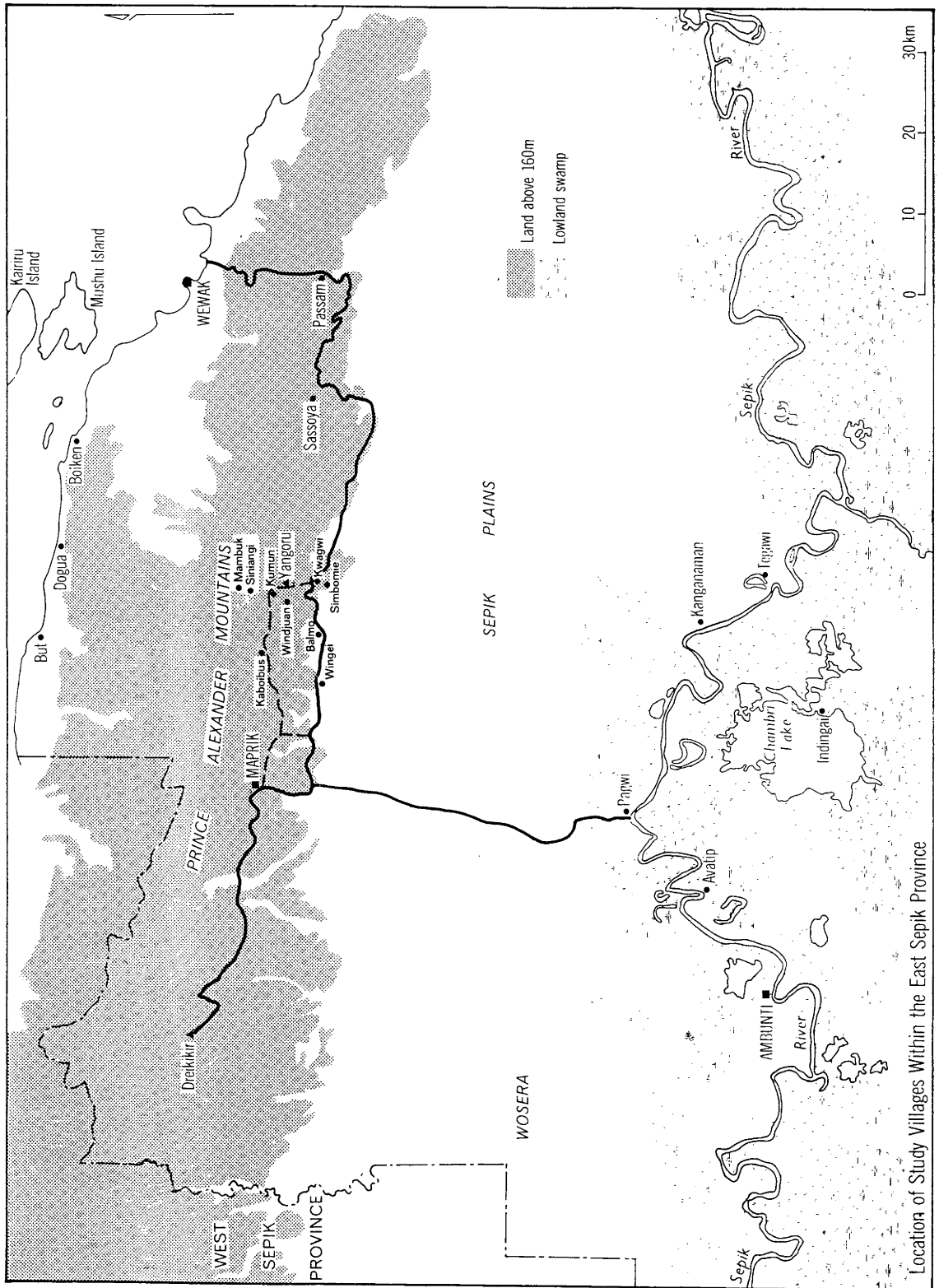
The Yangoru study villages belong to three linguistic groupings (Laycock 1973:79): the Boiken language group with 30,500 speakers (which includes the study villages of Kwagwie, Simbomie, Mambuk, Siniangu, Kumun and Windjuan), the Mountain Arapesh with some 10,300 speakers (Kaboibus #1 and #2) and the Abelam (Balmo and Wingei #2 villages) with some 39,300 speakers. Major ethnographic accounts have been written by Mead (1938, 1940, 1947) and Tuzin (1976) for the Mountain and Southern Arapesh, and by Kaberry (1940-41) and Forge (1972b) for the Abelam living in the foothills. Lea (1964), a geographer, has provided a thorough study of the Abelam agricultural system of shifting cultivation. Allen (1976), another geographer, has studied innovation diffusion and information flow in a group of villages west of Maprik. No major study has been made of the Boiken.

Amongst the study villages on the river, the major linguistic groupings are the Iatmul speakers (to which Kanganaman and Tegawi villages belong) with 9800 people, the Chambri language group (Indingai) with 1800 speakers and the Manambu (Avatip) with 2000 speakers. The major ethnographic accounts are Bateson (1932, 1936) for the Iatmul, Mead (1935) and Gewertz (1977a) for the Chambri and Newton (1971) for the Manambu.

¹ In Chapter Three, the two study areas were located in their districts of Ambunti and Maprik respectively.

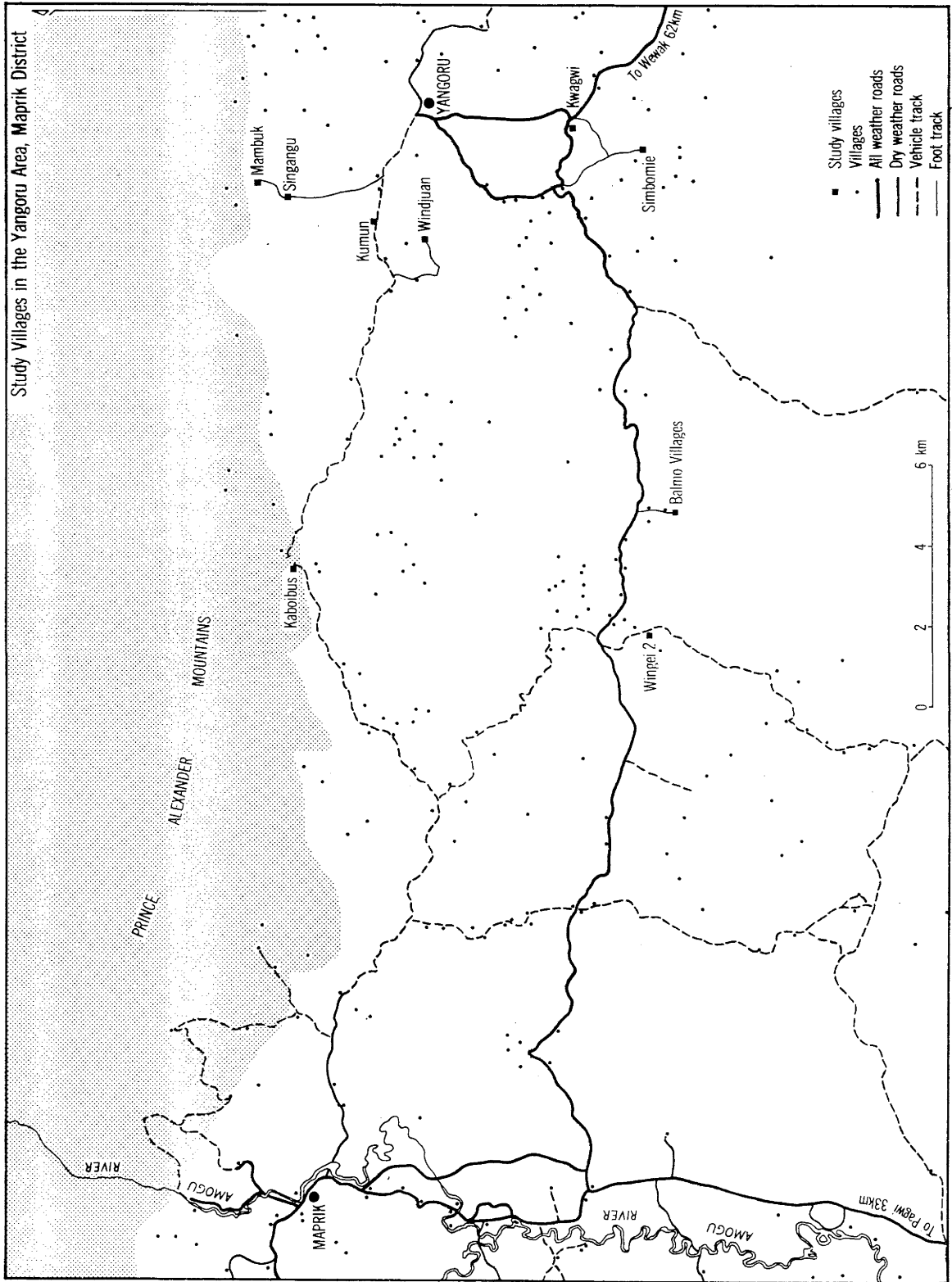
ERRATA

Map 5.1	Dogua should read Dagua Mushu should read Muschu Siniangi should read Siniangu
Map 5.2	Singangu should read Siniangu
Map 5.6	Singangu should read Siniangu
Map 5.7	Singangu should read Siniangu
Map 5.8	Kaboilus should read Kaboibus Singangu should read Siniangu
Map 5.9	Singangu should read Siniangu

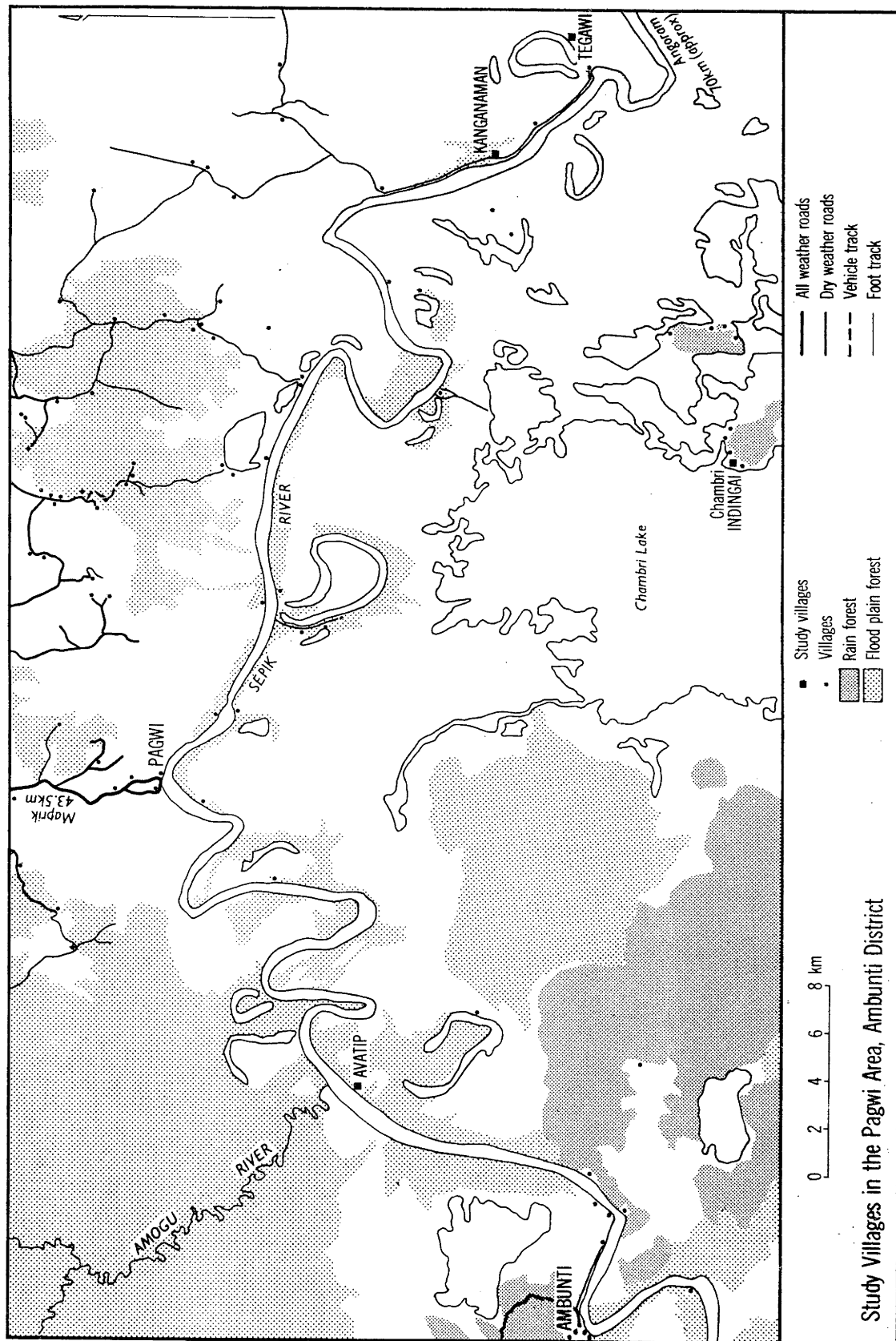


Map 5.1

Location of Study Villages Within the East Sepik Province



Map 5.2



The pre-colonial villages in the Prince Alexander foothills were mainly composed of a series of hamlets, located along ridge tops. They were semi-isolated villages, of 150 to 250 people each, separated by patches of thick undergrowth. The tracks between the hamlets were narrow and overgrown and people walked everywhere in single file. Entrances and exits to hamlets were often fenced and sometimes barricaded with planking four to six metres high with a ditch, pallisaded with sharpened sticks, dug across the track to guard against surprise attacks. A watchtower often overlooked the road (Allen 1976:29). Between these apparently isolated hamlets, there was a series of interconnecting links based on kinship, ceremonial exchange, trade and warfare (Allen 1976:30; Tuzin 1976)¹. The inhabitants were horticulturalists practising shifting cultivation. It was a subsistence economy dependent mainly on yam and taro, supplemented in the lean periods by sago.

The Abelam practise an elaborate ritual focused on long yam and *Tambaran* cults. Through the cultivation of ceremonial long yams (sometimes as long as two to three metres in length) the men practised, as they still do, a fertility cult which demanded their complete involvement and produced much competitive pressure. This was complemented by the *Tambaran* cult which divided ritual groups of men into competing sets of partners who maintained a constant state of aggressive rivalry towards each other through a complicated system of gift exchanges. The yam cult seems to have existed to a lesser extent among the Mountain Arapesh and the Boiken. Today only the Abelam and to a lesser extent the Boiken appear to have retained a vigorous ceremonial life.

1 Tuzin (1976) provides a detailed account of the social organisation of an Arapesh village south of Maprik.

The river villages contained larger populations of over 300 people, but were restricted to narrow levees of raised ground which varied in size but rarely exceeded 50 metres in width. The entire alluvial plain through which the Sepik River flows is subject to annual flooding, often to a depth of four metres although the levees supporting the villages were rarely under more than a metre of water. The people occupy large, solidly constructed houses, built on stilts about two metres above the ground.

The river people are mostly sedentary hunter-gatherers, subsisting on a diet of sago and fish.¹ The river and lakes provide ample quantities of fish and prawns, while sago can be collected in large quantities from the naturally regenerating sago palm. Probably about 90 per cent of the villagers' food is obtained through hunting and gathering. Other sources are coconuts, pigs, and a few yams or taros. The regularity of the floods, lasting for at least five months of the year and sometimes occurring in other parts of the year as well, means that the people have an extremely limited agricultural base.

The river villages existed in an almost constant state of war, with large raiding parties seeking heads from neighbouring villages

1 This applies to the Iatmul-Chambri people, and only to a much lesser extent to the inhabitants of Avatip. An anthropologist resident in Avatip for 17 months has explained the different situation in that village: 'The traditional economy of Avatip is a kind of half-way house between that of the Iatmul-Chambri and that of the Yangoru villages. ... The area of land which Avatip acquired [through raiding] is not normally susceptible to flooding, and will more than suffice for the village's needs for the indefinite future. It contains sago, and it enables Avatip to cultivate yams all year round; the villagers make gardens on the levees on the bank of the Sepik which are harvested at the beginning of the wet season in December, and other [gardens] in the ... bush which are harvested around June, at the start of the dry season.' (Simon Harrison, personal communication: 1978).

as a basic means of initiating the young men into adulthood. The procurement of a head was considered essential by Iatmul tradition before a man was permitted to wear a genital covering and therefore to take a wife (McCarthy, personal communication 1976 and 1963:49). Otherwise, inter-village relations were limited to the barter of fish for sago and the exchange of stone tools and plaited mosquito bags for shell valuables (Gewertz 1977a).

The sexual division of labour was also very different from that in Yangoru. The tuber-dependent economies of the foothills required a high degree of interdependence and cooperation between males and females. In the gardens, the men did the initial clearing of the forest, tree lopping and fencing. The women did the planting, weeding and harvesting of such crops as taro, sugar cane and greens. Particularly among the Northern and Eastern Abelam and the Mountain Arapesh, the men had sole charge of the planting, weeding and harvesting of the yams. In addition, the men cut the sago palms and killed and cooked the pigs. A family worked together, spending much of its time in the garden. The men played a major role in organising the agricultural production. Lea (1964:89) noted that of the 80 gardening groups in the village he studied, 59 of the gardening groups were led by adult male heads of family.

In distinct contrast was the river-dependent subsistence economy of the Chambri and Iatmul people. Here the economic division of labour between the sexes was much more extreme. Amongst the Chambri, the work of subsistence production was entirely in the hands of the women, who alone fished and then bartered their surplus catch with the 'bush' people (those from the grasslands or hills inland from

the river) in return for sago, taro and other foods.¹ In pre-colonial times, the women also earned wealth through making and trading the large family-size mosquito bags as well as trading axes and cooking pots along the river. Although the men were entirely dependent for their subsistence upon the women's fishing and barter markets, the women were still subservient within a patrilineal organisation which determined the ownership of land and water rights, assigned the women to productive roles and distributed the products of their labour (Gewertz 1977a:208). The marked differences between the two areas in the productive role played by men, particularly for married men over 30 years of age, suggests that some traditional economies may have been more susceptible than others to outside forces tending to induce men to leave home.

In yam-growing areas the more demanding methods of production (the labour input for yams is up to three times higher than that for sweet potatoes) probably exerted a strong hold on the men, demanding the regular presence of particularly the older men (Bathgate, personal communication:1978; see also Lea 1964:Chapter Six). New ground has to be cleared more often because of the heavy demand yams make on trace elements in the soil, and the crop requires intensive preparation before planting and persistent attention to weeding while the yams are growing. In addition the ritual of the long yam fertility cult allowed only the men to tend the yams. They observed strict food and sex taboos for up to seven months (Lea 1964:113). Women were seen as inimical to the growth of the yams and they were forbidden to enter either the yam gardens or the storehouses.

1 Today most Iatmul women still acquire their sago through the traditional barter markets. The Chambri women now also prefer to travel to money markets to sell their fish to buy other staples (Gewertz 1977b).

For those societies knit together by the need to cooperate over an extended gardening season, the introduction of iron tools meant merely that traditional methods could now be practised with greater efficiency. But for the Chambri villages in particular, the society was profoundly shaken by the introduction of steel tools, aluminium pots and mosquito netting which destroyed the indigenous industries that were a major source of shell money to the Chambris (Gewertz 1977a: 118). Labour migration became a necessary outlet to earn money to acquire both steel axes and other valuables previously gained through trade.

The relationship between the mode of subsistence production and the propensity to migrate is illustrated well by the example of one of the river villages, Avatip. The access to an abundance of higher land above the flood level has led the men to play a far more vital role in subsistence production than is the case among the Iatmul and Chambri people, a role which tends to discourage migration. The men do the heavier work of clearing and fencing gardens, while the planting of yams, an important part of the subsistence economy for Avatip, requires a coordinated series of tasks involving men and women equally. Although the women in Avatip are not regarded as quite so inimical to yams as are women among the Abelam, nevertheless the first fruits of the levee gardens, which are highly sacred, can only be harvested by men, which they do during an important annual ritual. With the production of sago too, men play a vital role, as Avatip is nearly self-sufficient in sago. As the discussion of the migration profiles of the individual study villages in Chapter Seven will show, Avatip's level of outmigration is much closer to that of the Yangoru study villages. The lower level of male outmigration and higher level

of return-migration is due partly to the important role played by men in the local subsistence economy.

The different forms of organisation of the pre-colonial subsistence economies are, however, only one factor in explaining the differing propensities to migrate. The easy access for recruiters to large concentrations of population afforded by the Sepik River was certainly another major factor in explaining the large number of men recruited from the river villages.

Patterns of traditional mobility. Movement within pre-colonial society was, except at marriage, almost entirely conducted by people in social groups, rather than by individuals. Migrations meant the gradual movement over generations of the whole tribal grouping either as an encroachment onto other tribal territory or in retreat from such an encroachment. Forge (personal communication:1975) has said that: 'Over the last thousand years or so, very substantial movements were taking place, particularly in the middle Sepik area, on the river and through the Abelam territory to the coast'. The main movement involving the Abelam and Boiken peoples came from the north across the low grasslands until they encountered the Arapesh along the foothills. Forge has described the movement among the Abelam, as the 'jostling together of large, fairly densely packed Abelam villages, fighting each other and gradually moving as a whole in a northerly and later westerly direction'. Further east, the Boiken speakers absorbed the small scattered bands of local inhabitants and continued over the Prince Alexander mountains to the narrow coastal region and eventually to the off-shore islands (Tuzin 1976:72-76).

Individual mobility of the Abelam, Arapesh, and Boiken groups occurred only within a local confederation of eight to ten villages and only on special occasions. For a group of villages around Dreikikir, west of Maprik, Allen (1976:111) has estimated, from oral histories, that pre-European contact movement by an adult male was never likely to take him more than eight kilometres from his village of birth. These trips were temporary absences for the purposes of ceremonial exchanges and were made only by groups of well-armed men travelling in a party. The only form of permanent change of residence for individuals independently of their clans was that of women marrying into neighbouring villages. Allen (1976:48), using current marriage patterns for one village, has estimated that 16 per cent of these traditional marriage movements were to an adjacent village (less than two kilometres away), 13 per cent were to villages 2 to 7.5 kilometres distant and a further 11 per cent were to villages 8 to 8.5 kilometres distant. But 60 per cent of the women surveyed by Allen were married within their home village. Colonial penetration introduced dramatic changes to this very limited pattern of mobility.

The introduction of colonial control: the Sepik River

The Sepik River was first explored by the Germans in 1887. By 1908, the German New Guinea Company made the first attempt to recruit labour from the river villages. A government expedition followed in November 1908. On this occasion, Hahl, the German colonial governor, was reported to have said (by the Commander of the 1600 tonne warship which made the trip):

The first consideration in the further opening of the river basin is whether natives from there can be recruited as manpower (quoted in Firth 1973:167).

Hahl concluded that their physical fitness generally corresponded with expectations.

The imposition of colonial authority was not peaceful. In 1920, with labour recruiting already well under way along the river, a German recruiter and his party were attacked while seeking recruits some 400 km from the mouth of the river. It was claimed that a trawler had been attacked by men from Avatip (one of the study villages) and 17 of the attackers had been shot. As Rowley commented (1958a: 203): 'With an ever-increasing demand for plantation labour, there was no question of prohibiting recruiting so far inland'. So a punitive expedition was organised by the Australian Military Occupation Force. The steamer *Sumatra* was armed with a three-pounder cannon, two machine-guns and a party of four officers, ten Australian soldiers and 75 New Guinean Police. Several people were killed and houses destroyed in villages including Avatip. The men of the river villages were not cowed by this show of force. In retaliation, Marienburg Mission, near the mouth of the river, was attacked in January 1920 and nine labourers were killed. Angoram, the government station near the mission, was raided in June, 1921. Twenty-nine villagers were killed. 'The Sepik River area remained troublesome, probably because of the increasing pressure being applied by recruiters' (Rowley 1958a:204-5).

In 1924, another show of strength was made, this time by the new civilian administration which mounted a similar expedition (Townsend 1968:99). But no punitive action was taken because the villages were deserted. As a result of the expedition, a government station was established at Ambunti. It was soon to become the headquarters of the newly created Sepik District focused on the river.

The official reason for the creation of the new district was to stop headhunting raids along the river. Townsend, the Officer in Charge, set about his appointed task vigorously. In his autobiography, he tells of his practice of taking men convicted of headhunting back to their own villages to hang them in public. He mentions five such public hangings between 1925 and 1935, at two of which there were said to be some 2000 spectators (Townsend 1968:106). J.K. McCarthy, also a government officer on the river during the same period, mentions a public hanging of seven men before a large crowd at Ambunti (McCarthy 1963:49). The prohibition against headhunting had caused a vacuum (or 'cultural paralysis' in Mead's words) in the lives of the men which made them even more susceptible to the inducements of the recruiter.

This active imposition of the colonial code of law was considered by McCarthy to be one of the main pressures which induced the adult men to become migrant labourers.

The Annual Report of 1925, in announcing the formation of the new district, ostensibly to halt headhunting, made the observation:

It is considered that the Sepik River is at present the best field for recruiting in the whole territory. Recruiters have been active along the river and the Expropriation Board has established a camp at Angoram, near Marienberg, for the concentration of recruits. Whilst the actual possibilities of the District from a recruiting stand point are not known, it seems certain that the labour requirements of the Territory can to a large extent be met from this source for a number of years to come (NGAR 1925:44).

And so it was. Table 5.1 shows the numbers recruited between 1924-25 and 1932-33 while the Sepik River was a separate district.

Table 5.1

Number of recruits from the Sepik District
1924-25 to 1932-33

1924	130
1926	296
1927	627
1928	1232
1929	2040
1930	2610
1931	2174
1932	1828

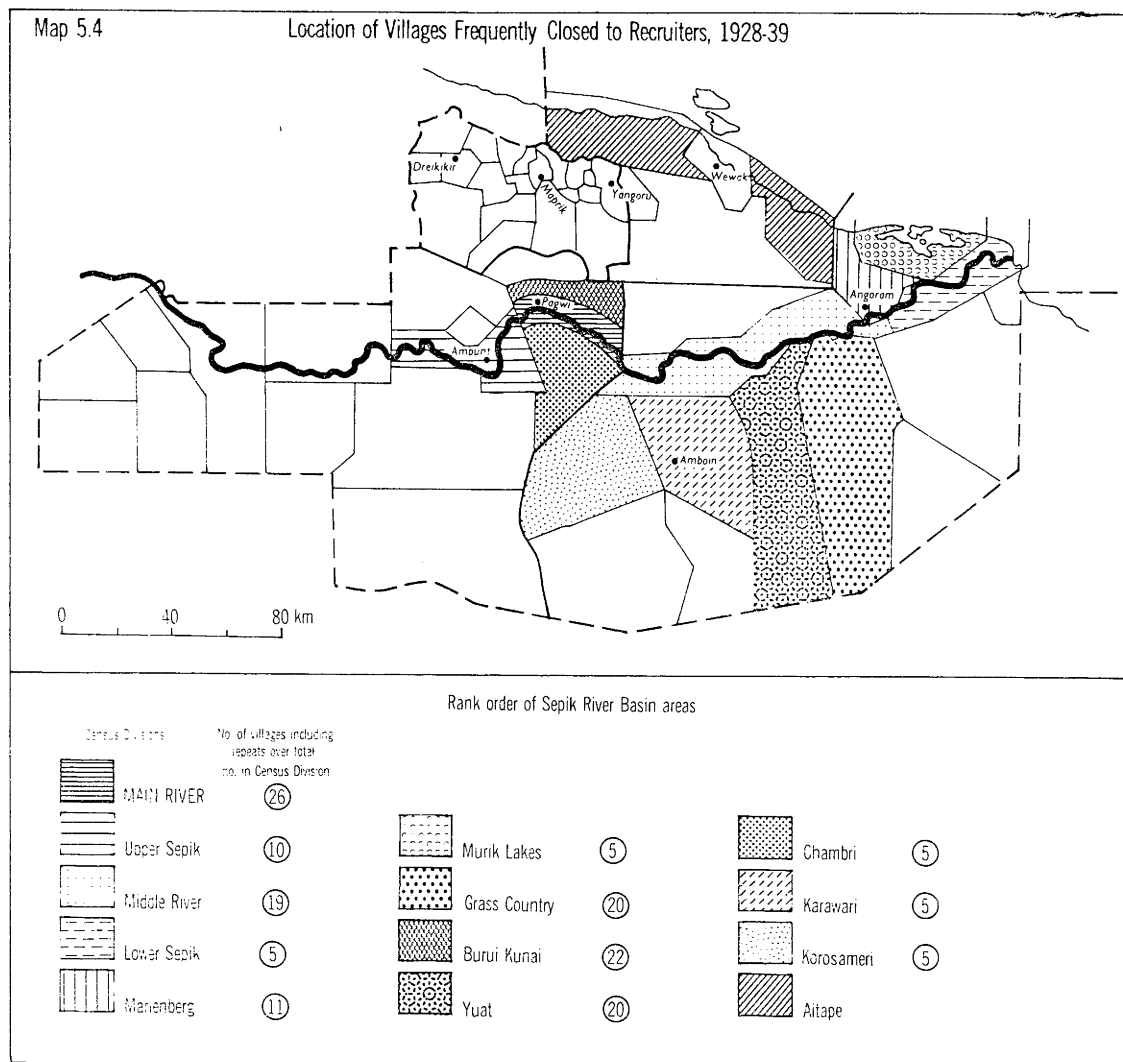
Source: NGAR for specified years.

After 1932, the Sepik District was recombined with the former Aitape District. But strong evidence of the continuing importance of the river can be gathered from the location of the villages closed to recruiters (Map 5.4). From September 1931, three main river¹ villages were listed in the Government Gazette as closed to recruiters for 12 months. In December 1933, 24 villages were listed as closed to recruiters in the main river area, including Avatip, Kanaganaman, Tegawi and the Chambri Lake villages.

Bateson, an anthropologist on fieldwork in Kaganaman in 1931, made one reference to the extent of recruiting at the time:

As to the position of young men after initiation and before marriage, I can say little, since in my time all the available young men had left the

1 Main river refers to the stretch of the river around Pagwi below Ambunti.



village to work for Europeans, including some who had left wives behind in the village as a result of government regulations (Bateson 1932:275).

In November 1937, Tegawi and Kanganaman were closed again for a further 12 months. The Chambri villages were closed in December 1939. Map 5.4 indicates the location of the 195 Sepik River villages (grouped according to the present census divisions) which were closed to recruiters before the Second World War. Over-recruiting was apparent along the length of the Sepik River up to Ambunti over this period. By the late 1930s 'closed' villages were recorded along the tributaries of the Biwat and Yuat Rivers as well as in the grass country north of the main river area. Of all these areas, the Main River Census

Division had the largest proportion of 'closed' villages. A number of villages had to be closed several times.

The picture which emerges is one of initial opposition to recruiting which resulted in a powerful reaction by the colonial authorities after which the river villages, particularly the Iatmul and Chambri villages, capitulated and permitted large numbers of their men to be recruited.

The role of recruiters. The blatant use of force by two long-term recruiters on the river during the late 1920s and early 1930s is documented in extracts from R.A. Beazley's manuscript in Appendix 2.1. However, the river men were not always merely passive recruits, so easily manipulated. Reed points to the different response individual recruiters received:

Of two professional recruiters on the Sepik River in 1936, the most successful one 'bought' a total of 664 boys during the course of the year, for each of whom he received a per capita payment of £7 to £10 on his investment of about £3, the other [recruiter] was able to secure only 28. Several factors must be taken into account in analyzing the discrepancy between these figures: the capabilities of their native helpers, the quality of the trade goods with which the boys are 'bought' and the amount of energy put into the task by the respective recruiters. More important than these, however, is the acquired skill of inducing reluctant natives to sign on in some European enterprise. This is definitely an art, in which skill depends to a small degree on the ability and personality of the recruiter (Reed 1943:215).

Pre-war migration and destinations of the Pagwi villagers. Between 1933 and 1940, Morobe was the most important destination of Sepik recruits, accounting for a yearly average of a third of all those recruited. The Bulolo Gold Dredging (BGD) Company employed its own recruiters who

maintained a launch which operated the length of the river (Healy 1967:82). Before the War, the 'Nambawan'¹ Sepiks (those from river villages between Tambanam and Ambunti) were a prominent group amongst the indentured labourers at Bulolo. The Sepiks were said to comprise between 55 and 62 per cent of the indigenous workforce before the War. They were almost solely employed as field labour for the dredges². The sophisticated medical facilities, better accommodation and working conditions together with the camaraderie of a large labour force meant that 'there was universal agreement among the Sepik natives that Bulolo was a fine place to work' (Reed 1943:223). Gawi in his narrative in the Appendix to Chapter Six tells how immediately after the War he was attracted to work in Bulolo because of its good pre-war reputation (*kampani i gutpela i lukautim ol boi*) (see pp.301-307).

Unofficially, BGD sought to encourage migrant labourers to stay on beyond the statutory maximum period of employment while allowing them to take a holiday every two years. As explained above in Chapter Two, while the plantations were only interested in short-term unskilled labour to perform the simple tasks of collecting and smoking the copra, the large mining companies wanted a more permanent workforce to allow a greater acquisition of skills over time. Because of the increasingly important role some Sepiks played as semi-skilled workmen, the Company encouraged men to stay on by giving them open travel warrants at the end of two years' work so that they could visit other centres rather than returning home. Their travel warrant was

1 Literally 'number one'. 'Number two' Sepiks were those from below Tambanam village to the mouth of the River.

2 Personal communication, Personnel Manager, Commonwealth New Guinea Timbers Ltd (CNGT), 1976.

their 'pass' to be shown to a *kiap* in Madang or Rabaul. It was their permit to stay in town for a short visit. In the post-war period, there was the widespread practice of cashing in travel warrants and remaining in Bulolo for their three month leave.¹

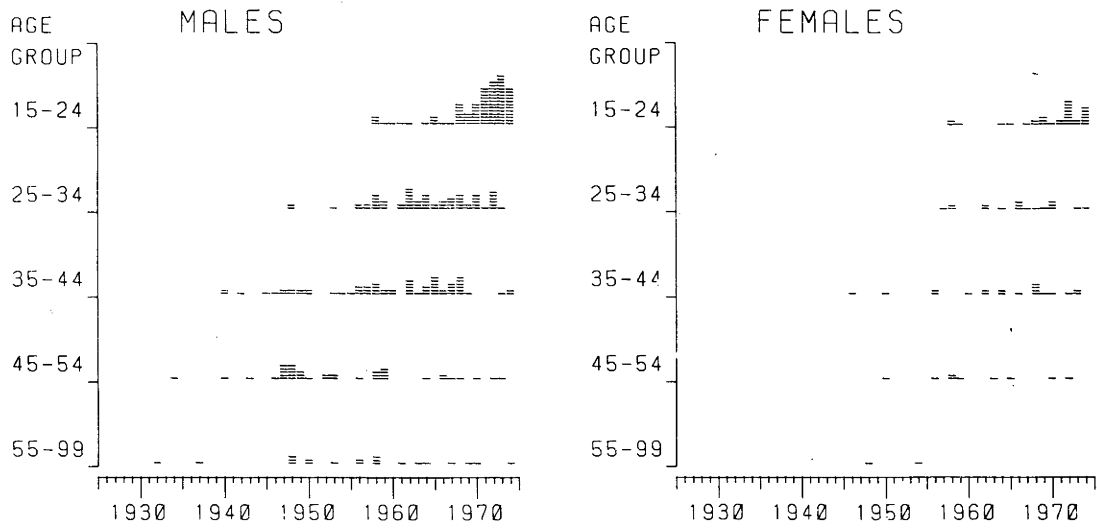
The migrant histories for the Pagwi villages record very few pre-war migrants despite the evidence of heavy over-recruiting presented above (see Figure 5.1). Of those recorded, very few are noted going to Morobe, the most important post-1933 Sepik destination (see Map 5.5). The discrepancy could be partly explained by the failure of current residents to recall long term, pre-war absentees². Also, it is possible that many of the early pre-war recruits died while on indenture³. High mortality rates were prevalent on the Wau-Kiandi goldfields before the companies set up their large-scale mining operations in the early 1930s (Nelson 1976:265). Even for the years for which figures are available (1931 to 1940), of the average

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- 1 Personal communication, Personnel Manager, CNGT. It is not certain whether this practice applied to the pre-war period as well as the post-war period.
 - 2 Despite the fact that the interviewers in the Rural Survey were university students working in or close to their home villages, there were some difficulties in obtaining information about the migration histories of those currently absent. The histories of only 62 per cent were recorded; of these 82 per cent were recorded from those who had returned to the village but only 46 per cent of the current male absentees were recorded (with more data on the Pagwi male absentees than on the Yangoru male absentees (54 per cent compared with 40 per cent). For the women the migration history data represent a smaller fraction of those eligible with 53 per cent overall. Fifty-eight per cent of the returnee women were represented compared with 50 per cent of the current absentee women.
 - 3 Nelson (1978:17) mentions a patrol report in 1946-47 which recorded that of the 40 men who were away from Avatip at the last census before the War, ten had died and two had married and settled in New Ireland. By the end of the War, 28 had returned home.

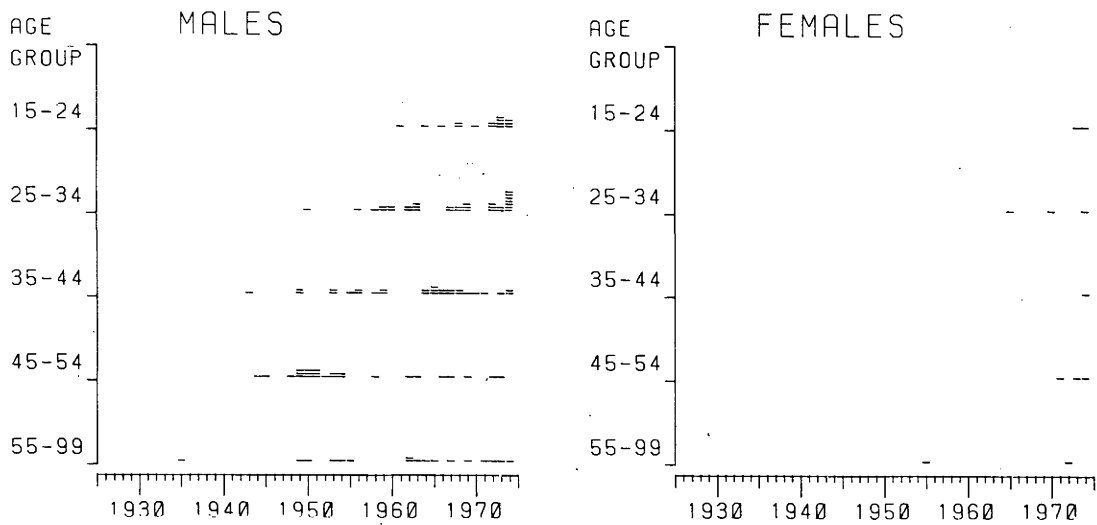
Figure 5.1

PAGWI

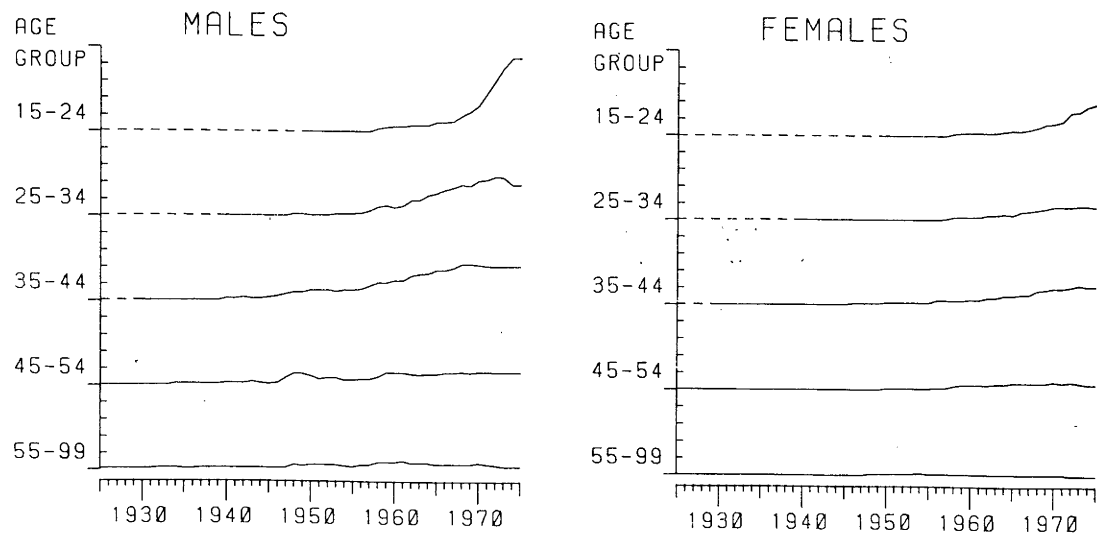
YEAR OF OUTMIGRATION OF PRESENT AGE GROUPS
EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS ONE EMIGRATION



YEAR OF RETURN TO VILLAGE BY PRESENT AGE GROUPS
EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS A SINGLE RETURN

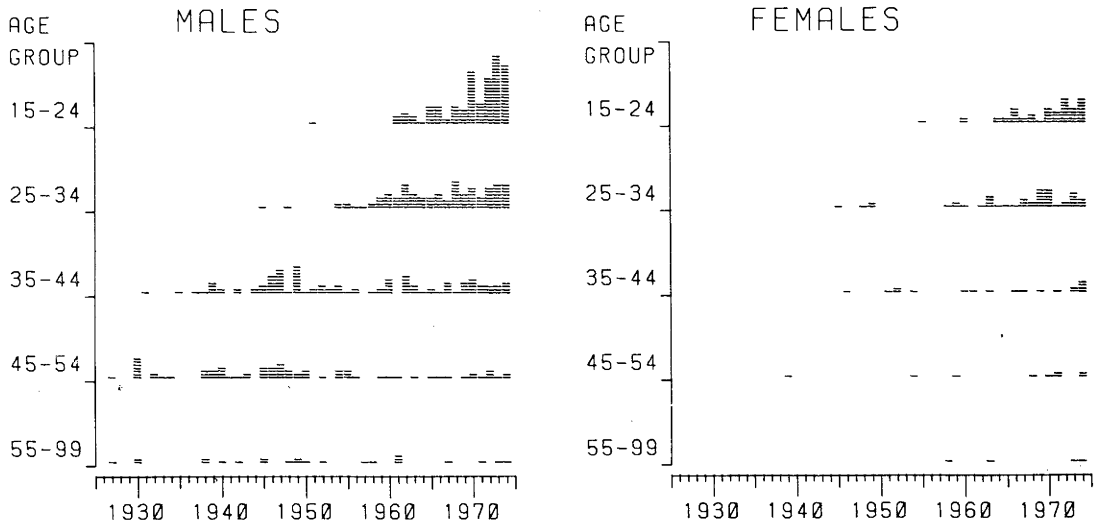


CUMULATIVE NET EMIGRATION FROM VILLAGE
EACH GRADUATION REPRESENTS SIXTEEN PEOPLE

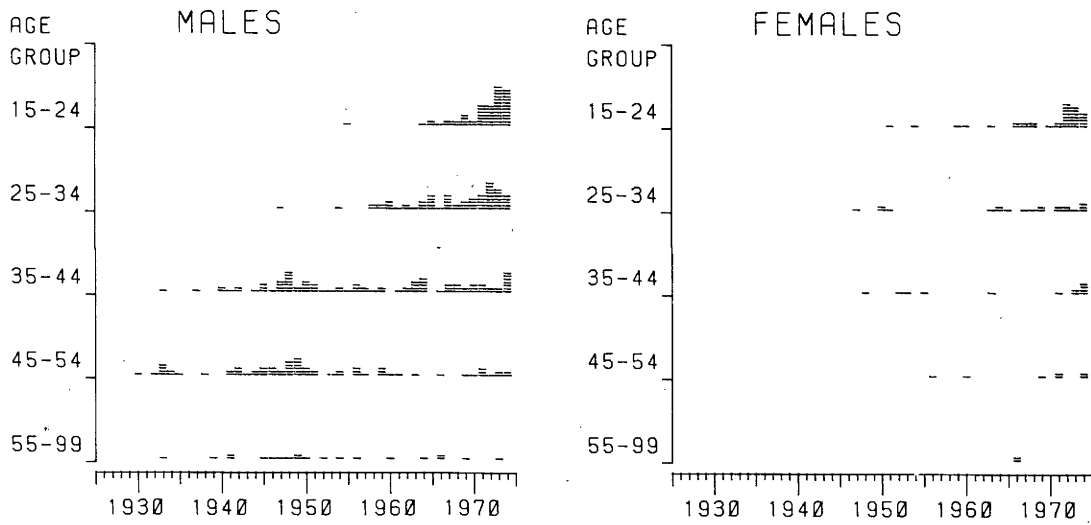


YANGORU

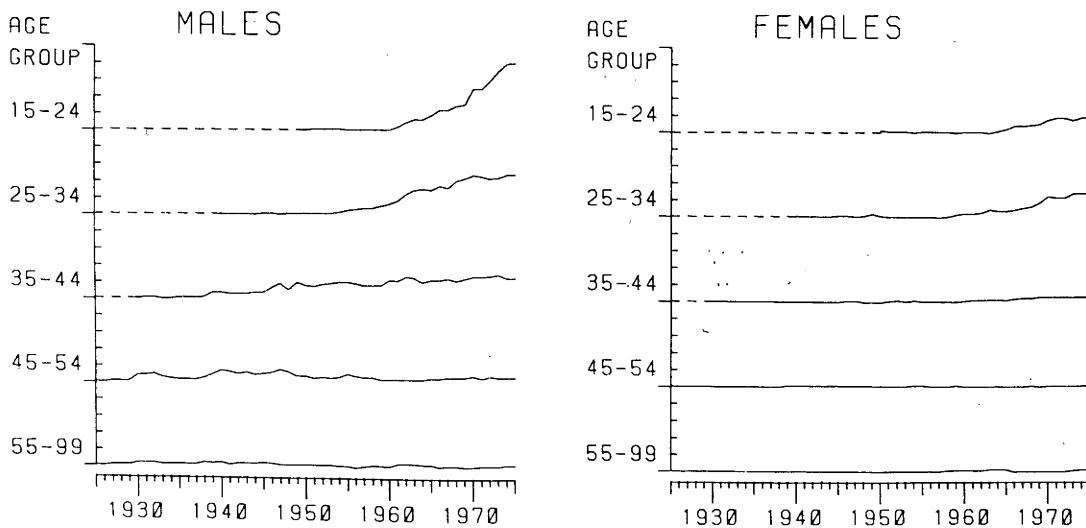
YEAR OF OUTMIGRATION OF PRESENT AGE GROUPS
EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS ONE EMIGRATION



YEAR OF RETURN TO VILLAGE BY PRESENT AGE GROUPS
EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS A SINGLE RETURN



CUMULATIVE NET EMIGRATION FROM VILLAGE
EACH GRADUATION REPRESENTS SIXTEEN PEOPLE



of 554 indentured labourers who died each year, 40 per cent had been employed in Morobe. But the level of return among the surviving population was much lower than for the Yangoru study villages. The age-sex profile of the current residents and absentees of the four river study villages showed that only 68 per cent of male migrants 45 years and over had returned home compared with an 86 per cent level of return for the same age group in the Yangoru villages. It is likely that some pre-war labour migrants from the river villages stayed on in Bulolo, or moved elsewhere without returning home, losing all contact with those who were interviewed in the village.

In contrast, most pre-war moves recorded in the migration histories refer to the plantation economies of Rabaul, Manus and Bougainville as destinations. It is from the plantations that migrant labourers were more likely to be repatriated. For those recorded in the migration histories there was, even before the war, a shift to urban unskilled or semi-skilled employment. While 38 per cent were plantation labourers, some 56 per cent were in urban-related occupations or in the police force (see Appendix 5.2, Figures 3 and 4).

The Yangoru villages: pre-war isolation

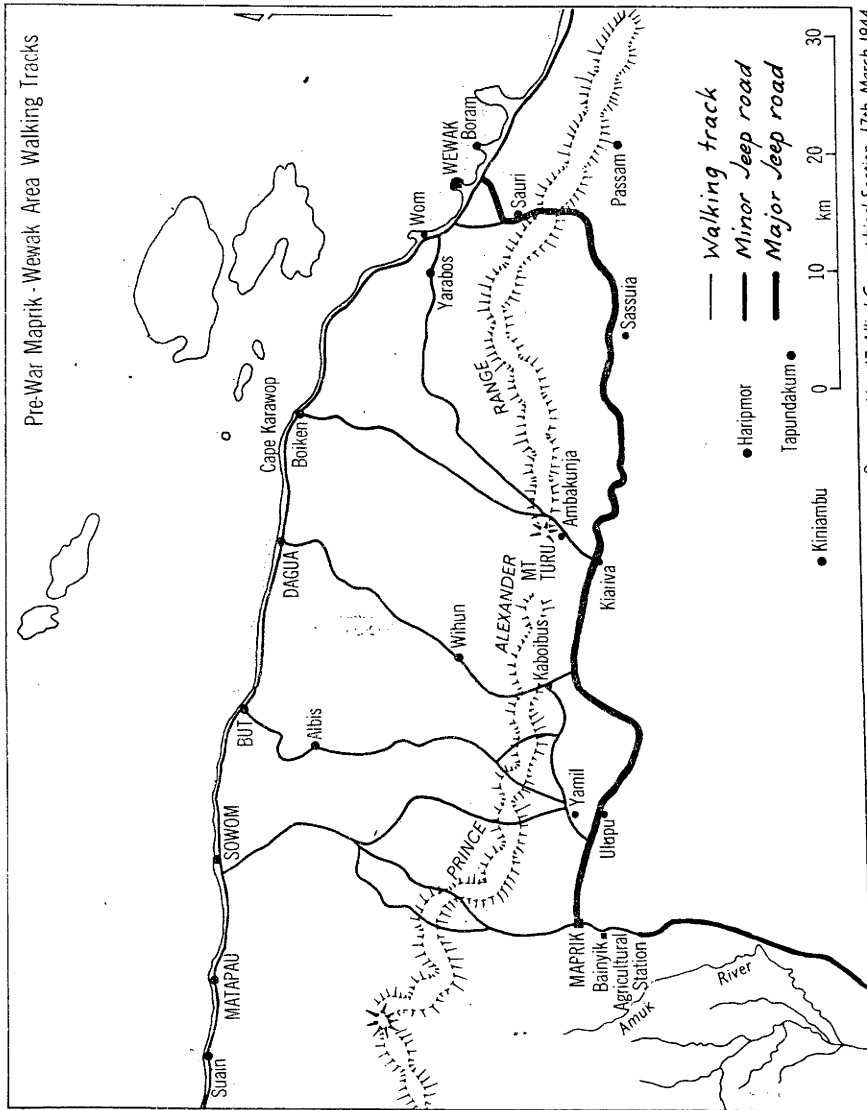
In marked contrast to the Sepik River, the foothills south of the Prince Alexander Mountains remained isolated and inaccessible until the discovery of gold at Yamil near Maprik in 1936. Although a German trading and mission presence had been established in the vicinity of Aitape from 1894 and recruiters were active along the coast and inland across the Torricelli Mountains (Allen 1976:60), little

impact was made on the area behind the coastal mountain range further to the south.

For the Yangoru study villages, the early contact came some time after 1909 when a mission station was established at Boiken. Following a traditional trading route over the mountains via Mt Hurun (which involved a two-day walk), first contacts were made through a missionary and recruiter and finally a German colonial field officer. Similarly for the Mountain Arapesh villages of Kaboibus, contact was made with the German colonial police following a traditional trading route into the interior (see Map 5.5). Aitape was, from the 1900s to 1934, the major administrative and commercial centre northwest of Madang. Several men were abducted and taken to this centre to be taught the *lingua franca*, pidgin, and to be instructed in the new balance of power. Four men from the Siniangu-Mambuk villages and nine men from the Kaboibus villages were so abducted and trained.¹

With the change from German to Australian colonial control, the hinterland was neglected. By 1924, Patrol Officer Townsend, stationed at Aitape, reported that government influence inland of the coast was minimal (Townsend 1968:110)... A patrol from Wewak in August, 1933 was the first government contact with the area for four to five years. It was noted that there were some *luluais* in the northern part

1 See Hawaina's, Yachichori's and Kwaikiau's narratives (pp.232-242). Reed (1943:146) mentions the German and later Australian practice of kidnapping men from untouched villages which had steadfastly refused to furnish recruits.

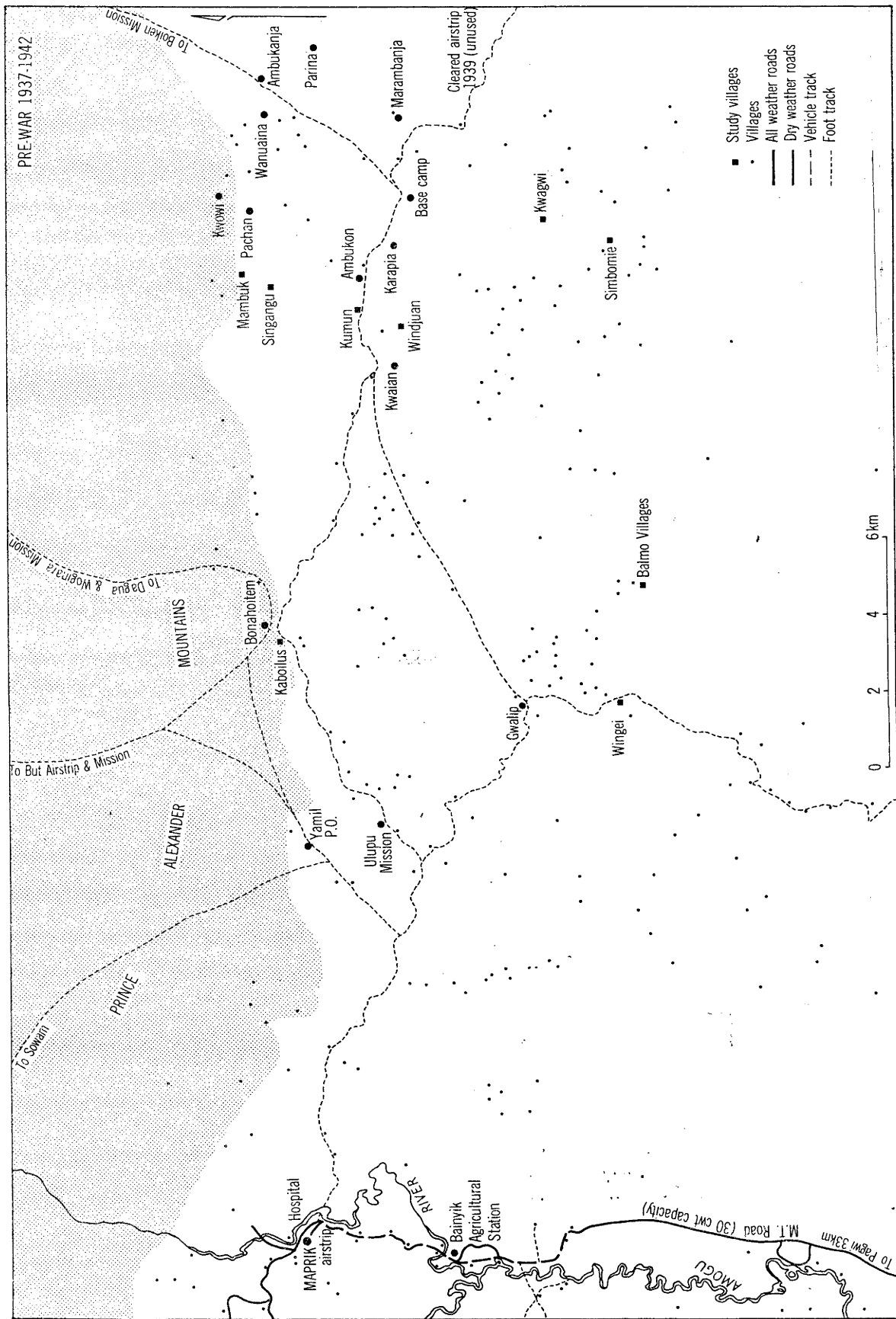


Map 5.5

of the foothills. Deserters from indenture were apprehended and a census taken of five villages for the first time. The last tax-paying village on the patrol route from Wewak was still some 18 kilometres to the east of the Yangoru villages. The patrol officer noted, however, that there were a number of ex-labourers in the area who had been recruited by Cobb for Karawop plantation on the coast. By the mid-1930s, some recruiters who were sending labourers to the Wau-Bulolo goldfields appeared to be operating in the area (see the narratives of Mingisin, Yekerai and Palili). But one study village, Balmo, seemed to be outside government influence until 1936-37 and actively engaged in inter-tribal fighting. Therefore, despite an early contact with the German colonial administration, the lack of interest and accessibility meant that little attention was paid to the Yangoru area until 1936 when these limitations were transformed with the discovery of gold at Yamil.

The activities on the goldfield brought two new patrol posts to the interior, Yamil and Maprik. The latter became a subdistrict headquarters in 1937. An agricultural station under the supervision of two Europeans was opened nearby at Bainyik. Mission stations were set up at several locations in the foothills (see Map 5.6). Both government posts had airfields and a daily air service from the district headquarters, now at Wewak, was started to serve the miners. The one effect of the large influx of Europeans (50 sat down to a Christmas meal at Maprik in 1937¹) was to increase the mobility of local villagers. Mrs Judy Tudor was with her husband on the Yamil goldfield in 1936:

1 Dan Leahy, personal communication: 1976.



• Places mentioned in the narratives in the Appendix to Chapter Five.

Map 5.6

When we first knew this area it was difficult to get any villager to go further than three or four hours' walk from his place although this changed rapidly once a lot of Europeans came into the district and government set up posts (personal communication: 1976).

The role of head tax. McCarthy (1963:155), writing of the Sepik as it was in the late 1930s, recalled that:

For several years the villages of the Sepik had paid their annual tax of ten shillings to the Administration and the money went into general revenue. The tax was collected only of those people regarded as being sufficiently civilized to pay it, and since most of the Sepik people had little hope of obtaining money by trade, the tax was usually paid from one source - from indentured labourers who returned home bringing their deferred wages with them.

On the Sepik River, Townsend's intensive patrolling from Ambunti from the mid-1920s was most likely to have involved tax collection. But in the Yangoru area, head tax was not collected until 1937 or 1938, some time after recruiting had started and *luluais* had been appointed. Once introduced, the tax provided an important incentive for men to continue to be recruited. As Kwaikiau of Kumun explained:

From this time, we were recruited for copra plantations to earn money to pay our tax. In the German period we had no money. But later through outside work on the plantations we earned money to buy things such as bush knives and axes, and to pay tax. Townsend had been here before head tax was introduced. Some men went away and came back, paid the tax and then others left and returned home and paid the tax. It went on like that.

Initial responses: the Yangoru villages. The narratives which I collected from men in the Yangoru area provide a detailed account of the early responses to the colonial presence. The first response was one of fear (see Yachichori's narrative, p. 235). The demonstration of the killing capacity of the foreigners' weaponry instilled an awareness that, although small in number, these people were not to be viewed in the same way as an enemy from the next village. In contrast to the activities of recruiters on the river, there is no evidence that those at Yangoru used dynamite, but nevertheless among the Boiken the demonstration effect of a rifle bullet on a shield or large block of wood earned the coloniser the name of *Wala*, the spirit most feared because it was held responsible for great storms and winds capable of blowing down houses. To overcome this fear, recruiters initially resorted to abduction. Nalmerninki from Wingei recounts how he himself led into the Wosera recruiting parties which captured young men, tied them up with laplaps (so no marks would show) and presented them to the European recruiter and then to the *kiap*.

A more profound reaction among the newly contacted villagers was the growing awareness of the gap in the standard and provision of material goods between the two economies. The fascination with, and demand for, simple utensils such as axes, tomahawks, knives and cloth is a constant theme running through the narratives. The handing out of trade goods soon became the major way of inducing the village elders to give up their young men. Yehirai's narrative (p.243) illustrates well the demonstration the recruiter put on for the assembled village. Someone would use a knife to cut bark from a tree; another would use matches to ignite some dry coconut fronds;

a third man might use a razor to shave off half of an old man's beard, or use a pair of scissors to cut someone's hair. But the most impressive demonstration was placing distilled salt on people's tongues. The craving for salt had for generations sent the inlanders over the mountains to collect sea water in bamboo containers to be arduously carried back home. Now, it was demonstrated that quantities of salt could be obtained in a much more direct manner.

Labour migration appeared to be the only available means to obtain trade goods. Hawaina tells how the village would gather in great expectation as he opened his patrol box to hand out knives, laplaps, matches and salt. Wants soon began to expand so that clothing, nails, razors, mirrors and trade store tobacco were soon considered necessities. By the late 1930s, head tax also became another incentive. Kwaikiau summed up the situation:

The pattern was for many men to go away to work on plantations. They would get cargo to bring back home to their village and money to pay the tax.

The level of demand for material goods in the areas behind the ranges can be judged from the following assessment provided in the Allied Geographical Section's (AGS) 1943 background report on the Sepik:

In normal times on the beach and near beach areas, money would purchase anything from native foods, canoes etc. to labourers, if these items were to be had ... Inland, natives want all steel items (axes, knives, files, plane blades, razor blades) salt (always in good demand), matches, beads, laplaps, mirrors and to a smaller degree, money. Items such as laplaps, taro knives, plane blades etc. are given for one or two days service. Also money is sometimes used. Items such as salt, seed beads, matches or razor blades, are usually reserved

for the purchasing of native foods ... salt is number one trade inland. Razor blades are next on the list and are in universal demand (AGS 1943:165).

While returned labour migrants and the greater presence of Europeans working various gold diggings after 1937 brought increasing amounts of trade goods into the area, the perceived gap in material possessions did not close but considerably widened. As labourers returned home to tell of the enormous wealth of the Europeans in places such as Rabaul, the dissatisfaction with their subservient role, only minimally rewarded, boiled over into cargo cult activity. Several narrators stressed the low wages they were paid for long, tedious work. Kwaikiau explained:

Those recruited stayed for two years. They were given a laplap and 30 cents (three shillings) each month. The employers were not kind. The foreman could imprison men. If the workers did not listen to them, they would beat them up. They had to wake up at half past six in the morning and line up by seven o'clock, then work and not finish until dark.

Returned labourers such as Hawaina became involved in a cargo cult that started initially on the coast and rapidly spread inland. The main impetus of the cult was a call for a more equitable distribution of the material goods which were now solidly under the control of the white man (see Yachichori's narrative).

In response to the awareness of the extent of their poverty and of the very different world beyond the mountains, some young men did not wait to be 'bought', but actively sought out recruiters and insisted that they be taken along. Palili and Mingisin in their

narratives point out how they themselves took the initiative in signing on. Others became eager collaborators with the Europeans in helping to recruit their fellow villagers, sometimes even to the extent of using force.¹ Maringingi, who lived until 1974 and was widely recognised as a big-man, was able to take advantage of his early abduction by the Germans to advance his position considerably. He used his newly acquired skill in pidgin to play a profitable intermediary role between the demands of the outsiders and his own interests (see Otto Innahosi's narrative, p.246).

So prior to the War, in Yangoru and Pagwi as in many other areas, labour migration presented itself as the only means of responding to the pressures applied by recruiters through force and later the inducement of trade goods by colonial officials through head tax, and from local leaders who worked with the new power to weaken their traditional enemies. By the late 1930s, a new set of needs had been created which was to cause an eagerness to work.

Pre-war migration and destinations of the Yangoru villagers. The pre-war data on the movements of those from the Yangoru study villages still alive in 1974 point to an improperly regulated system of circulation at that time. Most had returned home after their first three years indenture had been completed. But of the 57 men who left their village between 1920 and 1945, 35 per cent had not returned by the end of the War despite a general release from contracts for everyone in October 1945 (see Figure 5.2, p.184). This confirms other evidence that the repatriation provisions could be circumvented. Yehirai's

¹ See the narratives of Nalmerninki and Yekirai (pp.248,243).

narrative shows the degree of mobility and lengthy absence some individuals were able to achieve. In a conference on Native Labour held in Sydney in December 1944, most participants acknowledged that there were many examples of indentured labourers not returning home after the legal maximum of seven years under indenture. Examples were cited of men being given fares back to their home area, but stopping off at the next port of call. Instances also were given of men staying on plantations, marrying local women and rearing families over a period of ten to 15 years. An anthropologist, A.P. Elkin, went so far as to suggest that the repatriation requirement of the Native Labour Ordinance might exist more in theory than in practice.¹ In the long-term, while 86 per cent of the Yangoru male migrants 45 years and over had returned home by the time of the survey in 1974, a significant proportion of the early migrants appeared to have stayed away from their village longer than the strict operation of the legislation allowed.²

The migration histories of surviving Yangoru male villagers reveal a considerable pre-war mobility. Morobe District was the most important destination but within Morobe, Bulolo was relatively unimportant. Most Yangoru migrants were taken to Wau or Salamaua. With BGD's attention concentrated on the river, inland recruiters sought labourers for Wau. (Palili, Mingisin, Yehirai and Otto Invahosi all mention going to work in Wau or Salamaua.) Most of the men from Yangoru were employed in gold mining, with only 10 per cent employed in urban unskilled jobs.

1 The conference is reported in 'Native labour conference proceedings', December, 1944 CRS A518, L840/1/1 AA.

2 Some migrants such as police, however, were outside the requirements of the Native Labour Ordinance.

Rabaul was also an important destination. Here 50 per cent were engaged in plantation employment, a much higher proportion than for the men in Rabaul from the river villages. The shorter history of recruiting had perhaps given the Yangoru men less opportunity to escape the drudgery of plantation work. Maprik also emerged as a destination for some pre-war migrants. In 1938 and 1939, some 500 labourers were indentured to white miners prospecting gold in the vicinity of Maprik (Nelson 1976:259).

The War and its effects

The 1943 Allied Geographical Study of the Sepik had this to say about local attitudes prior to the War:

Before the Japanese occupation the attitude of the natives towards Europeans was generally friendly and more or less respectful, though, through the years some villages have been consistently hostile. That does not mean that they will attack a white man on sight. Continued irritations and more and more frequent quarrels are usually the methods used to drive visitors away (AGS 1943:164).

But this latent hostility erupted once it became known that the Europeans were on the defensive in a major war. On the Sepik River in March 1942, three European miner recruiters, one *kiap*, two Chinese and a number of their indentured labourers were killed when a detachment of police revolted after their European officer-in-charge had apparently gone insane. The eight rebel police joined by 30 local villagers finally entrenched themselves on an island in the Chambri Lakes. They were said to have a launch in their possession with plenty of fuel.¹ The rebel police had 'ravaged a wide area, fomented local

¹ Report on the Sepik District 8 December 1941 to 31 July 1942. Captain J.H. Jones, Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) War Diary, Australian War Memorial.

uprisings at some 'points and caused serious disorders among the natives generally before they themselves were finally killed or apprehended' (D.M. McCarthy 1959:48).

The Japanese Armed Forces landed at Wewak in December 1942. Their behaviour towards the local population was immediately perceived as being very different from that of their predecessors. Michael Somare, a young boy at the time, described his initial impressions at their arrival in his village at the mouth of the Sepik River:

They quickly made friends with our people. They brought presents of food, clothes and all sorts of good things and they passed around plenty of whiskey to our people who had a big celebration on the arrival of the Japanese (Somare 1975:2).

Not only did the Japanese break at once the long-established colonial caste rule which severely restricted close contact with the colonisers and prohibited the use of alcoholic beverages to the indigenous population, they also set about teaching adults as well as children how to count and sing in the Japanese language (see Mambi's narrative). The invaders also sought to present themselves as the returned spirits of the people's ancestors. An ANGAU Report from the Aitape area described the propaganda being used:

Just now times are hard, but as soon as we have finished off the whites ... we will send many ships laden with cargo and you will all have clothes, shoes, blankets and firearms, canned food in abundance and all the utensils you desire. The white skins are cowardly, they ground you down and exploited you but we will treat you as men. We are mighty and we are your friends and your ancestors (quoted in Allen 1976:87).

These ideas would doubtless have found a receptive audience among those who flocked to hear the prophecy of the cargo cultists who had predicted the arrival of liberators (see Yachichori's narrative). Many of the men willingly offered their services as local officials for the Japanese (see Hawaina's narrative). The ordinary Japanese soldier, probably from a rural peasant background himself, found no difficulty in eating together with the local villagers or in sharing the workload in the gardens (Allen 1976:88).¹

Japanese patrols passed through the foothills and men were taken to the coast to work as guards or carriers. Most areas had to provide a certain quota of labour for Japanese construction work on the coast. Payment was in the form of occupation paper money or in coins of aluminium alloy which quickly eroded into a white powder (AGS 1944:72)². Former *luluais* and *tultuls* who had some standing in their local areas were appointed officials of the Japanese Administration. In contrast to the previous direct form of colonial rule, the Japanese dealt through these officials alone in the administration of particular areas, a method of operation which greatly increased the prestige of the new officials (AGS 1944:71).

By early 1944, the Japanese Armed Forces were on the defensive and hard pressed. An army of 54,000 men was concentrated along the Aitape-Wewak coast and inland to the Sepik River. With food and material supplies from Japan cut off, only two months'

1 Tuzin (1976:31) in his study of a village south of Maprik comments on the willingness of the Japanese soldiers to help in the gardens.

2 Yekirai mentions being paid in a worthless paper money. There were no stores in which the money could be used to buy goods (see p. 243).

supply of food was left in early 1944. It was decided to set up self-support units in the foothills behind the coast. While waiting for their own gardens to yield, the troops turned to the villagers' gardens. Troops were billeted in each village 'to support and encourage the natives' in working their gardens. All the wild and domestic game was hunted down.

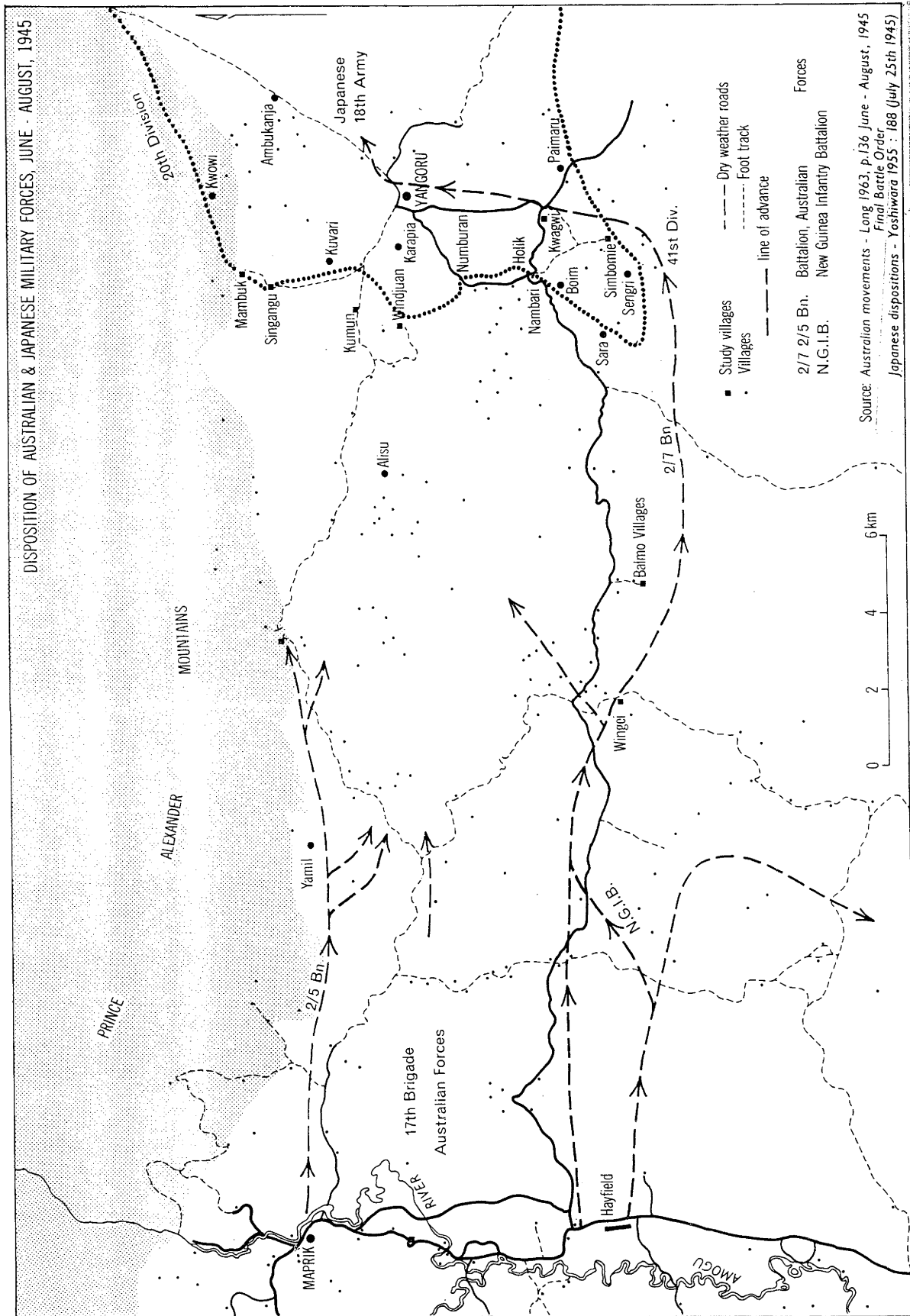
After a major battle at Aitape between April and August 1944, the Japanese 18th Army was reduced to 35,000 men. At the surrender in August 1945, only 13,300 troops remained, 3400 of whom were sick.¹ Despite the obviously desperate situation of the Japanese, the Australian advance from Aitape towards Wewak on two fronts, along the coast and inland, was so fierce that the Japanese commanders believed that their total destruction was sought.² They reacted by engaging in what they called 'decisive ambushing'. It involved digging in at tactical sites, often villages, and withdrawing only after a severe fight. The villages in the Yangoru area were heavily involved in this intensive hand to hand fighting which was backed by massive aerial bombardment.³ Villages on the main lines of advance were completely levelled (see Map 5.7).

By October 1944, some 15,000 Japanese troops were positioned in the foothills, with gardens enough to feed only 10,000 men. Since the Aitape campaign no supplies had been received at all. There were no new supplies of clothes, shoes, blankets, mosquito nets, tools,

1 The Australian Military Forces in the same year in this campaign lost only 442 men killed (Long 1963:385).

2 Japanese Army Operations Record Vol. 5: 207 Australian War Memorial.

3 See the narratives of Kwaikiau, Mambi and Yekirai (pp.238,249,243).



• Places mentioned in the narratives in the Appendix to Chapter Five

ammunition, or medicine. There was very little food (Yoshiwara 1955: 171). The desperate troops tested everything for edibility. As a result a large number suffered from ptomaine poisoning. Faced with starvation, men turned to cannibalism.¹

As the Japanese 18th Army was being forced into its final battle position around Yangoru from the direction of Wewak and Maprik (see Map 5.8), the villagers in the area began to revolt (Yoshiwara 1955:172).

After the surrender on 15 August 1945 the Japanese were permitted to retain their personal arms for fear of attack by the villagers. The Australian Forces impounded the population as well. Summary executions of so-called collaborators were carried out, others were sent to prison in Rabaul for ten years, and others publicly humiliated.²

Post-war: *kago* and *bisnis*

Quite apart from the devastation it caused, the effect of the war was to alter irreversibly Papua New Guineans' perceptions of their colonial masters. For indentured labourers such as Palili, Mingisin and Yehivai in Wau at the start of the War, the sudden collapse of the civilian administration came as a great shock. The pre-war rigid caste barriers broke down as Europeans panicked and fled. The incompetence of the expatriate militia in guerilla tactics soon became obvious to Palili who made a number of suggestions for

1 See Kwaikiau and Mambi's narratives (pp.238,249).

2 See the narratives of Yekirai and Hawaina (pp.243,232).

improvement. Contacts with ordinary soldiers, whether Australian, American or Japanese, had revealed little of the racial bigotry of the pre-war colonial society. As Hogbin (1951:287) explained, Australian soldiers neither had a vested interest in New Guineans as units of labour nor feared them as a threat to their social status. Therefore they were able to meet them as relative equals. New Guineans began to view themselves differently. Many who had fought alongside the Allied soldiers refused to accept that things should return to their pre-war condition. At the conclusion of the hostilities, the hopes of those Papua New Guineans involved were high. A number of prominent Allied officers were said to have promised massive development efforts for those who had helped defeat the Japanese. Both Yachichori and Palili speak of the promises made and the disappointment over their non-fulfilment.¹

At the same time, cargo cultist ideas reappeared. Rather than cultivate new gardens, villagers cleared dropping zones in the hope that rations would continue to be dropped by plane as they had been in the final days of the War. Villagers had to be cajoled into cleaning up their villages by being offered trade goods. Cargo cult activity swept the length of the Sepik River and into the Maprik area for several years after the War.

Against this background of severe food shortages and the need to absorb the indentured labourers returning home after the

1 'Before we were in our villages but now we have helped you. You are very well off now. Why won't you help us to improve our villages?' (Yachichori's narrative). Some ex-soldiers in the Kumun area were said to be openly critical of the Australians as colonial masters, claiming but for their help, Australia would have lost the war (Patrol Report Kumun area 14 May 1946; see also Palili's narrative (p.251)).

cancellation of all contracts in October 1946, men were soon compelled to seek employment again. This time force, pressure or inducement was no longer present or necessary.¹ The change in the response of labour migration to cash cropping is summarised by Kwaikiau of Kumun village:

Before the war, [indentured labour] was the only way of going away to work but after the war men went to Wewak to the recruiters to offer themselves for work. The men wanted to work for money. By 1962 when the Council was formed, men had stopped going away as contract labourers. It was at this time that the *didiman* started coffee, cocoa, rice and peanuts (see also Palili's narrative, p. 251).

Although Kwaikiau's chronology is incorrect about the date of the introduction of cash crops, it does illustrate the perceived connection between contract labour and the absence of any alternative sources of cash income.

Allen (1976) in an intensive and thorough study, has documented the spread of *bisnis* after the War through the foothills of the Prince Alexander and Torricelli mountains. His study reveals the thin line of distinction between the concept of *bisnis* and cargo cultist expectations in the minds of the people involved.

Bisnis must not be equated with Western concepts of business. *Bisnis* is a broad concept manifested in a number of ways, which include producing crops for sale, and investing money in enterprises which it is believed will cause large amounts of money to accrue to the individual. The processes by which the money is generated are poorly understood, if understood at all, by many people. When *bisnis* was first introduced people believed it was the

1 Head tax was abolished between 1945 and 1958 when it was reintroduced for those men not paying taxes directly to local government councils.

form of behaviour which Europeans used to gain access to wealth and power, and because of this they adopted rice growing enthusiastically ... When people found rice growing was not bringing about the changes they believed it would, they ceased planting (Allen 1976:252).

The urge to engage in *bisnis* like cargo cult ideas can be readily understood as a response to the heightened expectations of opportunities for material progress, which had been greatly enhanced by the wartime experience of an enormous display of material goods. *Bisnis* was introduced and promoted by a small group of innovative and enterprising men like Hawaina and Palili, who had undergone a profound wartime experience of their own inferiority and powerlessness and yet also realised the opportunities for change through their new perceptions of the re-imposed colonial order. Many of the innovators had been migrants, working as labourers, domestic servants, policemen or soldiers.

While the older men who migrated before or during the War were returning home to use cash cropping as a way of gaining better access to the outside world, the younger men were leaving their villages to accumulate capital to be able to return home and establish themselves.¹ After the War, the local economy moved from a situation in which money was used only to pay the head tax, to one in which the traditional exchange system (depending mostly on clam rings and shells) was partly supplanted by the use of money. In the

1 Much of the following discussion of the post-war period relates to the foothills area, mainly because my second field trip concentrated on the Yangoru area. Many of the attempts to start *bisnis* and local cooperative societies were paralleled on the river but this area suffered greatly from its lack of capacity to develop local sources of income through cash crops because of the severe shortage of suitable land.

Yangoru area as late as 1954, brideprice and pigs were still paid for entirely with shell money. The main way to earn the shell money was to raise pigs. So migrant labourers returned from places like Rabaul with pigs, bought for £1 or £2, for breeding at home. Young men, by taking up wage employment, were therefore able to acquire traditional wealth far more quickly than had been possible in earlier generations. However, these men returned home to find that the early enthusiastic attempts at rice growing had often failed. With little official encouragement, poor roads or none at all, inadequate marketing facilities and low prices, the people's first attempts at *bisnis* were unsuccessful. As Yekirai from Kwagwie explained:

In the beginning everyone tried it. They planted communal gardens. The rice mill was then at Yangoru, but it was broken by those who did not know how to use it. I am not sure why people stopped growing rice. It worked well around Maprik. It was partly to do with the breakdown of the mill, but also it was a desire to look for something new.¹

From the late 1950s peanuts and coffee were taken up. Other *bisnis* ventures tried over the years included gold mining, fish ponds, teak forests, artifacts, passenger motor vehicles, piggeries, cattle, European vegetables, trade stores and tipper trucks. Few have had much success.²

1 Mr W.R. Stent (personal communication 1977), an agricultural extension officer in the Maprik area in 1956-57, confirms that there were two small ANCO rice mills at Nindepoyle and Himburu villages 'but these gave so poor a return - only 50 per cent milled rice - and constantly broke down'.

2 Among the villages on the river, the range of experimentation has been only marginally narrower: coconuts, pigs, smoked fish, artifacts, wet rice, coffee, crocodile skins, cocoa, vegetables, trade-stores, and river transport.

By 1966, the Yehere-Nindepoyle Cooperative Society (covering the Wingei, Kumun, Yangoru and Sepik Census Divisions) could claim a turnover of only \$3500 with a net profit of a mere \$76. This showed little advance on the £945 turnover in 1957 for the smaller Balimo Society which covered only part of the same area. Coffee began to spread throughout the Yangoru area in the late 1960s. In 1964-65, only 24.5 tons were bought from local growers. By 1970-71, 783 tons of coffee beans (or 7.8 per cent of the Maprik district's total sales of coffee to the association) were sold from Yangoru growers to the Sepik Producers Cooperative Association.

After the mid-1960s, the rural economy of the Sepik became increasingly incorporated into a monetary exchange system. Many of the rural villager's needs could be met only through the acquisition of money. Council taxes and school fees had to be paid when local government councils and primary schools were introduced. Imported foods, clothes and household utensils became more accessible as trade stores spread through the rural areas, and luxury items such as motor vehicles, radios, liquor and tobacco became more common as roads, pidgin broadcasts and repeal of discriminatory legislation made their acquisition possible.¹

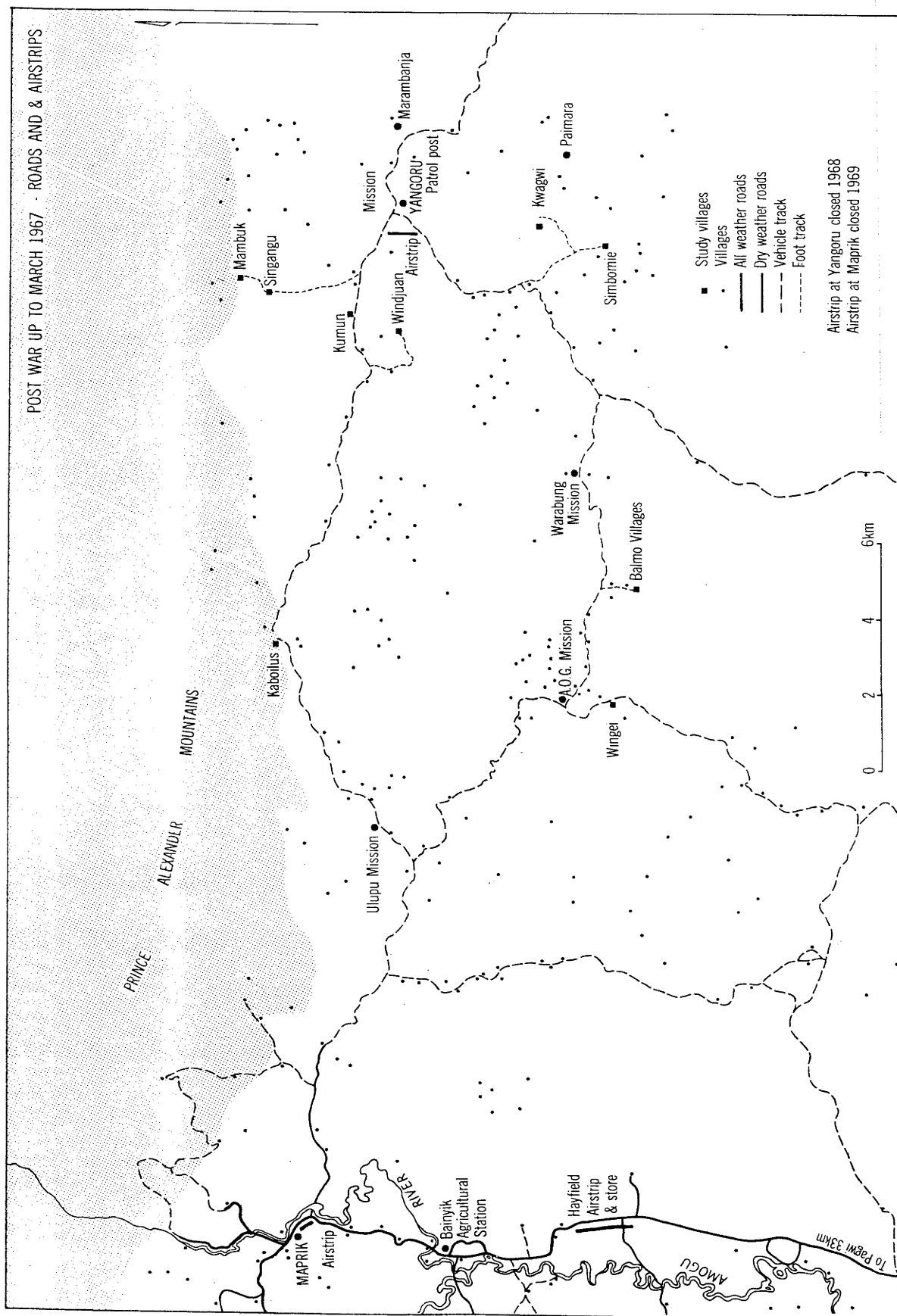
1 In 1961-62, Lea noted that there were 39 Papua New Guinean-owned trade stores in the Maprik district. In the Yangoru area only (five census divisions), there were 55 trade stores in 1970, 62 in 1971 and an estimated 104 in 1972 (Seiler 1972:62). For the Maprik district as a whole, the number of trade stores rose from 347 in 1970 to an estimated 715 in 1972, showing a rise of 1733 per cent on the 1962 figure.

Another basic factor bringing a closer incorporation into a wider economy was the Sepik Highway. In 1968, an all-weather road replaced a rough jeep track from Maprik to Wewak (see Maps 5.8 and 5.9). By January 1970, the highway had been extended to Dreikikir (see Map 5.1). Smaller roads were built and expanded from the early 1960s. In 1968, only one PMV (passenger motor vehicle) was registered from a village within the Maprik district; by 1969 there were 13 vehicles; by 1970, 48 and by 1971, 64. Altogether 95 vehicles were registered at some time in the four-year period (Seiler 1972:263).

The kago movement. Cargo cultist ideas and activity were widespread throughout the foothills zone before the War. By 1969, they re-emerged. The initial call to action was said to be inspired by the poor local economic conditions, Mathias Yaliwan claimed that the presence of survey markers on Mt Hurun caused reduced harvests and poor hunting (Stent 1977:190). By 1972, the main emphasis had become the attempted miraculous manufacture of money through ritual. Kumun, one of the study villages, was one of the central places where in 1972 people brought their suitcases to the *haus paau* (power house)¹, to be left for a qualifying period and then to be collected hopefully full of cash.

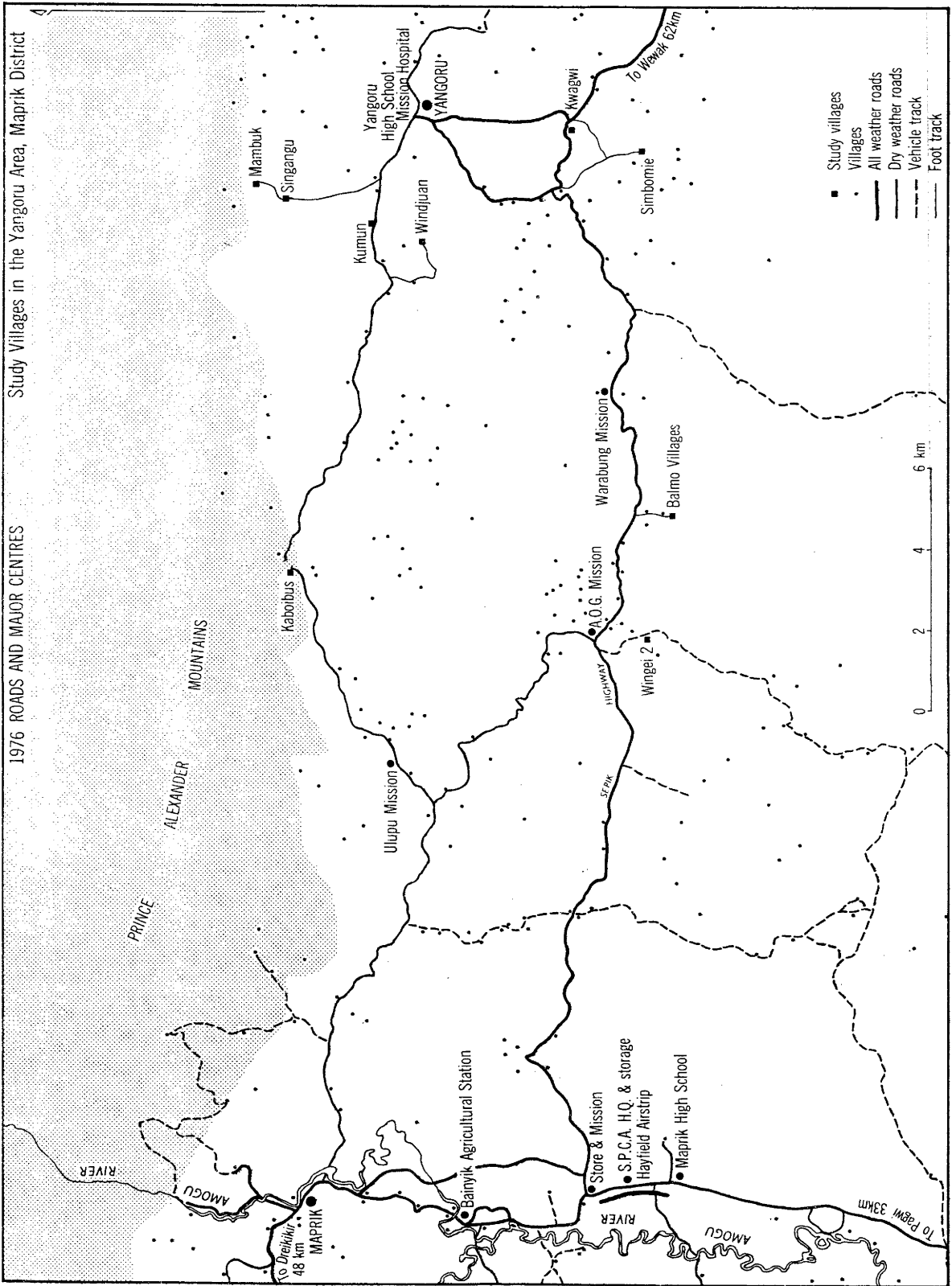
The local cash-earning activities of coffee and rice were neglected and a large-scale movement of people took place through the area, directed towards Yaliwan's village. The 'commissioners' or village leaders in the Peli Association (as it became known after July 1972) were the big-men who traditionally led others in such

¹ Also called '*haus moni*' or '*beng*' (bank).



Map 5.8

• Places mentioned in the narratives in the Appendix to Chapter Five.



Map 5.9

Places mentioned in the narratives in the Appendix to Chapter Five.

activities as making gardens, the planting of crops and ceremonial activities. Their attention turned away from these activities to those of the Peli Association.¹

But by late 1973, a reaction to the Peli Association had set in. It seemed that yet another enterprise had failed to live up to its promise of quick *win moni* (profit). Villagers in the Wingei Census Division threatened to kill the ringleaders if they appeared in their area. Others claimed that the Peli Association had been an alternative form of *bisnis* worth a try. If it failed they could still go back to coffee.

The Peli Association was only the most recent of a number of cargo cult activities in the area. Pita Simogun has claimed that before the War he was part of a patrol that went into the foothills to quash a cargo cult movement led by the father of one of the principal leaders of the Peli Association (Daniel Hawaina). For the Dreikikir area, Allen has described the *Kirap-Kirap* (1956) and the *Red Box* (1963) movements. Political parties have also received support based on cargo ideas.² In mid-1972, expectations of sudden wealth had been raised by a chain letter racket run from Sydney. It was eventually banned by the Administration and yet again 'people became unsure as to whether they were on the right "road" or not' (Stent 1977:196). By late 1976,

1 The following account is derived from fieldwork notes, Patrol Reports held in Yangoru and Maprik, Stent (1977), May (1976) and Allen (1976).

2 Allen has claimed that a cargo mentality lay behind the widespread joining of and voting for, the Pangu Pati in 1968 in the Dreikikir area. The local people's rejection of the Pati later in 1972 elections, was merely another demonstration of over-enthusiastic adoption, trial, crisis and discontinuation (Allen 1976:281).

attention was again directed towards *bisnis* in the form of coffee and cocoa, along with a growing interest in the fundamentalist evangelical mission activities. Despite a general discounting of the Peli Association, delegates from several of the study villages were still making monthly visits to Yaliwan's village to bring back reports.

The processes by which money is acquired are poorly understood by many rural villagers. Enterprises have been embraced enthusiastically in the hope of finding the key to wealth and equal status with the colonisers. When difficulties with the various enterprises appeared, such as low prices, poor marketing, or inadequate husbandry, projects were quickly abandoned. The same search for the key to wealth has produced cultist reactions. The distinction between *bisnis* and *kago* is not one the villagers made. Both are seen as alternative roads to the same end.

The connection between bisnis, kago and outmigration. In the Sepik, as elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, the growth of cash cropping caused a shift away from plantation labour (Ward 1971:85; Harris 1973:132). In both Sepik districts agreement labour was in rapid decline from 1963, while non-agreement migrant workers were on the increase after 1966. Involvement in the market economy did not, however, halt outmigration because the *bisnis* activities that accompanied the introduction of a transport and marketing system emerged at the same time as a rapid expansion of formal education and urban wage employment.¹ Life on a plantation was seen as a poor alternative to subsistence

1 Educational facilities were provided both by the Administration and the missions. The first schools were started in the early 1950s.

farming on one's own land, supplemented by some cash cropping. But the choice was not so clear-cut between village life and an urban job. *bisnis* activities remained an irregular source of income, often inspiring a retreat into *kago* activities when the high expectations were unfulfilled. On the other hand, urban wage employment provided a regular cash income and a standard of living often superior to that of the villager in spite of the high urban cost of living. The approximate average family income for rural coffee smallholders has always been (at least to 1977), even in times of high coffee prices, considerably lower than urban wages even when the urban cost of living is taken into account (Lam 1978a).

Thus in the post-war period, the rural economy and society of the Sepik moved from one of isolated communal cultivators tentatively linked to the outside world economy through labour migration to become a peasant society encapsulated within a larger economic and political system.¹ The former isolated units were incorporated within an economic and political hierarchy. The extraction of an 'economic surplus' from the peasant cultivator was achieved through the mechanism of such institutions as cooperatives, local government councils and a central administration. Certain aspects of the peasant society, such as kinship ties, remain 'traditional', but the dominant role of kinship as the organising ideology of the society no longer holds.²

1 Peasant societies may be thought of as situated somewhere along a continuum between the self-subsisting, non-monetised type of economy, which is usually termed 'primitive' or 'tribal' and the modern, commercial, exchange-oriented economy (Howlett 1973:252).

2 This is illustrated by the reaction of some people from Balmo to a prominent Wewak business man Labu and a local big-man. Several said they thought he had used their labour and money for his own purposes with very little benefit to them.

Communal land rights remain, but access to land use becomes increasingly individualised.¹ Subsistence agriculture remains predominant, but most of the time formerly devoted to ceremonial ritual is now devoted to cash cropping. People are attracted to the capitalist sector (usually the urban economy) to buy and sell goods and to seek wage employment. But the migrant's ties to the land and to subsistence agriculture remain his ultimate security. Cash cropping and wage employment for most rural peasants remain peripheral.²

Land and the peasant economy

The rural economy of the Sepik has moved from one based on isolated communal subsistence cultivators to a peasant economy based on increasing contact with the international market. The growth of a road network from the mid-1960s affording access to markets, together with the establishment of robusta coffee as a successful cash crop, and a growing number of trade stores were all indications of an increasing involvement in the monetary economy. But this transformation was not at the expense of the villagers' rights or access to land. The land has not become a commercial commodity bought and sold in the marketplace. Communal landrights remain although some access to land use,

1 The early attempts at rice growing were made as communal enterprises but disputes soon caused a shift to the individual cultivation of *bisnis* crops (see Yehirai's narrative), although it is more likely that traditional land use was not as communal as the extension officers assumed it to be.

2 This assertion will be explored and justified in Chapters Six and Seven.

particularly for the production of cash crops, may become subject to individual control.¹ Despite the extensive monetisation of the rural economy, the ownership of the land remains within the traditional kinship structure. This is the distinguishing feature of a peasant economy with strong tribal traditions. Rural villagers' involvement with the monetary economy is not at the expense of the ownership and access to their livelihood, the land. The kinship structure has been successful to date in resisting the transformation of land into an exchange commodity.

The significance of the land tenure system for peasant mobility is paramount. An independent peasantry based on tribal traditions and not tied to feudal estates through some rent arrangement has a great potential for mobility because leaving the land does not involve loss of that land (Standing 1979:10).

The colonial administration made a number of attempts to encourage the conversion of customary land ownership to individual titles. But there is little evidence, despite various informal arrangements and pressures (Howlett 1979, A. Ward 1979) that *rural* land has become available for unrestricted sale on the market.²

1 The individual control of customary land is often the result of the Development Bank's requirement of security for personal loans for rural projects. The security is usually provided by a 'Clan Land Use Agreement' whereby individuals gain sole rights to the use of a defined portion of the clan's land for a defined period (A. Ward 1979:9).

2 The number of cattle projects has grown considerably in the East Sepik Province in recent years. Some 365 projects have been noted by the Department of Primary Industry, with an approximate average of 11 cattle per project (W. Graham pers. comm. 1979). The commercial nature of these projects has produced pressures towards individual control of the land involved. But through such arrangements as the 'Clan Land Use Agreement' of the Development Bank, this individual control of land has not been at the expense of traditional clan ownership.

Rowley (1978:122) in a review of former Minister Hasluck's *A Time for Building* (1976) assesses the attempt to convert land to individual tenure:

A great deal of effort went into creating 'native' individual tenures and into making land a commodity ... [but] the machinery set up in his [Hasluck's] and subsequent legislation had little real effect (as distinct from effect in law) in taking individual blocks out of group tenure. For the claims of relatives to use land in accordance with tradition were not to be frustrated by Australian laws. There were many innovators who used land for their profit, but generally within a definite range of obligations established in custom.

Where individuals had acquired registered titles to rural land before 1973 the obligations of traditional usage and succession still held sway (A. Ward 1979:4-5).

The colonial state in Papua New Guinea, from its foundation, insisted on the recognition of customary land rights. With its post-war attempts to introduce individual ownership, it continued to insist that the state should be the sole authority over land regulation and sales:

The prohibition of direct dealing (between native and non-native) had been fundamental to land policies since the very establishment of the colonies. It had always been the Administration's belief that direct dealing would result in land that was needed for subsistence being effectively alienated to outside interests thereby producing *de facto* landlessness (Quinn 1980:19).

It was this fear of creating a class of 'land short or landless villagers' reflecting a fundamental policy emphasis, that hindered the enforcement of a vigorous policy of land tenure conversion in the 1960s (Quinn 1980:18).

The rejection of the Administration Land Bills by the new House of Assembly in 1972, led to an all Papua New Guinean Commission of Inquiry into Land Matters. The Inquiry recommended a reversal of emphasis. Its proposal was for some form of group title as basic to any new policy of land registration, with individual rights of occupation to be recognised beneath that group title (Quinn 1978:83). The Inquiry reflected the interests of the 'big peasants' in suggesting provision for individual access and control over land with commercially production potential, but at the same time acknowledged the primacy of the rights of group ownership. The continuing close relationship between the migrant and his village was reflected in the concern shown for the retention of rights by clan members who had lived and worked away from their home village for extended periods.

In the eight years following the Inquiry to date no legislation has been passed providing for land registration. A recent survey of informal land arrangements (to 1977) in a number of rural and urban locations through Papua New Guinea, by A. Ward and others, confirms the conclusion about the earlier practice where customary landowners retained 'absolute' ownership of the land:

My overall view was that as well as a powerful drive by some Papua New Guineans towards individual holdings in land, there was an equally powerful counter-current asserting residual group rights, and highly suspicious of an excess of individualisation (A. Ward 1979:24).

The effect of land ownership remaining inalienable under traditional clan structure means that most migrants retain their rights to land. This is confirmed by data from the Rural Survey in the East

Sepik in 1974-75. 'Village *residents* were asked about the land rights of absentees. An overwhelming majority (94 per cent) of the male absentees were said to have clear, unchallenged landrights.

In the initial incursion of the colonial economy into the subsistence economy it was apparent that some individual responded enthusiastically to the new balance of power and sought to manipulate the new opportunities to their own benefit as *luluai*, *bosboi*, recruiters' assistants or young men actively seeking recruitment as policemen and soldiers. For the most part, these were the men who in the post-war period introduced *bisnis*. But others showed an extreme resistance to the new forces by refusing to migrate, and retreating into their traditional culture and cargo cult activity.

The shift to urban skilled employment: evidence from the migrant histories

Contract labour migration from the Pagwi villages ceased after 1959. But some men from Yangoru were still entering contract labour in the early 1970s (see Appendix 5.2, Figure 13). These men engaged as contract labourers primarily as a means of free travel to the islands; and once there they could find their own employment.¹ Mattias Kumbi and Lucas Gimbal, in their narratives, tell how they were able to gain free transport to rural New Ireland and Rabaul respectively, by signing a contract. Kumbi deserted and was forced to disguise himself in Kavieng town for fear of being apprehended. Although penal

1 It was a common occurrence in the early 1960s for recruits to try to desert immediately on arrival at Rabaul Airport by chartered plane (personal communication, Mr Terry Dawe, former Social Welfare Officer, Rabaul, 1976).

sanctions for desertion were abolished in 1950 (some ten years before the period in the narrative), he was still under the impression that he was liable to be gaoled for breaking a contract.

Before and immediately after the War, Rabaul was the most frequented destination for the Yangoru and Pagwi migrants. From the end of the War to 1964, the town of Rabaul and the surrounding plantations accounted for 24 per cent of the destinations of the male migrants from the Pagwi villages and 35 per cent of those from Yangoru. Just prior to the first House of Assembly elections in 1964, a survey of all 'foreign natives' resident in Rabaul was carried out.¹ It showed that 35 per cent of the migrant or 'foreign native' population were from the Sepik District, with 8.6 per cent from the Maprik subdistrict and 8 per cent from the Sepik River below Ambunti. Most Sepik migrants were still employed under contracts (61 per cent of Maprik men and 68 per cent of men from the river). The Sepik migrants were concentrated in the 25 to 34 age group with a severe sex imbalance (1039 men to 46 Sepik women).

The concentration of the migrants in Rabaul in the older age groups points to a shift away from that area for the younger men. The migration histories from the study villages support this, showing a movement to the towns of Madang, Lae and Wewak from about 1959. Of the Pagwi men going to Madang, the largest movement took place after 1958 as the town became the main entrepôt for the expanding commercial

1 I am indebted to Mr Terry Dawe for access to these data.

agricultural sector in the Highlands.¹ The shift away from Rabaul to the more accessible and rapidly growing urban centres was probably related to the greater number of urban semi-skilled and skilled jobs available in Madang, Lae and Wewak. Up to 1964, Madang provided 51 per cent and Wewak 61 per cent of male migrants with highly skilled (and better paid positions), compared with only 11 per cent who were in the same level positions in Rabaul.² This difference in the proportions holding semi-skilled or higher employment may have been due to Rabaul's declining role as a major port by the early 1960s (Varpian and Jackson 1976:426) but it is more likely to have been due to the restriction of the more skilled jobs to the better educated Tolai population. The shift of migrants away from the other old plantation destinations (Kavieng, Bougainville and Manus) was also marked by 1958. The new and rapidly growing urban centres on the mainland were now the key destinations.

The static presentation of the data, however, overlooks the high degree of mobility of the migrants. Kumbi tells how he first went to Wewak and then to rural New Ireland, Kavieng, Rabaul, Bougainville and finally back to Wewak. Gimbal first went to Angoram, then to Rabaul and then to Madang, finally returning to Rabaul. The man from Siniangu made a similarly wide range of movements: Wewak, Madang, Lae, Wau, Rabaul, Kieta and back to Rabaul.

An important change in migration patterns which took place in the 1950s was the involvement of women. Women from the Pagwi

1 By 1974, there were more male Pagwi migrants in Madang than in any other destination.

2 By 1974, Rabaul could claim only 5 per cent of all current Pagwi male migrants.

villages made their first moves to Lae by 1956, and to Wewak and Madang by 1962 (see Appendix). But Rabaul, it appears, still catered only for single men. The major destination for the first Yangoru female migrants was the one closest to home, Wewak. These moves were closely tied to those of their husbands or parents. Yangoru women did not come to town for their own purposes, such as selling produce, visiting relatives or in some cases for self-employment until 1970.

Changes in occupations of migrants over time

The initial migrant stream was an undifferentiated flow of unaccompanied young males directed to plantation employment. But these men soon moved to other jobs once the opportunity presented itself. A summary table of the changes in the occupational structures of migrants over some 50 years is presented in Table 5.4. Urban unskilled employment was well-established before the War for a significant proportion of male migrants from both Pagwi and Yangoru. In the post-war period, plantation work became even less important. A significant number of the Yangoru men now had unskilled jobs in the towns, while the Pagwi men moved more into urban semi-skilled occupations. But it is in the most recent decade that the achievement of greater occupational mobility has been most marked.

Plantation employment has become insignificant. The proportion of Pagwi men in urban unskilled jobs has also declined in favour of semi-skilled positions and the 'posted' occupations of teachers, the police and other public service officials. Those migrating to attend an educational institution also formed a significant proportion. But it is the 'other' category of jobs seekers,

Table 5.2

Occupations of men for specific periods from
the study villages

	Pagwi villages			Yangoru villages		
	1920-45	1945-64	1965-74	1920-45	1945-64	1965-74
Other ¹	5.4	9.1	25.8	3.8	11.1	25.7
Education	5.4	2.9	10.7	1.5	4.9	16.5
Posted	18.9	11.6	21.4	10.5	9.3	14.7
Urban skilled	5.4	1.1	4.2	-	-	2.2
Urban semi-skilled	5.4	22.5	23.9	3.0	8.8	11.8
Urban unskilled	27.0	21.4	10.4	22.6	28.7	19.2
Rural casual	-	2.5	1.2	-	1.0	1.2
Gold mining	2.7	1.8	0.2	21.1	2.1	0.8
Plantation contract	29.7	25.4	0.5	37.6	32.0	3.9
Accompany	-	1.8	1.9	-	2.1	4.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

n = 37 n = 267 n = 416 n = 129 n = 387 n = 495

Data source: Migration histories, Rural Survey 1973-74

1 Other refers to job seekers, self-employed and short-term visitors.

the self-employed and the short-term visitors, which has become the largest group. The position of the Yangoru men on the occupational ladder is not so advanced. Many are still in urban, unskilled jobs with only small increases in the proportions in semi-skilled and skilled employment compared with earlier years. Those seeking higher

education, however, had increased significantly. The 'posted' occupations were also an important group. But, as with the Pagwi men, the 'other' category, encompassing those outside wage employment, had become the largest grouping in the decade prior to 1974. Related to the higher educational and occupational status of the Pagwi male migrants was the fact that their average length of absence in the ten years previous to 1974 was much greater than that for the Yangoru men.

Types of contemporary migrants and new destinations

After the distinct move away from contract employment by most first-time Sepik outmigrants by the mid-1960s, four types of migrant could be identified:

Short-term visitors of both sexes, with women an increasingly important component;

Unskilled single men seeking work;

Older men with minimal education from the poorer rural areas to whom an urban or rural non-village existence, despite the risk of being without a wage job, is preferable to their prospects of achieving an adequate rural livelihood in their home village;

The educated migrants moving to the major towns. These people have become longer-term absentees.

Short-term visitors.¹ With the easing of restrictions on the building of migrant settlements and a relaxation of legislation restricting movement in general, together with the provision of adequate roads and cheap transport, villagers became more mobile on a short-term basis. This applies to those least able to leave the village in the past. Old men, women and children were now able to catch their first glimpse of the sea from the back of a truck as they descended the hills via the Sepik Highway into Wewak. And then, after tasting the pleasures of urban life, selling their produce and visiting long-term absentees, they could return home within a few days or a few weeks as they wished. In the Yangoru area in particular, with the opening of the Sepik Highway as far as Maprik by 1968 and the rapid increase in the ownership of passenger motor vehicles, the number of male Yangoru outmigrants almost doubled between 1968 and 1970. The level of return migration was also high. Among the Pagwi men, who lacked easy access to Wewak, the level of movement in the five years before 1974 did not show the same dramatic rise. Despite the lower rate of mobility of the Pagwi villagers, the overall level of absenteeism was higher because of the low number of return migrants, particularly among those in the 15 to 24 age group. A similar pattern of recent high mobility was evident among the Yangoru women, and to a lesser extent, the Pagwi women. The five-year period prior to 1974 accounted for 48 per cent

1 The Rural Survey defined someone as a migrant if he were absent for a month or more. The category of short-term visitor therefore includes a considerable proportion of 'non-migrants' who had made a visit to town for less than a month.

and 39 per cent respectively of all their recorded moves¹ (see Appendix 5.1, Figure 5.2 (p.185)). This group of visitors from the Yangoru and Pagwi villages who, on their latest migration, did not intend to seek employment and who in fact did not have a wage job, accounted for some 25 per cent of the males and 88 per cent of the females who had ever migrated (i.e. been absent for a month or more).

Unskilled, minimally educated young men. These migrants set out to find work, using their own financial resources to travel to a place of anticipated employment. This type of migrant is most likely to rely on his kin to provide him with information about, and possibly access to, a job.² As shown above, the real value of the urban minimum wage was higher than a cash income derived from smallholder coffee. The difference in income potential is likely to be even greater for a young man who has not yet planted a cash crop, or for a newly married man who leaves his wife behind to tend his trees while he looks for short-term employment in town. Therefore, unaccompanied young men of this group are likely to seek out the centres of expanding employment and to move elsewhere if their job search is unsuccessful. The length of absence from the village of these young men is very likely to depend on the state of the job market. The size of this group, who

1 This female short-distance mobility is reflected in the destinations of absentees in 1974. Of the Yangoru women, 34 per cent were in Wewak, and 13 per cent in Maprik. Thirty per cent of the Pagwi women were in Wewak, 6 per cent in Maprik but 23 per cent were in Madang.

2 Among the Yangoru absentees in 1974, 23 per cent of the men and 34 per cent of the women resided in Wewak. Among the Pagwi absentees more male migrants were in Madang (23 per cent) compared with Wewak (18 per cent) but 30 per cent of the women were in Wewak.

could be termed 'the young job seekers', was approximately 37 per cent of all males and 8 per cent of all females who had ever migrated.

Older men and women from the poorer areas. While there was an overall tendency for men to return home as they got older, in some areas this was less marked. As well as the short-term visitors and young job seekers, there is also a group of mature-age men (and women) who have decided that it is preferable to remain in town surviving as best they can through various means of self-employment rather than to try to live off an inadequate rural economy. This group was noticeable in the data from the urban and rural surveys of the Ambunti (Pagwi) older male migrants. As yet they appear to be a relatively small component of the general migrant stream (see Chapter Six).

Educated, longer term migrants. With the expansion of educational facilities, accompanied by the localisation and growth of employment in the public and private sectors, urban residence for the educated and those acquiring education has become an attractive proposition. Furthermore, the better education facilities of the towns attract migrants. Port Moresby, as the location of university and public service training facilities, is an important destination for this reason.¹ Thirty-seven per cent of the Pagwi migrants in this town attended educational, mostly tertiary, institutions. A similar proportion applied to the Yangoru migrants in Port Moresby. In Lae, Wewak and Maprik over a fifth of the migrants from both areas in 1974 were full-time students in an educational institutions.

1 Fifteen per cent of Pagwi male absentees resided in Port Moresby in 1974, as did 10 per cent of the Yangoru male absentees.

A common characteristic of many well-educated migrants is that their choice of destinations is largely dictated by their employers. Once employment is accepted after a formal application, a fare is provided for travel from the home village to a pre-determined destination, where, after a period of training, the employee is posted. Formerly, such pre-arranged employment and pre-determined destinations applied mainly to the so-called 'disciplined services' (the police, the army and the corrective services). Today, pre-arranged travel also applies to tertiary students taking up government scholarships. Other people who are 'posted' are teachers, other public service personnel and senior private sector employees. This type of controlled movement applied to 17 per cent of all male migrants and was negligible for women.¹

Apart from those attending educational institutions, certain destinations were more likely to contain the more highly educated. Three-quarters of the current Pagwi migrants in Port Moresby had completed primary school or above. Wewak's proportion was 43 per cent while in Rabaul, with its mostly unskilled Pagwi migrants, only 21 per cent had completed primary education. Eighty-three per cent of the Yangoru migrants in Port Moresby were educated to completed primary level. Madang and Maprik also scored highly but again, of those in Rabaul, very few (13 per cent) had completed primary schooling.²

1 Historically similar pre-arranged employment also characterised indenture or agreement labour. Although no longer undertaken by Sepik migrants, it accounted for 20 per cent of the past migratory moves from the study villages.

2 The proportion of total absentees in Rabaul in 1974 from Pagwi was only 4.5 per cent. Of the Yangoru absentees in 1974, 13 per cent were still in Rabaul.

Conclusion

The forces affecting migration during this period from the 1920s to the early 1970s can be described, perhaps somewhat whimsically, by the dual meaning of the pidgin words *pulim boi*, used in the title of this chapter. This expression conveys the meanings of both 'abduction' and 'seduction'. For most early migrants, the 'abduction' or strong inducement to work in the wage economy was only temporary. In time the need to acquire money served to propel men into the wage labour force, but only as a means of coping better with life in the rural economy.

The major transformation brought about through a growing involvement with the market economy has not been at the expense of the villagers' relationship to their traditional means of livelihood. Land has remained a non-convertible asset beyond market forces. The 'seduction' of a reliable income from wage employment has not meant that migrants have divorced themselves from the security of rural land ownership protected by traditional kinship structures.

The historical sketch has shown a shift away from an isolated group of small communities, initially only called upon, often under compulsion, to provide cheap labour for the enclave plantation and mining economies. The major catalyst of the dramatic movement into the outside world was the sudden involvement of the Sepiks as spectators and participants in a large-scale modern war. Nothing could be quite the same afterwards. The traditional societies of communal subsistence cultivators were irrevocably drawn into a wider political and economic system. Sometimes the response was active,

enthusiastic participation. At other times it was deliberate, dramatic withdrawal. Migration in the two decades after the War was largely complementary to the formation of a rural peasant economy, with young men returning home after relatively short absences in plantation or urban unskilled employment to invest what savings they had made in local *bisnis*. Ultimate dependence on the rural economy was paramount for migrants in this period.

From the mid-1960s, in contrast to the fluctuating fortunes of *bisnis* activities based largely on cargo cultist expectations, the new opportunities presented by rapidly expanding urban employment, particularly for the young with some formal education, made an easy choice for many. For the young men able to offer only their unskilled labour, the period of absence from the home village has come to reflect the current state of the job market. If jobs are scarce and those with jobs retain their employment, it is likely that these unskilled young men will remain at home or return there after a short job search, to redirect their energies into local cash cropping, especially when commodity prices are high. This is likely to have been the case after the contraction of the urban job market in late 1974 and the boom in coffee prices in mid-1975 (see Skeldon 1978b:14).

For this group of circular migrants, the rural economy based on a subsistence livelihood supplemented by cash crops is their refuge against the uncertainties of urban employment. Such employment is often seen only as temporary while the individual accumulates sufficient money to invest in *bisnis* at home.

The security of land as a non-convertible asset and its effect on mobility patterns depends upon population pressure and the suitability of land for subsistence agriculture and some cash cropping. As Chapter Seven will show, many of the heavily populated river villages suffer from a severe shortage of arable land. The result is a great number of intense inter-village disputes over land and swamp rights. The tendency to permanent outmigration from these villages stems, most likely from the villagers' limited access to productive land.

The final group of migrants who through formal education have acquired secure jobs show a greater commitment to urban residence. Their higher wages and the extensive subsidisation of urban housing and services provide them with a standard of living far above that possible in a peasant economy. The next chapter looks, in greater detail, at the various types of East Sepik urban migrants, the extent of their commitment to urban residence and conversely, the extent of each group's dependence on the rural economy.

APPENDIX 5.1

The Narratives

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INTERVIEW WITH HAWAINA OF MARAMBANJA VILLAGE (YANGORU)

The following interview was a joint one with Hawaina, now an old man (about 75 years of age) and Kwaikiau the bosboi (foreman) of the Yangoru Patrol post's labour line.

Hawaina is locally recognised as a 'big man'. A former luluai under both the Australians and the Japanese, he was a leader in the Yangoru area and was involved in the introduction of cash cropping in the 1950s. He has two very prominent sons. One, Andrew, is currently manager of the large and very successful Sepik Producers Cooperative Society. The other, Daniel, was a key figure in a Cargo Cult movement known as the Peli Association.

My father Hombinoia and some others were the first men from my village to go away to work. The police came and took them away. It was at the time when Kiap Thompson¹ was at Aitape. Then later my brother and I gave our names for a three-year contract at Rabaul. Kiap Thompson came and took us from the village. We did not have lapalps or a Luluai. At this time Thompson appointed a Luluai, Maringingi, at Kumun.

I stayed in Rabaul for three years and then went back to Aitape for two years. Then I went back home with a knife, tomahawk, a spoon and other goods. I went to Wewak and people from Ambukanja and Marambanja went down to Wewak and carried my cargo back over the mountains. The next morning they all gathered at my village so I opened my box and gave out knives, laplaps, matches, salt and other things to each of my relatives. The axes in particular were much prized because stone axes were still being used at this time.

I stayed on in my village. Kiap Townsend and Masta Niall came.¹ My father was Luluai. I interpreted for the kiap and he made

1 Oliver Thompson was District Officer at Aitape from about 1921. However, there is some confusion over the names of Thompson and Townsend when used in pidgin. G.W.L. Townsend was posted to the Aitape District as a Patrol Officer in 1921 and was later to become well known as the District Officer for the Sepik. Wewak was maintained as a Patrol post from the early 1920s (Townsend 1968:55).

2 In July 1924, Townsend went on patrol as far as Kubuhun (today spelt Kumbuhun) to investigate the coercion and abduction of local men by two European recruiters.

... at this time there had been little or no contact between the people of this foothill country and the Administration on the coast. Not only were there no regular patrols into the area, but government had not reached them second hand either through the appointment of any of their men of influence to be Luluais (chiefs) or Tul-Tuls (assistants to chiefs) (Townsend 1968:11).

Townsend did not return to the foothills area for seven to nine years (1931 or 1933), and by this time Luluais and Tultuls had been appointed. In July 1933, he returned to the Sepik as District Officer. Assistant District Officer H.L.R. Niall did not arrive in the Sepik until sometime in 1939 so Hawaina appears to be inaccurate here by claiming Niall was in the area before the Yamil airstrip was built (1936).

me *Tultul*. My job was to tell the people about the government. Two years later my father died and I was made *Luluai*. A man I was with in Rabaul was then made *Tultul*.

The *Kiap* passed through the area and took me with him to Yamil to help build an airstrip there. The first plane tried to land but crashed into a tree. So the *Kiap* told the police to get some more people to help us cut down trees and improve the airstrip. We pulled the plane back onto the airstrip. We were then told to tie the plane down to a tree with lawyervine. The vine was cut and the plane raced forward and took off. We made the local people build houses for us to sleep in. To those who built houses we gave laplaps. [The conversation became so indistinct here that it was impossible to transcribe.]

[When did you start paying head tax?] During the period before the war [1942]. My father had been *Luluai* for one year before we had to pay head tax. [At this time Kwaikiau interrupted to say that...] from this time, we were recruited for copra plantations to earn money to pay our tax. In the German period we had no money. But later through outside work on the plantations we earned money to buy things such as bush knives and axes, and to pay tax. *Kiap* Townsend had been here for three years before head tax was introduced. Some men went away and came back, paid the tax, and then others left and returned home and paid the tax. It went on like that.

[Who was the first man to introduce rice into the area? Was it Simogun from the coast near Wewak?] No, it was me. I was the one who first introduced rice. Simogun is from the Wewak area and he stayed behind in his village. When I finished working for the government, having earned some money, I went home. But a year later the money was gone. So I went and got rice and peanut seeds. I called everyone together and told them to plant seeds. Rice was the first crop and then the peanuts. Everyone in the local area planted rice. A European came to help and a rice mill was set up at Bimaru. The rice and peanuts were harvested, I sold the crop and with the money bought a car, I also had a shotgun and I was the only man to have one. I was the President and I also had a clerk. There was an office, and a building for the rice mill. A European *Didiman* [agricultural officer] also came to help. We put some money into a bigger mill, but it was taken to Bainyik. At this time my car was destroyed. A landslide covered the car up and killed three people.¹

1 The Agricultural Extension Officer was W.K. Stent now Senior Lecturer in Economics, Latrobe University. He has described his encounter with *Hawaina* (personal communication). 'When I first met him in 1957, he was President of the *Bauimo* Rural Progress Society... They had operated small ANCO rice mills at *Nindepoyle* and *Himburu* but these gave so poor a return - only 50 per cent milled rice - and constantly broke down. Transport was also a problem. As a result of the merger, a large rice mill was set up at *Yangoru* and the *Willeys* 4 x 4 truck ...was used to transport the paddy from the villages to the mill. Unfortunately, the truck was soon involved in a fatal accident while on hire to the local patrol officer and had to be written off. About the same time the Agricultural officer who had been stationed at

(contd. over)

I went into all the villages around about here and tried to encourage them to stop growing cocoa and to stay with rice. I tried to stop them growing cocoa. I was the first one to bring coffee. There was also a man named Wavginwangu who helped me. Now everyone has followed me and all now have coffee trees. They earn money but they don't give any to me. Cocoa is also being planted now but they have not earned any money from it yet. In another year they will. Before I tried to stop people from growing cocoa, they were just playing around with it and not taking it seriously.

Now everyone has coffee. I was the one to start it, not a European. Coffee was a new crop and I saw how good it was. And the men, women and children saw how good it was too. Now everyone thinks it is good, but before they were stubborn, very stubborn. Now everyone wants to plant cocoa. Rice was first, peanuts came second, coffee third and cocoa fourth. Now in this area cocoa is becoming the largest crop.

I sent my eldest son to school at Yangoru, then he went on to High School. He came back and started work at Bainyik. He is now manager of the SPCA. In earlier times I worked hard but earned little money but now my son doesn't work very hard and yet he earns a lot of money [he laughs]. I was the one who built the school here.

[How were you involved in the war?] I helped the Japanese. I was made a Captain. It was like a policeman in charge of people. I was given a shotgun, and hand grenades. I was in charge of men who were to guard the road in the Yangoru area. We were also to guard important Japanese officers. Their major headquarters was at Sassoia.¹

Then the Australians captured Yangoru. I left and hid in the mountains and put everything I had in boxes. After a while, the whole of the area was under Australian control. All hand guns, machine guns, hand grenades had to be handed in and placed on top of a hill. I had to hand in my hat [his badge of office]. I handed in everything I had.

Masta 'Ton' [an Australian Army Officer] took charge. He told me to climb a nearby tree and stay there. He told all the people assembled to look at me and they accused me of working in a high position for the Japanese. I thought they were going to shoot me for having worked with the Japanese. The Australians wanted to punish me.

1 (contd.) Yangoru went on leave, not to return to Yangoru. And it was decided that the rice milling should return to Bainyik [where it remains to this day!]. The people were not at all pleased at the increasing remoteness of the mill and this combined with the low price of paddy (2½ pence per lb) to decrease interest even further.'

1 This most likely refers to the headquarters of Lt. General Adachi, Commander of the Japanese 18th Army. Having being driven westward from Lae in 1943, the Japanese consolidated their forces in the Sepik.

I could not think. All I could say was sorry. And I cried. After a long while, at five o'clock, I was allowed to come down from the tree and sit down in a nearby house. My brother's wife came to me to say that they had heard my name called to go before a court in one week's time. The next day at dawn everyone from the surrounding villages were assembled. I had to assemble with my clan but no men came forward. I called for them but no one came forward. Three days later I appeared in Court before men from New Guinea, Papua and Tolais.¹ I made my plea. The government had deserted us [*mi nogat king, mi nogat gavman*]. What else could we do when the Japanese came? We did not have any weapons to fight them. We were just like women. And so when the Japanese came we had to obey. We have been like wives first to the Germans, then to the Australians and finally to the Japanese. We had to submit to the Japanese. It was this plea that freed me from the court.

YACHICHORI OF SINIANGU VILLAGE (YANGORU)

Yachichori is from Siniangu, one of the study villages about two hours walking distance from Yangoru Station. Siniangu is located on a ridge below a steep climb to the neighbouring village of Mambuk, one of the last villages before the high mountains. Yachichori looked to be about 55 to 60 years of age. The narrative about the area's first contact with Europeans would place him at about 65 years of age. The German Administration had first established a base at Aitape in 1906. The Mission at Boiken was set up soon after in 1909. But the Karawop plantation was not likely to have been started until around 1920.

The Germans who were only settled on the coast, came into this area recruiting.² A man from Mambuk, Nankuho was taken, from Siniangu, Hunga, and from Kumun Maringingi, Waringu, Martoa and ... another man, Yankila, was taken from Ambukwon. They were all taken away. They stayed there and everyone went home except Hunga who stayed and died there. At this time we had nothing, no *Luluais* had been appointed, no laplaps, tomahawk or knives. Only one or two men had a knife or tomahawk. Now even my eldest child has a knife.

Then Father Mey³ came into this area by the track passing through Ambukanja. They came to a village where (Maringingi) rounded up men who had run away into the bush, bound (*pulim*)⁴ them, and gave them over to Father Mey and they were taken away to work for the *waitman* [white man].

1 He is probably referring to the Second New Guinea Infantry Battalion which was involved in the capture of Yangoru.

2 The pidgin word for recruiting is *baiim boi* which literally means to 'buy boys'.

3 Study No. 65 lists a Father G. Mey and two other clerics at Boiken in 1940 (AGS 1943:14).

4 *Mihalic* gives the meaning of the verb '*pulim*' followed by a person as 'abduct' (*Mihalic* 1971:161).

Next came a planter called *Masta Cobb*. His plantation was at *Karawop*¹. These two men, the planter and the missionary came together to recruit men. They didn't buy them, they took them away. (*Tupela i no baim, pulim tasol*). They were taken away to work for the *waitman*. They were amongst the first to leave.

Next came a German *Kiap*. He also came over the track through *Ambukanja*, and *Kwowi* and he went up to *Mambuk*² and camped there. The next morning he lined us up. He told us to send message down to *Kuman* to come and hear him. He said it was no good fighting him. Our older men went up to see him. The women and children stayed behind in the village. The men came back down to say that the *Masta* was coming down to look at the village. My mother took me and ran into the bush. All the children ran away and hid in the bush. He called the men of the village to hear him. He sat everyone down and gave them salt, putting it on their tongues. The men tasted a little and said how sweet it was. They thought he was a good man to give them something so good. They sat down and took it easy.

He then spoke:

Your spears are made of hard timber but you can kill me only if you hold it firmly. But my spear can shoot everyone here. The women, children and the men would all be killed. No one would be left. Look at me shoot a piece of hard wood.

They got a piece of wood. My father took his door and put it against a coconut tree.

The German *Kiap* took his gun and fired a hole through it into the coconut tree. (If you go around to my hut now you can still see the hole.) Everyone looked. They said amongst themselves: if we tried to fight him, we would all be killed, no one would be left. We cannot fight so we should not anger him. They then said to him how they appreciated him coming down to *lain*³ them and bringing the government to them. We were only *kanakas* up until then. He stayed another day, then took three men to carry his cargo. He headed for *Maringini's* village of *Kumun*. There for the first time he made *Maringini Luluai*, and *Nangua*, a man from *Siniangu* - *Makbuk*, the *Tultul*.⁴

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- 1 *Karawop* plantation was on the coast next to the *Boiken Mission Station*. It was started around 1920.
 - 2 *Mambuk* is on a hill and *Siniangu* is at its base.
 - 3 'Lining' was the way a village was expected to present itself for the *Kiap's* inspection. Everyone had to arrange themselves in family groups, from the senior clan to the most junior, and within the family from the most senior male to the youngest child. A person could be imprisoned for failing to present himself.
 - 4 The office of *Luluai* was a German institution named after the position of a war leader of the *Tolai* people who had certain traditional functions in settling disputes. His role was that of village headman. The *Tultul* was a person conversant with government practices and with a knowledge of pidgin (Rowley 1972:82).

Yugumani was also made a *Luluai*. Altogether, three men were made *Luluais*. He came back and gave each one (of the *Luluais* and *Tultuls*) a laplap and said:

Whenever I come through here, you must put them on like this. In the future when I come I will call out your name, you are to put on your laplaps and come forward. You now have a village book and when you *lain*, I will look in the book and call out each name.

He then went on to appoint *Luluais* in Marambanja, Kwaian and Windjuan. He appointed Hinwanki, and the *Luluai* in Ambukwon was Sarahari. At Kuvari, Nahoru was appointed. At Karapia, Yonavi was made *Luluai*, Yompi in Pachan, Sahibari in Kurowi village, in Wamaina village Simbiahori was appointed. At Proina, Kambuku was made *Luluai* and Wrahomki *Tultul*.

Before the war there was a man from the islands who made magic (*mekim sampela wok beibeng*).¹ He took a man from the coast called Holo as his helper. He said:

You come with me. The two of us will make magic so that another country will come and take over control. Why are we wild, raw bushmen (*buskanaka*) while the *waitman* has got plenty (*sindaun gutpela*)? You come with me friend, we will work some magic and you will become the same as the *waitman*.

He thus persuaded the man from the coast, Holo and he went with him. And the two of them made magic by eating the bark of trees, ginger², rope and human bones. The two of them said: A new country is coming, this Australia will go. The men from the new country will come and give us new houses to live in together with good food.³ The two men ate something made of ginger and human bone. Holding spears they danced and sang out: 'a new country will come and fight Australia'. They spoke like this while eating ginger and human bones. And they danced and sang. They sent out messages all over the place. Everyone heard it, every village in the Yangoru area. Everyone came to the two men's house and heard their talk. They came to look at the two men eating ginger, bark, and human bones and to hear what they were saying. The war came and everyone went back home to work in their villages. Everyone worked.

1 *'wok beibeng'*: it is difficult to know what exactly this means. A Form Four school leaver from Siniangu translated it as 'cargo cult'. The following story is obviously about cargo cult activities.

2 Ginger was an important ingredient in traditional magic (Worsley 1970:105).

3 Worsley suggests that the pro-Nazi element amongst the German missionaries may have suggested that a new country would come to oust the Australian (Worsley 1970:46).

The big fight came up now. Japan started a fight with Australia. From our area one man, Palili¹ (he is still alive) joined the police force to help Australia. From here others stayed with the *waitman* as Palili did. I was with Palili. I came back, he stayed. I went into the police, I was trained and I took part in the fighting.

Japan came up. We were with the Australian Army. The men who stayed in the village worked for the Japanese. Our side was the strongest and we beat Japan. Japan went back and Australia took over again. Those men who helped Australia asked the government:

Government, since we helped you and you are now in a good position (*sindaun gutpela nau*) what things will you give us now?

We asked them this. The men who had fought in the war asked the government this. We asked *Masta Niall*:

Before we were in our villages but now we have helped you: You are very well off now. Why won't you help us to improve our villages?

The government thought about it and said to us:

Yes, you are good men for helping us. You will benefit in the future. We have noticed what you have done.

But the council was given to us only after a long time. After the council, we were given self-government. Now we have been given Independence. Independence has come and the government has said:

Now we are turning over everything to you. You now can look after yourselves and your own land. We will not be able to help you. You yourselves are now in control of your villages.

Now we have been given village courts and peace men to take care of us all. This is all.

KWAIKIAU OF KUMUN VILLAGE (YANGORU)

Kwaikiau was interviewed together with Hawaina. The following transcript presents only Kwaikiau's narrative. Kwaikiau had been the foreman of the labour line on Yangoru station for some 20 years. He came from a village nearby. He appeared to be about 55 years old. Although a man of some local stature because of his government position, he deferred to the 'big man', Hawaina.

At this time I was only a small child like my son here (a three year old). My father told me stories of the time when my grandparents existed with very little and were ignorant (*sindaun nating, ol*

1 Palili's narrative in on p.251.

i gat nating). For example, when a man died they would bury him in the house.¹

Then the first to come were the Germans. People didn't sit around to wait for them to come, instead they ran away into the bush. The police who came with them had laplaps with red, white and red bands. Now the men of the village ran away but the police rounded up the village people, raped the women and tied everybody up. Then they took the fit young men away to work. They bought them with salt, a few tomahawks and bush knives which they gave to the young men's fathers or brothers. They were taken away to work. The Germans went as far as Maprik, but I don't think they went down to the Sepik River.

Those taken away by the Germans did not understand *tok pisin* well. All they could understand was '*sarap*' [shut up!], '*kaman!*' [come on!], '*hariap!*' [hurry up!] and '*maski!*' [forget it!] - that is all they understood. For some things, the Europeans had to make signs by using their hands. Also, these *waitman* were not good at understanding *tok pisin* themselves.²

Those recruited stayed for two years. They were given a laplap and 30 cents [three shillings] each month. The employers were not kind. The foreman could imprison men. If the workers did not listen to them, they would beat them up. They had to wake up at half past six in the morning and line up by seven o'clock, then work and not finish until dark. After these men's contracts had finished they went back home with presents. They were given laplaps, a good box and a lock to go with it.³ After a two-year contract they got paid around £7. They would then go to a store and buy such things as a small knife for peeling taro, laplaps, belts and suitcases.

When they returned home they were greeted by the village people. They were very glad to see the knives, axes and laplaps they brought back with them. Then the Germans went and the English came.⁴ During this period, many men were recruited. They were bought with knives and tomahawks. And in this area, Hawaina became *Luluai*.

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- 1 Common practice in the area noted by Townsend as late as 1933. European-style grave yards along with latrines were some of the first things government control meant to the villagers.
 - 2 Melanesian pidgin was already established as a *lingua franca* before the German colonial authorities formally took over. The German Imperial Government ordered that it be discouraged. 'Great stress should also be laid on the fact that German should be taught instead of Pidgin English for the latter must be eliminated' (Rowley 1958:280). Nevertheless, the German field administration was gradually forced to use it (Johnson 1977:430).
 - 3 There was a compulsory issue of a blanket, bowls, spoon and trade box (Townsend 1968:52).
 - 4 It is the universal custom in the area to refer to the inter-war period as *taim bilong Inglis*. Worsley (1970:105) suggests the German missionaries may have insisted on referring to the administration as English in contradistinction to themselves.

Hawaina started his narrative here and was occasionally interrupted by Kwaikiau. In reply to a question about when head tax was first instituted in the Yangoru area, Kwaikiau gave an extended reply.

Before the war, we were recruited and taken to work on copra plantations to earn money to pay our taxes. When the Germans were here we did not have money. But when we were taken to work on plantations we were given money to buy such things as bush knives and axes as well as pay head tax when we returned home. Some went away, came back, paid the tax, then others went away and returned to pay the tax. It went on like that.

In my own case, when I was recruited I was taken to a plantation but it did not need any more labourers so I was employed in several places cutting copra, grass and building fences. Then I was taken to work on a road which was a former German main road.¹ I was taken to *Mai Mai* to work on a road with the Oil Company.² We would cut down trees, dig up the ground and build a road, then cargo would be carried in from a ship. While some worked on the road, others were given trade goods to go into the nearby villages to buy pigs and *saksak* [sago] for salt and matches. No money was used. The tax in the Sepik before the war was not very big. The men would collect one shilling pieces to make five shillings.³ The pattern was for many men to go away to work on plantations. They would get cargo to bring back home to their village and money to pay the tax. When the war came and Australia fought, there were plenty of goods - meat, rice, tobacco, salt and money.

[When did men stop making contracts to work on the plantations?] Before the war this was the only way of going away to work but after the war, men went to Wewak to the recruiters to offer themselves for work. The men wanted to work for money. By 1962 when the Council was formed, men had stopped going away as contract labourers. It was at this time that the *Didiman* [agricultural extension officer] started coffee, cocoa, rice and peanuts.⁴

During the big war, I was in the police, the Japanese police. When they came to Wewak, they took myself and a friend and both of us joined the Japanese police. We went over the mountains from Ambukanja to the coast. The Japanese knew little *tok pisin*, only such words as

1 *The German road refers to a track between Aitape and Wewak along the coast.*

2 *Oil Search Ltd had been established on the coast midway between Aitape and Wewak from the early 1920s (Townsend 1968:195). In 1938, a patrol post was set up at Mai Mai to protect the Oil Search Company's base there (Townsend 1968:235).*

3 *McCarthy (1963:155) and Townsend (1968:155) both state that the head tax was ten shillings.*

4 *See Hawaina's narrative.*

sindaun! [sit down!], *sanap!* [stand up!], *maski!* [forget it!]. We were given the job of guarding the women of the Japanese who were behind a wire fence on a hillside. We stayed there for some time. Then a friend deserted and went over to the Europeans. The Japanese then decided to move out of the coast. I went back to show the Japanese the way over the mountains to Ambukanja. They made camp there. Many men from this area joined their police and guarded their camps while they slept. We stayed on there.

Then the planes came to bomb Wewak. They bombed our area too. We fled into the bush, hiding under trees. I was afraid I would never see my mother and father again. The planes took over the skies but I continued as a guard for the Japanese. Soon the Australians were advancing across from the direction of Maprik. The Japanese were close to killing us including those from village, Kumun. If the Australians had waited any longer, the Japanese would have killed us all.

Two spies from the Australian Army came across the mountains to Mambak and spoke to me there. They asked me how many Japanese were in the area. I told them that there were large numbers in Ambukanja, in the bush near Mambuk, Siniangu and Kwowi. And there were many, many more in the vicinity of Alisu and Nambori. They said that in three weeks the Australian forces would arrive and kill everyone.¹ We waited for two weeks and then I decided to desert with a friend who had been a guard to a Japanese General at Alisu.

At seven o'clock one night as we were climbing a hill, the Japanese saw us and tried to capture us but we escaped. We threw away all our Japanese clothing and badges and escaped. In the middle of the night we came to Yangoru and went toward Karapia. There we were surrounded by the Australians and they put us all together in one place. The Japanese were taken prisoners after they captured Kumun. We were all taken prisoner too. We had our laplaps taken from us and men and women stood naked. We were given material that holds the cargo.² We cut it up and tried to make the most of what

1 *The Australians were said to have threatened to bomb villages unless the villagers refused to cooperate with the Japanese. The threats were said to be most successful (18th Japanese Army Operations, nd Vol. 4:93). Japanese accounts of the fighting reported villages rebelling, and desertions by those used as runners between units. After April 15, 1945, while the Australian forces were trying to take Maprik, the Japanese reported 'one after another rebellions occurred among the natives inside our position' (Yoshiwara 1955:178).*

The natives have acquired the habit of joining the stronger side and it often happened that at the slightest set back in our operations they would go over to the enemy helping them with spying and acts of sabotage in our area (18th Japanese Army Operations, nd Vol.4:173).

2 *Possibly the cloth from the parachutes.*

we had. We were kept there. Then we were given papers. All the young men were taken away by the Australians, down into *kunai* [grassland] and up to Maprik.¹ There were still Japanese in the area between Maprik and Yangoru. The Australians took us to carry cargo. We went down into the *kunai* and came up to Hayfield.² We unloaded cargo from the planes there and took the food supplies to Maprik, and on to Yamil and up to Kaboibus.

I was appointed *bosboi* in charge of the carriers and their cargo. The soldiers would send a message and the slow planes³ would come and drop cargo from the air. A message came to the officer in charge of our group. It said that across the Kaboibus river there were many Japanese. We slept, got up the next morning and went down. We could see the Japanese and they were shooting at us. We shot back and charged up the hill and captured it. A sergeant was shot. Next morning, they sent radio messages and more planes came and bombed the heavy machine guns on Kaboibus mountain. The Japanese were all finished.⁴ We took up the cargo and came up to Yangoru. We took Yangoru. A Japanese soldier came forward carrying their flags. He cried and an Australian stood up and declared that the war had finished. Everyone then left the area leaving us behind. I was taken away once more on contract to repair roads and to build bridges. Then I was able to return to my home area where I am now.

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- 1 *Kwaikiau's capture refers to the wide sweep down from Wingei into the kunai and then up into the Yangoru area by the Australian 2/7th battalion and a company of the 2nd New Guinea Infantry Battalion (New Guinea troops under Australian Officers) after three days of hard marching across undulating kunai grasslands (see map).*
 - 2 *Hayfield airstrip was built in about 11 days, some three months earlier.*
 - 3 *Probably DC3s - the pidgin expression was lapun bilong yupela, literally, 'the old men belonging to your side'.*
 - 4 *The military actions are also described in Long (1963:360). The fighting was very fierce. The Japanese held a position near Ulupu for three weeks under heavy bombardment the whole time. Up to 34 bombers were involved in the bombing raids together with Artillery (25 pounders). The Kaboibus villages were captured on 2 August. It is difficult to reconcile Kwaikiau's account of being captured, presumably on 8 August and then being part of the Kaboibus attack on 2 August. But he could well be referring to later actions in the Kaboibus area. Fighting took place right up to the day of the Japanese Emperor's surrender on 15 August 1945.*

YEKIRAI OF KWAGWIE VILLAGE (YANGORU)

Yekirai was an old man living in a group of houses attached to a Mission near his home village. He wore thick lense glasses and he enjoyed being interviewed.

I was recruited by a *Masta Cobb* while I was still a young man. I had not yet started to shave. *Masta Cobb* had a plantation at Boiken called 'Koanumbo'.¹ It was during the time when the *Kiap* was at Aitape.² There was a coastal road from Boiken to Aitape.³ My family were offered salt and tomahawks and I was bought. I was taken to Boram plantation (the coconut trees there were still small).⁴ From there I was taken to Aitape to sign a three-year contract after a medical examination and was returned to Boram plantation where I stayed for two years. Then a *Masta Smack* from Rabaul asked for recruits. So I signed a new contract for three years to work on the 'Fronдор' plantation near Rabaul. I then signed again for a further three years. I liked the work in Rabaul and the Europeans I worked for liked me. I became a carpenter and went to Kieta, Manus, Madang, Salamaua and to Lae to build houses.

We helped demolish the old gaol in Madang and built new Burns Philp and Carpenters stores. From there I went back to Rabaul with my employer. From Rabaul, as *bosboi* I took a line of 40 men on the ship 'Dural' to Wewak. *Masta Townsend* and *Masta Niall* were still living in houses made of sago palm.⁵ I built the first house for Townsend, the second house for the police master, the third for the number two *Kiap*, the fourth for a Patrol Officer, the fifth building was for an office, the sixth for a store, the seventh for a hospital and the eighth house for the medical assistant. After returning to Rabaul on a Burns Philp ship, I received my pay of £100 for the year. It was not much pay for the hard work of a *bosboi*. I then took a ship to Boiken mission station and walked back to my village.

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- 1 *This is the name of a village near the plantation which itself was called 'Karawop'.*
 - 2 *The Headquarters of the Aitape District was at Aitape until a combined Sepik district set up its headquarters at Wewak in 1934.*
 - 3 *A track laid out in German times.*
 - 4 *Boram plantation, located on the present site of Wewak, was started in the early 1920s. Before the war, the major centres from which recruiters operated were Boiken Mission Station, Boram, Aitape, Tumleo and Sileo Islands of Aitape. There were three ships which took recruits to Rabaul or Madang. It was a three-week trip to Rabaul.*
 - 5 *G.W.L. Townsend, District Officer, Sepik, 1932. HLR Niall did not arrive in the Sepik until 1939. The houses were probably built in 1935 (see Townsend 1968:241,193).*

Diwai [Wood]¹ came through this area recruiting and signed up two men from Kwagwie but I told Diwai I did not want to leave the village again. I then helped prepare an airstrip at Yangoru before the war under the direction of *Kiap* Morris who built a *haus morauta* [local materials house] for me.

Another *Kiap* from Maprik asked some of us to go to Yamil.² A large line of women and children also went to help build the airstrip there.³ The missionaries' and governments' planes used it. Yamil was set up first as a small station and then the government moved to Maprik.

A prospector from Wau-Bulolo came and stayed in Kwagwie. He asked me to recruit men for him to work on the new goldfield at Yamil. The man's name was Ted Pumpkin⁴. But he gave me very little money for the work. People from Nimbiku came to me and asked me to sign on their sons. I gave out knives and laplaps and told them 'you take the cargo and I will take your young men.' But many ran away and on that occasion I was only able to recruit one man.

I recruited men from the areas around Wingei, Balmo, Naramgo and Yamil. If any villagers looked hostile or angry, I passed them by. I did not get any men from Wingei itself because at that time they had just built a new *haus tambaran* [ceremonial house] and were initiating the young men. They were unwilling to allow any to be recruited. In all, about 30 men were recruited. I did not like to take married men, only young single men or adolescents. There were two Sepiks and three Madangs in the recruiting party plus myself. We had a shotgun to shoot wild pigs.

We used this approach to gain recruits: we would come to a village and have them line up. Then would follow a demonstration of the trade goods we had with us. With a knife someone would cut bark from a tree. We would show them knives and tomahawks. Another man would take a torch made of dry coconut fronds, hold up matches and start a fire. Another man had a razor and he would shave an onlooker's beard. Another would cut hair with a pair of scissors. The best demonstration was putting salt in peoples' mouths. The knife and tomahawk were shown in action, a fire was lit, a razor was used to shave and laplaps tried on.

The villagers would be surprised and very impressed. He [the European recruiter] would go on to say:

1 Diwai is *tok pisin* for wood. A.J.H. Wood was a recruiter stationed in Aitape in the late 1930s (Allen 1976:72).

2 Yamil was the location of a new goldfield in 1936, it is some 15 kilometres north-east of Maprik.

3 See Hawaina's narrative also.

4 This most probably refers to Ted Fulton who mined in the area until 1939.

Yupela i salim ol pikinini i kamap bai ol i go wok kisim ol dispela samting kamap behain, behain nau boi yu olsem tasol. Em i grisim gut olsem. [If you people send your sons with me to go away to work, they will acquire all these goods and you will benefit. He would persuade them well.]

On one recruiting trip I was involved in a shooting incident. The village was deserted, with everyone hiding in the bush. Then we were attacked suddenly with spears and in retaliation, our recruiting party shot a villager. We took the wounded man to Maprik and then by plane to Wewak. The *Kiap* gaoled several Kumbuhun men and absolved me from blame because seven spears had been thrown before I had fired back. But I had to leave the area as a result and went to Salamaua and then to Wau. There I spent three years and returned home by walking back across the north coast just before the war broke out. I had children at home so I took no part in the war.

The Japanese occupied the immediate area and stayed for a year. During this time I had to carry cargo such as kerosene and food supplies over Mount Hurun from Boiken on the coast in teams of ten to 20 men. It was a two-day walk. They were given paper money for the work, but they couldn't buy anything with it.

The Japanese appointed local men to positions of Captain (Hawaina was a Captain) but I did not accept any office. I kept to my house.

Near the end of the War, the Japanese soldiers became hostile and embittered through lack of food. If a man would not quickly provide yams, taro or *saksak* [sago] on demand, the soldiers would hang him upside down by a rope around his legs in the centre of the village, and then ransack his gardens and kill his pigs. When they had finished they would untie their captive. In the end they killed and ate several men near here. Finally, villages in the area were bombed and one villager nearby was killed by bullets fired from a plane.

With the surrender, several villagers and Japanese soldiers were executed by the Australian Forces. My uncle was captured and told to dig his own grave. He was then blindfolded, stood in the grave and two soldiers shot him. At least three other villagers were shot like this. But a major official with the Japanese called King Louis was never caught and is still alive today living in the bush behind Kaboibus.¹

¹ This man was widely known as far west as Dreikikir as a zealous official for the Japanese (Bryant Allen, personal communication, 1976). Even the Japanese thought his actions were too harsh. The chief of staff of the 18th Japanese Army wrote:

At this time there was, in our area of jurisdiction, a southern mountain native chieftain called Louis.

(contd. over)

When the war was over, there was no wild game, domestic pigs or chickens left in the area. The Australians gave out pigs and other food plus war damage payments. Several men in my village received £5 each. I had my houses, fences and gardens destroyed. But, despite Japanese soldiers' threats to kill me, I managed to keep four pigs for myself.

Immediately after the war, men did not sign contracts, they worked for daily pay only. They sought local work on the coast at Boiken and Suain.

After the war, Pita Simogun (who had gone to Australia), Hawaina and Awuisana first brought rice to Paimaru. In the beginning everyone tried it. They planted communal gardens. The rice mill was then at Yangoru, but it was broken by those who did not know how to use it.¹ I am not sure why people stopped growing rice. It worked well around Maprik. It was partly to do with the breakdown of the mill, but also it was a desire to look for something new. Peanuts were then tried but were also not successful. Then coffee came next. The *Didiman* [agricultural extension officer] said to try all three crops but the villagers said one crop was enough.

OTTO INVAHOSI OF WINDJUAN VILLAGE (YANGORU)

Maringini was our *Luluai*. Townsend made him the *Luluai*. Wild men [*kanaka*] were still fighting among each other. Maringini, together with the *Kiap*, broke their spears. These two men stopped the fighting. He was the only one who understood *tok pisin*. The rest of us didn't know how to speak it.

A recruiter came into the area and took some of the men to Boiken. I was told to stay behind with my parents but I said I wanted to go. I followed and came to Boiken and presented myself to the recruiter. I told them I wanted to go with Wanip who had just been recruited. They agreed to my request and put my name down. They bought me with a knife and tomahawk. I arranged to have them sent back to my parents. We went from there to Boram. We were told we were going to 'Lota'. Before Wewak and Maprik existed, there was 'Lota'. There we made our mark before the *Kiap* for a three-year

1 (contd.) He co-operated really well with our forces. If there were people who were not observing an army order, he used to take them aside and chastise them, so that on the natives' side there was a fair amount of ill feeling toward him. I felt that there was a menace in his prompt and decisive action and issued a firm prohibition that henceforth there must be absolutely no punishments. (Translator's note: *shoke* could mean 'executions' as well as 'punishments'.) (Yoshiwara 1955:172).

1 See W.R. Stent's comments attached to Hawaina's narrative.

contract. We were then put on a ship at Boram. It took two nights to reach Salamaua after taking on copra at Madang. At Salamaua, a European gave us a blanket, a spoon, a plate and told us to sleep on the airstrip. Then after a three-day walk we reached Wau. From there we were taken by truck to Kiandi. The Company clerk ordered some of us to work on the river and others to work the gold sluices.

After three years, we were taken back by plane to Salamaua. Some went back home but I signed another contract for two years. I went with others back up to Kiandi. This time I was working alone there. My employer was in Lae. But a European there at Kiandi would not allow it and made me come back to work with the labour line.

One year later, the war came to Port Moresby. I asked the Europeans what were we going to do. They said the fighting was still a long way off as yet. So we stayed on, working. Then Bulolo was bombed and two planes were set alight. We had to stop our work. And we were told we had to build a road to Papua.¹ The army arrived, lined us up and took us off to carry cargo. All of us, in a party, set out along the track towards Papua.² We finally came out at an airstrip on a big river, the Lakekamu. There we built rafts for the big river and cargo was stacked on them. When the rafts were loaded, the Europeans boarded them, two or three of them sitting on top of the cargo. We stayed behind to return to our villages. They cried and we cried too. They left and headed for the coast where a ship picked them up and took them to their homes. We went back to Lae where we were carriers for the Army.

Some time later, a *Kiap* asked for all those who were married with a wife at home in the village to come forward. So I stepped forward with the other married men.³ We were allowed to take with us bombs and bullets and shotguns. We then set out walking, crossing the Ramu, and reaching the Sepik via Madang and the Murik Lakes. There we met Europeans being taken out on the Mission boat. We were very strong and kept going until we came to Wewak. There the *Kiap* asked for our weapons. We handed them all over to him. We then went to Boiken and followed the track over the mountains to my village.

The fighting came closer. Maprik was captured and then Yangoru was taken. At seven o'clock at night, soldiers marched into Kumun and Kuvvari. The next afternoon they rounded us up and put us men, women and children together in an enclosure at Yangoru.⁴

Masta Ton accompanied by the police, now took over Yangoru. He lined us and had us build houses for everyone to sleep in. We were

1 This was the bulldog track.

2 The trip referred to here was the party of European civilians who were evacuated from Wau.

3 He was not married at the time.

4 See *Kwaikiau's* narrative.

also put to work cutting bush. At this time, Yangoru was covered in heavy bush. We had to level the bush and build houses. Two weeks later everyone at Yangoru was lined again and some of us were taken along the track as far as Yamil. The track was the same one that the soldiers had used in the fighting. Our job was to find anything left over from the fighting still laying in the bush and put it out on the main track. We went down to Boiken and back to Yangoru.

The war had finished by now. The Japanese were all taken prisoner. Maringini told us to prepare to return to our villages tomorrow and for us to burn all our rubbish. That night at Yangoru a big sing-sing was held.

I was not married so I had to go with the other single men down to Moem.¹ We had to clean up the rubbish and burn it. We collected human bones to be sent to Lae. At Boram we cleared the air-field of bush.

The mission came into our area. A priest built a Mission at Negri and then at Yangoru. The government returned and a *Kiap* was posted here. My brother became *Tultul* and I worked at the mission at Yangoru. Now I am living in the village.

NALMERNINKI OF WINGEI #2 VILLAGE (YANGORU)

I myself used to recruit men [*ba'im boi*] in various parts of the Sepik, around the behind Maprik and in the Wosera.

Before the war, the people were ignorant (*longlong*). They could not speak pidgin and they had not heard of the *waitman*. I went into these areas and the men ran away. We rounded them up and a fight followed. We captured them and dragged them off [*pait i pinis, mipela i kisim i kam, kisim i kam, pulim i kam*]. The men cried. The *Masta* asked whether we had fought with them. We said we had not fought with them. They wanted to be taken away. They are only crying for their mothers and fathers now. They wanted to come with us.

The big men we fought and bound up and their hair which was done according to the style of their ancestors², we cut. We bound their hands with laplaps and dragged them off and brought them to the recruiter. He asked why they were crying. 'Have you been fighting them? No, we haven't. They wanted to come with us.' We gave them knives, tomahawks, salt and matches. Their women folk came and we gave the goods to them. We mocked them: 'You should not cry. You will go to work with the *waitman* and come back with laplaps and other things. You will not cry then. You will see the good things of the *waitman*.'

1 One of the peninsulas close to Wewak.

2 A photo in Townsend (1968:224) shows the pre-war fashion described as 'a "pompadour type" of hair style with a bunch of ringlets down the back'.

MAMBI OF WINGEI #2 VILLAGE (YANGORU)

The Wingeis are part of the Abelam language group which with Balmo, another study village, distinguishes them from the other Yangoru study villages. The men from Wingei are known as vigorous entrepreneurs as well as enthusiastic participators in a ceremonial life centred around the Yam and Tambaran Cults. In 1976, they owned two large diesel trucks doing contract work along the Sepik Highway (at least K1600 had been repaid on the Development Bank Loan). Mambi was one of the major entrepreneurs in the area. Although he must have been over 45 years old, he looked much younger and he spoke in a very lively way.

I was still a boy when the war came. That was in 1941. The Japanese arrived¹ and we ran away. They said they had come to make friends with us. 'We have chased away the Australians and we have come to stay with you.' But later we saw how they shot some of us, cut up the bodies and ate them. They stayed for about a year. There were many; many men camping in and around Wingei. There were two camps down below with a very important Japanese soldier. He was their overall commander.² The ordinary soldiers were camped elsewhere. Only this important man was camped at Wingei. People had to bend their knee [genuflect] to him all the time just as in church. His name was Masomoto.

We carried cargo to Wewak and Boiken. I carried the food for the bigger men who carried the cargo. I only carried small amounts of cargo. Two Japanese soldiers watched us on our way to Wewak. We went down via Ambukanja, alongside Mt Hurun and down the coast.

Australia approached close to Hayfield. Planes were flying overhead. The Japanese told us that the American soldiers were coming. 'If you help them we will shoot you.' But we went and talked with the Australians who gave us food. They told us to run away.

Then the attack started and we ran away and hid. The Australian soldiers shot many Japanese. Some ran away and some died. Then an Australian officer said that the houses were to be burnt down to chase the Japanese out. They set fire to our houses and burnt them down, our houses as well as the houses belonging to the Japanese. We could see it all from the bush. They caught all the Japanese and took them away. Then the Australians also left. And we came back and our village belonged to us again. We settled down again. The planes dropped tins of fish and rice and other things for us. The Australians helped us. They helped us by giving us fish and rice.

When the fighting was over, we had to carry cargo. We carried it to Yamil. Six or seven men from Wingei were shot in the fighting either by the Australian forces or the Japanese. I myself had to retrieve the body of one man. There was a rotten smell. We were told to carry

1 *The Japanese did not land in Wewak until December, 1942.*

2 *This was Lt. General Mano, Commander of the 41st Division who had established his headquarters in Wingei in late July 1945 (Long 1963:369).*

the body to Yamil. Five men, I think, from Wingei were killed. I myself had to go down and put a rope around one body and carry it up to the top. We put the bodies on a rough wooden stretcher and tied them on and carried them. The bodies were all collected at Yamil. When all of them had been brought back, all the bones were taken to Lae. The war had ended.

We received war damage payments for coconuts, pigs or chickens destroyed. Some men were paid £50, £60 or £70. Others who were shot or bombed by the planes were given larger amounts up to £100. I didn't get much money, only £5 for two chickens killed.

During the fighting, our food was stolen, and people were shot and eaten. They cut up bodies and ate them. Many were eaten. In one village, the villagers were stood up in a line and machine-gunned down. All the men in the line were killed. They were cut up and sent to other Japanese soldiers. They cut them up like this, into six pieces. I went and saw them cooking the meat. I cried, I was afraid that they would eat us too.

When the war ended, we were given rice as a crop. The *Didiman* [agricultural extension officer] gave it to us and we tried it. We cut down the grass and the rice came up a little. He said it was the way brown rice grew. The *Didiman* encouraged us to plant gardens of rice, peanuts and coffee were tried next. Rice was tried first of all. But we here were not very serious about the rice. We harvested it the first time, sent it away and got our money. But the money was not very much. We lost our eagerness over rice. We started coffee. The seeds were brought by the *Didiman*. The first time we were given the seeds for nothing, the next time we had to buy them. Simogun first brought *bisnis* into the area but he stayed on the coast. The *Didiman* was close by and he brought us coffee. Lately, cocoa trees have been planted by us. So we have two crops now - cocoa and coffee.

The *Didiman* did not give us cocoa. We started it off and then went to him to tell him. We wanted to know who had started this *bisnis*. We told him that we ourselves had. So he said he would come and look at the garden. If it was in good condition, he would put our names down. If the gardens were in poor condition he said he would put our names down in red ink. We came back and cleaned up the gardens. He came and was satisfied. We now have cocoa in Wingei #2.

We have another *bisnis* - forestry timber. We have planted Teak trees here. So far, we have only used the wood for a cattle yard. We asked whether the Department of Forestry is interested in buying the wood. But they said we should use it for small houses or cattle yards which we have since done. They told us:

And in another fifteen years when the wood is tough, then it can be cut down and sent to a sawmill. It will earn you a lot of money then. You look after it until then.

In 1974, I bought a Landrover and started a new *bisnis*. Then I bought a new Dyna truck and another utility for our own use in

Wingei #2. I am very happy with some of the things given by the *waitman* which can help us. The truck goes around from Wewak to Maprik, earning money. Before we had to walk everywhere or carry a sick person on a stretcher to Yangoru or Maprik. Now with a vehicle we can ride everywhere. If someone is sick he can be taken to hospital.

We also have a cattle project. All the men of the village are very happy with this. There are eight cows. A short time ago, we sold two cows for K324 and I have one to God [to the Assemblies of God Mission, nearby] so that he can look after this '*bisnis*', and keep it safe from any trouble and make it a success. I believe God can bless this *bisnis*.

PALILI OF MAMBUK (YANGORU)

Palili was regarded by both Siniangu and Mambuk people as a leader in their villages. He had been Luluai after the war and became councillor for the two villages when the council was instituted in 1962. He was also involved in the Peli Association as a village representative. He had a son at the University. (This interview was recorded on two separate occasions.)

The Germans came and took our fathers away to work. When their contracts finished they came back home and told us about how they spent their time there. All of them are now dead. Later, the Australians came and took us away on contract: we were bought with knives and axes. They didn't pay us with money. While we were working, the pay was one shilling in the first few weeks, then after one month we were paid two shillings a week. When the war came we were getting three shillings a week.

Just before the war, I was in Salamaua in 1941. Japan bombed the town and all the planes.¹ I had no way of returning home. Some men ran away and headed towards the Sepik. They were very strong and after walking and fighting their way through, they came to Wewak. There the *Kiap* told them to go on to their villages.

Those of us who stayed with the Europeans were very tough. We worked hard in the bush. We slept in rough places. The food upset our stomachs. We hid in the jungle while the Japanese went around about us. *Masta Niall*² lined us up and asked which of us were determined about defeating Japan or was Japan a *wantok* [friend, relation] of ours. We said that Japan was no friend. 'You Australians are the ones who have helped us and given us a lot of knowledge. We will not help Japan. We will help Australia.' *Masta Niall* then said that for

1 The actual date was January 21, 1942. Eleven or 13 aircraft were destroyed. Salamaua had a European population of 70 to 80 at the time (D.M. McCarthy 1959:54).

2 H.L.R. Niall was at that time Assistant District Officer stationed at Wau (D.M. McCarthy 1959:58).

those who wanted to help, they had to join the police, the NGVR [New Guinea Volunteer Rifles], the navy or act as scouts. 'If you can help us we will be able to beat Japan and you can return home.'

We stayed and Australian soldiers flew into Wau.¹ We were looked over and each man was put with a small group of soldiers to act as scouts in the bush. The Japanese were patrolling near us. I was with *Masta* Cliff, *Masta* Webb, Jim Mamis, Bill Hollis. We went on patrol, spying on Japan. We went over into Papua, came back, then to the Waria River in Morobe, spying on the Japanese who were at Salamaua and Lae. We patrolled with *Masta* Niall around Lae. We scouted ahead and came back to report to him. He told us to try to attack Salamaua. But they did not follow the native way of fighting.²

Five Europeans in the patrol were no good. They let the enemy know they are coming and the Japanese were ready. As a result, they were killed. No one came back. I told them about how we fought: 'Your European way of fighting should be thrown out, and you must follow the native way. If you want to attack a certain place, you don't send them a message so that they can kill you.' I explained my ideas to them: 'Put black paint on the face, or cover it up with mud. Surround the place to be attacked at five o'clock in the morning, then at six o'clock, attack.' They said this was a better way to fight.

We stayed in the bush. It was very hard. We asked *Masta* Niall: 'When will we beat Japan? The Army Chief in Australia has not sent enough soldiers yet to fight the Japanese. It is now Christmas. We, New Guineans - Sepiks, Aitapes, Madangs - have all assembled and are waiting.' *Masta* Niall replied: 'We will try to fight soon. We are collecting bombs and ammunition in preparation for attacking Salamaua.' We went down and attacked the Japanese but many New Guineans deserted and headed for their villages.

Then the Americans came to help us and with Australia, we took Salamaua, Lae, Finschhafen. We were sent for training to Port Moresby. Rabaul was captured and the war ended. We helped imprison the Japanese behind barbed wire.

They had ruined the places where people lived, killing pigs or shooting men. Some Japanese officers, lieutenants and captains were responsible. So some were shot and some were hanged. But the ordinary soldiers were sent back to Tokyo. We put the ordinary soldiers behind a fence where they worked gardens. Later, ships came and took them back to Tokyo. We New Guineans returned home to our villages.

1 On May 23, 1942, a force of commandos was landed (D.M. McCarthy 1959:89).

2 Between the landing of the Japanese in April 1942 and January 1943, the commando force stationed in Wau 'had done little to harass the Japanese at their Salamaua and Lae bases' (D.M. McCarthy 1959:544).

Now I would like to tell you about Simogun and how he brought *bisnis*¹ into our area. Simogun had been to Australia during the war and had seen coffee and cocoa being grown. When Simogun went back to his village, I was still a policeman in Rabaul. He called men together from a wide area and brought them down to Dagua.² There they cut down timber and built houses and settled in. By this time, I had finished my period of service with the police and returned home on leave. I went to Dagua to find everyone there. I told Simogun that I thought his scheme was wrongheaded because when these men returned home to the inland they would not have the means to carry on *bisnis*. Simogun answered: 'We are all bushmen. I am starting the work off and spreading it along the coast. It is the others who are copying.'

The first crop to be planted was rice. Everyone in the Yangoru area started to plant rice but the money from the rice was not good. So everyone dropped rice as a crop and took up coffee. Everyone set to and planted coffee. Now coffee is grown in this area. The money from coffee is enough. Now Australia has left and we have been given Independence. I think in the future we need a factory for cocoa in Yangoru and then we can get better prices for our coffee and cocoa. That is the story of *bisnis* in this area.

*Later in a second interview, he said he was less satisfied with coffee prices because of their fluctuation. An additional problem was having to carry the full coffee bags down to Yangoru from the village. It was regarded as hard work producing coffee, having to wash and dry it. Everything had to be done by hand because a coffee pulper was too expensive to buy. It cost around K120. He concluded: 'The people are short of money and that is why they go into towns to find ways of earning money. It is very hard at home to start *bisnis*. The soil is not good enough to grow some crops like coconuts. We have only one *bisnis* and that is coffee and now we are starting to grow cocoa.'*

After I came back from Rabaul in 1948, where I was a policeman, I was made *Luluai*. In 1962, I was elected Councillor and now I am a member of the Seven Association³. Before the war the Australians came and took people away to work on the plantations, but I went on my own (*mi yet, laik bilong mi i go, no masta baim mi*).

After the war, those who worked for the government got money, but those who did not work got no money. The government told those of us who didn't work after the war to give K4 to the RSL [Returned Serviceman's League] but we got nothing in return. Then we had to give K10 and still we haven't got any money from them. There are four of us who fought and helped win the Second World War. We worked for nothing in the Second World War. The school was not built until 1962. Now my son is at the University.

1 *The tok pisin word has a much wider meaning than the English word 'business'. Bisnis refers to any cash-producing activity.*

2 *Simogun's village is located north of Wewak on the coast.*

3 *An alternative name for the Peli Association.*

MINGISIN FROM KUVARI VILLAGE (YANGORU)

Mingisin was a prominent old man who had recently been appointed a village court magistrate.

We were taken away from Kumun with the *Luluai's* son. The two of us went together. His name is Kwimasi and he is still alive in Wewak. Before we were put on board a ship at Wewak, we were kept in a house in Boram. Twenty more of us had been recruited, 18 men and us two young boys. We stayed with the men. They signed contracts, but the two of us were not allowed to. The government told us to go away, and ordered us to be sent back to our village and parents. A *Masta* took a tarpaulin and covered us up to avoid being found on board the ship. We sailed this way to Salamaua.

When we got there the men were led away by the police. Later, at seven o'clock at night, he took us from our hiding place and sent us to *Bipi* [Burns Philp] where we were hidden in the big bulk store. The men from our area were sent by plane to Wau. The two of us were left behind. The *Masta* told us we were to look after chickens in Lae. With the men gone, we cried because we had been left behind. We cried and cried. The foreman at *Bipi* thought we were crying for our parents. But we told him we were crying because the men we came with had gone on to Wau without us. A man from Dagua¹ translated for us. We asked and were allowed to follow them. Jim Leahy allowed us to go. We flew to Wau and landed at the airstrip where a policeman noticed us.

Be careful you two young lads. There is a lot of hostility around because a Sepik has been killed. He had his throat cut by a Morobe. The Sepiks are looking for the man to cut his neck in turn.

The policeman looked after us and took us to Bulolo. We went to stay with a European, cleaning out his house. We did not sign a contract. We were too young. But after two years we were able to sign. I stayed on working for his wife and looking after the children. Jack Allen was his name.

The two of us stayed for seven years. One day the *Kiap* in charge told us that a 'small wind' was coming up. He did not call it a fight; no, he said a 'wind' was coming up.² He told us to prepare for something to happen on the Saturday. On Saturday we were walking along - then all of a sudden they came and destroyed the planes on the airstrip³. We ran in all directions to hide. Some hid in the grass,

¹ *Dagua is within the Boiken language group's area.*

² *Hogbin comments about this phenomenon: 'I knew several Europeans who in 1940 and 1941 did their best to keep the war news from their native servants. It was thought that a knowledge of our repeated defeats would be bad for the masters' prestige' (Hogbin 1951:11).*

³ *The first bombing raids on Lae, Salamaua and Bulolo were carried out on January 21, 1942 - 'five fighters flying just above the ground up the valley, destroyed three junkers (aircraft)' (D.M. McCarthy 1959:54).*

others hid in a timber shed, while others hid in the bush, or in the stone quarry. Some simply laid down in the grass where they were. 'What was it that was shaking the ground everywhere?', we asked. It was the bombs falling.

We stayed hidden until two o'clock the next morning. At the dawn, the *Kiap* lined us up. Palili, who later joined the police, was there with me too. He was only an ordinary labourer then. *Masta Niall* (who later became a big man in the House of Assembly) was to blame. He forgot all about the bank, he got up and ran away. Those in gaol broke out and ran away too. Some went to the *liklik banis* or headed out on the road to Kiandi, others hid near *Granda* and *Mutuhul*¹. *Masta Niall* went into the bush. He was not able to remain strong. He ran away. Only some of us remained behind. There were no Europeans to take charge of us. Only one police officer, *Masta 'Morgi'* [Morgan] stayed to look after us. He had a crippled hand. We went up to Kaindi and joined the others there. We stayed there for a week. The houses in the town were burnt down.² *Masta Niall* set fire to them. Now we no longer had the government in charge. New Guinea was without a government. The government had run away completely.

One *Masta*, he was a government officer, not a District Commissioner or something, but a working man, *Kiap 'Morgi'*, he took us all and we left Wau. We walked through the bush for three weeks, moving down to the Watut River across to Kokoda and on to the Yodda River, which is midway between Moresby and Morobe. We went down the [Kokoda] track. This was before the Australian Army had arrived. The track starts in Moresby and ends in Buna. On our way to Moresby a sergeant and some of the people deserted. We came to Port Moresby.

The Papuans came to look at us. Their hair was long. It was not their custom to cut their hair, this was something only the New Guineans did. They came and looked us over. They wanted to know why it was that the New Guineans looked better off than them. They had different uniforms before the war. We said the government had cleaned us up. They had cut our hair and looked after us. We camped near the airstrip. Later the Papuans came with us when we left. The Japanese were in Morobe. The Australians were in the bush, the Japanese were on the coast. We were in the bush also. We were carrying cargo. Then the government in Papua looked after us. There was no longer a government in New Guinea. Our government had gone.

1 Local names probably of various of the mines. Kaindi refers to Mt Kaindi, a tall mountain towering over Wau.

2 This could refer to the bombing and demolition of installations at Wau and Bulolo around March 1942. Or it could refer to an event which took place on 30 August 1942, when the Australian Commando forces destroyed all the buildings and installations as part of a general 'scorching' of the Bulolo Valley. They then retreated to higher ground above Wau (D.M. McCarthy 1959:106).

So we were put together to become Papua New Guinea.¹

We were in the bush for a long time. We were told that our side was near victory. There was fighting at Buna. The Japanese were defeated there and at Kokoda, the Waria and at Milne Bay also. Men from Rabaul ran away from the Japanese and were put with us. Men from Bougainville and New Ireland were also put with us. The fight moved into the Morobe area, the progress was very slow because of a very difficult mountain. The Japanese were there in force. Then Salamaua was taken. Planes flew us there. There was a big river, the Markham which we could not cross. We had to march to its head, where the road from the Highlands now comes down. There was a small station there called Kaiapit. Many planes flew into the airstrip there. Nadzab was also an important airfield. Lae was captured, then Finschhafen, then the plantations around Madang.

The Japanese used to say they were the same as the New Guineans. They were not white men.

I was there the whole time carrying cargo. The policemen carried nothing, the soldiers carried nothing, *Kiaps* too did not carry any cargo. We had to carry the food supplies and ammunition. We captured an island near Sio², and went on to Rai Coast. The fighting went on and we captured Madang. Wewak was close by now. This was the end of it. The big fighting was at Buna, Lae, Salamaua and Madang. When they came to Wewak the fighting was not too hard. I stayed at Moem [Wewak] in a big camp there. There was not a big fight there.

When the war finished I went back home and cleaned up my village. I was made *Luluai* and then Councillor.

MATTIAS KUMBI OF KUMUN VILLAGE (YANGORU) - now resident in his home village.

Mattias was a young man, possibly 30 years of age. He had no formal education. He appeared to have returned to his home village with his wife and two young children more or less permanently. In contrast with many of the other narratives, the following account refers to a migration first beginning in the early 1960s.

I went down to Wewak without a contract and stayed there in a settlement at Kaindi.³ A European asked me there whether I wanted to go to Kavieng to work. He wanted me to interpret for two men from Nuku

1 In March 1942, the two military administrative units for Papua and New Guinea were merged into the Australian New Guinean Administrative Unit which was to function as the administrative body for both territories (D.M. McCarthy 1959:43).

2 Sialum Island was captured on January 1, 1944.

3 The time was in the early 1960s.

who could not understand *tok pişin*. He had recruited the two of them from their village. He gave me £2 and the three of us went by plane to Kavieng. I wanted to find a wantok and stay with him and just work from month to month.

We were taken to work on a plantation run by a Chinese. We were ordered to cut the grass around 60 coconut trees. I could only cut around 30 trees. The Chinese planter was angry. He said I couldn't have my tobacco or food because I had not earned it. So at 5.30 am the next morning when everyone was getting up, I ran away taking with me my money, £2, and a laplap. The other two Nuku men did not try to desert. They did not know about casual work and how you buy food to live on.

I hid on the coast and eventually came to Kavieng. The other two men stayed behind and the Chinese planter tied them up and locked them away. They nearly died. The government found out and they were sent back home.

The Chinese planter did not find me. In Kavieng I put peroxide in my hair so that I would look like someone from New Britain or New Ireland. No one could recognise me as someone from the New Guinea mainland. My hair was now a different colour. Even my wantoks didn't recognise me. When I told them who I was, they wanted to know why I had done it. I told them I had signed a contract and had run away. I did not want to be found out and put in prison.¹ I stayed there doing casual work. Then I went into Rabaul where my brother had a job working a power saw. He taught me how to use it. I worked there for eight years cutting timber. I learnt how to use a chain saw.

I was sent to Buka [Bougainville Island] to cut timber, but I returned because my brother had died. They tried to talk me into staying in Rabaul. They said I could earn up to K80 or K100 in one to two weeks. The job needed someone who had special skills. A man who didn't know how to operate the saw could injure himself badly. But I left and went back to Wewak. I went looking for a job at the sawmill. When I told them that I knew how to use a chain saw, they asked me to give them a demonstration. At that time they only used hand saws and axes. Thirty men could cut down the trees with axes and 30 men could cut the wood up with large hand saws. The mill then ordered two new chain saws at K300 each. I taught some of the men how to use one.

After a while, I left and went to Muschu Island where I cut timber for the cattle fence. I stayed there for a year and now have returned home to my village.

¹ *The penal sanctions for deserting were abolished in 1950 but Rowley (1972:106) comments, 'Theoretically, the employer whose workers desert can now [after 1950] obtain redress only through a court action against the deserter. In practice, for some years at least, most workers did not know the new position. There were government officers who were prepared to help the employer by ordering the contract breakers back to work. The law could be used for the same purpose.'*

LUCAS GIMBAL FROM KANGANAMAN VILLAGE (SEPIK RIVER) - now resident in Rabaul.

Lucas was living in the Sepik settlement at Malay town. He had bought a small imported-materials house there and was married to a Tolai woman.

When I finished school, I went to the Marienburg Catholic Mission and worked there. From Angoram I went to Rabaul. The government paid my fare. There I worked at the Nonga Base Hospital for two years as part of the labour line. When my contract was finished, I used the return fare to go to Madang where I worked for a year. I went back to Rabaul but had to pay my own fare this time. I have remained here ever since.

[When did you come to the Malay town settlement?] A long time ago. I cannot remember the year. I have bought a piece of land here with a house, all for only K150. It was bought from the traditional landowners and my tenure is secure. I am married to a Tolai woman but have no children.

[Have you visited home since you left?] No, in 1962 I visited my sister in Angoram and then returned to Rabaul. I send and receive letters from home. There are only four other people from Kanganaman in Rabaul now. They are a policeman, a former policeman and two younger men. No wantoks visit us here. I was the first of the group to come to Rabaul. David was here in the police force. Now he is staying with me. Most people from Kanganaman go to Madang or Lae. Nobody comes to Rabaul from the village, probably because of the hardships for Sepiks here. There are already many people from Parambei¹ at Rabaul. In this settlement there are Tolais from Matupit Island, people from Madang, the Mur Lakes, the Biwat, Aitapes, and Mapriks. There are no troubles or fights amongst the different groups or with the landowners. For the people from Main River (Parambei and Yentchanmangua villages), some have jobs and some don't. Some work for private businesses on a regular basis, others have casual work and others produce carvings for sale.

There is only one old man from Kanganaman still working on a plantation at Malaguna near Kokopo. He is not actually working on the plantation but living in a village on the plantation. He is not married. He visits us often.

A MAN FROM SINIANGU VILLAGE (YANGORU) - now resident in Rabaul.

After five years at school, I left when I was 20 years old. My sister gave me K10 to come to Madang. I paid K6 for the boat from Wewak to Madang where I stayed for one year working with Andrew and Son Company. I lived with my uncle. It was he who first found me

1 A village on the Sepik River directly opposite to Kanganaman.

the job. The pay was only K7 a fortnight, so I left. I bought a ticket for K6 and went to Lae. There I worked at a hotel. After a while, I got tired of the job and went to Wau. I stayed there for a short time without a job, living with a wantok. On returning to Lae, I found a job with a company there. But I soon left because the pay was only K7 a week. I bought a boat ticket for K25 from Lae to Rabaul.

Here I first stayed with another uncle. I thought of going to Kieta, but my uncle advised me against it so I stayed on in Rabaul. I am now working for a local company as a salesman. I am married so I have been given a house, but it is mine only as long as I keep my job. I receive K50.96 a fortnight and do not pay rent for the house.

My father arranged a marriage for me with a girl from Yangoru. I had not seen her before she arrived in Rabaul in August, 1974. My father paid the brideprice.

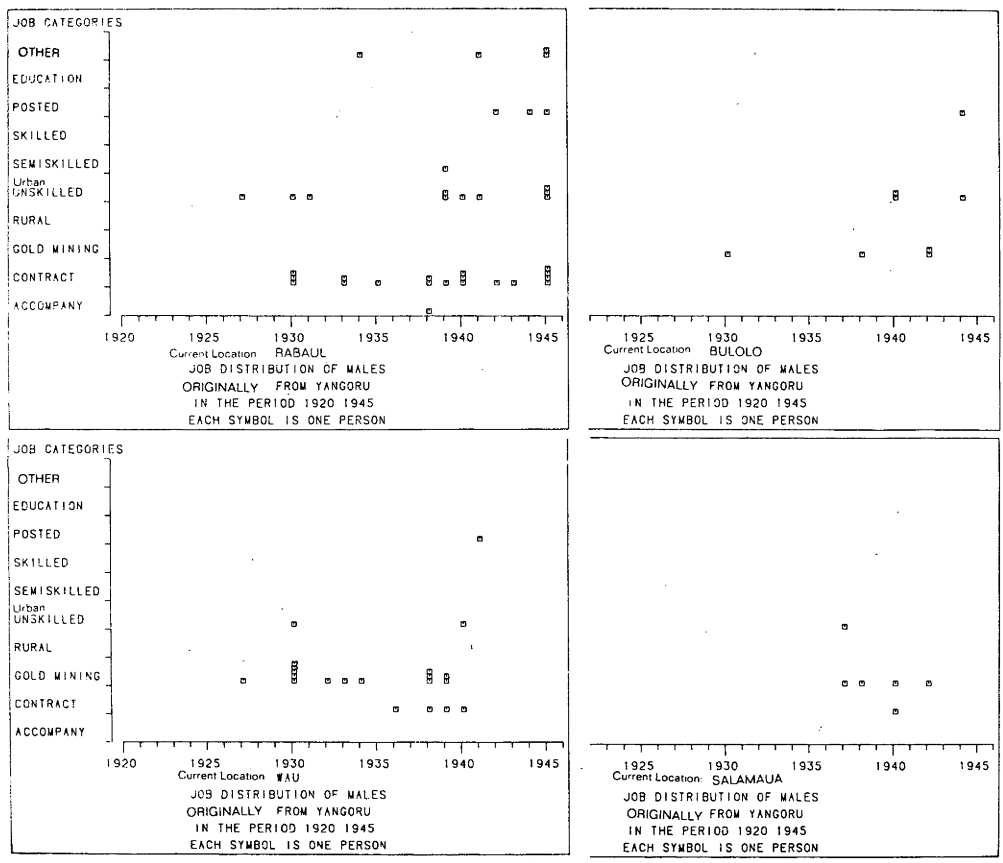


Figure 1

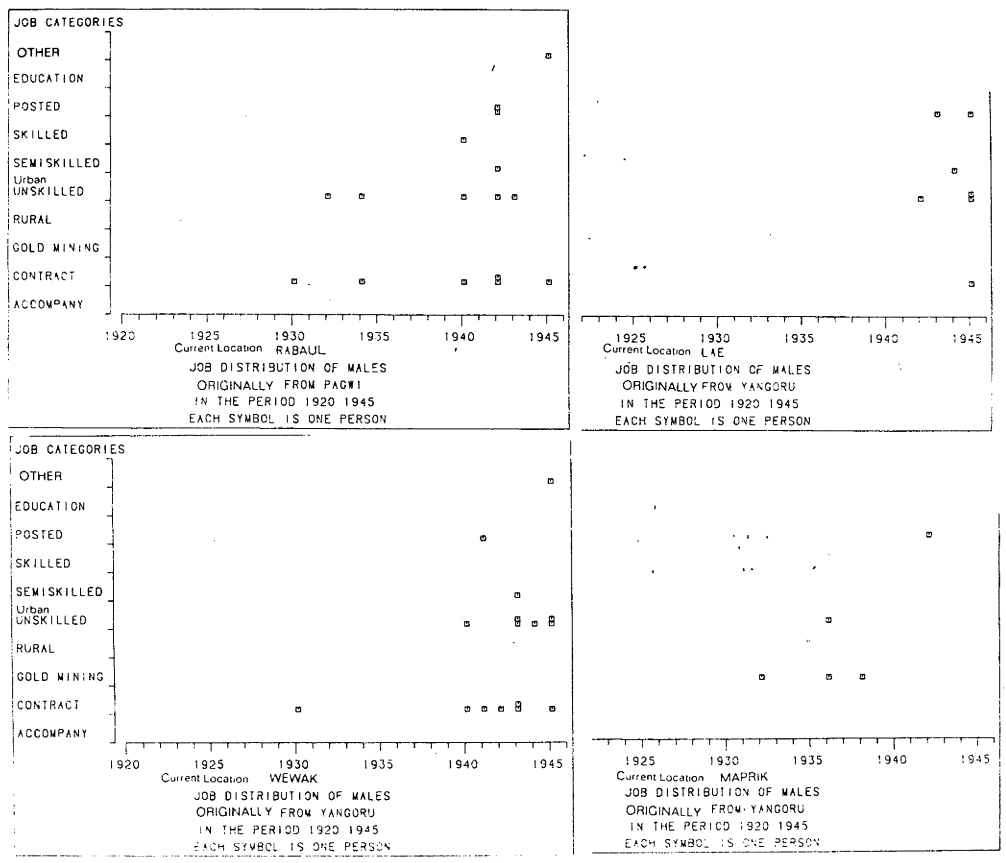


Figure 2

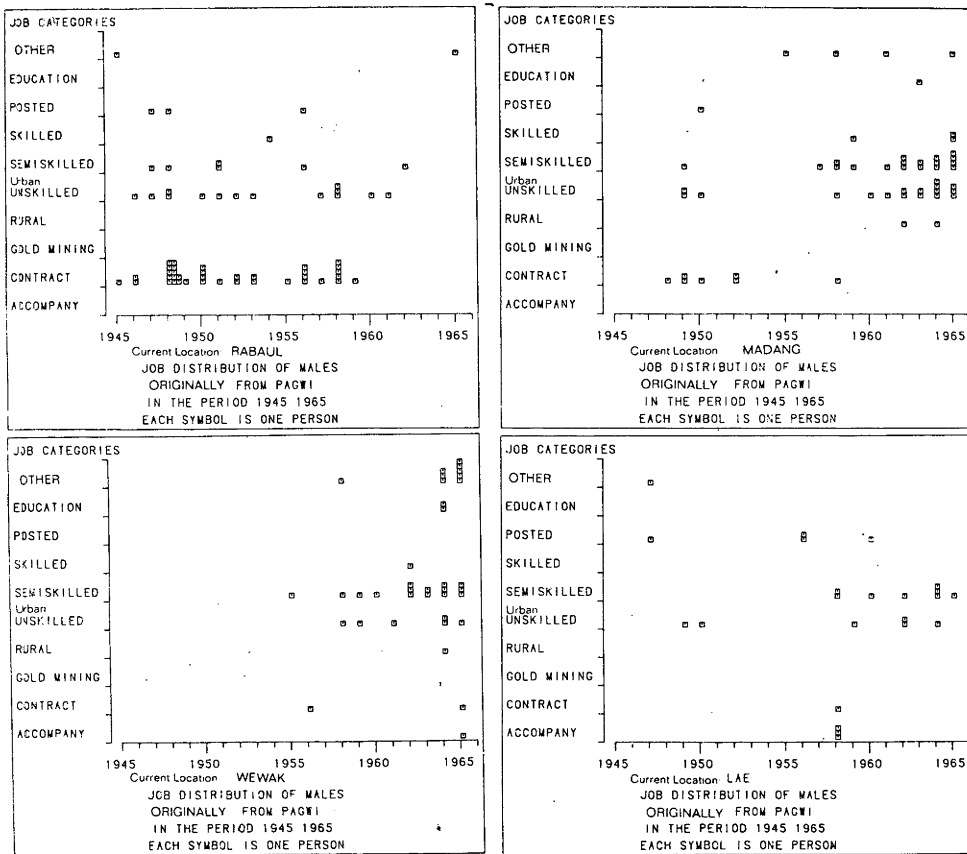


Figure 3

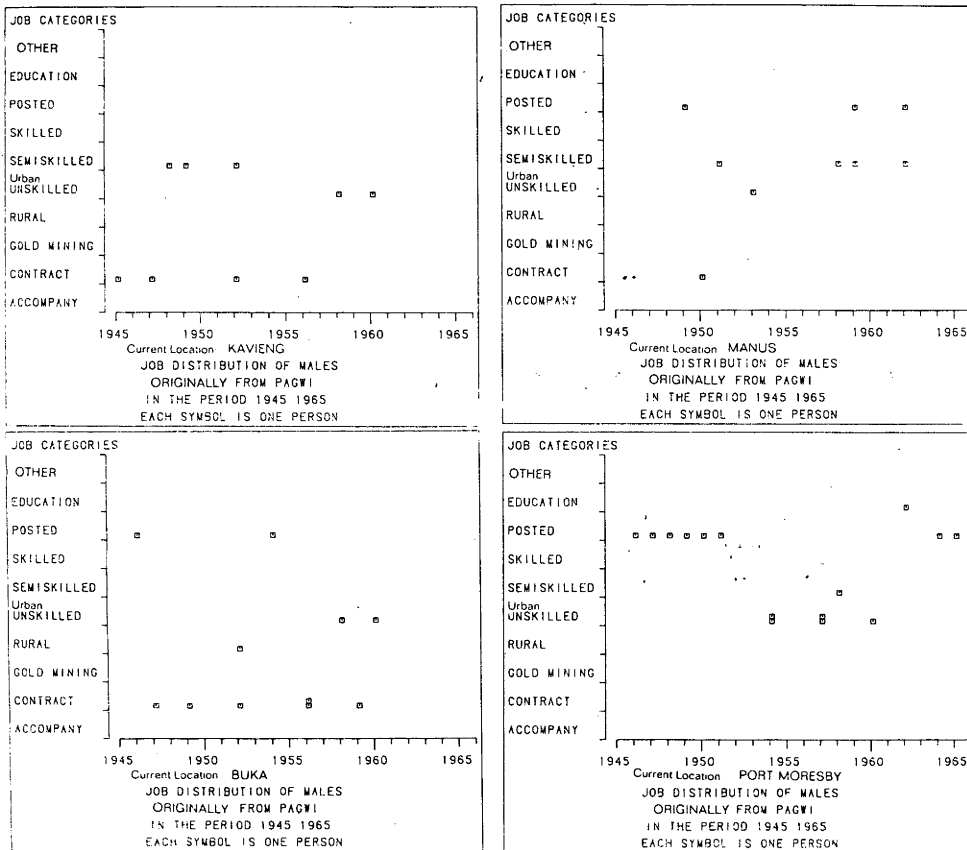


Figure 4

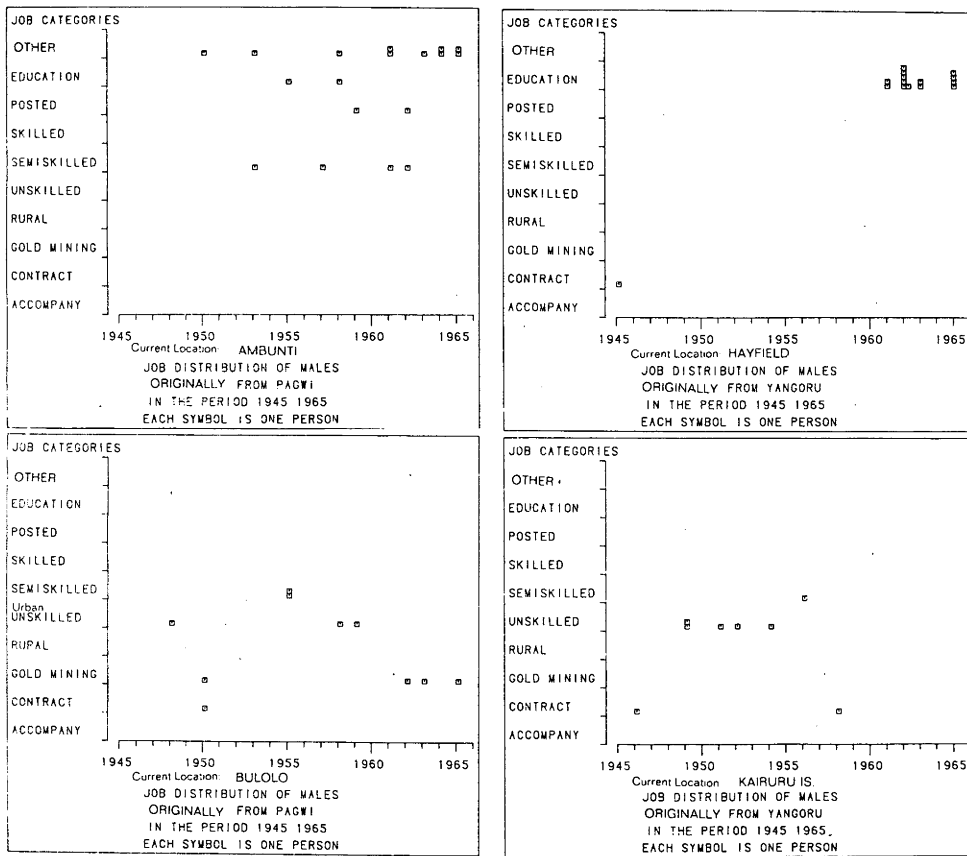


Figure 5

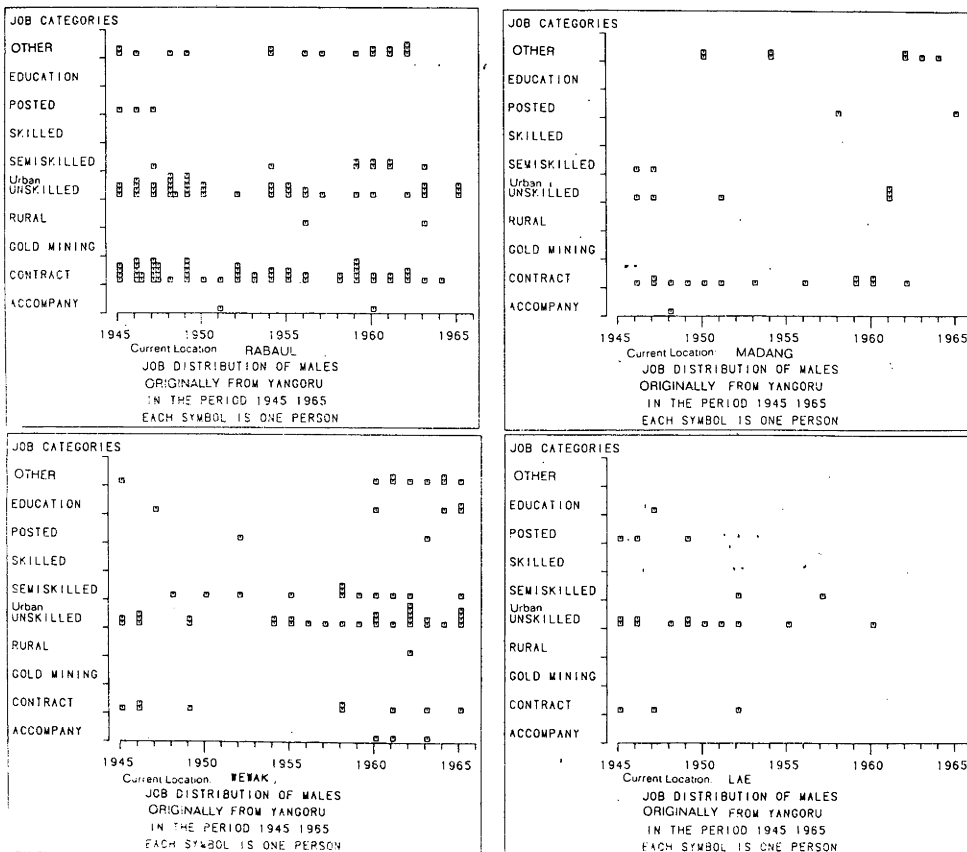


Figure 6

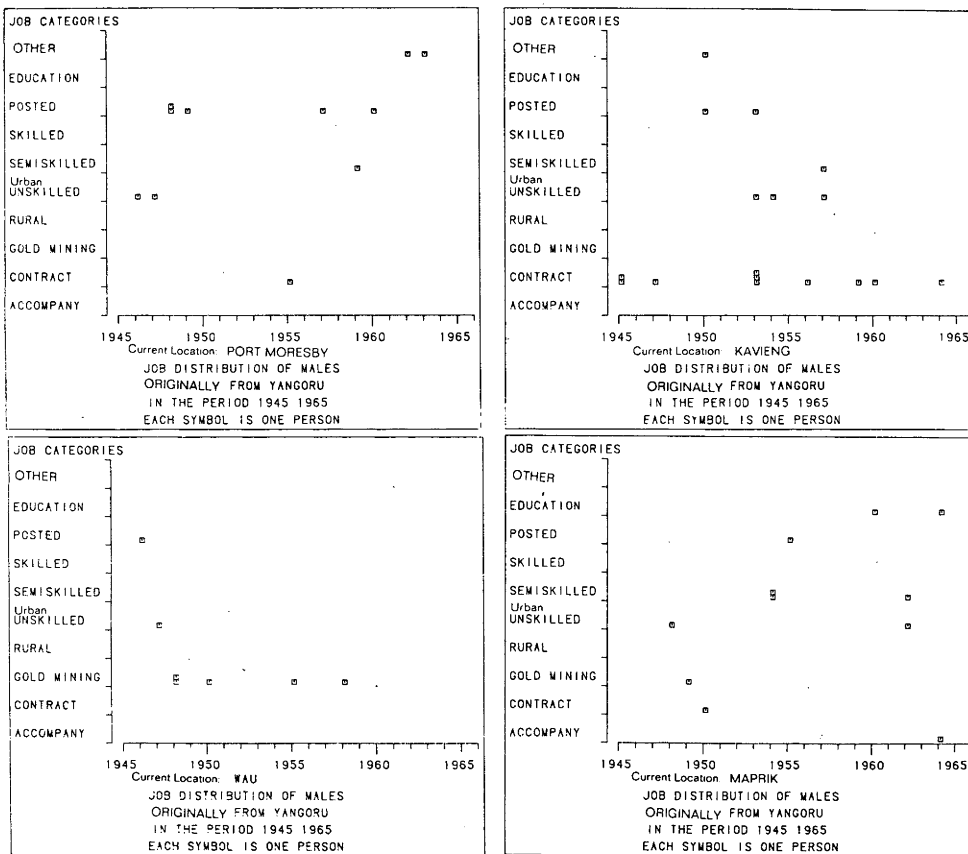


Figure 7

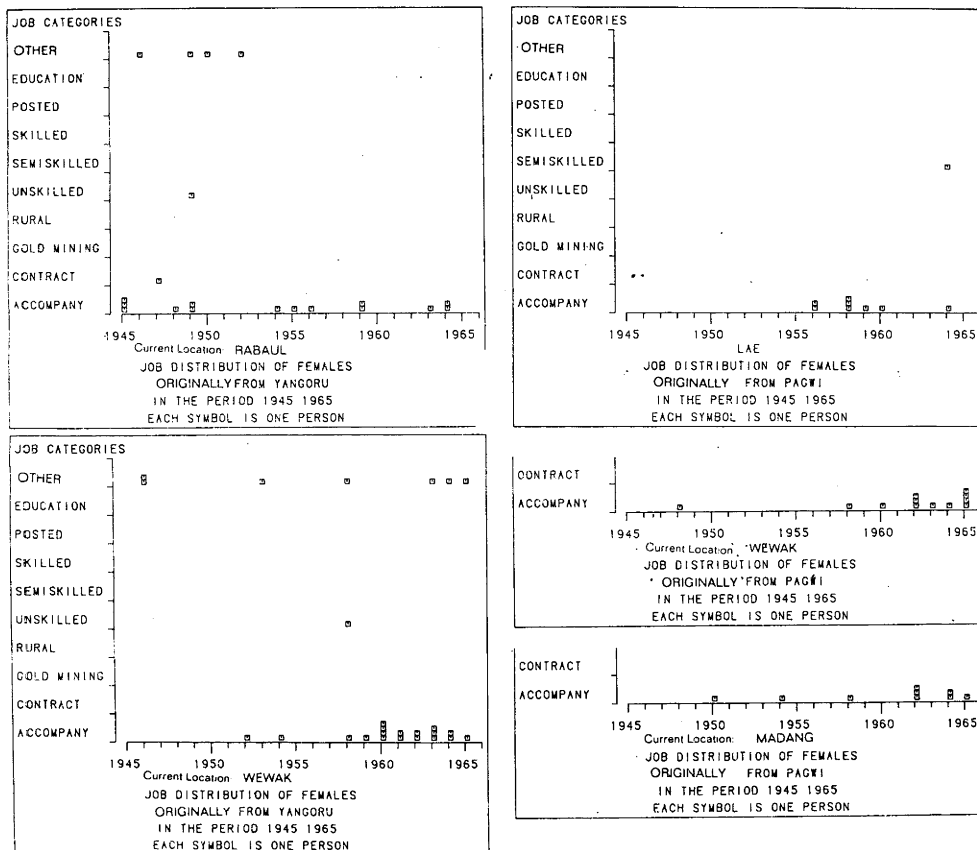


Figure 8

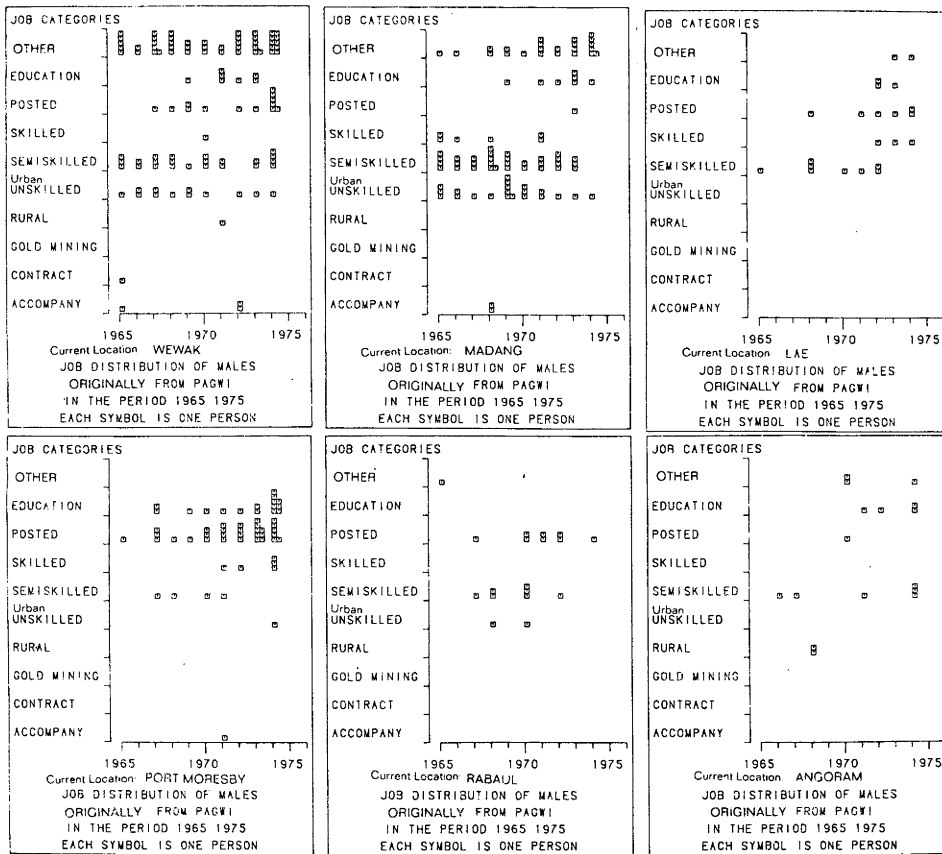


Figure 9

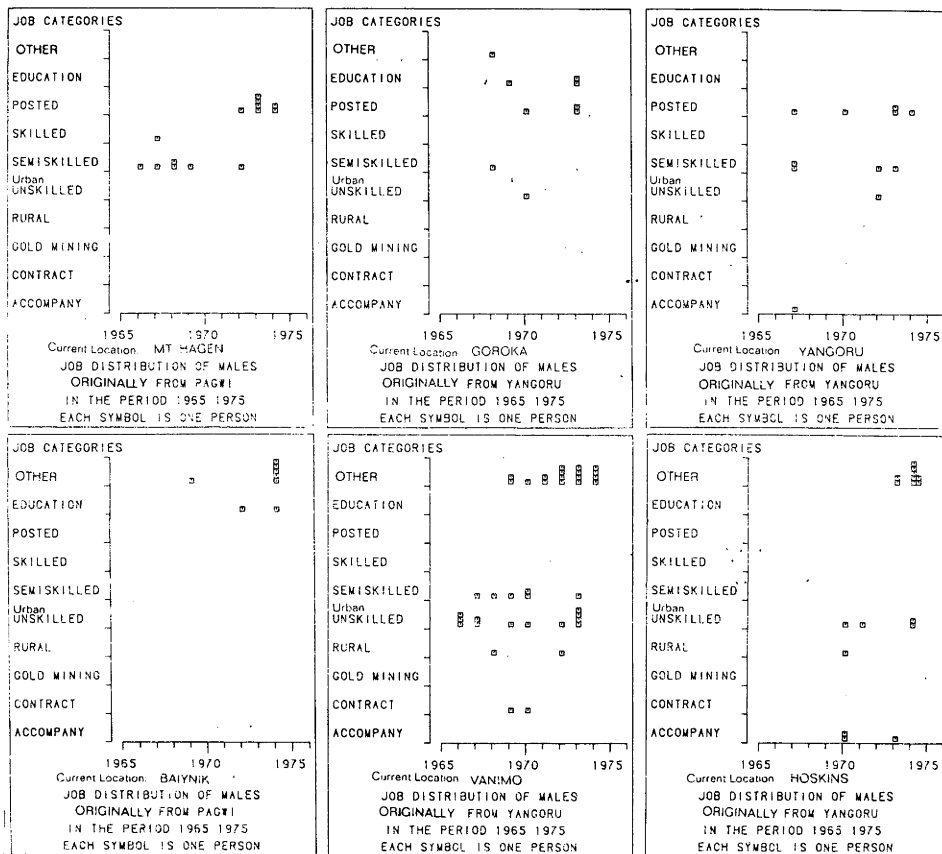


Figure 10

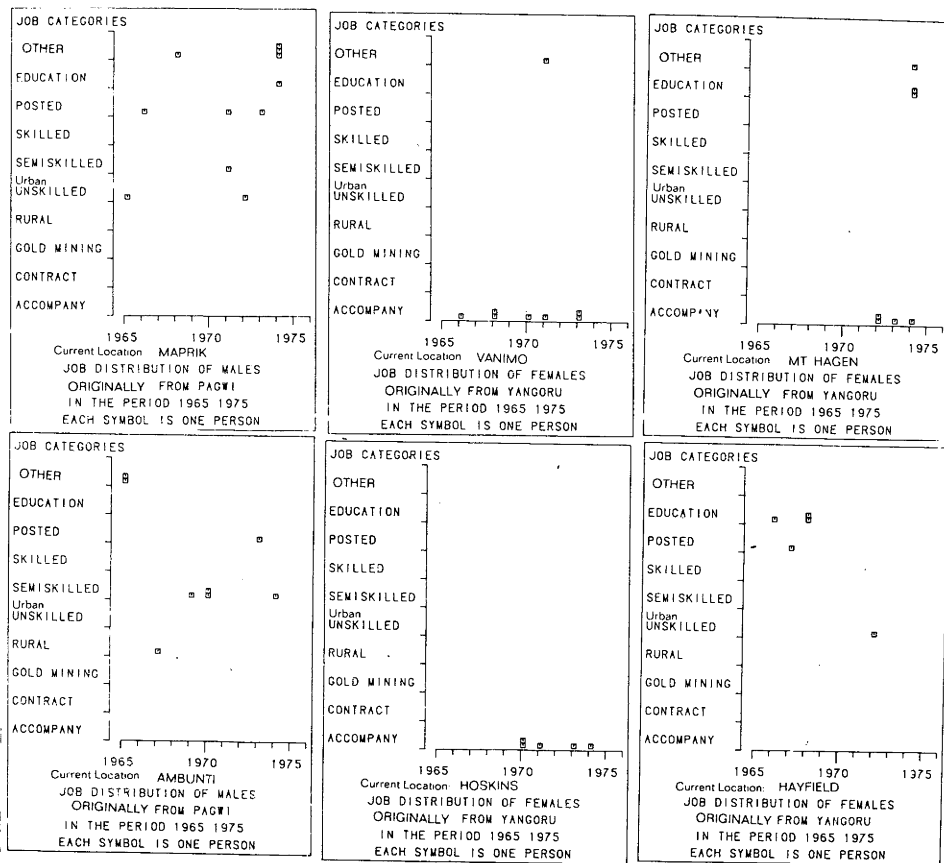


Figure 11

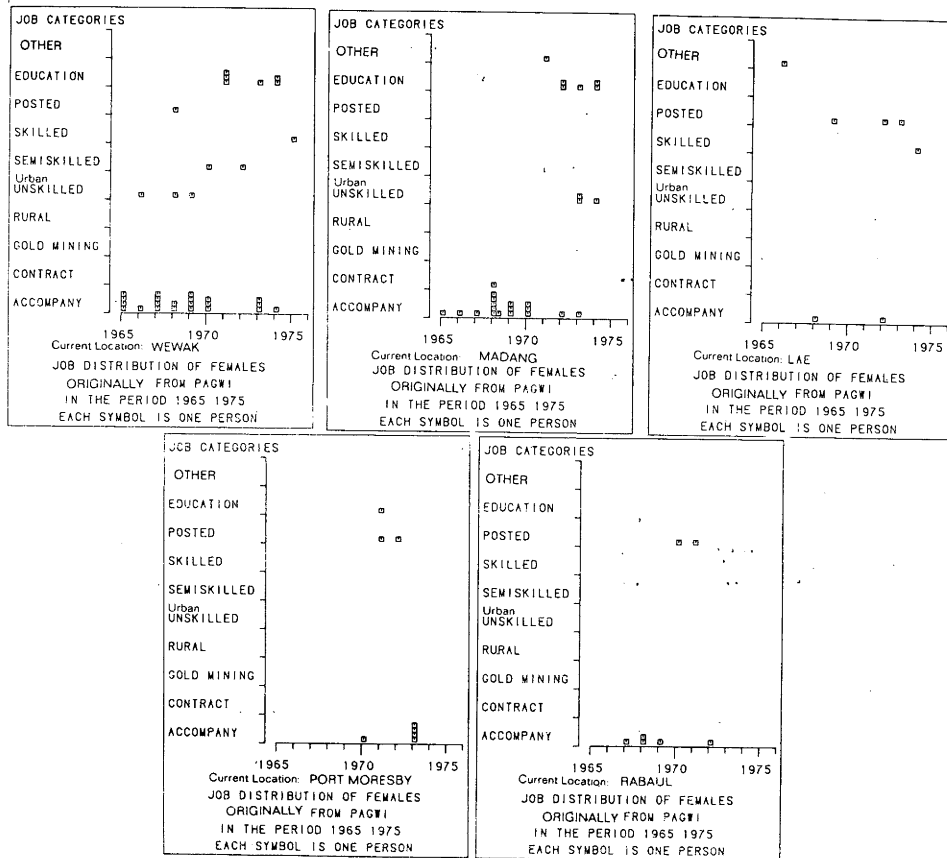


Figure 12

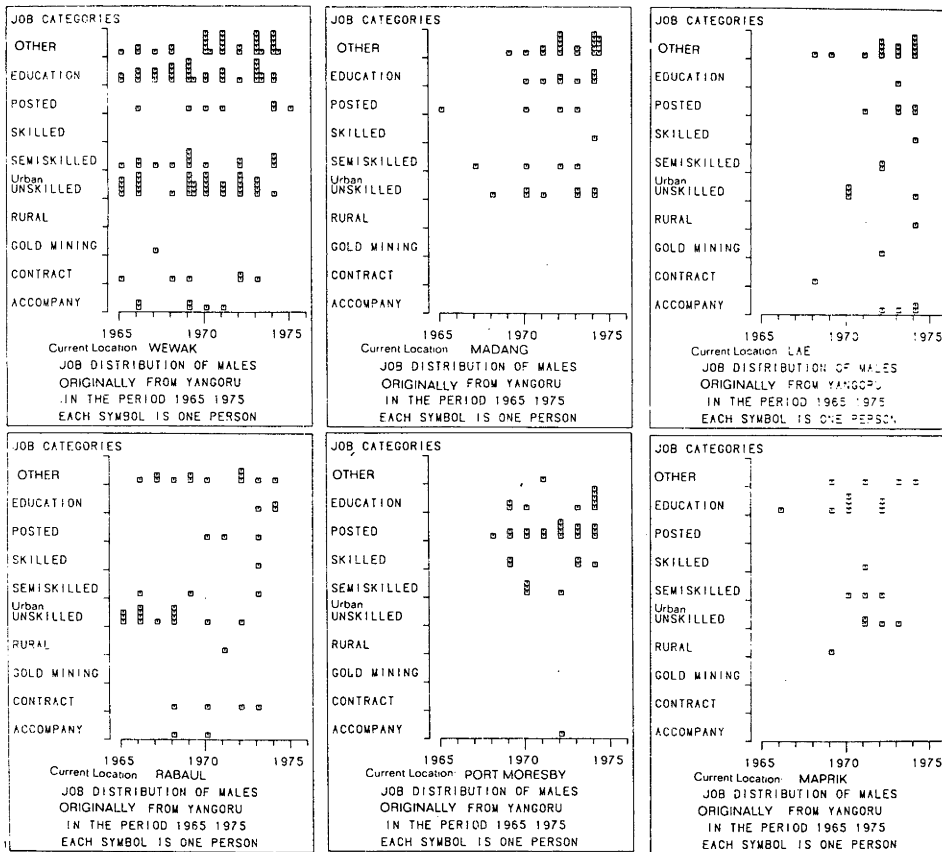


Figure 13

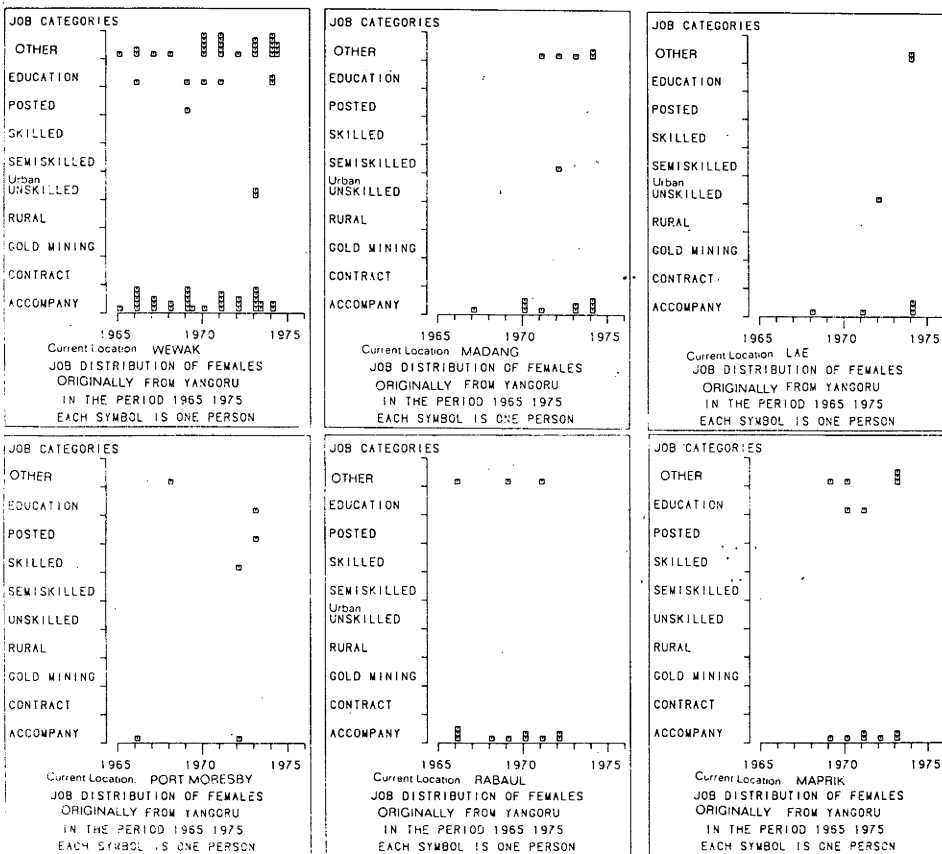


Figure 14

CHAPTER SIXTHE EAST SEPIKS IN TOWN: TEMPORARY MIGRANTS
OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS?

Preceding chapters have argued that although the extraction of labour power for the introduced capitalist economy necessitated some penetration of the existing pre-capitalist economy and society and hence its subservience to the demands of capitalist production, the MLS through its demand for cheap labour, acted to preserve the indigenous mode of production. This was so that neither employer nor the colonial state had to pay for the long-term reproduction of the labour force - social security benefits, retirement provisions, the bringing up of the next generation and meeting the subsistence needs of the workers' families. Thus, elements of the village economy were maintained in order to preserve its viability to reproduce the labour force. One result was therefore a slowing down of the process of proletarianisation because of the need for labour migrants to keep up a *dual dependence* on both economies.

Now with the transformation of the indigenous mode of production into a peasant economy integrated into the international market economy through migrant labour and smallholder cash cropping, it remains to be seen whether the resulting high level of rural to urban movement has produced migrants increasingly divorced from the rural subsistence-based economy. This chapter examines whether the changed socio economic conditions in the urban areas, which now make long-term residence possible, have done away with the need to maintain a *dual dependence* on the two economic systems.

Focusing mainly but not exclusively on East Sepik working-age (15 to 44 years) migrants in the major towns, the aim of this chapter is to assess their degree of commitment to permanent urban residence. Particular attention is paid to that class of migrants most able to adapt to and take advantage of urban life, namely those with high formal educational qualifications in secure wage employment.

East Sepiks in town

Using a broad definition of a migrant as someone resident in town who was not born there, the vast majority of adult East Sepiks in the towns of Papua New Guinea in 1973-74 have migrated there. Only 7.5 per cent of those aged 15 to 44 years have not been born in the rural village sector. Of this 7.5 per cent, about half were born in a traditional village within Wewak's town boundaries. Thus, 92.5 per cent have migrated originally from a rural village. But of the 15 to 19 year old cohort, 16 per cent were born in other than a rural village. Most of these children of migrants lived in Madang, Lae and Wewak.

The distribution of the working-age East Sepik population across the 15 urban areas surveyed in 1973-74 (see Map 6.1) is shown in Table 6.1.

The four major destinations for East Sepik urban migrants are clearly Wewak, Lae, Madang and Rabaul. Their importance can be attributed to ease of access (Wewak and to a lesser extent Madang), an expanding economy (Lae)¹ and the remnant of an earlier migration

1 This refers to the period prior to mid-1973, the date of the survey in Lae. More recently Lae's economy appears to have stabilised (Skeldon 1978b:16).

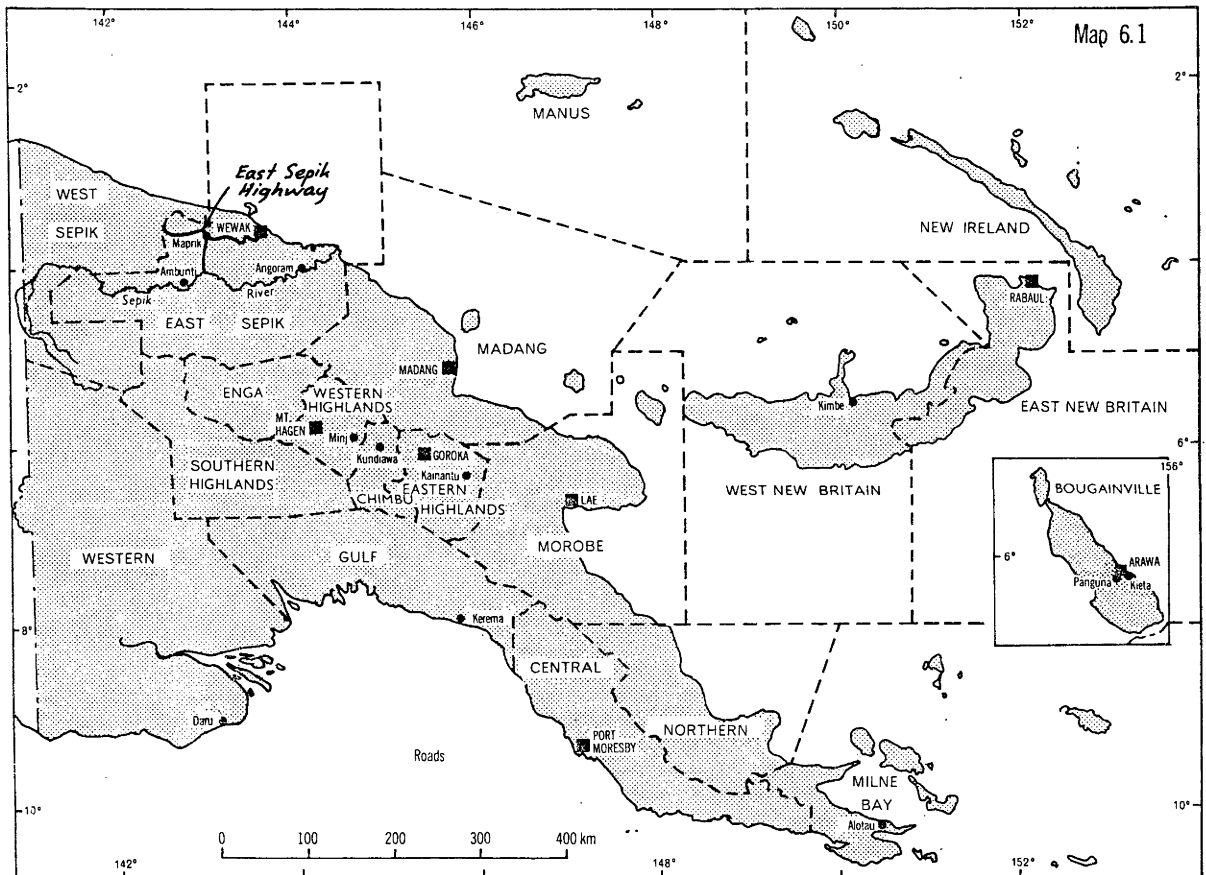
Table 6.1

Distribution of East Sepiks in the surveyed towns in 1973-74, their proportion in each town's population and the male to female ratio (total population 15-44 years)¹

Rank Order	Percentage distribution in each town	Sample size (n)	Sample ratio 1 in ...	Proportion of East Sepiks in the total working age population in each town (per cent)	Males per 100 females
1.	43.8	(513)	7 Wewak	68.4	93
2.	16.4	(136)	10 Lae	8.4	240
3.	14.7	(149)	8 Madang	20.5	137
4.	9.7	(80)	10 Rabaul	17.5	176
5.	4.6	(62)	6 Arawa, Kieta, Panguna		
6.	4.2	(19)	15 Port Moresby	7.7	417
7.	2.1	(28)	6 Mt Hagen	1.2	240
8.	1.4	(19)	6 Goroka	4.5	833
9.	1.4	(29)	3 Kimbe	2.3	280
10.	0.7	(19)	3 Kundiawa	11.9	867
11.	0.3	(7)	3 Kainantu	6.9	850
12.	0.2	(5)	3 Minj	3.3	133
13.	0.2	(4)	3 Alotau	4.4	400
14.	0.2	(4)	5 Daru	1.3	100
15.	0.1	(2)	4 Kerema	1.2	100
	100.0	(1076)		1.0	

¹ The overall distribution is derived by multiplying the sample number by the sample ratio for that town. The sample sizes are presented here but not in the preceding tables because of the need to weight the sample size for each town to give an aggregate figure. However where a cell frequency is three or less, an asterisk is used.

Data source: derived from Garnaut *et al.* 1977:table 3.6



The Location of Urban Areas Surveyed by the UHS, 1973-74 and District Headquarters within the East Sepik Province

stream (Rabaul). Wewak, the provincial capital of the East Sepik, derived two-thirds of its population from the immediate province. No other major town derived as many migrants from its province as did Wewak from the East Sepik. The East Sepiks were also prominent groups within the urban populations of Madang and Rabaul, but they were less prominent in Lae. Of the other destinations, the job opportunities at the large mining complex of Arawa-Kieta-Panguna attracted some young men, while the educational institutions and more senior Public Service employment opportunities in Port Moresby served to attract others. Although Kimbe, the service centre for the Cape Hoskins Oil Palm Scheme had a small proportion of all East Sepik urban residents surveyed, they represented some 12 per cent of the total population of the small town.

Most of the urban migrant population came directly from their home village to town (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2

Proportion of urban East Sepik male migrants who have come directly from their home village (per cent)

Major urban destination	Total males	Employed males	Unemployed males
Wewak	56.4	48.3	72.6
Madang	71.8	62.0	85.7
Lae	49.2	47.7	53.3
Rabaul	57.7	52.9	66.7

Data source: UHS 1973-74

Commitment to urban residence

In assessing the extent of a migrant's commitment to urban life, a number of indicators may be taken into account. They include the migrant's length of time in town, his current employment status and educational level, whether or not he is accompanied by a wife, the contact maintained with the migrant's home village, the migrant's attitude towards returning home, and whether or not he has built a house at home. Other relevant factors are the migrant's claims on urban housing, and his prospects of an adequate livelihood after retirement. The various institutional constraints on permanent urban residence for the group most likely to settle in town - the educated in secure employment - will be discussed below.

The urban dwellers recorded in the UHS may be categorised into three groups. The first group comprises the visitors who are merely short-term circular migrants. The second group, at the other end of the spectrum, are the permanent urban residents. Thirdly, the group in-between are those who are long-term circular migrants with more or less stable employment. It is difficult to be definitive about the size of each group by merely using survey data collected at one point in time. Since the growth in the urban areas is a recent phenomenon occurring within the life of the current generation of working-age migrants, it is not possible to look at the responses to urban residence of earlier generations or even older age cohorts of contemporary migrants. What follows must necessarily be tentative.

Visitors and short-term circular migrants. About one-quarter of East Sepiks in the major towns are recent arrivals, having been in town

for 12 months or less with most resident for six months or less.

Their period of residence is shown in Table 6.3.

Skeldon (1976), in his census of Goroka, described a large 'floating' visitor population of up to 12 per cent of the total who were in town for an average of only six weeks. The above data showing a sharp drop in the numbers resident for longer than six months, suggest a similar conclusion although the proportion of recent arrivals differed from town to town. Women in particular appear to be short-term migrants or visitors. Twenty-two per cent (aggregated for the eight major towns) have been in town for six months or less. Wewak, understandably, has the highest proportion of visitors, most having been in town for three months or less. These visitors are likely to be people coming to town to sell their produce (vegetables or fish) at the market, to exchange gossip and perhaps to receive a 'handout' from those employed. Their purpose is to *raun raun tasol*¹. Gewertz (1977b) describes the periodic visits of women from the Chambri Lakes to sell their fish at the market. Of 17 visits to Wewak made over a 11 month period in 1974-75, the average time spent in town was seven and a half weeks per visit². The market trips were usually planned to coincide with other occasions, such as a visit to the hospital, a son finishing high school or the naming of a sister's town-born son (Gewertz 1977b: 134).

These short-term visitors have no intention of becoming urban

1 Literally 'to round round only' ie merely making the trip for no particular reason.

2 Similar trips to Pagwi averaged 10 days (21 visits), and to Maprik 30 market visits averaged 25 days (recomputed from Gewertz 1977b:135).

Table 6.3

Period of residence of East Sepik male and female migrants,
excluding full-time students and don't know, no replies
(per cent)

Males

Period up to	Wewak	Lae	Madang	Rabaul
0-2 m*	15	7	11	-
3-5 m	6	21	-	2
6-8 m	2	1	4	-
9-12 m	4	-	3	-
1-2 yrs	6	15	17	8
3-4 yrs	12	12	16	20
5-9 yrs	25	28	25	22
10+ yrs	30	16	24	48
Total	100	100	100	100

Females

0-2 m	17	12	2	7
3-5 m	5	33	5	3
6-8 m	3	-	3	-
9-12 m	1	-	7	10
1-2 yrs	11	7	8	17
3-4 yrs	15	17	20	28
5-9 yrs	24	12	30	21
10+ yrs	24	19	25	14
Total	100	100	100	100

* m = month(s)

Source: Derived from Garnaut *et al.* 1977: tables 5.25,
5.23, 5.24, 5.27.

residents. They are still clearly integrated into the rural peasant economy. Although they are not part of the town in one sense, yet in another they play an important role in maintaining rural-urban links with longer term urban residents. They can act as conduits for the transfer of money to the rural sector and they themselves bring food to their urban relatives. Such visitors often pose a major dilemma to the longer term resident whether to continue to offer hospitality in the expectation of building up a reputation for generosity at home, or to cut off all or most ties of reciprocity by refusing to accommodate *wantoks*. For example, Gawi, who had lived in Wau for over 30 years with very few visits home, chose to offer only limited hospitality which probably reflected his ambiguity about eventually returning home.¹ For those who do decide to remain in close contact with home, urban settlement life, particularly in Wewak, can often revolve around the comings and goings of visitors. In the Koil Island settlement in Wewak, of the 200 or so Koil people in town over a 21-week survey period, only 55 could be called permanent town residents.

... these great numbers of temporary residents more or less create the tempo and flavour of life in the settlement: parties are held for boat arrivals and departures, etc. News from home is constantly discussed.²

The 'hosting' of visitors by the townspeople, the marketing of produce, and helping to find work for the unskilled job seekers are acts which help the urban migrant build up his credit at home.

1 See Gawi's narrative in the Appendix to this chapter.

2 Personal communication: Mary Huber, an anthropologist resident in *Koil Kamp* 1975-76.

A second component of the recent arrivals' group is likely to be young men seeking a wage job. These migrants are likely to predominate in the more distant destinations. The 1971 Census data revealed that the largest urban age groups of East Sepiks were young men in the 15-19 and 20-24 year cohorts (accounting for 5.5 and 7.9 per cent respectively). However, if the immediate district is excluded from Wewak's urban population, the proportion of urban East Sepiks in those two age groups moves to 14.0 and 11.3 per cent respectively.¹ Therefore the heavy dominance of young males is still likely to appear in the migrant stream to the more distant towns, particularly among the recent arrivals. These young men are likely to go to those towns which offer the best employment prospects.

A good indication of the towns where there was a chance of obtaining work for East Sepik men is the relative proportion of these men employed at the time of the survey compared with the town's total male population. In Lae, for example, 81.5 per cent of men from the East Sepik were employed. Of Lae's total male population, 79.8 per cent had employment. In Arawa-Kieta-Panguna, all the resident East Sepik men were employed compared with 95.5 per cent of the total male population. In Port Moresby the relative proportions were 100 per cent compared with 82.0 per cent. Elsewhere East Sepik men fared less well when compared with the town's overall proportion employed. In Wewak, only 67.2 per cent had wage jobs compared with 75.2 per cent for the men of the town as a whole. The situation was similar in Madang (74.4 per cent compared with 76.7 per cent) and in

1 1971 Census data, special tabulations, Department of Human Geography, ANU.

Rabaul (72.5 per cent compared with 78.0 per cent).¹ However, employment prospects also depend on the rate of job turnover. The changes in the rate of job creation and job turnover and the information flow about these changing conditions make the size and destinations of this group of job-seeking recent arrivals highly variable.

These job seekers are, for the most part, only temporary residents. The proportion of less educated men in wage employment fell dramatically with length of residence in town, although the tendency was not so marked in Wewak.

Table 6.4

Proportion of East Sepik men outside employment for each specific period of residence in town [those with less than primary school completed] (per cent)

	0-2m	3-5m	6-8m	9-12m	Total to 12m	1-2yrs	3-4yrs	5-9yrs	10yrs+
Wewak	82	60	-	*	78	32	36	29	20
Other towns	44	14	*	26	12	16	68	-	22

* Three or less observations

Data source: UHS 1973-74.

In the more inaccessible towns, with perhaps less chance of support from kinship ties, the proportion of minimally educated men without employment

¹ But for women, 20.7 per cent from the East Sepik were employed compared with 14.9 per cent for the total population in Wewak. However in Madang, Rabaul and Lae, the proportions were much lower 10.0, 12.7 and 6.9 compared with 12.0, 15.9 and 16 per cent respectively.

fell noticeably after three months residence and remained low in the intermediate period of residence, then rose substantially for those longest resident in town. However, Wewak's proportion of unemployed East Sepik men remained high, even for those with up to ten years' residence in town.¹

For the visitors and short-term young job seekers, the extent of urban commitment is likely to be minimal. One indication is the decision of the man without work to leave his wife at home. Those men without wage employment especially in the younger age groups were much less likely to bring a spouse to town. As shown below, those out of work were also less likely to receive help from their home villages probably because they were not in a position to initiate or sustain such an exchange.

Table 6.5

Proportion of urban East Sepik men accompanied by a wife for specific age groups and employment status (per cent).

15-19 yrs		20-24 yrs		25-34 yrs		35-44 yrs		Total	
Job	Without job	Job	Without job	Job	Without job	Job	Without job	Job	Without job
23	0	48	7	81	67	78	70	66	49

Data source: UHS 1973-74

1 High proportions of East Sepik men with five or more years residence in Rabaul and Madang also had no formal sector employment. These towns together with Wewak with their well-established East Sepik populations are more likely to be able to support long-term jobless men than Port Moresby, Goroka, Mt Hagen or Arawa-Kieta-Panguna.

Following Bedford and Mamak (1976), these people can best be regarded as merely peasants in town, still basically integrated into a rural peasant economy. 'They consider their involvement in urban work to be peripheral, while cash cropping and enterpreneurial activity in rural areas is of primary importance' (Bedford and Mamak 1976:180). They are short-term circular migrants from their rural villages.¹

In recent years, the transition to longer term residence for the young, unskilled migrant through finding well-paid urban employment has become more difficult to make. It is likely however that those who do find employment with adequate accommodation will bring a wife to town, start a family and settle down to a medium- to long-term urban residence. Whether these people become permanent town dwellers will be considered in the discussion of the third group of urban residents; those who appear to have cut themselves off from their rural village of origin.

Permanent town dwellers. Those in town with no apparent rural ties are not a large component of the urban population. Apart from those who are from a traditional village within Wewak town itself, a relatively high proportion of East Sepik urban migrants have either left recently their home village or returned home on a visit. But some 30 per cent have not visited home for three years or more, and a third of these have not visited home for ten years or more.

1 The young men in particular may try their luck in the search for a job in a number of towns but the high proportion of unemployed men who had come directly from their home village (see Table 6.2) suggests that inter-urban movement is not very high for this group.

Table 6.6

Proportion of East Sepiks who last had physical contact with their home village for specific periods (per cent)

No contact for 1 year or more*	No contact for 3 years or more	No contact for 5 years or more	No contact for 10 years or more
48	30	20	10

Data source: UHS, 1973-74.

* Thus 52 per cent of East Sepik migrants had either arrived in town within the previous 12 months to the survey or had visited home within that period.

These figures do not necessarily mean a total loss of contact. Another important form of communication, apart from visiting, is the exchange of goods and money. The following table is the result of cross-tabulation of a number of indicators to arrive at the *minimum* proportion of East Sepiks who appeared to have lost all contact with their home villages. The corollary is that these people have decided to become permanent urban dwellers.

Among this group of likely permanent urban residents are those at both ends of the income scale. On the one hand there are the higher level public and private sector employees who can afford to buy an urban house and feel confident of the adequacy of their retirement pension and/or the employment prospects of their children. But as this group of Papua New Guineans in the professional or subprofessional manpower categories in 1973-74 was still very small¹, the group

1 In Port Moresby only 3.6 per cent of the male urban workforce were in the top two levels of a five level manpower classification. The percentage in the other major towns was less than half that of Port Moresby.

Table 6.7

East Sepiks in four major destinations who appear to have lost contact with their home villages: the proportion of the total migrant population who have been in town for three years or more and who have neither visited their home village nor sent or received gifts (per cent)

	Have not sent gifts	Have not received gifts
Wewak	9	11
Lae	23	21
Madang	19	25
Rabaul	27	59
Weighted average	15	20

Data source: UHS 1973-74

is not likely to be a very large section of the urban population. A major component of the permanent residents is more likely to be those forced to remain in town because of perceived inadequate prospects at home. A successful businessman in Madang who was originally from the Sepik River village of Kanganaman, explained his reluctance to return home:

I want to stay on here in business to earn enough money. When I am an old man I may then return home. For the present I want to stay on in Madang town and if I get a good house I will remain here when I get old. Back home on the Sepik River, there is no good land to start a business for me or my children. The land is all swamp with only enough good land to build houses on. There is no *bisnis* on the river. Only those who live in the mountainous areas around Maprik and Wewak have enough land for *bisnis*.

Table 6.4 (p.270) shows a significant proportion of East Sepik males out of work for a considerable period of time especially in Wewak. A ranking of the proportion of males out of work from each of the 79 districts in the 15 major and minor towns surveyed in the UHS, shows that the two East Sepik Districts of Ambunti and Angoram are ranked sixth and twelfth highest respectively. The other two East Sepik Districts, Wewak and Maprik, are ranked 17th and 29th respectively. If only the longer distance migrants are considered¹, Ambunti and Angoram Districts rise to third and seventh place as districts with the most men out of work. In addition, if a more precise definition of unemployment is used, (ie those actively seeking work in the week previous to the survey) Ambunti and Angoram emerge third and second respectively as having the highest proportion of active job seekers (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:45,49).

A rank correlation comparing the district of origin of those out of work with a ranking of districts by socio-economic indicators revealed a significant negative correlation (significant at the 0.001 level) (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:182). The major districts of origin of the unemployed (in both proportional and absolute terms) with low socio-economic ranking, not unexpectedly, included both Ambunti and Angoram.² This evidence suggests that, to men from these areas,

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- 1 This involves excluding the immediate district in which the town is located on the assumption that the proximity of these districts of origin overwhelms other factors. This means, for example, that visitors and urban villagers depending on a subsistence livelihood are likely to form a much higher component of those out of work from the immediate district of the town.
 - 2 Both districts were ranked in the fifth grouping of Kent Wilson's six ranked groups of 79 districts. The socio economic indicators were the relative proportions of indigenous cash crops, hospital beds, administration staff, school enrolments, an index of accessibility and a grading of the districts' local government councils.

long-term urban unemployment may be seen as preferable to an inadequate rural existence. The persistence of those men from Ambunti and Angoram Districts in remaining in town without wage employment under difficult economic conditions, strongly suggests that they have become entirely dependent on the urban economy, although their livelihood in town may be similar to that of a rural peasant: reliant on subsistence gardening and irregular sources of cash income.

Long-term residents: permanent urbanites or eventual return-migrants?

While it is possible to suggest the existence of these three groups of urban residents, it is much more difficult to determine their relative sizes, mainly because the people involved have not finally decided whether they will return to their villages or remain as permanent absentees from them. Much of the following discussion of the various indicators of temporary or permanent urban residence cannot, of its nature, be definitive.

In some towns, a notable proportion of East Sepiks have been resident for considerable periods. Table 6.3 shows that the proportion of men resident in towns in 1973-74 for over ten years ranges from 48 per cent in Rabaul to 16 per cent in Lae. Considerable proportions of men have been in a town for over five years (Wewak 56 per cent, Lae 44 per cent, Madang 44 per cent, and Rabaul 66 per cent). As well urban populations were becoming more stable in demographic structure. Chapter Three described the general process of the 'normalisation' of the urban population in recent years. For the East Sepiks, this process is more evident in some towns than in others. Only in Lae, of the major urban destinations of the East Sepiks, is the male to female ratio among the

East Sepik migrants higher than in the total urban population. Elsewhere, and particularly in Wewak, the increasing presence of women and children is evident in the town (see Table 6.2, p.262). The presence of women in town is further confirmed by the proportion of urban men now accompanied by a wife. Only 11 per cent of East Sepik men have continued to leave a wife at home. As Table 6.5 (p.271) indicates, the unemployed (and more particularly the younger unemployed men) were much less likely to be accompanied by a wife.

Table 6.8

Proportion of urban East Sepik married men and location
of wife (per cent)

Age (Years)	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	Total
Wife in town	16	35	79	78	62
Wife at home	7	8	9	19	11
Not married	77	57	12	3	27
	100	100	100	100	100

Data source: UHS 1973-74

For those in wage employment, the former physical separation of the worker from his family required by the need to maintain a *dual dependence* on both economies, seems to have ended. The proportion of married men in the UHS was not very different from the East Sepik Provinces' adult male population as a whole. The provision of free or cheap housing in migrant settlements, subsidised

high standard housing for the more senior urban employees, and the economic security of higher wages based on the needs of a family, together with the provision by the state of adequate educational and health facilities have all enabled the urban worker to become completely dependent for his, and his family's, livelihood on the urban wage economy. The employer and the state have now largely accepted responsibility for the reproduction of the urban workforce. So he has now become a proletarian in the orthodox sense of the word - his standard of living is entirely dependent on the sale of his labour.

Bedford and Mamak (1976) have described the proletarian strategy of urban involvement:

For a significant number [of men] better-than-average education, job stability, and greater urban work experience have led to a considerable occupational mobility. Qualification for a house ... has come with occupational mobility and higher wages. Those who are married have sent for their immediate families and lengthy visits by kinsmen are not uncommon ... Many express a desire to return "one day" to their villages, and almost all stated a preference for cash cropping in place of wage employment. But each additional year in the towns brings with it an increasing involvement and commitment (Bedford and Mamak 1976:182).

But does this increasing involvement lead to a permanent urban commitment? The above describes the current situation of the established urban worker. Whether he will remain a proletarian after retirement to die in town or return to the rural economy, either as a peasant mainly dependent on a subsistence livelihood supplemented by cash cropping or to become a rural capitalist, is a question that can only be definitively answered when more of the current young urban population reach retirement age. But some indicators are available from the UHS to give an idea of future trends.

Attitudes towards returning home. Of the urban East Sepiks as a whole only 5 per cent said that they would 'never' return home; 39 per cent said they would return home 'sometime' and 56 per cent said they 'did not know'. Many of the large number who gave a 'don't know' reply may have wanted to be assured of secure conditions for continued urban residence, such as employment for their children and adequate housing. Others may have been non-committal because they would not need to make a decision yet for a number of years. While intentions may never be fulfilled, they nevertheless reflect the person's current attitudes and are likely to influence his or her behaviour while in town. An intention to return, or at least an ambivalence about the possibility of returning, is likely to prompt a migrant to continue to send remittances home, to make vacation visits and perhaps to build a house in his village.

Visiting home. Evidence of the extent of continuing rural-urban ties among longer term urban residents in general has already been noted in Curtin (1977a:18) and for the East Sepiks in particular in Table 6.7. Urban residents in wage employment with higher educational qualifications have also shown a greater tendency to visit their home village. Of those male wage earners in town for three years or more with little or no formal education, 53 per cent had visited their home village. But of the employed who had been urban residents for three years or more and who had completed primary school or higher, 69 per cent had visited home. This is not altogether surprising as it is much easier for public and private sector employees in middle level positions and above to return home more frequently because they are given leave fares to their home

areas at least every two years.¹

However, the tendency was less marked for the more educated East Sepik men to visit home more often compared with those having less formal education. Nevertheless the proportions of those men in both educational groups who had visited their home village since migrating to town are high, particularly for those resident in Wewak (79 and 86 per cent respectively).²

Building a house at home. A more tangible indicator of continuing rural-urban ties than that provided by gift exchanges and visits is whether or not the urban migrant has built a house in his home village (see Caldwell 1969:146). Respondents were asked whether they had ever built a house in their home village.³ The results for all male migrants aggregated for the eight major towns are presented in the table below. Urban traditional villages have been excluded to omit non-migrants from the tabulation.

1 From the mid-1960s to the early 1970s the possession of a primary school certificate was required for entry to the Public Service. The Police and the Army which required lesser qualifications also provided leave fares. People with higher qualifications in the private sector were usually kept on par with conditions of service in the public sector.

2 People from traditional villages within the town were excluded from this and subsequent tabulations so that migrants only would form the data base.

3 Some qualification needs to be noted about the meaning of this indicator. An individual may build a rural house for his parents or otherwise to enhance his status without necessarily indicating an intention to return home (Elspeth Young personal communication: 1977.) Therefore, at a minimum the fact of having built a rural house may be taken as an indication of continuing close ties with the migrant's home leaving open the possibility of returning there.

Table 6.9

Proportion of migrant men in the eight major towns who have built a house in their home village, urban traditional villages excluded.
(per cent)

15-24 years	25-44 years	Total
46.8	60.9	54.0

Data source: UHS 1973-74.

Not unexpectedly, there is a greater tendency for the older men to have established a presence in their home village. But also, over half of all male migrants have built a rural house. A separate tabulation for men in town for three years or more produced the same proportion - 54 per cent.¹

Another major influence on the propensity of a migrant to build a rural house is his educational status. A permanent commitment toward urban residence (which means staying in town after retirement age) is likely to be determined by the degree of future economic security the urban resident feels he or his children are likely to have. A major factor contributing to this feeling of economic security is likely

1 These figures are higher than similar figures for Ghana. Caldwell (1969) found that while Ghanaian urban migrants were often reluctant to invest in housing in the city, they were eager to do so in their home places.

It is probably reasonable to suggest that over one-third of the migrants had at the time of the survey invested in the construction of some form of accommodation in their home villages and that before their death well over 90 per cent expect to do so ... It is unlikely that fewer than half the migrants will ultimately undertake such construction (Caldwell 1969:148).

to be the person's current educational qualifications and wage employment status.

A computer tabulation was carried out for those in *wage employment only* who had minimal formal education or none, compared with those who had completed primary school or higher. The hypothesis was that those with wage employment based on higher formal education are more likely to be oriented to permanent urban residence and hence less likely to build a rural home.

As expected, those in wage employment with little or no formal education are more likely to have a rural house (61 per cent). Of those men in wage employment who had completed primary school or higher, 45 per cent had built a rural house. Thus the more educated appear less likely to build at home. But age is also a variable likely to bias the results. Since the young showed a lower tendency to have built a house, and a high proportion of primary school leavers are young, the propensity among the more educated not to have a rural house could be explained simply as an effect of age. The table below presents a tabulation controlling for two age groupings.

Table 6.10

Proportion of employed men for two age and educational groupings who have built a house in their home village for the major towns, excluding urban traditional villages (per cent)

Age	No education & up to standard 5	Primary school completed and above
15-24	55	41
25-44	63	53

Data source: UHS 1973-74

With age controlled for, the level of education still has a marked effect on a migrant's lower propensity to build a rural house. These data tend to modify the earlier evidence on the extent of the rural-urban ties maintained by those benefitting most from urban residence. Despite a tendency amongst the more educated to have visited home more often, there was a much lower propensity to have built a house there.¹ Nevertheless, over half of the older, more educated men had done so. In general, the above table presents evidence which confirms the hypothesis about those most and least likely to become eventual return-migrants. The group one would most expect to become return-migrants are the older, less well-educated men. Those least expected to return home are the young educated migrants. But the most significant finding is the high proportion of those in urban wage employment based on higher educational qualifications who had built a rural house. Even among the men aged 15-24 years, fully 41 per cent had done so.

The above evidence of continuing close ties with the home village, and the apparent intention of returning there, is supported by a representative sample survey of middle-level public servants carried out under the supervision of Stretton (1978). Two hundred and fifty married male public servants with status equivalent to semi-skilled workers or higher were interviewed (150 were interviewed in

1 There were considerable variations between the major towns. The lower proportions of those in Port Moresby who had built a rural house especially among the young (36 per cent) probably reflects the growing number of second-generation migrants. But in Rabaul, the other major town with long-term residents, 52 per cent of its male migrant residents had built a rural house. Wewak was far above the other towns with 72 per cent of its work-age residents with a rural house.

Port Moresby, 50 in Madang and 50 in Goroka). Many had been long-term urban residents.¹

Excluding those whose village is within the town boundary as non-migrant urban residents, 82 per cent of the public service migrants to Port Moresby stated that they would return home either before or on retirement. Only 8 per cent said that they would never return home, with most giving loss of land rights as the reason. In Madang and Goroka the equivalent figures were over 95 per cent. Most of the respondents interviewed, however, said that they would remain in town until retirement.

The replies to the question on whether they had built or intended to build a village house are shown in the table below.

Table 6.11

Village house construction by married male public servants, semi-skilled and above, residents of urban traditional villages excluded (per cent).

	House built in rural village	Intention to build	No intention	(n)
Port Moresby	43	47	10	126
Madang	41	57	2	46
Goroka	62	38	-	42

Source: derived from Stretton 1978:67 and table 23

1 Seventy per cent in Port Moresby had been resident for five years or more, and 38 per cent resident for five years or more in Madang and Goroka.

These figures are very similar to the UHS figures for those who had built a rural house - Port Moresby 47 per cent, Madang 43 per cent and Goroka 67 per cent. In addition, the Stretton survey of public servants also shows a high proportion who intended to build a rural house in the future. Although building a rural home does not necessarily exclude owning a house in town, very few had in fact acquired urban property. A large number were simply not interested (39 per cent in Port Moresby, 50 per cent in Madang and 44 per cent in Goroka).¹ Of those interested in buying an urban house, only 20 out of 71 men in Port Moresby had taken steps to do so. In Madang it was only four out of 22 and in Goroka four out of 23 of those interested who had taken any steps to buy an urban house. Stretton concluded that there was a general reluctance, even among the more secure, better-paid public servants, to become urban home owners:

Apart from families living in urban villages and settlements, most urban dwellers have been reluctant to enter into home ownership. Ex-government houses^[2] are not available for purchase and only approximately 700 of the 5600 houses constructed by the National Housing Commission have been sold. The number of Papua New Guineans who have arranged for the construction of their own conventional dwelling is extremely small (Stretton 1978:35).

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- 1 Excluded are people who already owned an urban dwelling mostly in an urban traditional village - 16 per cent in Port Moresby, 12 per cent in Madang and 18 per cent in Goroka.
 - 2 Ex-government houses refer to those built by the colonial administration for its public servants and handed over, as a gift, to the Papua New Guinean government at Independence.

Institutional constraints on permanent urban residence

The general reluctance for the better-placed urban residents to become permanent town dwellers may be explained by the continuing uncertainties over urban residence, to which urban housing is only one of the contributors. For most urban residents, particularly middle and senior level public and private sector employees, accommodation is provided by their employer.

Table 6.12

Occupancy status of Papua New Guinean urban households, major towns, excluding Arawa-Kieta-Panguna¹ (per cent)

Total owned		44
Owned and built	38	
Owned but not built	5	
Being purchased	1	
Provided by employer		29
Rented or leased		23
Don't know/No reply		4
		<u>100</u>

Data source: UHS 1973-74

Over 50 per cent of urban accommodation is therefore available only as long as the occupants continued in the service of their employer, or are receiving an adequate income to be able to pay the rent. Only 1 per cent of householders are purchasing their current residence, presumably through one of the National Housing Commission's (NHC) schemes.

¹ The mining complex of Arawa-Kieta-Panguna has a very large proportion of company housing (52 per cent).

Until June 1977, only 2.2 per cent of urban housing was being purchased through the NHC, although its housing accounted for 17 per cent of the total major urban housing stock (Stretton 1978:3). Most of the housing which was owner-built was located in migrant settlements and traditional villages. Dismissing broader social and cultural reasons, Stretton has argued that the main reasons for lack of interest in urban home ownership among the better-paid urban employees are the rental subsidies which apply to ex-government, NHC and private-sector houses. These subsidies are said to make home-ownership an uneconomic proposition.

Although only a small proportion of Papua New Guinea public servants are eligible for subsidised housing because of their rank, others are eligible for subsidised institutional housing attached to such Government departments as Defence, Health and Education.¹ Others may decide against acquiring a more permanent urban residence in the expectation of meeting the eligibility criterion for a subsidised house through a future promotion. Even for those occupying NHC housing who are supposed to be paying economic rents, the rentals are far below a realistic economic level.² Stretton also argues that even for more

1 The provision of low rental housing for the middle-level public servants in the major centres and most personnel in outlying areas is a legacy of the colonial authorities which used cheap housing to attract expatriate public servants. Institutional housing was necessary because of frequent transfers of expatriates within and out of the country. (For an historical background to the urban housing situation see Jackson 1978).

2 Current rentals for ex-government houses have remained stable from the mid-1960s. They range from K3.49 to K15.95 a fortnight. In addition the maximum rental can only be 7.5 per cent of a householder's salary. Stretton has estimated that in 1977 a realistic economic rent would fall in the range of K64 to K86 per fortnight.

cheaply built housing, there is little financial incentive to buy the house rather than rent it.¹

Thus the provision of subsidised housing for the middle to high-level private and public sector employees encourages impermanency. Recent government moves in 1978 to sell government housing to the occupants and to encourage informal housing schemes have shown little progress.

For the majority of the urban population who are in government or other employer-provided housing, the economic constraints against owning a house are strong. Whether the stated reluctance to buy an urban house is due solely to the lack of economic incentives or whether it stems from a broader perception of urban employment as merely temporary, and urban life as alien, is difficult to say while the economic disincentives to settle permanently in town still remain. Maintaining close ties and eventual return to the rural economy, continue to appear necessary for most urban dwellers.

Apart from economic considerations, the rural areas in Papua New Guinea are also important loci of political status and social prestige, if not political power. The national parliament is based on the equal representation of electorates and the recent introduction of provincial government has provided a new focus and base for local élites. Therefore, the more wealthy urban dwellers may still be strongly inclined to seek out the respect and

1 The cost-advantage of buying rather than renting disappears when the owner has to meet his own maintenance costs and rate payments. The fact that the low-cost housing may well be uninhabitable by the time the mortgage is paid off (in 25 years) is a very real discouragement against buying. The lack of a market for the resale of low and medium-covenant houses has prevented potential owners from seeing them as a realisable capital asset (Stretton 1978:40).

deference of their own home society, something which they see as not possible in the alien social climate of the towns. Combined with the quest for social prestige the economic opportunity to become a businessman may also seem greater at home when compared with more limited opportunities for small investors in the larger towns.¹

So far the discussion has considered only those long-term urban residents in employer-provided housing. The large numbers of residents who provide their own housing in migrant settlements and urban traditional villages² do not, of course, have the same difficulties with home ownership or cost of accommodation. Nevertheless their security of occupancy on a long-term basis is often uncertain. Most migrant settlements are on land not owned by the occupants although their occupancy is not necessarily illegal. The situation of individual East Sepik migrant settlements will be examined more closely in the final part of this chapter.

East Sepiks in Wewak

The rural-urban ties of the East Sepiks in Wewak are substantially different from those maintained by East Sepiks in the other towns. Data presented above (Table 6.7) show that those in Wewak, even long-term residents, have maintained close rural contact through visits

1 The Salisburys (1977:225) have made a similar point in the late 1960s about the attitudes of urban migrants from the Eastern Highlands towards returning home. Salisbury (1970:164-171) noted the tendency in the early 1960s among Tolai migrants including the better educated, to return home after the age of 30 to become involved in cash-cropping activities.

2 The migrant settlements and urban traditional villages combined accounted for 53.1 per cent of the population in Wewak, 34.7 per cent in Lae, 39.6 per cent in Madang and 47.9 per cent in Rabaul.

and sending gifts. East Sepik male residents of Wewak were also more likely to have built a rural house compared with East Sepik men in the other major towns. Part of the close relationship between town and hinterland is obviously due to the easy access between the two areas provided by the Sepik Highway (see Map 5.1).

In many ways, the demography of Wewak appears to be similar in a number of characteristics to that of its rural hinterland. The town had the most balanced sex ratio of any of the major towns in 1971.¹ The proportion of working-age males decreased from 30 per cent of the total population in 1971 to 27 per cent in 1973-74, again the lowest proportion in any major town. Correspondingly, the UHS showed that Wewak had one of the lowest proportions of men in wage employment and the highest percentage of households without a wage earner (17 per cent of households located outside urban traditional villages Garnaut *et al.* 1977:124). The balanced sex ratios and higher relative proportions of children and older people are made possible by the ready availability of cheap accommodation. Wewak, by a considerable margin, had the highest proportion of owner-occupied housing (60 per cent), mostly in migrant and urban traditional village settlements, of any of the major towns.

These data show the very settled nature of the population in Wewak, but it is an exaggeration to view the urban area as a mere extension of the rural villages. While the town displays 'stable'

1 According to the 1971 Census, there were 129 males per 100 females in Wewak compared with 158 males in Port Moresby, 174 males in Lae and 163 males in Madang.

demographic characteristics and individual households have close ties with their homes, security of land tenure for many migrants is often uncertain.

Many migrant groups have been able to settle on urban land by inter-marrying with the customary land owners and these people have often reaffirmed their rights by gifts and an annual feast. However, with the growth in the number of *wantoks* in the settlement, the death or retirement of the initial parties to the agreement and the neglect of friendship obligations by the new migrants, trouble over occupancy soon arises. The younger urban land owners often request a fortnightly payment of rent or demand that the migrants quit the land. By this time the migrants in turn feel they have rights to the land or at least should be paid compensation for their houses and tree crops.

It is clear that, for many East Sepiks resident in Wewak, maintaining a dual dependence on the rural and urban economies continues to be an important strategy of urban existence. The need and opportunity to maintain close ties is illustrated by the case of a long-term urban employee:

The man from the Yangoru study village of Siniangu had started work in Rabaul in 1959 as a hotel cook. He stayed there for 13 years and was able to arrange a transfer to the Wewak Hotel. He was still earning only the urban minimum wage but his accommodation, a galvanised tin hut behind the hotel, was provided by his employer rent-free with no charge for electricity. He said he would eventually return home to live permanently. Since being in Wewak, he had

been able to return home every leave period (once a year). But while he was in Rabaul he was able to visit home only once because of the expense.

But what of those East Sepiks living in the more distant and isolated towns?

East Sepiks in Rabaul

Rabaul is a prime case of a town where one would expect to find a long-settled group of East Sepiks with diminishing contact with their home areas. By the end of 1973, 48 per cent of the East Sepik working-age population had lived in Rabaul for ten years or more. This was nearly double the proportion resident in Wewak for an equivalent period.

Also in marked contrast to Wewak, there had been very few recent arrivals.¹ Only 2 per cent of the resident East Sepik population had arrived in the year prior to the UHS and only 10 per cent in the previous two years. The high cost of transport to the mainland prevented many people from making visits home. Seventy-eight per cent of the East Sepik people in Rabaul had not made physical contact with their home place (ie neither visited, nor arrived from the village) for three years or more, 55 per cent for five years or more and 35 per cent for ten years or more. For the town as a whole (of whom the East Sepiks comprised a fifth) 24 per cent of the children born in town had not visited their home village.

1 According to Census data, the net growth of the East Sepik population in Rabaul between 1966 and 1971 was only half (9.7 per cent per annum) the annual growth rate for the other major East Sepik destinations. The fall in the numbers going to Rabaul was probably due to the lack of free transport for unskilled workers formerly provided by contract employment. The town itself was going through a recession dating from the mid-1960s (Varpian and Jackson 1976:426).

Against this background of long-term residence and minimal physical contact with home through visits or recent arrivals, one might expect these people to have become divorced from their area of origin. But this did not appear to be the case. Forty-eight per cent of the East Sepik men who had been resident for three years or more had sent gifts home while only 26 per cent had received gifts. The proportion of longer term migrant women (resident for three years or more) who had exchanged gifts was exceptionally high; 86 per cent had sent gifts and 71 per cent had received gifts (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:73). These data however tell us nothing about the value of the gifts exchanged and who benefitted in monetary terms from the exchange but they do point to a high level of continuing ties.

In the same way, although 58 per cent of the East Sepiks in Rabaul said they 'didn't know' whether they would return home permanently (a higher proportion than for the East Sepiks in the other towns), only 3 per cent said they would 'never' return. Among the women a number said that they wanted to return home permanently 'sometime', but they did not currently have the money to do so.

The lack of commitment to urban residence in Rabaul, and a concern to keep up home ties, is not difficult to understand. The East Sepik population in Rabaul in late 1973 was still heavily male-biased. The Sepik men, perhaps through earlier antagonistic relations with the Tolai population, found it difficult to acquire a Tolai wife. The brideprice had to be paid for in tambu shells, the local traditional medium of exchange. The 100 to 200 shells necessary were extremely difficult for non-Tolais to acquire. Despite the rapid growth in the East Sepik female population through movement to Rabaul between 1966 and 1971,

the proportion of East Sepik married men in the 25 to 34 age group was the lowest amongst the major towns.

Despite the fact that the early Sepik-Tolai antagonism has given way to a mostly Chimbu-Tolai confrontation, the Sepiks were still seen as 'foreign natives'¹ who occupied most of the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the town.² For those earning the minimum wage, accommodation was very expensive in the former government workers' compound. The recent changeover to the NHC had meant increased rentals, and new charges for garbage removal and electricity.

Among those Sepiks living in Malay town migrant settlement, some degree of security over occupancy has been assured through the acquisition of the settlement's land by the NHC. But residents of the settlement were uncertain as to what charges the Commission would make and what standard of housing would be required. Long-term urban residence still has not meant security of permanent occupancy.

Other towns

The situation of most East Sepiks in migrant settlements in Madang and Lae was similar. For example, for those from the Sepik River

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- 1 A prominent Sepik, Mindin (former *bosboi* of the District Office's labour line) had been able to marry a Tolai woman. Although his children could speak Kuanua, the Tolai language, and despite a Tolai mother they were still referred to as 'Sepiks'.
 - 2 The UHS showed that 59 per cent of the East Sepik men in wage employment were unskilled workers, mostly in government employment. For years Sepiks had been concentrated in the District Office's labour line and then the Town Council's labour force, but many lost their jobs from the latter with the cutback in government expenditure in late 1974.

living in the Karkar (or Nabasa Road) settlement in Madang, the overcrowded conditions meant that of the 93 households in the settlement 44 were to be moved by order of the NHC to Sisiak, a site-and-service scheme for self-help housing, some distance from the centre of the town (see also Bryant 1977:53). For many river artifact producers, the nearby Smugglers Inn tourist motel provided a regular source of income. Sisiak lacks easily accessible schools, stores or other urban amenities, and fares to the main centre of Madang are costly. There were similar disadvantages for other East Sepik migrant settlements on Bilbil village land. The plight of East Sepiks in the Buko settlement in Lae is illustrated by Gerrard Walikindi's account of conditions there (see the Appendix to this Chapter p. 300).

East Sepiks in Bulolo and Wau

The evidence so far presented has indicated that most urban East Sepiks have maintained close ties with their home villages in anticipation of returning there eventually. But one area where this general conclusion does not seem to apply is Bulolo-Wau. As noted in Chapters Four and Five the mining and later timber companies sought out River Sepiks to work as migrant labourers. The demands for a more skilled, stable labour force led the companies involved to encourage workers to become long-term residents. In early 1977, 54 per cent of those in the migrant settlements in Bulolo came from the East Sepik and they comprised 33 per cent of the Commonwealth New Guinea Timbers' workforce in Bulolo.

Far from becoming a ghost town after the mining operations closed down in the mid-1950s, Bulolo experienced a vigorous expansion of

the timber industry based on the processing of plywood and chopsticks. Employment in Bulolo increased by 34 per cent from 845 in September 1973 to 1136 in December 1977. In the migrant settlements 75 per cent of the men were employed in 1978 (Stephanie Fahey, personal communication 1979).

Fahey (1978) in a study of River Sepiks and Morobe migrants in Bulolo found that according to a number of economic, social and psychological indicators, the Sepiks showed a greater attachment to urban life. Compared with the Morobe migrants, the Sepiks had been resident in town longer, had better paid jobs, made very few return visits home and had become more deeply involved in the political and social activities of the town. Those not working were able to rely on support from those employed, particularly their working-age children. Other sources of income were informal sector activities such as the production and sale of carvings, black market beer sales, bottle collection and the sale of vegetables in the local market.

Nevertheless, few of the Sepiks surveyed expressed a wish to remain in town permanently (Fahey 1978:48). The dilemma facing a man on retirement after a long period of wage employment is illustrated by Gawi's experience (see Appendix to this Chapter pp.301-307). Originally from Kanganaman, one of the study villages on the Sepik River, he had been resident with his wife in Wau continuously from 1946. After 30 years of wage employment with one firm, the New Guinea Goldfields Ltd, he was compulsorily retired. Despite his years of employment and accumulated savings, he found it very difficult to continue living in Wau. But with even worse prospects at home on the river and children to educate, he seemed likely to become a permanent resident of Wau.

Many of the river people in Bulolo and Wau appear to have

joined the second group of urban residents - those with poor cash earning potential in their home villages who have become permanent proletarians.

Conclusion

The argument and supporting evidence presented in this chapter is not unique to Papua New Guinea. The contention that many, if not most, urban residents are likely to return home on or before retirement is supported by similar studies elsewhere in the Third World eg East Africa (Grillo 1973) and West Africa (Caldwell 1969). In an extensive survey of the literature on urban commitment in the Third World, J.M. Nelson (1976) has reached the same conclusion for Africa and Southeast Asia. Nelson attributed the desire to return to the home village at some point to the migrant's access to rural land holdings:

Heavy return migration is often associated with more or less guaranteed access to land. A migrant who owns enough land to support his family, or who has claim to communal land or to owned or rented land shared jointly with siblings or an extended family, has a more or less secure base on which to fall back if he must. Such conditions are common in much of Africa and South Asia but rare in Latin America. Indeed, in parts of Africa a man may keep his claim to a plot of communal land so long as he or his wife cultivates it but he cannot sell it. The land represents not only a modicum of security but also a non-convertible asset (J.M. Nelson 1976:736).

A similar situation with regard to rural land rights and access also appears applicable to an overwhelming majority of migrants in Papua New Guinea. The UHS found that 91 per cent of working-age men currently in town said that they had been able to grow enough food on their own land in their home area. Data from the Rural Survey carried out

in 50 villages in ten districts across the country, showed that 82.5 per cent of male absentees were said by the resident villagers to have clear, unchallenged land rights; 13.8 per cent were said to have land rights open to dispute; and only 3.7 per cent were considered to be without any land rights.¹ In the 14 villages from the East Sepik, resident villagers said that 94.2 per cent of all male absentees had clear, unchallenged land rights, 46 per cent were open to challenge and only 1.2 per cent were said to have no land rights.

Compared with the insecurity and uncertainties of urban residence, the rural peasant economy still provides a basic security through access to land. Most urban workers maintain a network of extra-town ties which links them socially and economically with their home. This chapter has argued that many employees regard urban residence as temporary because when they retire from their wage employment they intend to return to their rural homes. It is partly in preparation for this retirement that they maintain their networks of rural links, fulfilling important obligations, exchanging services, transferring wealth and so on. Perhaps less than 15 per cent do not maintain such links, though the intensity with which the ties are fostered may vary with stages in the individual's personal or family life-cycle.

Although these links fulfil the functions of providing long- and short-term social and economic security for workers at all status levels, they are important even to those urban employees in the high-status positions. The way in which they operate such rural-urban relationships reflects on their reputations. So urban conditions, such

1 The size of the male sample was 1605.

as land tenure insecurity, cheap employer-provided housing, high inter-town mobility for public servants and little or no post-retirement provisions, explain why many maintain rural links. It also seems that those who are wealthier and better-educated retain even closer ties with their homeplaces than less successful men. This is partly because they can afford the financial burden of such ties. It is also in the rural areas that their newly acquired status is more readily recognised as such rather than in the concentration of people of similar high status in the major towns.

For the East Sepiks as a group, the above generalisation is subject to greater qualification than for most migrants from other better-endowed rural areas. The river districts, Ambunti and Angoram, were heavily represented among the longer distance, out of work, urban migrants. Further confirmation of this trend towards permanent outmigration and the reasons for it are examined in the next chapter.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER SIX

GERRARD WALIKUNDI FROM KANGANAMAN VILLAGE (SEPIK RIVER) - now resident in Lae (Buko settlement)

Buko settlement on the Bumbu River is inhabited by a number of different ethnic groupings although there is a heavy proportion of Sepiks, especially those from the Sepik river. The settlement is subject to widespread flooding. Occupancy of the land is under dispute with the customary land owners.

I was at home during the war. After the war, I worked at the Catholic Mission at Kinjigini (near Maprik). I was married there and stayed there. Then I went to work at the Catholic Mission's plantation at Alexishafen. The fortnight system of payment of wages had just started [1963]. The pay was K10 a fortnight. While there, I heard of my brother-in-law's illness so I left for Lae. I first got work at the government auctions and stayed for 12 years. I have now lived in Lae for about 14 years altogether. During this time, I have never returned home for visits. But I will not stay in Lae permanently and hope to return home in a few years time. At the moment I still have children at school.

I was the first Sepik to come to the Bumbu area. There was no one else around. My house was the first in the area. By 1970, most of the people living here now had settled in.

About the land situation. There have been some disputes with the traditional landowners. Every house must pay K4 tax and K6 for the use of the land. There are fights within the settlement caused by young men getting drunk, starting fights and wantoks coming to their aid. But, apart from these sorts of incidents, there have not been other serious disturbances.

Some of the people in Lae from Kanganaman want to stay on in town. There is a better chance to get their children in a school here. Even though there is a school at Kapaïmari, they feel that there is not enough space there for their children. Also, at home there are few ways of earning money to pay for the school fees. There is no land for growing cash crops. So they want to stay on in town to educate their children with the little money they get.

In town, people find life very hard to live, especially for those without jobs. These people try to sell carvings and do other odd jobs for money. But carvings are only bought sometimes. They can sit and wait for hours on the footpaths in the centre of Lae without anything being bought. The beads are sold for 40 toea and

1 The Catholic Mission next to his home village, Kanganaman.

the other items sold at different prices. To sell these artifacts in one area, outside Burns Philp store, they have to pay K2 to form an association to sell their carvings.

Others from the village visit people living here and return home after a stay of some time. Many prefer to go to Wewak or Madang because it is closer. In the past, it was easier to get a boat from Angoram or Wewak to come to Lae, Madang or Rabaul. The fare then was about K10 to K20. It was not very much. Others made contracts with Bulolo Timber or New Guinea Gold at Wau. They were paid by their employers to come and work there.

In Bumbu settlement today, of those who come from the Ambunti area, large numbers are out of work. Only a few have jobs. Those without work depend on making and selling carvings and beads for their living.

GAWI FROM KANGANAMAN VILLAGE (SEPIK RIVER) - now resident in Wau.

The following are two separate interviews conducted some 15 months apart. The first was conducted in November 1976 in Lae.

Gawi looked about 65 years old. Having missed him in Wau, I met him at the New Guinea Goldfields (NGG) Trading Company's Lae depot. He was waiting for a large diesel truck to be loaded for a trip to Bulolo and Wau. His wife, from the same village of Kanganaman, had been interviewed earlier in Wau. The following interviews have been transcribed from notes and often the text consists of comments made in response to questions.

The second set of interviews took place in Wau in April 1978, in a Housing Commission house where he was living after he had been evicted by the company from his house several months before. Since his retirement, he had tried a number of ventures but had come back to casual employment for the company, driving a large cargo truck between Wau and Lae. But the company had refused (up to then) to give him back his former house.

During the war, I first fought for the Japanese and then went over to the Australians. I worked with a party of troops which was supplied by a flying boat on the Ramu River.¹ We were attacked by the Japanese and two Australians fled. The rest of us were captured, hung up and tortured.

After the war, I was recruited by Masta Moiny [?] in a recruiting ship called the *Weembla*. That was on 13 January 1946.² I was

1 Most probably refers to patrols by Australian commando units in the Ramu Valley in September 1943.

2 His claim to have started work for New Guinea Goldfields on 13 January 1946 is difficult to reconcile with the one year's work in Madang after the war. His wife claimed he retired from NGG on 6 November 1976 with 31 year's service. Presuming his retirement was back-dated to include leave, the January 1946 date appears correct.

bought with a knife and a tomahawk. We were only permitted to sign a contract for one year at this time and I went to Madang. After the year I returned home to Kanganaman and was then recruited to go to work in Wau. The Wau-Bulolo area had had a good reputation [*gutpela stasin*] before the war. Many men from the main river villages (Parambei, Yentchan, Kanganaman, Malingai) had gone to Bulolo before the war. The BGD [Bulolo Gold Dredging Company] in particular was a good employer to work for [*Kampani gutpela i lukautim ol boi*]. Myself and my wife were taken to the attestation centre at Angoram. I signed the contract on 13 January 1946. Single men were flown straight to Wau because labourers were needed urgently. The married men went by ship. When they arrived at Wau, there were already men working there. NGG [New Guinea Goldfields Limited] was my employer. My first job was to work on the electricity lines. This work was not safe because several men had died through electric shocks. So I became a driver.

There were three other married couples from Kanganaman and seven couples altogether in the group of people who started work at that time. The Company allowed us to bring our wives. My wife became the supervisor of the other women. They were given work cutting grass and bush to prepare for the building of the compounds. There had been married quarters before the war but then everything had been destroyed. Two houses were eventually built for the married couples. Before that they shared a hut built as a single men's quarters. Later, nine houses were built for the married couples. At the time, there were about 500 men working on the labour line.

Later I was given a house rent free. The electricity was also paid for by the company. Now I only have to pay the electricity bill which is K11 a month. The company has let me stay on in the house since I have retired but I hope to buy a European house when one becomes vacant. I now receive a pension payment every fortnight.

[Will you return home now you have retired?] I want to stay on in Wau for several more years so that my children can finish school here. I have made three visits home since 1946, the last one was in 1973 when I stayed there for a year. The company had given me a travel warrant every two years, but I only made three trips home, once by ship and twice by air.

I am afraid that if I set up a major *bisnis* in my home area, sorcery will be used against me. There were no opportunities to set up a transport *bisnis* like my present job. The most I could do perhaps was to buy a boat. There is a severe shortage of land. If I buy a trade store, I will stay on in Wau and my children can run it. When I was young I thought the village was a good place to live. Now I do not think so. At present I have two boys and one girl still in school. After they have started working, I might return home.¹

¹ He was quite uncertain about his retirement plans. His eldest daughter and wife (interviewed in Wau) were also unsure of future plans. All seemed to depend on the economic opportunities available in Wau, especially the chance to buy a trade store.

The other people from Kanganaman (six of them) stayed only one year in 1946. I had a good job as a driver so I stayed. Today there were two other families now in Wau from my home village. I had told them about the gold and that if they didn't drink and worked hard they could come. But I said I would not sponsor them, because I did not want to be responsible for them. If anything went wrong, such as getting ill or having an accident, I would suffer the consequences. There have been other visitors also. My wife's brother came to visit for three months and two old men from Malingai stayed six months, but I refused to pay their fares back home. Another relative of my wife's stayed for six months. We gave him food and K40 when he left. Many other Sepiks have stayed with me for shorter periods.

I often visit wantoks at Bulolo (men from Aibom, Chambri, Parambei and Malingai). There are seven or eight still living there now. They also visit me.

I started a PMV [Passenger Motor Vehicle] business in 1953 in addition to my job. I bought an ex-army vehicle and operated it from 1953 to 1957. One day the police officer-in-charge called me in and asked how much money I was making. I told him I was making £100 a week by working from after 4.30 pm to midnight or 1.00 am each working day and on the weekends charging five shillings for the trip to Bulolo. When the police officer heard this, he himself bought an old army truck and put on a police driver to carry passengers and kept the profits for himself.

In 1946, my pay was £10 a year of which £5 was kept as deferred pay.¹ When rations were no longer provided, my pay became £22/10/- (K45) a fortnight. Just before my retirement on 6 November 1976 my pay was K150 a fortnight clear. My work then was making three return-trips to Lae a week and it also involved overtime. Now as a casual driver, I am being paid K160 for two trips. I have asked the company to help me to buy a truck. But they said there was not enough business for a third truck on the route.

GAWI'S WIFE, ALSO FROM KANGANAMAN VILLAGE (SEPIK RIVER)

Gawi's wife was interviewed in Wau in November 1976.

Both Gawi and myself were at home when the war ended. After the war he went to Madang for a one-year contract. Immediately after the war, people could only sign a contract for a year. After his contract finished, he returned home. I had a baby daughter while he was away. Then the fares were paid by the company. There were many others, both married and single, who came with us. But after the two-year contract, they all returned home. Only our family stayed. Gawi finally retired from NGG on 6 November, 1976 after 31 years service.

¹ *Deferred pay was given to the contract labourer at his home subdistrict or patrol post after he had returned home.*

When he first started work, he was only paid 50 toea a month, the other 50 toea a month was kept back by the company for the workers until they returned home. At that time after the war, goods like axes, knives, clothes, plates, etc. were not very expensive. These things could be bought for 10 toea or 20 toea. After a while the workers were paid K10 a month as well as being issued with rations. Parents were given two tins of meat plus some biscuits while children were given one tin of meat each and a few biscuits.

When we arrived here from Wau there were many other people from the Sepik and Madang. But there was nobody from Morobe or local people to help with the cleaning up. After a while, people from the area nearby started to come and work for the company. Some of the workers were married and they came with their wives. When they arrived there was a shortage of houses and a room was occupied by one or two couples. Others who could not find rooms went and slept in the single men's quarters. Later timber was provided and they built houses for married couples.

Women sometimes helped with the cleaning of the area and were paid 50 toea and were given matches, soap, tobacco, etc. Gardens were not made at that time because the company handed out rations every Thursday. People lived off the rations.¹ We moved into the house we are now occupying in 1967. We were the first locals [Papuan New Guineans] to be given a European house in Wau. When many of the whites left, the locals who had been with the company for long periods were given the houses to live in. Some money is being taken out from Gawi's pension to pay for the house. We can stay on in the house as long as we want to, but if Gawi died, then we might not be able to use the house any longer.

Now that Gawi has retired, he has no job. We have many children and it is hard to pay their school fees. He pays for those in high school and I pay for those at school here in Wau. I have my own pigs and chickens to earn money for the school fees.

Of the 11 children, only three have visited the home village, the rest do not know the local language. They were brought up in town, so they like town life. They can go home, but there is not enough land to do *bisnis*. Floods sometimes spoil the crops that have been planted. There are few chances to do *bisnis* at home.

Gawi is trying to buy a trade store in Wau. But the store will cost about K10,000. He is waiting for someone, either in Lae or Wau, who owns a store to leave so he can buy the store. But at the moment he has a temporary job carrying cargo to the Highlands. He also wanted to start a trucking business by buying a large truck to carry orders from Lae to Bulolo and Wau or up to the Highlands. A European lady at Wau does not want him to take on this business because she feels that he is getting too old to drive a big truck with heavy loads. So she found him a temporary job while he waits for someone with a trade store to leave Wau or Lae. When that happens, Gawi will buy the store and go into business.

¹ Rations were provided until 1963.

SECOND INTERVIEW WITH GAWI AND HIS WIFE IN WAU, APRIL 1978

This time I could interview Gawi with his wife who took a major part in offering supporting comments to the substance of what her husband was saying. The interview was conducted in a small Housing Commission place in a new residential quarter of Wau.

I have worked for the Company for 33 years, now going into my 34th year. When I finished full-time work with the Company, I received K1560 long service pension and the Company said I could keep the house we were in. But a new manager came and told me I could only stay for three months and then I had to leave. I asked why another European man was given a house but not me. Mr Bill Len retired from the Company and he was given a house. The Company looked after him but it is throwing me out of my house.

When I retired from the Company, I went to work in the Highlands, driving a cattle truck. I did not have enough money for school fees for my children. So I decided I could not sit around doing nothing, I had to work a little to earn money to pay the school fees. They were K75 altogether, K25 for each child. Now while I was working in the Highlands, the Company told my family to move out. All my cargo was put out on the ground. The Company gave us no transport. I was very annoyed. When I saw the manager I was very angry. I asked the Company to give me transport to carry my cargo to a wantok's place. But the Company did not listen to me. One businessman sent his tractor to pick up my cargo. I was so angry with the Company. They had thrown out my family and we were without a house. They offered us a rubbish house. I went to the ADC [Assistant District Commissioner] here in Wau and he took me in his car to Bulolo where I put in an application for this house at the Housing Commission Office. After a five-month wait I was given a house. In the meantime we stayed in the rubbish house. At first they lost my application for a house but after a while I was given this house.

Up until the time of Independence [September 1975], I was working for the Company. Now they can throw us out like their rubbish. I worked well for them. When I returned the Company asked me to help them by driving for them. But they are still treating me like rubbish. I am so annoyed. I went to a Union man and asked him how it was that NGG could throw me out when others were in the Company's housing. But he could not help me. I had been a member of his Union for ten years. It was the Bulolo Timber Workers' Association. There is no Union in Wau now.

Lately my wife has been going to see the Company's housing person who is a woman. She said she could give us a house but we want our old house back. But she only offered to find us another house, for which we had to pay K10 a week. I went to talk to her. She told me to come back another day. I came back and asked why I could not have back our former house. I have many children. The house they offered me was too small. Our house we lived in before had six rooms altogether. This new house had three rooms for only K10 a week - the same rent as this Housing Commission house. NGG before did not collect

rent. We only had to pay for the light. We did not have to pay rent, we stayed there for nothing. Other men who retired from the Company were given housing.

On 13 October, 1976 I finished. I stayed around doing nothing for four weeks. Then school fees came up. I did not have enough money. I was asked by a European to continue driving the truck from Wau to Lae on casual rates. We thought of buying a trade store but I did not have enough money. Now if I get my old house back I will go back to work for the Company.

I thought of working a gold claim on Kaindi. I asked the Company for land but they refused me. I thought of buying a truck with a loan from the Development Bank. I could get a contract to carry cargo. I have the experience, I am a mechanic and driver. I have driven all kinds of motors even the big grader on the roads. But the Company were against the idea. I thought of getting a contract to carry cargo from Bulolo to Lae. I could carry building materials for the Housing Commission too. But I did not have enough money. I was worried about my children's school fees. When my children leave me, I can then go to the Development Bank. I have got about K2400 in the bank. It is very hard to put money in the bank with children in school.

The Company took K500 of my pension back. They lied to me and took it back. The Company wronged me. A clerk [accountant] from Australia came and checked and checked through all the books. He found out that the man-in-charge had stolen money. The Company had lost a lot of money. So they tried to get some money back. They took money back from me. I asked the man-in-charge:

Why have you done this? It is the same law for everyone. You gave a pay cheque to a European, Bill Len, who retired. You didn't take his money back. Why is it you took my money back?

He answered that I could well afford it. To this I said bullshit. All those men who work for the government such as *bosboi*, *wokboi* and others who do not have important jobs, when they retire they are given money!

[How many from NGG have retired?] Before, one man from Buang [Morobe Province] - when he retired, the Company gave him a house. Then when he died, the Company sent his body back to be buried in his village. To others, the Company gave land at Kiandi to work gold from. The Company gave land to one man from Aitape. They earned big money from goldmining on their own ground. It is hard work but they were earning, I think, about K10,000 or K11,000 or K12,000 a year. That is big money. But I cannot earn it. The Company only gave ground to men from the Waria.¹ They would not give any ground to me. I asked them. But they said they had no ground!

¹ The Waria River is close to Wau. The Company apparently only gave ground to local people, probably to offset demands for compensation for the extensive land alienation in the area.

I am very worried about my situation. I have no land in Wau. I don't think I want to stay in this place. I had another idea of going to the Oil Palm at Kimbe. But I put that idea aside. Then I decided to go to the Development Bank to get a loan to carry timber for CNGT [Commonwealth New Guinea Timber Ltd] from Bulolo. They want the native people to carry the cargo. I thought of buying a truck. I put my name down. I could carry cargo from Lae on the way back. There is a new sawmilling company in Wau. They asked me to leave NGG and to come and work for them on a contract basis with my own truck.

I have another worry. It is about trying to get some land in Wau to build a house and trade store. But I have written to the Lands Department in Moresby. But the government has not replied. I heard them say on the radio that people can be given land in town. If a man has finished his work and he wants to stay in town, he can start a business. I heard this idea from the government on the radio. I talked it over with some men in Lae. We filled in application forms and sent them to Port Moresby. But I have heard nothing from them. They have misled me. I went to their office and they said: 'Papa, your paper has not yet come. You wait, Papa. We will find out and bring it to you.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EXTENT OF A CONTINUING DEPENDENCE ON THE RURAL ECONOMY:
A CASE STUDY OF TWO AREAS IN THE EAST SEPIK PROVINCE

Although the MLS as a legislative, political and social institution no longer exists, its legacy in the form of a set of centrifugal and centripetal forces revolving around the rural peasant economy, still sustains the process of circular migration over a migrant's life cycle. The need of most urban residents to maintain a short-term *dual dependence* has gone with the recent changes in economic, social and political conditions. But there is still a need as it was argued in Chapter Six, for even the urban dweller in secure wage employment to maintain a longer term dependence on the rural economy which will manifest itself by most migrants eventually returning home on, or before, retirement.

This chapter analyses, from the village end, the extent of the continuing dependence of both rural non-village and urban migrants on the rural economy. In particular it looks at the contrast in migration patterns between two areas in the East Sepik, and attempts to explain why the Pagwi villagers on the Sepik River are moving away from an interdependent relationship between the home village and the wage economy towards permanent outmigration, while the Yangoru villagers are not.

The level of outmigration from different parts of the East Sepik Province and the selection of the study villages

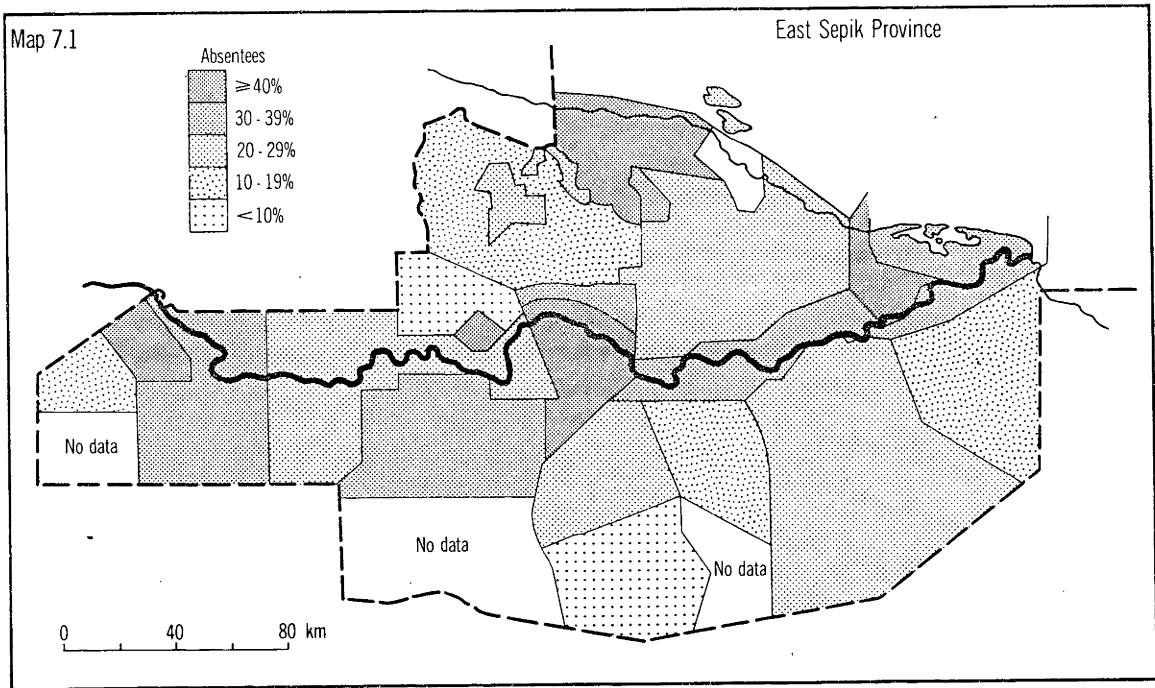
Using village census data collected by administration field

officers between 1968 and 1971, Map 7.1 provides data on the census divisions of high absenteeism in the East Sepik Province¹. Over 9 per cent of adult males were absent from the village, but resident in the home province². Adult men resident outside the home province accounted for another 17 per cent, thus producing a total adult male absentee level of about 27 per cent. The level of absenteeism varied considerably between the four districts within the province. Ambunti District had 34 per cent of its adult males absent, Wewak District 33 per cent, Angoram 27 per cent and Maprik 23 per cent. Between individual census divisions the variation in the level of absenteeism was considerable. Half the adult men of the Main River CD in Ambunti District were absent, and 41 per cent of those from Chambri Lakes CD in the same district. Between 44 and 45 per cent of adult men were absent from Kaboibus, Kumun and Nindepolye CDs in the Yangoru District, with a similar proportion absent from But-Boiken CD, in the coastal region north of Wewak.

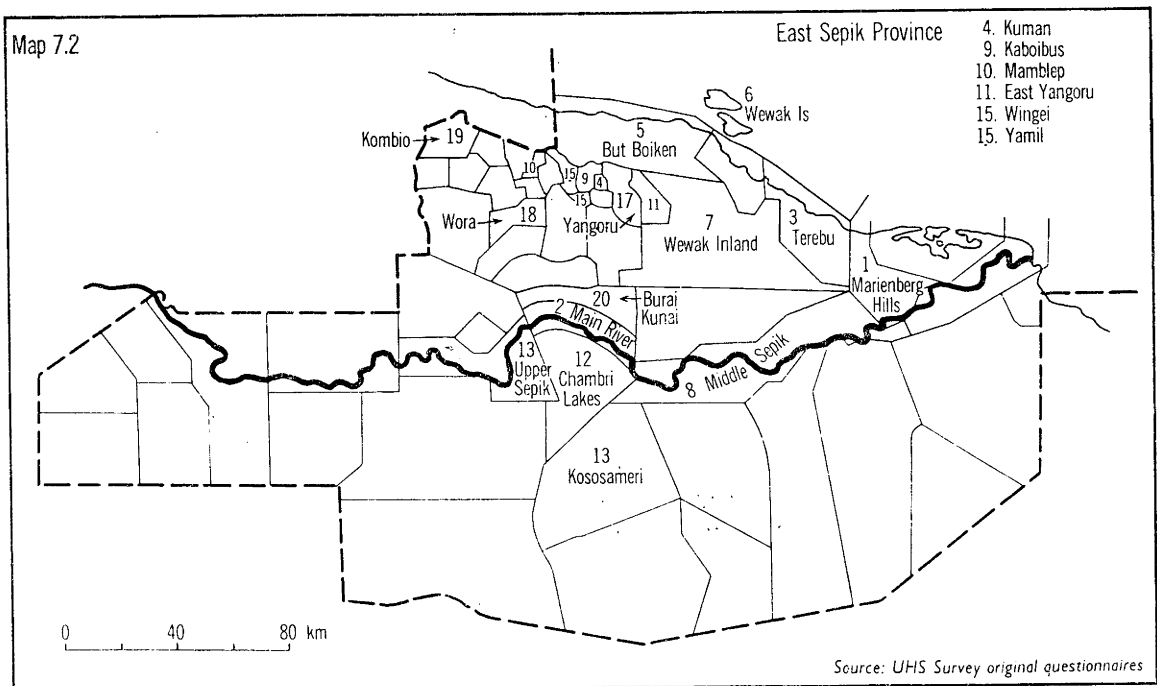
In selecting villages for a more intensive investigation of these high levels of outmigration, data on the village of origin of

1 Reservations need to be expressed about the accuracy of the data, especially the absentee figures. The inaccuracies are greatest for individual villages but it is assumed that the more aggregate data at census division level may reflect a figure closer to reality. Only data up to 1971 can be used in the form presented here because after that date the breakdown was for those absent inside their electorate and those absent outside. Source of data: Seiler (nd) and Papua New Guinea Bureau of Statistics computer printout of village census data. The limitations of the data are discussed in Seiler (1972:212).

2 An absentee was defined as someone not resident in the village but belonging to the village. It did not include short visits out of the village, nor married women born in the village who were not considered to belong to the husband's village.



Adult male workers absent from villages (as % of total adult males) Inside & outside home province by census divisions (circa 1969 - 1971)



Areas of high urban outmigration ranked according to urban migrants as a proportion of the census division of origins total population.

East Sepik urban migrants interviewed in the UHS were used. The census divisions contributing high proportions of urban migrants were ranked by the ratio of the number of urban households against the population of the area¹ (see Map 7.2). The similarities between the village census data and the data from the UHS are marked. The Sepik River villages are well represented amongst East Sepik urban residents, with the inland foothills and the area north of Wewak (But-Boiken) also important sources of urban migrants. The choice of study villages from areas of high outmigration could therefore be narrowed down to the above three locations. Of the three, the But-Boiken area was excluded because of the likely overriding effect of its proximity and easy access to Wewak town. This left the Yangoru area, midway between Maprik and Wewak, and the Main River area near Pagwi.

The final choice of individual villages in the two areas was dictated by the available knowledge of their location in relation to factors thought to be likely to influence outmigration. Such factors are access to schools, roads and cash cropping opportunities². It was hoped to select from within an area of high outmigration, villages with high and low absentee levels and with differential access to some of the above-named factors. A major constraint on the choice of villages was the availability of a tertiary student from one of the villages in the area who could conduct interviews. However, sufficient students

1 Other census divisions with a high level of absenteeism were Yangoru, East Yangoru, Middle Sepik, Lower Sepik, Sepik May, Samsai, Burui-Kunai, Central May. All areas are either in the vicinity of the Sepik River or in the Yangoru foothills.

2 Area studies by local field staff were consulted and additional information was provided by University students from the two areas.

from the East Sepik applied to allow a variety of villages to be selected. Fifteen villages were originally surveyed, but one village on the Sepik River was excluded from the analysis because of incomplete and inaccurate data¹.

The ten villages selected in the Yangoru Subdistrict are within a range of 83 to 100 kilometres from Wewak, on or near the Sepik Highway. They are located within the census divisions of Yangoru (Kwagwi, Simbomie, Mambuk and Siniangu) Kumun (Kumun village and Windjuān) Kaboibus (Kaboibus villages #1 and #2) Wingei (Wingei #2) and Nindepolye (Balmo) (see Map 7.3). The Sepik River study villages are only accessible by boat from Pagwi or Ambunti². Pagwi is 160 kilometres by road from Wewak. The census divisions in which the study villages are located are the Upper Sepik (Avatip) Main River (Kanganaman and Tegawi) and the Chambri Lakes (Indingai)³.

A description of the different patterns of outmigration from the two study areas

As the Appendix to Chapter Three showed and as shown by the data presented in a different format in Table 7.1, the patterns of outmigration in the two study areas are substantially different. Before analysing why they differ, the two diverging patterns are described.

-
- 1 The interviewer was the only student not working in his own village amongst those surveyed on the river. In a village of very high outmigration (Malingai) he appears to have missed whole households which were absent.
 - 2 Except for Avatip, the study villages on the river are in the Pagwi Subdistrict.
 - 3 The village survey in Indingai was conducted under the supervision of Deborah Gewertz, an anthropologist resident during 1974 and early 1975 (see Gewertz 1977a).

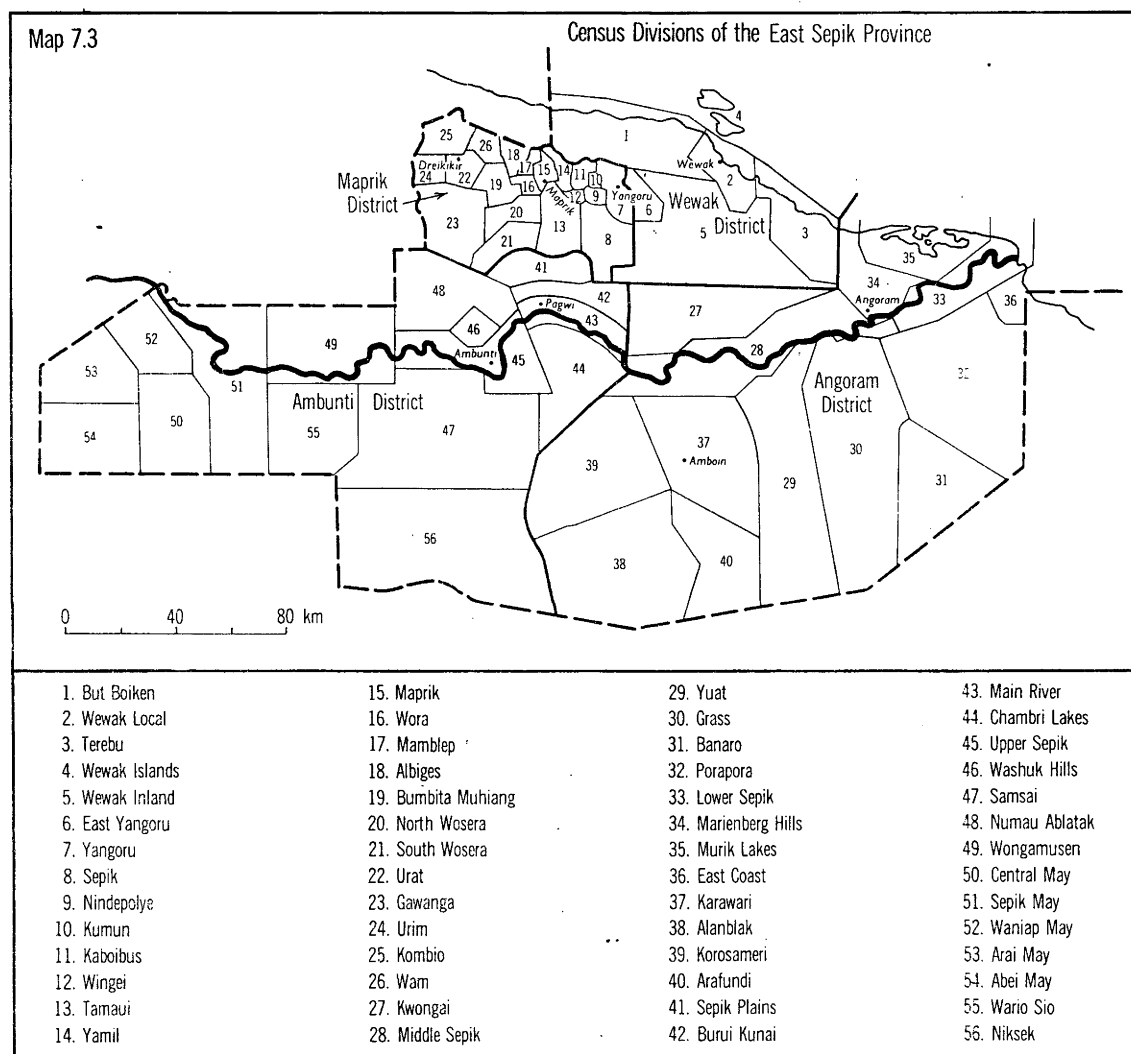


Table 7.1

Migrant status of adult male and female populations (15 years and over) for the two study areas (per cent)¹

	Never 'migrant'	Returned- 'migrant'	Absentee	Total	(n)
<u>Males</u>					
Yangoru	24.8	38.6	36.6	100	(892)
Pagwi	21.2	26.6	52.2	100	(539)
<u>Females</u>					
Yangoru	66.5	17.6	15.9	100	(731)
Pagwi	53.2	16.3	30.5	100	(479)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

Although the proportion of men who have been or are migrants (75.2 per cent and 78.8 per cent respectively) is about the same in each area, the Pagwi villages have a much lower level of male return-migration. As a result, the current level of absenteeism is some 15.6 per cent greater for the Pagwi villages. The different pattern of outmigration is also reflected in the differential involvement of women in migration. Fewer women have ever migrated from the Yangoru villages (33.5 per cent

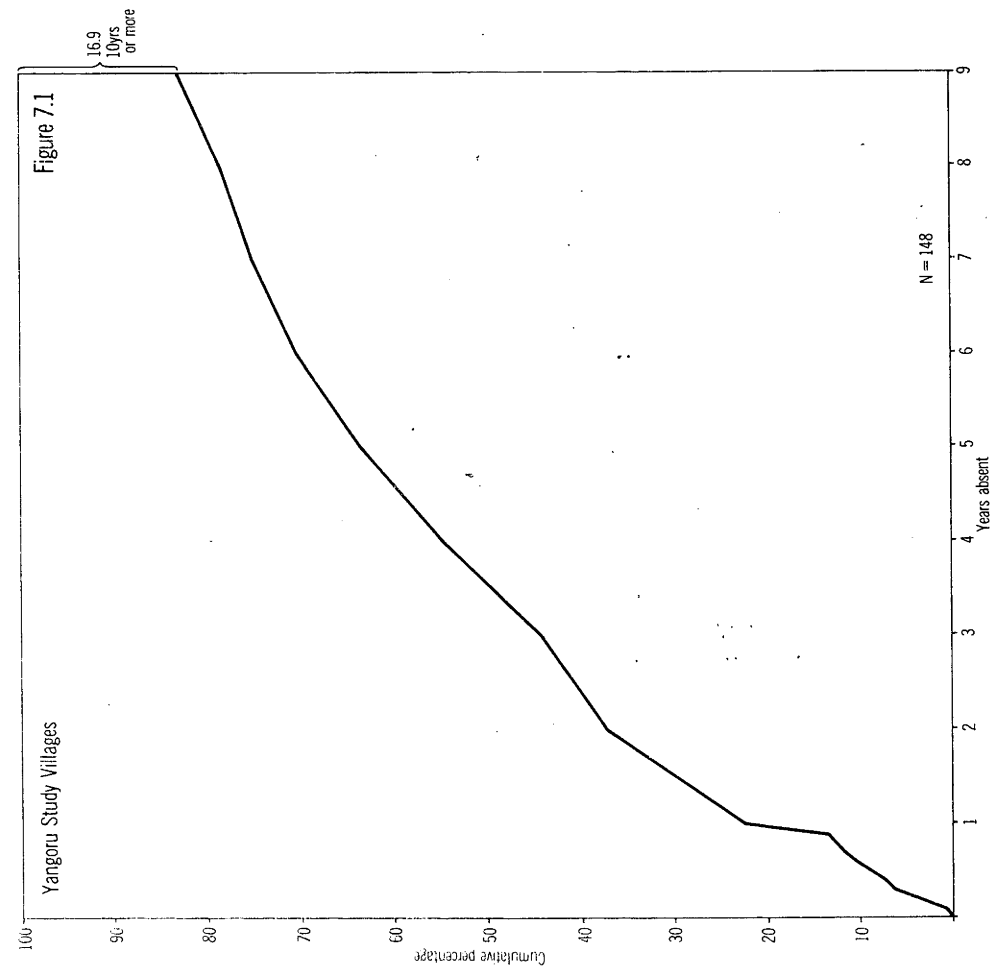
1 'Migrant' refers to those absent for more than a month outside the rural-village sector except where absent for medical treatment. Those present in the village on a visit at the time of the survey but normally resident elsewhere were considered as current 'migrants'.

compared with 46.8 per cent from the Pagwi villages) and the proportion of Yangoru women currently absent was only half that of the Pagwi women. The different proportions of women absent is reflected in the more evenly balanced sex ratio of the Pagwi absentees (193 males to 100 females compared with 283 males to 100 females from Yangoru).

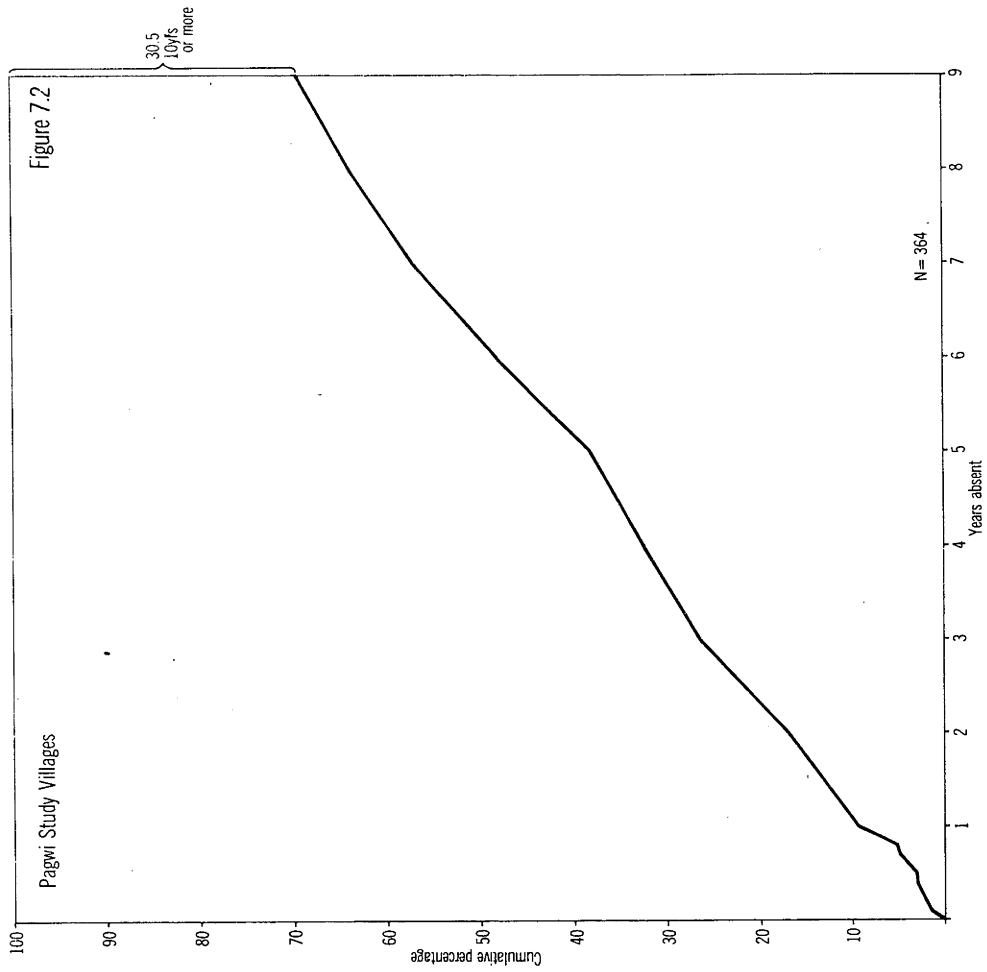
Other data point to longer periods of absence by the Pagwi migrants. Of those men currently absent from the Pagwi villages, 41.4 per cent have been away for ten years or more, while only 29.8 per cent have been absent from the Yangoru villages for the equivalent period (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2). The average length of time absent for those men from the Pagwi villages who migrated within the ten years previous to the survey is 4.7 years, compared with only 3.3 years for those men from the Yangoru villages. Reflecting these trends, 9 per cent of the men absent from the Pagwi villages have lived away from their village of origin since birth, compared with only 5.5 per cent of the men absent from the Yangoru villages. The greatest differences in the levels of absenteeism occur in the three youngest age groups. In the youngest male age group (15-24 years), just over three-quarters are migrants from the river study villages, compared with only 56 per cent of the young men who are migrants from the foothills study villages¹.

Although a pattern of return-migration over a life cycle is

1 Some in the youngest age grouping may still be too young to migrate. In reply to a question on why people had not migrated, 10 per cent of the males 15-24 age group in Yangoru were said to be still too young to migrate while only 3 per cent were similarly labelled in the Pagwi villages. For the women it was 18 per cent in Yangoru and 10 per cent in Pagwi. But what constitutes 'too young to migrate' may also reflect different local attitudes to outmigration and its necessity.



Cumulative frequency of period of time absent from the home village. Males returned & currently absent migrants.



Cumulative frequency of period of time absent from the home village. Males returned & currently absent migrants.

evident in both areas, it was not as marked amongst the Pagwi villages¹. Table 7.2 reproduced from the Appendix to Chapter Three (p.111) demonstrates how the proportion of male returned-migrants from the Pagwi villages in each age group is much lower. The greatest difference is in the 35 to 44 age group where 65.3 per cent of the Yangoru men have returned, but only 42.1 per cent of the Pagwi men have done so. Among the returned-migrant women, the picture is similar.

Three of the study villages on the river in particular (Tegawi, Kanganaman and Indingai) display all the characteristics of high and prolonged absenteeism. Tegawi has 68 per cent of adult men and 42 per cent of adult women absent (with 87 per cent of the men in the youngest group away). Of all the men who have ever migrated from Tegawi, only 30 per cent have returned. By comparison, 59 per cent of the adult men

1 The above data tend to give the impression that migration is a once-only event. This is not so. The following table gives the total number of moves for the migrant population. The greater number of moves by the Pagwi women is due to their frequent market visits to sell fish (see Gewertz 1977b).

	<u>Number of migrations</u>					
	Mean			Standard deviation		
	Male	(n)	Female	(n)	Male	Female
Yangoru	1.96	(595)	1.32	(228)	1.24	0.70
Pagwi	1.87	(409)	1.97	(214)	1.53	1.73

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

Table 7.2

Returned-migrants as a percentage of total migrants in the two sets of study villages

Age	Male	(n)	Female	(n)
<u>Pagwi villages</u>				
15-24	14.8	(142)	25.3	(79)
25-34	28.6	(105)	32.1	(53)
35-44	42.1	(107)	35.0	(60)
45-54	63.3	(49)	52.4	(21)
55+	77.3	(22)	81.8	(11)
<u>Total</u>	33.9	(425)	34.8	(224)
<u>Yangoru villages</u>				
15-24	23.3	(210)	51.7	(89)
25-34	43.7	(171)	43.4	(83)
35-44	65.3	(144)	64.2	(53)
45-54	84.2	(120)	64.3	(14)
55+	92.0	(25)	71.4	(7)
<u>Total</u>	51.6	(670)	52.8	(246)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

and 33 per cent of the adult women are absent from Indingai, and the respective proportions absent from Kanganaman are 51 per cent and 34 per cent. Only 26 per cent of the adult men who migrated from Kanganaman had returned, and 39 per cent of Indingai's male migrants had returned. The level of absenteeism from Avatip is lower (42 per cent of the men and 21 per cent of the women), and a higher proportion of male migrants (43 per cent) have returned to the village. Avatip's lower level of outmigration and higher return-migration reflects its better resource base compared with the other river villages. Its migration

pattern and resource base makes it more akin to the Yangoru villages.

Among the inland foothill study villages, there are those with a higher level of absenteeism alongside those with a more moderate level. The villages of Kwagwi, Simbomie and Kaboibus #2 have proportions of absentee males between 55 and 48 per cent, (with from 26 to 13 per cent of the women currently absent) and levels of return-migration from 47 to 35 per cent for the male migrants. The remaining Yangoru study villages have moderate levels of absenteeism, ranging from 22 per cent to 37 per cent, with the proportion of women absent ranging from 19 to 7 per cent, and a high level of male return-migration (between 62 and 49 per cent)¹.

From these patterns of migration, it appears that some villages even within areas with high absentee levels, are still capable of drawing migrants back, while others are less so. In general, the Yangoru study villages show stronger indications that circular migration continues as the predominant pattern. For the river villages, and for three of them in particular, the tendency to return home in the shorter term is not present and there are indications that outmigration may become permanent. In the Yangoru villages the *dual dependence* in varying degrees remains the most common way of interacting with the introduced economy, but in the river villages it appears that the mode of interaction is one of long-term or perhaps permanent participation in the wage economy. To understand better the factors behind the different

1 The discussion of the individual villages was greatly aided by the tables in Clunies Ross 1977:4,14.

patterns of outmigration, it is necessary to look at the physical setting of the two study areas, to assess the possibilities of a viable livelihood for villagers in each.

The physical setting

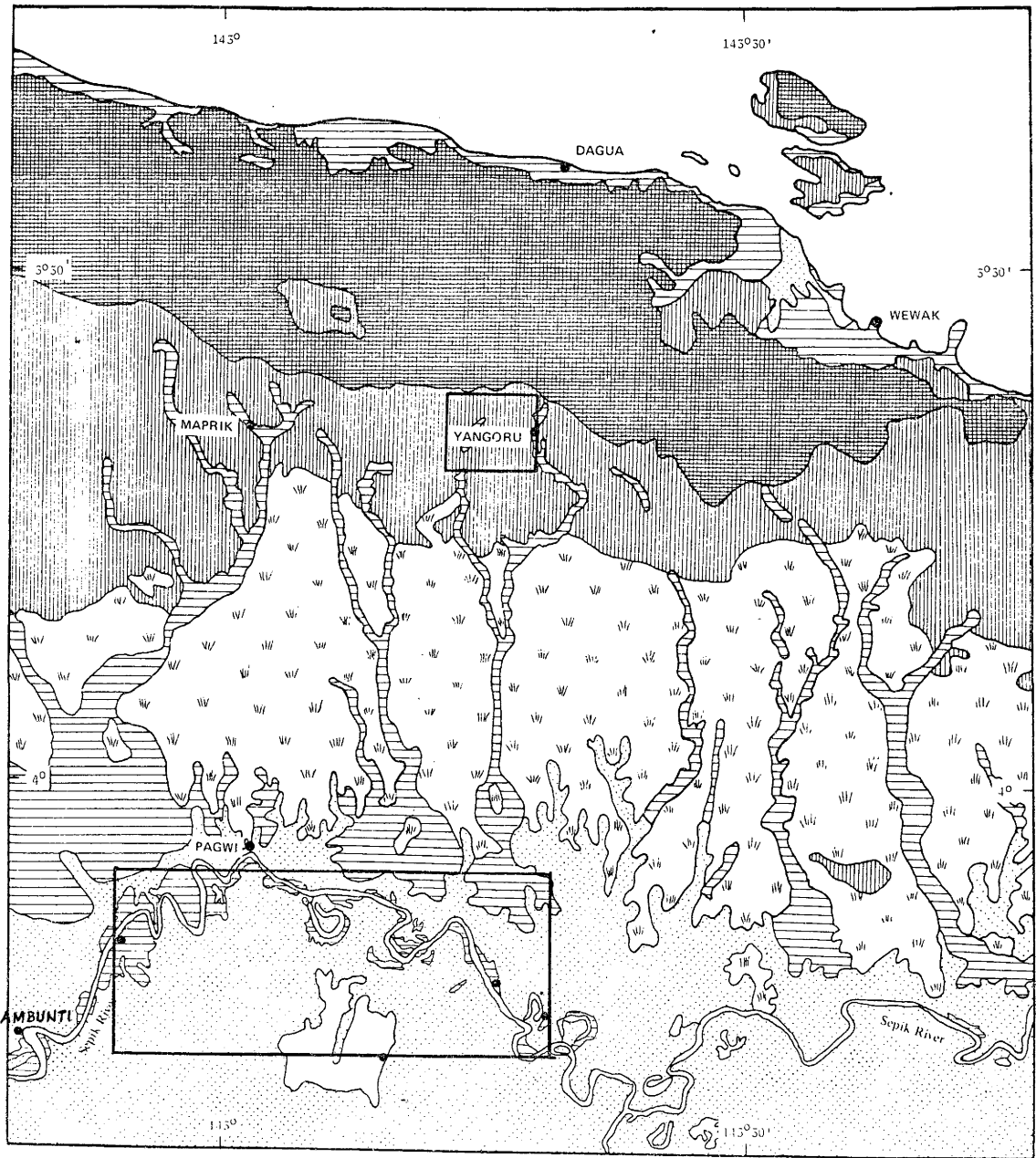
Five environmental zones which have a broad similarity of land forms, soils and vegetation, have been identified by the CSIRO's Division of Land Research (CSIRO 1968:9) (see Map 7.4). These are, from north to south, the forested alluvial coastal plains; the forested mountains which extend across the northern part of the province; the grass-covered foothills where the Yangoru study villages are located; the rolling to flat grassed plains through which a number of tributaries flow to the Sepik River; and the sago, grass forest and mangrove swamps which form the most extensive ecological zone in the province. Forested alluvial plains also occur along the tributaries of the Sepik River. The river villages have access, in varying degrees, to patches of alluvial soil but periodic flooding creates drainage problems.






Land-use capability and population density

The overall population density in the province is 5.7 persons per km². The population densities of the two study areas are, however, much higher (see Map 7.5). The overall population density of the Yangoru area (comprising the five census divisions of Kaboibus, Nindepolye, Wingei, Kumun and Yangoru) using population figures from

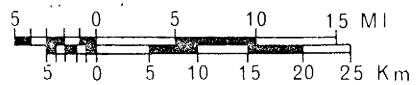
Map 7.4

LAND SYSTEMS in the Wewak-Maprik area

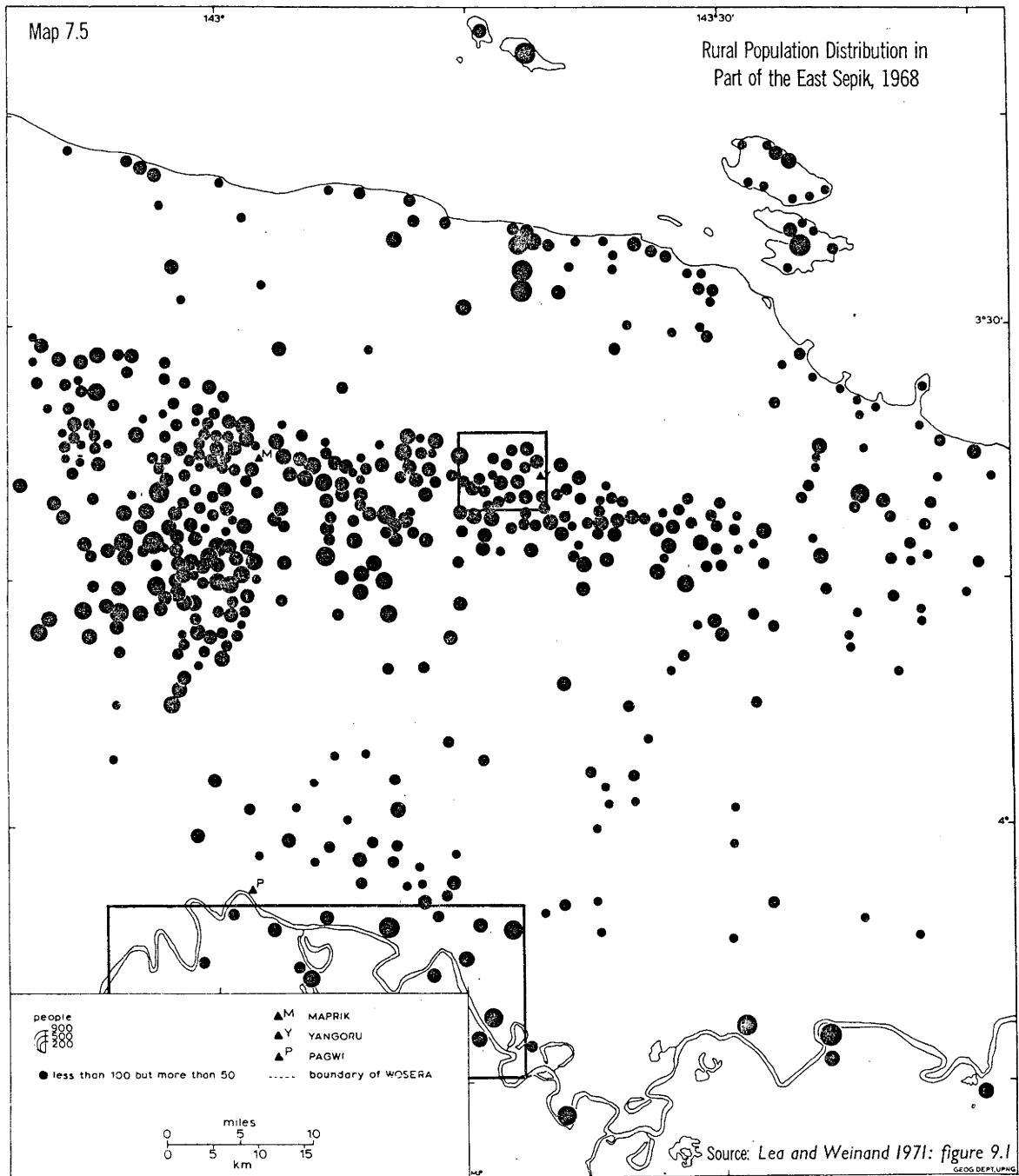


-  1. Forested Mountains
-  2. Forested and Grass Covered Hills - (Foothill Zone)
-  3. Flat Grass Plains
-  4. Forested Alluvial Plains
-  5. Sage, Grass, Forest and Mangrove Swamps

• Location of Pagwi study villages



SOURCE: C.S.I.R.O. (1968), (1972), LEA and WEINAND (1971)



the 1973 Village Directory was 47.5 persons per km² compared with 26.4 persons per km² for the Maprik District as a whole. There were wide variations in population density between the census divisions in which the study villages were situated.

Table 7.3

Population densities for specified census divisions

	Area ¹ (km ²)	Population per (km ²)	Area per head (ha)
Kaboibus	59.6	60.4	1.60
Nindepolye	50.2	48.2	2.02
Wingei	16.1	129.2	0.74
Kumun	34.2	44.4	2.19
Yangoru	210.3	38.0	2.62
	370.4	47.5	2.06

1 Seiler (1972:40) using a planimeter on a district map (scale 1:63,360), has calculated quite different areas for the five census divisions compared with the 1973 village directory. As his figures are similar to those used by the East Sepik Agricultural Development Project's Report (ADB 1976), I have used his calculations.

Source: Seiler 1972; PNG Village Directory

The Maprik Intensive Agricultural Survey in 1962¹ estimated that 0.8 hectares of good arable land was required to maintain an adequate level of subsistence based on yams and taros. Using this criterion, many parts of the Yangoru area are reaching a critical stage

1 The survey was carried out by the Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics.

of population pressure. Assuming that all the land is good arable land, the critical level appears to have been exceeded in the Wingei Census Division. One indication of population pressure is that fallow periods in many of the study villages were said by village informants to be as low as four years compared with six to ten years in the immediate post-war period.

In the river villages, the ratio of arable land per head of population is not an appropriate index of population pressure because of reliance on fish and sago as staples. The villages are situated in unstable alluvial plains with frequent flooding and impeded drainage. The narrow levees permit only small gardens which are often ruined by flooding before their crops can be harvested. This creates great pressure on scarce agricultural resources and points to a very vulnerable subsistence base.

Clearly, high population density is one of the important factors explaining the high absentee levels in both areas, with the very high man-land ratios on the river, in particular, contributing a great deal to the higher absentee levels from those villages¹. But the relationship between the two factors is not a simple or direct one for all areas in the East Sepik. The Wingei CD has consistently recorded a lower level of absenteeism over the years which is confirmed by the village of Wingei #2's low level of outmigration, yet of all the

1 A causal relationship between the woman-dominated hunter-gatherer system of subsistence production among the Iatmul and Chambri people of the river and a propensity for high levels of male outmigration has been noted in Chapter Five.

Yangoru census divisions it appears to be under the most severe land pressure¹. On the other hand, amongst the river villages the better position of Avatip, which has access to land suitable for coffee-growing, is reflected in the lower level of outmigration and higher rate of return movement. The remaining three villages with their high level of outmigration and low level of returns have very little cultivable land.

The relationship between land availability and outmigration is confirmed by the assessment of a former Assistant District Commissioner for Ambunti District, L.W. Bragge:

... the overall reason for high outward migration is lack of opportunity on the river ... The land disputes on the river are more intense than anywhere else I have served. Hatred of one's neighbours over land trouble is a real thing on the river and could be an important reason for moves to the town (L.W. Bragge, personal communication:1974).

In his view there was particularly severe pressure on land in the Main River area (which includes Kanganaman and Tegawi), leading to strong feelings and extended arguments about land matters (which included water and swamp rights).

1 The lack of a direct relationship between population pressure and outmigration is further confirmed by a comparison between the Yangoru and Wosera areas. The five census divisions from Yangoru in which the study villages are located have a population density of 48.5 persons per km² (well above the district-wide figure of 25.5 persons per km²). The level of absenteeism is also well above the district's mean (40.5 per cent compared with 23.1 per cent). But the North Wosera population density is 72 persons per km², and yet has only an absentee level barely above the district mean (24.5 per cent). The level of absenteeism in the other census divisions of high population density ratios, whether merely absent inside the province or total absenteeism, is not notably above the province's average (the Maprik Census Division was in fact considerably below the average). Harris has argued that in the case of parts of the Chimbu Province low levels of effective land per head may encourage people to stay at home to protect their land rights (Harris 1978:5).

The basis of a continuing dependence on the peasant economy

The ultimate security of land, and the subsistence livelihood that goes with it in a peasant economy, provides a strong inducement for migrants eventually to return home. As in much of Africa and South Asia, 'heavy return migration is often associated with more or less guaranteed access to land' (Nelson 1976:736). The same guaranteed access, or at least rights to land, applied in the study villages. Most migrants were able to retain their rights to village land. Very few migrants can therefore be regarded as dispossessed of an economic base in the peasant economy, although long-term absentees may have trouble regaining access to land which is being currently used by others in the village.

Resident villagers were asked about the land rights of those absent. The responses demonstrate that very few current male migrants were without clear unchallenged land rights. The position of women reflected the patrilineal system of inheritance and differed somewhat from village to village. Seventy five per cent of the women migrants from Kanganaman were said to have no land rights (see Table 7.4).

In the Yangoru area village informants claimed that an individual male has no exclusive rights to land unless he is the only son of his father. Village land is divided between clans in the form of irregularly shaped plots, unequal in size. Control over the clan land is divided among households and is exercised by the eldest active male in the family who has to come to some sort of agreement with all the members of the family on access to that land. Flexibility is a main feature of the arrangements. Despite a highly unequal distribution of land between villages and families, *usufructuary* rights are given to

Table 7.4

Land rights status of current migrants (per cent)

	Clear unchallenged	Open to dispute	No land rights	Total	(n)
(Males)					
Yangoru	92.0	7.7	0.3	100	(325)
Pagwi	97.0	1.0	2.0	100	(280)
(Females)					
Yangoru	64.0	17.0	19.0	100	(112)
Pagwi	51.0	1.0	48.0	100	(146)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

neighbouring men from a nearby village if they marry a woman whose natal village has more available land, though some form of exchange of shell money or other traditional valuables is required. So in a sense, a family can make gardens in the village of either the husband or the wife wherever land is available. These are *usufruct* rights only and cover short-term subsistence production (including sago and fishing rights). They exclude perennial tree crops such as coconuts, coffee or cocoa.

In Wingei #2 village, located in an area of intense land pressure, a family can gain permission to use another clan's land for six months only and then is required to ask for permission again. Land rights are reinforced through regular pig exchanges, but there was likely to be trouble over access to land if the exchange obligations

lapsed. Although among the older absentee migrants, who are likely to have little involvement in traditional exchanges, there was no marked tendency for them to have more problems over rights to land. Those with doubtful or no land rights were equally represented in each age group.

The extent of the continuing dependence

Many migrants still feel the need to maintain a measure of dependence on the rural economy. One key indicator of this is the tendency of village households to allow only non-essential members of the basic production unit to be absentees, so that other members of the household can act as guarantors of subsistence production in the peasant economy. The demographic structure of the study villages in Yangoru, in particular, point to this. The tendency for women to remain in the village is illustrated by a comparison of the sex ratios for each age group of residents and migrants (Table 7.5). The tendency towards a high male-to-female ratio among the absentees in the Pagwi villages is not so marked, confirming the earlier picture of a more family-oriented pattern of migration from the river villages.

The ratios of both the residents and the absentees in the younger age groups demonstrate the unbalanced nature of the village population, with women heavily over-represented in the resident population and men over-represented amongst absentees. Despite an overall sex ratio in favour of adult males in the total population (the male-to-female ratios are 122 and 111 males per 100 females in the 15 years and

Table 7.5

Sex ratio of the survey village populations for residents
and absentees (males per 100 females)

YANGORU VILLAGES:			PAGWI VILLAGES:		
Age	<u>Migrant Status</u>		Resident	<u>Migrant Status</u>	
	Resident	Absent		Absent	
15-24	74	366 (309) ⁺	49	205 (259) ⁺	
25-34	92	202 (221) ⁺	76	206 (186) ⁺	
35-44	75	263	70	159	
45-54	126	380	83	180	
55 +	135	*	131	*	
Total	92	279	76	192	

+ Sex ratios for those not attending school in the year of the survey.

* Too few observations.

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

over population of the Yangoru and Pagwi villages respectively)¹ it was only in the oldest age groupings among the residents that the men outnumbered the women.

Confirming the continuing tendency for migrants to be unaccompanied males, the following table shows that there is a lower proportion of married male migrants in each age group compared with the marital status of the resident men. Those attending school in the

1 The overall ratio for the East Sepik Province according to the 1971 Census was 108:100. Lea and Lewis (1975) have discussed reasons for the high masculinity in Papua New Guinea.

year of the survey are excluded from Table 7.6. This omits a likely bias toward single male migrants in the youngest age group.

Table 7.6

Proportion of men married for each age group by migrant status (those attending school in 1974 excluded)

Age	Migrant Status			
	Resident	(n)	Absent	(n)
Yangoru				
15-24	17.1	(105)	16.7	(102)
25-34	90.5	(105)	62.4	(93)
35-44	86.9	(122)	63.3	(49)
45-54	84.1	(145)	79.0	(19)
55 +	69.7	(66)	*	(2)
Total	71.3	(543)	46.0	(265)
<u>Pagwi</u>				
15-24	12.1	(33)	21.3	(75)
25-34	75.7	(37)	58.8	(68)
35-44	90.1	(66)	74.2	(62)
45-54	88.7	(62)	94.4	(18)
55 +	69.1	(55)	80.0	(5)
Total	73.1	(253)	54.0	(228)

*

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

Although a number of migrants are now able to contemplate having a wife or family accompany them while they are away, not all migrants are able to do so. The tendency for men to continue to migrate unaccompanied is more marked in the Yangoru villages where circular migration is a more established pattern.

Amongst the longer term absentees of the Pagwi villages, the proportions of married men, with the exception of the 25 to 34 age group, are notably higher in each age group compared with the Yangoru men. Of all those men who have migrated, the Pagwi villages have more current absentees who are married (54 per cent compared with 31 per cent from the Yangoru villages).

Finally, the continuing need for migrants to preserve the subsistence base and reproduction of the family in the peasant economy is also evident in the propensity of key members of a village household such as the male head of the household and his wife, to remain at home, while those in less important positions in the household migrate.

Mitchell (1969), in an article on circular labour migration in southern Africa, has commented on the probability of a man migrating depending partly on the positions he holds and the roles he plays in the rural social system. In particular, Mitchell noted evidence showing that the responsibilities of the head of a family militated against him migrating. The same tendency is evident in Table 7.7. Only 27 per cent of the household heads in the younger age group are currently absent while 57 per cent of those classified as dependents (mostly brothers, sisters, sons or daughters) are absent. Only 12 per cent of household heads among the older age group are absent compared with 39 per cent of dependents absent in the same age group. Most household heads are returned migrants. The wife of the household head, however, is likely to have never migrated. She, of all members of the household, was the least likely to be currently absent.

From these data, we can infer that men migrate while they have minimal responsibilities at home and return there to marry and set up a rural household. Wives are not likely to migrate, or if they do, they are likely to return home to become the lynchpin of the rural household. This strategy therefore encourages those dependents within the household to attempt to acquire a cash income to support the household through employment in the wage economy.

The data in Table 7.7 point to a likely strategy for a number of rural households, but other data show it is not applicable for all households. The resource differences between the foothill (Yangoru) and river (Pagwi) villages are likely to account for a number of degrees of involvement in this strategy of the 'straddled' peasant household. Other evidence suggests that the wealthier households within the village are more likely to participate in this strategy. As well, the level of educational attainment of the dependent members of the household will also increase the chances of becoming a straddled household. There is a stronger tendency for the older heads of household from the Pagwi villages to be absent. This is consistent with the family oriented permanent outmigration from the river villages, noted earlier.

Rural-urban contact

Seventy-three per cent of absentees maintained some form of contact with the home village. But the level of contact was not associated with a greater tendency towards circular migration for migrants from a particular area. Through the most concrete form of contact - return visits - migrants from the Pagwi villages maintained

Table 7.7

Position in household by migrant status for specified age groups (per cent)

Household position	15-34 years				35-55+ years					
	Non-migrant	Returned-migrant	Absentee	Total	(n)	Non-migrant	Returned-migrant	Absentee	Total	(n)
Head of household	20	53	27	100	(163)	33	55	12	100	(541)
Wife	56	24	20	100	(239)	63	23	14	100	(301)
Other dependents	28	15	57	100	(944)	50	11	39	100	(324)
Overall average for each migrant status	32	22	46	100	(1346)	51	31	18	100	(1166)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

closer links, despite their greater inaccessibility and longer term absenteeism.

Migrants visiting home during the Christmas/New Year vacation period of 1974-75 were recorded when the Rural Survey was conducted. The vacation period is a time when many urban wage earners are able to take advantage of statutory provisions for biennial leave with (in many cases) fares paid by employers. Thirty-one per cent of the migrant men and 40 per cent of the migrant women from the Pagwi villages were visiting their village of origin, compared with only 18 and 20 per cent of the male and female migrants from the Yangoru villages. Similarly, data on those migrants who had made a return visit to the village at any time during their most recent absence show that 32 per cent of both the Pagwi male and female migrants had visited home, compared with 22 and 29 per cent respectively of the Yangoru migrants.

The greater degree of contact maintained by the Pagwi migrants, despite their large-scale and long-term absenteeism, is further confirmed by the table below.

Table 7.8

Forms of communication with the home village by absentees for the two study areas, total population (per cent)

	Yangoru		Pagwi	
		(n)		(n)
Letters sent	53	(443)	68	(426)
Money sent	30	(443)	44	(426)
Goods sent	7	(443)	16	(426)
<i>Wantoks</i> accommodated	20	(443)	24	(426)
Other	5	(443)	4	(426)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that in an area of even moderate outmigration, and where the rural economy is not under too much pressure, migrants are generally reluctant to forsake forever the security of the land and subsistence base of the peasant, for the uncertain long-term prospects of becoming a proletarian in the wage economy.

As a strategy of survival, it is apparent that a number of peasant households continue to straddle the village economy and the plantation/urban sectors, just as they did under the MLS. Those members of the household (unmarried dependents) regarded as unimportant to the maintenance of rural production are released to seek out wage employment, eventually to return home with capital to contribute to the household. Women and the older male heads of household remain at or return home to maintain production. Village land as part of a peasant economy is only one of the factors of production. Labour migration has, in many cases, become an integral part of the peasant household's survival. The costs to the rural economy of this subsidisation of the wage labour force through circular migration are examined in the next chapter.

Where, however, the rural economy is barely able to provide adequate subsistence and cash-earning livelihood because of mounting population pressure, the tendency for absentees to become more totally dependent on the wage economy is evident. This appeared to be the case for those migrants from the Pagwi river villages. But this did not mean a severing of ties. The opposite appeared to be the case. Despite

the low rate of return among Pagwi migrants, greater contact was maintained through visits, mail and remittances compared with the more circular migratory Yangoru villages. Even among migrants seemingly established permanently elsewhere, close ties are maintained with the home village. As the next chapter shows, Pagwi migrants contribute, by way of remittances and visits, a significant amount of cash to the village economy. This proletarianisation does not necessarily entail having nothing more to do with one's home village.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHO BENEFITS FROM MIGRATION?

It was argued in Chapters Six and Seven that many East Sepik migrants and their families remain dependent, either in the short- or long-term, on the rural peasant economy. The question now arises as to whether this relationship is a symbiotic, or an exploitative one, for the rural economy. Symbiosis implies an association of dissimilar organisms to their mutual advantage. Exploitation implies that one party benefits at the expense of the other.

In Chapter Two it was shown how, historically, the MLS provided subsidised labour to the plantation and mining sectors by requiring the traditional village economy to incur the costs of replacing the worker in the next generation. These costs were normally borne by employers or the state in a metropolitan economy. This transferral of costs of reproduction was achieved through the physical separation of migrant workers from their families and the payment of low, 'bachelor' wages to temporary, unskilled labourers. Since secure, skilled employment in the urban economy based on a family wage has become possible in the 1970s and the state has accepted some of the costs of providing for a stable wage labour force, does the rural peasant economy continue to subsidise contemporary migrants? Does an exploitative relationship to the benefit of the capitalist economy still exist? What costs and benefits accrue to the peasant economy from contemporary migration?

This chapter attempts to answer these questions, using limited survey data from two sets of study villages, and offers conclusions applicable to the East Sepik region. The intention is to review the costs and benefits of migration to the rural economy and society as a whole and not merely in terms of the private returns to the individual. Although the decision of an individual or family to migrate must be prompted by some expectation of benefit¹, a distinction needs to be made between the private returns to the individual or family and the social returns to the rural society. A narrow focus on the cost/benefit calculation of the individual tends to overlook the broader economic and social repercussions of migration on the rural economy.

The literature on 'who benefits?' from labour migration can be classified into three main categories (see Shankman 1976:10-20). First, writers such as Berg (1965b) and Griffin (1976) assert that out-migration increases the income and improves the living standards of individual migrants, and that their families benefit through remittances. There is, it is argued, an overall beneficial effect on the rural economy provided that agricultural production is not adversely affected. Berg, referring to West Africa, contends that:

The analytic balancing of short-term costs and benefits from migration thus points to a considerable net gain for the village economy, for while output in the village declines only slightly, the aggregate incomes of village residents are swelled by the net earnings of the migrants (Berg 1965b:172).

Griffin's argument is largely based on guaranteed high-wage employment in a metropolitan country. He is less certain about the

1 Benefits to the individual are by no means always perceived in monetary terms. For example, people may migrate out of a fear of sorcery in their home area, to escape kinship obligations or simply to make a social visit.

beneficial rôle of internal migration within a dependent economy. The major benefits are most likely to stem from remittances which, he argues, could play an important developmental role in rural source regions (Griffin 1976:359).

A second view claims that migration and remittances help to maintain an economic *status quo* by raising income levels, but in the longer run, outmigration has a depressing economic effect on labour-exporting areas. Mitchell (1961), in his review of labour movements in Central Africa, found that the pattern of labour migration had not stabilised; but rather intensified so that more and more men needed to migrate, thus depressing the rural economy (cited in Shankman 1976:13). Lipton (1976:230-237) expresses this viewpoint most forcefully. He contends that outmigration, by removing potential rural leadership and increasing intra-village inequality, damages the rural economy.

The third view is that outmigration and remittances from migrants can contribute to the active underdevelopment of the rural economy by encouraging a dependence on remitted incomes to provide the residents' basic food requirements. As migration continues, a point may be reached where remittances cannot compensate for manpower losses. Since the remaining people cannot produce enough food for themselves, they spend their remittances on imported food. Agricultural production drops below subsistence requirements and remittances are not sufficient to compensate for the rise in the *real* cost of living (Shankman 1976:15).

The importance of remittances to the rural community?

The major financial compensation for the loss of labour to the rural economy is generally thought to be provided by remittances

(Berg 1965b, Griffin 1976 and Connell 1978). An argument used in Papua New Guinea by those advocating substantial rises in the Urban Minimum Wage in October, 1974 was that the rural areas would also benefit through remittances (Lepani 1974).

The data presented in Garnaut *et al.* (1977:68-74) on the transfer of money and gifts by urban migrants showed a high level of contact maintained with home villages, particularly for East Sepik migrants. No attempt was made, however, in the UHS to quantify the extent and frequency of those remittances.

The Rural Survey in 1974-75 which sought to investigate migration from the rural end, provides information about remittances. However some qualifications need to be made about the data. The flow of financial benefits from the urban to the rural economy is not necessarily limited to remittances. Other means of transfer may be through direct gifts and hospitality to visitors from the home village and by gifts during a period of 'home leave'. The following discussion of the importance of remittances focusses on the extent to which migrants send money home on a *regular* basis to compensate the village economy for their absence.

Frequency and amount. Overall, the frequency of remittances received by the East Sepik study villages is low (see Table 8.1). Seventy per cent of total male migrants did not remit any money while absent, a further 27 per cent are said to have done so on an occasional basis, and only 3 per cent remitted money on a regular basis. Current migrants are more likely to remit money but only 'occasionally' (36 per cent), 4 per cent do so on a regular basis, with 60 per cent listed as never having sent money home. The higher wages of urban employment may

Table 8.1

Frequency of remittance of money by male migrants (per cent)

	Yangoru		Pagwi	
	Total migrants (n=670)	Current migrants (n=325)	Total migrants (n=425)	Current migrants (n=280)
Never	77	67	60	52
Occasionally	21	30	36	43
Regularly	2	3	4	5
Total	100	100	100	100

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

account for the increase in occasional remittance among current migrants. A higher percentage (43 per cent) of those absent from the poorly endowed Pagwi river villages are more likely to send home occasional remittances.¹

It is uncertain whether these figures include the money migrants may hand over on a short return visit. But as 30 per cent of all absentees from the Pagwi villages and 17 per cent of those from the Yangoru villages visited home during the Christmas period of 1974-75, short visits most likely provide an important opportunity for injecting money into the village economy.

The amount of money being sent home regularly by only a few migrants is slightly greater in the case of the disadvantaged river

¹ The phenomenon of occasional remittances has been noted for elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Baxter (1973:103) in relation to the Orokaiva migrants from Northern Province and Connell (1978:54) for the Siwai of the North Solomons have recorded similar findings.

villages. Even so, the annual amount remitted regularly represents only 12 per cent of the Pagwi villages' reported total cash income in 1974.¹ Regular remittances received by the Yangoru villages account for a mere 4 per cent of their reported total cash income.²

The flow of benefits is not simply in one direction. Although most village residents probably could not afford to send money to migrants, many of those absent received food from their home villages. Unfortunately the Rural Survey recorded the responses of non-migrants only (they represented 61 per cent of the resident population). Twenty-one per cent of the non-migrant population in the Yangoru villages and 25 per cent in the Pagwi villages said they had sent food. These 'food' gifts from the Yangoru villages when valued at local market prices are equivalent to 94 per cent of the regular cash remittances received from male migrants. The exchange more clearly favours the Pagwi villages, with non-migrant food despatches amounting to only 36 per cent of the value of regular remittances received from male migrants.

From the Rural Survey (1974-75) data, it is clear that the extra contribution of occasional remittances to the village economy is likely to be counterbalanced by the food gifts sent by the resident

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- 1 An annual sum was calculated by asking village respondents to state how much was received in regular remittances and how often (in weeks). These two figures were multiplied to give a yearly figure.
 - 2 The insignificant role of remittances in the economies of other PNG villages has been noted also by Moulik (1973:77). In a study of the cash economy of three southern, two northern coastal and three highlands villages in 1969-70, he concluded that 'remittances comprises a relatively small proportion of the total cash income in all three regions'. The average monthly amount was less than 1 per cent of the average cash income of 366 households surveyed in eight villages between 1969 and 1971. Only 100 households reported receiving remittances (Moulik 1973:77).

villagers. The balance of who benefits most from gifts sent and remittances received has to be investigated empirically in each instance. The evidence from the study villages is mixed. In the case of the Yangoru villages studied, remittances received in one year, 1974, added little to the village economy and their value may not have equalled the cost of food sent to migrants. The village economy, in some instances, subsidises the migrant in the form of direct assistance which in the short term is not adequately reciprocated.

The above evidence indicates that for the East Sepik at least in the mid-1970s, the importance of remittances to the rural economy is small. Only 40 per cent of current migrants were sending money home, with the vast majority on an occasional basis only. While occasional monetary assistance may be important for some households, the village economy could not rely on remittances as a regular source of funds.

The river villages with their high level of prolonged absenteeism, received a greater share of their cash income from regular remittances which were likely to be supplemented by gifts from the large number of home-leave visitors. More migrants from the river villages sent home more money which in turn reached larger numbers of resident villagers compared with the Yangoru villagers. As well as the wider distribution of income from remittances, the data show that those who benefitted are the poorest (those whose income is near or below the villagers' average income). But there was no evidence of the river villages becoming wholly dependent on remittances to the neglect of subsistence production.

Remittances appear to contribute some benefit to a number of households within a set of villages with limited opportunities to earn a cash income. Although migrants from these villages are characterised by their greater length of absence, their more family-oriented pattern of migration and hence greater tendency to establish themselves as long-term urban residents, they are still concerned to help a number of their remaining kin with remittances. But can this rather meagre financial help be considered sufficient to compensate for the absence of a high proportion of the most productive members of the village population?

Impact on the village

A simple debit and credit account of the financial impact on the village economy does not reveal who in the village gains or whether the gains are relevant to the long-term development of the rural economy. Above all, any assessment of the gains and losses in a village experiencing high levels of outmigration must take account of the fact that it is the village's most productive age groups that are likely to have the highest proportion of absentees, assuming that the 25-44 age group is the most productive in the subsistence and cash-crop economy. For example, at the time of the survey, 46 per cent of the men and 25 per cent of the women in this age group were absent from the combined study villages.¹

As will be shown, their absence was felt by the residents through an increased workload. It is also likely that the more

1 In the Yangoru villages, 39 per cent of the men aged 25 to 44 years and 19 per cent of the women in the same age group were absent. The figures were much higher for the Pagwi villages, with 57 per cent of the men and 34 per cent of the women aged 25 to 44 years absent.

innovative and enterprising tend to migrate and stay away, while the less successful are more likely to return.

But certainly it is the steady drain of rural talent, not possible perverse effects of its return, that constitutes the main threat by migration to the progress of the village (Connell *et al.* 1976:135).

Lipton also supports the view that rural to urban migration offers few benefits to the rural village. Among other things, he claims out-migration deprives the village economy of its 'brightest and best people'.

Townward migration of the better-educated and more intelligent - for whom the urban-rural pay differential is greatest - imposes a variety of costs on villagers. First, they do not benefit from actual and potential skills of the training for which they have often paid. Even if the family of the educated migrant benefits from his remittances, the village loses the social benefits of his greater capacity to reason and to innovate. Second, villagers must support, in the city, the migrant who needs further education. Such education predisposes him to reject manual work, whether on the farm or in the town, and to rely on the rural family again for income while he waits for a sufficiently elevated job. Third, young educands, by moving townwards, further deprive the village during critical periods of the strongest and most skilful hands to work on the family farm. Above all, the selection-out of the brightest removes the potential leadership of the rural sector; the better-educated villagers dominate migrant groups (Lipton, 1977:231).

Lipton's contention may well be correct, but his second and third reasons do not necessarily apply in Papua New Guinea. The lure of well-paid wage employment with a range of fringe benefits certainly encourages high levels of outmigration among those with formal educational qualifications. Of those men with some education in the 15-44 age group (from both study areas), 60 per cent were absent. Of those

men 15-44 years of age with at least primary school education, almost two-thirds were absent. If it can be assumed that those with some formal education are more likely to possess actual and potential skills,¹ then outmigration has certainly drained the rural economy of this source of 'human capital'. Dakeyne (1977:158) has commented on this effect of labour migration from northern Papua:

From the point of view of the village, then, the overall effect is that the skills and potential labour of its most active, educated members are lost to it except for brief holiday periods.

The same point has been made by Howlett *et al.* (1976:42), with regard to Chimbu migrants.

Lipton's second contention is that the loss of the educated person imposed an additional financial burden on the village which has to support the person while he or she is away undergoing higher education or looking for work in town. This is only partly true in Papua New Guinea: the government heavily subsidises education at all levels without levying correspondingly high taxes, although some school fees and pocket money have to be provided by parents. Parents, however, may be called upon to provide financial assistance in times of need, or perhaps to provide a regular supplement to a tertiary student's scholarship allowance. As to possible support provided by the village while the young graduand looks for a suitable job, in Papua New Guinea it is often the town-based relatives who provide support. A small survey of nine young, unemployed primary school

1 The Rural Survey in the East Sepik produced some evidence that educated people in the two youngest age groups received higher earnings from rural activities than people with less education (Curtain 1977b:100).

leavers from Kanganaman Village in the East Sepik (carried out in November 1976 as part of my follow-up study of migrants from the study villages), showed that they were overwhelmingly dependent on their urban-employed relatives for support. If, as seems likely, these young men (all aged 15-20) do not play an active role in the production of a subsistence livelihood at home and therefore consume more than they produce, their absence from the village and support by urban relatives may permit a higher level of consumption at home.¹ As they are supported by those working in town, their outmigration from the village represents a subsidy, provided by the town in favour of the village. Lipton's third assertion, that the absence of young educands deprives rural areas of the strongest and most skilful hands, is only partly true if the young men in general do not play a key role in the local economy until they reach their mid-twenties and marry. Lipton's claims hold, however, if a large proportion of the 25-34 age group is still absent, as was the case with the study villages.

The fourth assertion is probably correct in that the outmigration of the brightest minds may remove those men with potential for leadership. This is evident when it is considered that 95 per cent of all those males and 87 per cent of the females who had attended secondary school are absent, with similar figures for those males attending tertiary institutions. On the other hand, account must also be taken of the fact that nearly all of those who have received

1 The extent of the unproductive role of young men is likely to differ from one area to another. It was the opinion of an anthropologist who had worked in Avatip, one of the river villages studied in the East Sepik, that young unmarried men there were far less parasitical than they were in the Iatmul villages further downstream (Simon Harrison, personal communication).

secondary or higher levels of education are concentrated in the two youngest age groups. The greater tendency for heads of family (and hence likely local leaders) to return home was noted in Chapter Seven. It remains to be seen what happens in the coming decades as the more educated migrants grow older. The conclusion from Chapter Six was that many educated migrants are likely to return home, some even before the retirement age of 55. These issues are explored in the following sections.

Benefits to the village economy from returned-migrants

In the past, some returned-migrants made the first moves towards establishing a local cash crop economy in the East Sepik. Beginning in the late 1940s Pita Simogun and other returned policemen spread rice seedlings from Dagua, on the coast west of Wewak, through the Yangoru-Maprik area as far as Dreikikir (Allen 1976 and Chapter Five). In one study village, Windjuan, a policeman brought back coffee seeds from the Highlands while on leave in the late 1950s, before other villages in the area had planted coffee. An ex-councillor brought back cocoa beans from Rabual in 1965 to the Yangoru area. The crop became an important alternative to coffee, against the wishes of the local agricultural extension staff.

These innovations notwithstanding, the particular skills acquired in urban areas appear to have little relevance for rural economic development. Although some returned-migrants are in a better position financially and socially than non-migrants, the assumption that return-migration benefits the rural economy by improving local 'human capital' needs to be examined in greater detail than has normally been true in Papua New Guinean migration studies.

Effects of absenteeism on workloads in the village?

The argument that outmigration is beneficial to the local economy depends upon the assumption that the absence of people from the village does not unduly disrupt local subsistence production. Connell in his discussion of migration of the Siwai on Bougainville Island claims that:

The contemporary absence of migrant workers has little impact on the village economy; their remittances are more than sufficient to offset their absent labour from either gardens or cocoa plantations, although their absence does minimize the effectiveness and regularity of cooperative work activities (Connell 1978:55).

Elsewhere, however, Boyd (1975) has stressed the importance of male involvement in the agricultural cycle. His work in Awa (Eastern Highlands) has been confirmed recently by a survey of subsistence agriculture and child malnutrition in the Okapa area, also in the Eastern Highlands Province (Bourke and Allen 1979). The authors of the study, commenting on high levels of male outmigration, state:

Absenteeism can be a contributing factor to malnutrition. When the adult male of a household is absent, the workload normally done by him is taken over by other men, or is left undone. Men are responsible for opening new land for gardens and fencing. If these tasks are not done, gardens must be replanted for longer than normal and lower yields result. If fences are not maintained, pigs break in and damage the gardens ... when a large proportion of adults are absent from a region ... responsibility for work normally done by them falls on the remaining men, the old men and the women ... it is likely that the high rates of absenteeism are a major contributing factor to the high rates of malnutrition in the District ... (Bourke and Allen 1979:7,8).

Does the same assessment apply to the study villages? The high proportion of men absent in the most productive age groups

(25-44 years) has been noted. To assess the impact of this absence would require a detailed study of the workload contribution of each person to his family unit over the complete agricultural cycle. Boyd (1975) appears to be the only person to have studied this so far. His evidence, for shifting cultivation based on taro, showed that the absence of the men beyond certain levels (between 46 and 62 per cent of adult males over a two-year period) caused major difficulties for the village's subsistence production (Boyd 1975:269).

The Rural Survey, however, provides a very limited method of assessment of the impact of the absence of migrants. Residents were asked whether their workload had increased because of the absence of a specific person. A more thorough assessment would require a detailed study of the allocation of residents' time, as in the study Boyd (1975) has carried out.

Table 8.2

Residents' responses to workload created by absenteeism (per cent)

Workload of residents	Yangoru		Pagwi	
	Because of males absent (n = 327)	Because of males and females absent (n = 443)	Because of males absent (n = 280)	Because of males and females absent (n = 426)
Much more work	45	40	40	37
A little more work	17	16	50	51
No more work	25	26	6	7
Don't know/no reply	13	18	4	5
Total	100	100	100	100

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

Residents in both areas claimed that their workloads had greatly increased. The hunter-gatherer economy of the river villages with high absentee levels was the most severely affected.¹ The number of residents from the East Sepik study village claiming an increased workload was far higher than for the Rural Survey at large, although the number of 'don't know/no reply' responses in the larger sample make a comparison difficult. In the two sets of study villages, male absentee levels of 36.6 per cent and 52.2 per cent appear to place a strain on those remaining at home. Whether or not this strain is harmful to the short- or long-term viability of the village economy can be assessed only by further fieldwork. Nevertheless the conclusions of Boyd's (1975) study, confirmed by Bourke and Allen (1979), together with the above supporting evidence of reported increased workload, challenge the assumption made by Fisk (1971) and Ward (1977) that male outmigration does not affect agricultural productivity. While significant effects from migration on agriculture might take longer to emerge, there is some evidence to support Connell's claim that:

The cultivation of food crops has conspicuously failed to benefit from migration or remittances; it [the cultivation of food crops] has declined, or even disappeared, almost throughout the Pacific ... (Connell 1980:46).

Outmigration and rural inequality

Examining the impact of migration on the rural economy further, there are a number of indicators that show, whatever the cause, outmigration is associated with inter- and intra-village inequality.

1 Male migrants aged 25-34 from the river villages were said to cause the heaviest burden by their absence.

Has migration introduced inequality into a previously egalitarian village society? Or has it merely reinforced pre-existing trends in traditional society? Perhaps migration is associated with other important factors which more directly cause inequality. Before exploring the causal links between migration and rural inequality, it is first necessary to establish the association.

Returned migration status is also associated with a number of advantages for men in their home village. But as the following will show, the benefits in terms of income, marital prospects, acquisition of skills, and access to village leadership positions are acquired by only a few.

Income differences

During the Rural Survey in the East Sepik, village residents were asked what cash income they had received in 1974 and from what sources. In both study areas, the main sources of cash income, as reported by two-thirds of the respondents, were the sale of cash crops, artifacts or cattle, with a third also mentioning the sale of pigs and other traditional valuables, as a source of income. Other sources of cash income, such as other business activities, local wage employment, gifts from returning migrants and remittances, were reported by no more than a fifth of the residents. The cash incomes in 1974 of returned-migrant and non-migrant men in the two sets of study villages in Yangoru and Pagwi are compared in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 shows clearly that male returned migrants generally earned much more income in 1974 than male residents who had not migrated. The mean income for returned migrants was over twice the amount earned by non-migrants. Similarly the median income of returned

Table 8.3

Village cash incomes (Kina) of non-migrant and returned-migrant men 1974 (both study areas combined)

Decile ranking (per cent)	Non-migrant (n = 332) K	Returned-migrant (n = 465) K
0-10	0-0	0-5
11-20	0-3	6-19
21-30	4-7	20-25
31-40	8-12	26-42
41-50	13-22	43-59
51-60	23-28	60-79
61-70	29-46	80-107
71-80	47-61	108-153
81-90	62-90	154-240
91-100	91-1006	241-2240
Mean	44.3	105.4
Median	21.0	56.0
Standard deviation	83.47	175.93

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

migrants was over two and a half times greater than the median income of non-migrants. On the other hand, the variance of each group around the mean shows a relatively greater degree of inequality among non-migrants (variance = 188 per cent:167 per cent).¹ However the difference in variance within the two groups of residents is only small and refers to the reported cash income for only one year. Moreover, it may well indicate a degree of inequality between individuals which

1 Variance is calculated by dividing the standard deviation by the mean.

existed before migration. This point is discussed further below.

The uneven distribution of income among resident villagers is evident from Table 8.3, but the disparity in wealth does not apply to all residents. Further analysis shows there is little difference in the income of up to 73 per cent of the male population who earned below K.80 in 1974, the mean male income in the study villages for that year. The non-migrant and returned-migrants are represented equally in this lower income grouping (Table 8.4).

Clearly then, the higher incomes accrued to a comparatively small number of resident villagers. Those men who earned incomes within the upper quartile (incomes exceeding K.80 for the adult male group as a whole) were not all returned-migrants, thus reflecting the influence of other factors associated with wealth apart from migration status. Nevertheless, 82 per cent of the upper income quartile of the male population are returned-migrants (Table 8.5).

Tables 8.4 and 8.5 also demonstrate that the higher incomes of returned-migrants are not simply a feature of the age of that group. Although there is a tendency for the wealthier, returned migrants with the higher incomes to predominate in the 35-54 age grouping, their incomes are matched by the wealthier non-migrants in the same age cohorts.

The significance of the above evidence is that not only have migrants the chance to acquire a greater cash income while in wage employment, but at least some returned-migrants as well are able to earn a greater cash income than non-migrants once they return home.

Table 8.4

Average cash income in 1974 of men earning less than K80,
non-migrants and returned migrants compared

Age	Non-migrant		Returned-migrant	
	K	(n)	K	(n)
15-24	9.1	(90)	10.7	(52)
25-34	30.0	(31)	31.7	(63)
35-44	36.2	(40)	36.9	(78)
45-54	30.2	(58)	35.0	(73)
55 plus	29.1	(74)	39.3	(24)
Total	24.2	(293)	32.6	(290)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

Table 8.5

Average cash income in 1974 of men earning more than K80,
non-migrants and returned migrants compared

Age	Non-migrant		Returned-migrant	
	K	(n)	K	(n)
15-24	*	(2)	249.7	(13)
25-34	154.2	(6)	211.1	(37)
35-44	279.6	(9)	225.8	(55)
45-54	202.1	(16)	205.4	(56)
55 plus	97.5	(6)	345.5	(13)
Total	197.2	(39)	226.8	(174)

* Too few observations.

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75

The greater incomes earned by some returned-migrants may benefit the village population as a whole if traditional reciprocity and exchange relations act to distribute the wealth of a few 'big men' more widely. If this is not the case, then return-migration may merely add to and emphasise the inequality already evident among the non-migrant men. There is some evidence from the fact of the marginally greater degree of inequality among non-migrant men shown by the analysis of variance in Table 8.1 that the accumulated impact of earlier migration on the village economy has done little to improve the capacity of the village to benefit financially as a whole.

Other advantages for some men of being a returned-migrant

Turning from income considerations, migration could well be expected to confer other benefits on the men who have returned to their villages after a period away. They have had better opportunities to acquire skills and expertise, as well as greater wealth than the men who have stayed at home. What advantages accrue to returned male migrants once they have re-established themselves in the village? Data from the Rural Survey in the East Sepik provide evidence on whether returned-migrants have a better chance of being married and, if so, of whether they have more than one wife (a sensitive indicator of wealth and prestige in Papua New Guinean villages in many areas). In addition, the Rural Survey is able to show whether useful skills were acquired while away and the extent to which returned-migrants became village leaders.

Table 8.6 shows that returned-migrants, regardless of age, have a much better chance of being married. A more marked indicator of a considerable wealth is the ability of men to acquire more than one

Table 8.6

Proportion of resident village males married (per cent)

Age	Non-migrant		Returned-migrant	
	Per cent	(n)	Per cent	(n)
15-24	5	(94)	27	(71)
25-34	74	(38)	91	(107)
35-44	78	(49)	92	(139)
45-54	76	(75)	91	(132)
55 plus	65	(80)	78	(40)
Total	54	(336)	81	(489)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.Table 8.7

Number of men with two or more wives

Age	Migrant status		
	Never migrant	Returned-migrant	Currently absent
15-24	-	-	-
25-34	2	7	2
35-44	3	16	10
45-54	6	21	1
55 plus	9	9	1
Total	20	53	14

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

wife. Only a small number of resident men (9 per cent) were able to do so and nearly three-quarters of those men with two or more wives are returned-migrants (Table 8.7).

Skills acquired while away

In the Rural Survey returned-migrants were asked what activities (such as cash cropping, cattle, other business, local semi-skilled or skilled employment) they had pursued before they left on their first migration and what activities they had begun after their return. They were also asked whether they had acquired any skills while away. Fifty per cent of the male returnees in the East Sepik village surveyed had not undertaken any rural cash earning activity before migration or after. A further 20 per cent said that they had acquired skills while away, but the skills had not been useful in starting cash-earning activities at home. Thus 70 per cent of the male returnees found that migration had little effect on their rural situation and consequently little impact on the village. This figure corresponds roughly with the proportion of returned-migrants for whom incomes had increased only marginally, compared with non-migrant residents (Table 8.4). Of the remainder, 10 per cent of the men had begun to grow cash crops or had started a cattle project before leaving the village. An additional 20 per cent had started a cash earning activity after their return. Smaller proportions were evident for the other two activities (business and/or local employment). As with the cash incomes of village residents, only a small proportion of returned-migrants have benefitted. The pattern of a highly unequal distribution of benefits is repeated.

Access to key positions

Another advantage associated with returned-migrant status for some men is the greater chance of acquiring a position of local power and influence. Only 17 per cent of the resident men held a contemporary non-traditional leadership position; and of these men 82 per cent were returned-migrants. These positions were associated with substantially higher incomes for those individuals who held them compared with the majority of the village residents.

Table 8.8

Position in the village and migrant status (per cent)

Village position	Migrant status			Total
	Non-migrant	Returned-migrant	Absent	
Traditional leader	43	44	13	100 (n=138)
Councillor)				
School committee)				
Church official)	15	70	15	100 (n=158)
Cooperative)				
official)				

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

Emerging rural stratification. Quite apart from the association with migrant status, the data presented above on the concentration of cash income in the upper quartile of resident male villagers, the small number of men able to acquire more than one wife, the lack of diffusion of skills and cash earning opportunities together with the limited opportunities to achieve a leadership position, all confirm the

impressions formed during fieldwork (Curtain 1977) that there is an emerging rural 'big peasant' group who have amassed resources and income far above the average villagers. Forge has reported the same trend:

What is happening in the villages, as far as I can make out, and this applies to Wingei as well as other villages I visited, is that we have an emergent rural middle class. Certain men take out options in cattle and use larger areas of clan land (some of which may be kunai, which would not usually be used for crops) than they would usually have. If successful this sort of project can give a few individuals in each village a high income compared to their fellows. This sort of village entrepreneur gets his capital equipment e.g. land, for nothing through the operations of kinship and clanship and indeed can get quite a lot of his labour for very little through kinship obligations (Anthony Forge, personal communication: 1976).

Further indication of the developing rural stratification is the number of poor households with no reported sources of cash income in 1974. In both study areas, 46 per cent of households received no income from export crop production. Twenty-six per cent of the households stated that they never had enough earnings from crops and other business to make payments such as council tax and school fees. Only 18 per cent of the households said they were always able to meet their cash commitments.

Migration and inequality: trying to untangle the relationship

The evidence presented above suggests that considerable inequality exists within the East Sepik study villages and that the migrant status of the resident male population is closely associated with this inequality. But the data do not permit an assertion to be

made about migration as the sole or even major cause of rural inequality. Other variables may be important or at least closely related to migrant status, such as the amount of formal education attained by a migrant, his access to land and other resources and the importance of the father's position and status. These may be all factors producing rural inequality which migration merely accentuates. The strength and importance of each of these variables is impossible to untangle using only survey data. Detailed anthropological investigations are needed. It is however reasonable to claim that migration at least serves to heighten the existing tendencies towards greater rural stratification. This claim is supported by the following evidence.

Propensity to migrate and economic status of village households

Connell *et al.* (1976:13) produced evidence from a number of Third World village studies to show that high levels of outmigration occur from both the poorer sections of a village and from the relatively prosperous households. Poor individuals or families go to town to seek a better basic income, while wealthy families send their children to town for higher education. In this study of migration in Ghana, Caldwell (1969:82) suggested that a positive relationship existed between wealth of the rural household and a greater propensity for members of the household to migrate.

Data were collected in the Rural Survey to test the relationship between an interviewer's subjective ranking of household wealth and the tendency to migrate. The use of the interviewer's subjective

assessment followed the procedure used by Caldwell (1969:82).¹

The proportion of householders who were past or current migrants was calculated for each economic ranking (Table 8.9).

Table 8.9

Propensity to migrate and economic status of household of origin

Households	Propensity to migrate	(n)
'Richest' group	0.662	(64)
'Middle' group	0.584	(429)
'Poorest' group	0.470	(170)

Data source: Rural Survey, 1974-75.

The difference in tendency to migrate between the 'middle' and 'poorest', and between the 'richest' and 'poorest' rankings of the households are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, but the differences between the richest households and those of the 'middle' level are significant only at the 0.05 level. Controlling for the possible variation between villages influenced by the interviewer's subjective ranking, the relationship still held.²

- 1 Interviewers in the Rural Survey were asked to rank households into the 'richest, middle or poorest' *thirds*. In all except one instance, they did not take this literally, instead assigning households to groupings of rich, poor or those in-between. Nearly two-thirds were thus classified as of 'middle' rank economic status, with only 10 per cent in the 'richest' group and the remainder (26 per cent) in the 'poorest' group. One village, Indingai, was excluded from the calculations because the instruction was taken literally.
- 2 An analysis of variance on the proportions in a contingency table based on unequal cell frequencies was carried out by means of a logit analysis using the computer package GLIM (General Linear Interactive Modelling, see Neder 1975).

Thus, it appears that the wealthier the household, the more likely it is to have a greater proportion of its members who have migrated. In the East Sepik case, the generalisation of Connell *et al.* (1976) needs to be modified to postulate a simple relationship - the wealthier the household, the more likely it is to have migrants.

Again, difficulties arise in trying to specify which way the causal relationship operates. Does the greater wealth of a household allow more of its members to migrate? Or does the fact that a household has more migrants explain its better economic standing gained from benefits accrued by the migrants? On the one hand, it is likely that the heads of the wealthier households are able to support their children through long years of higher education, or to support them while they remain longer in the job queue until an urban job becomes available. On the other hand, those few households are likely to gain, in return, considerable advantage from the income and skills of their returned household members.

Migration as a means of incorporation into the world economy is not solely responsible for introducing inequalities into a formerly egalitarian precontact society. The tendencies towards inequality in the traditional society were probably already present (Connell 1979). Nevertheless, it can be fairly claimed that migration and its effects have greatly accentuated the incipient inequalities.

Conclusion

Three perspectives on the costs and benefits of migration were outlined at the beginning of the chapter. These are first: that the increased earnings of migrants represented a 'considerable

net gain' to the village economy, if agricultural production is not unduly disrupted. Remittances are seen as having an important developmental role in rural source regions. A second view claimed that migration and remittances help to maintain a *status quo* by raising rural income levels, but in the longer term, outmigration has a depressing economic effect on labour exporting areas. The third view was that outmigration and remittances can contribute to the active underdevelopment of the rural economy by encouraging a dependence on remitted incomes to provide the residents' basic food requirements.

An analysis of the frequency and amount of money regularly remitted to two sets of study villages in the East Sepik showed that as a regular source of funds, remittances were insignificant. It could even be claimed for some villages that the outflow of food gifts continued to subsidise the absentee without adequate compensation in return.

The assumption that the absence of males was not likely to affect agricultural production is contradicted by the widespread claim by village residents of a greatly increased workload as a result of high absenteeism among the most productive age groups. This limited survey evidence lends support to Boyd's (1975:281-282) criticism of Fisk's (1971) assumption that rural labour could be drawn away from the traditional sector without an appreciable fall in the aggregate product of labour.

This evidence suggests that outmigration cannot be assumed a priori to have little or no effect on agricultural production. A number of compensatory practices may be used such as the introduction of less labour intensive staples which are often less nutritious. As well, the variety of food plants may be narrowed with similar consequences

for the nutritional value of diets (Connell 1980:46). Jones and Ward (1980), with regard to the Pacific in general, have stressed the effects of the absence of village men on the subsistence food economy.

The unbalanced age and sex structures of the residual rural populations have led to pressures on the remaining workforce in the mixed subsistence-cash crop sector ... The crop range has been reduced, the more labour demanding crops abandoned, new less demanding crops adopted, and many many techniques of cultivation and processing allowed to fall into disuse ... (Jones and Ward 1980:8).

The large proportion of men in the 25-44 age group absent, including most of the more highly educated, contributes to the long-term underdevelopment of the region. Although benefits such as increased rural income, the acquisition of skills, a greater chance of having more than one wife and greater access to key leadership positions were gained by *some* returned-migrants, there appeared to be no evidence to show that these benefits aided the rural community as a whole. The most likely effect is that migration, by assisting a small number, has greatly added to the degree of inequality in the source area.

While outmigration and remittances have not served to undermine in a fundamental way the rural economy of the East Sepik, and the greater incomes and other advantages are likely to have accrued to some individuals because of migration, the long-term effects appear detrimental. Contact with the capitalist economy through labour migration may have benefitted some individuals but only at the expense of the depletion of the human resources and subsistence capacity of the rural economy. Migration has most likely contributed towards increasing rural stratification and the underdevelopment of labour-exporting areas.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

In the preceding eight chapters, I have sought to explain the historical-structural framework within which migration has taken place in Papua New Guinea, emphasising the continuing importance of the colonial situation and the operation of the MLS until the early 1970s. The aim of this thesis has been to examine the consequences of migration for the development of a proletariat and peasantry. The general conclusion is that the *dual dependence* of migrants on the two economies which was fostered by the MLS and continued to varying degrees by present-day institutional arrangements, has promoted the growth of a broadly-based peasantry and at the same time greatly inhibited the widespread emergence of a permanent rural or urban proletariat.

Historical-structural perspective

The first chapter began with an outline of the existing approaches to internal migration in the Third World, giving some attention to their shortcomings. Many of the leading scholars working on migration, from Ravenstein in the 1880s to Todaro in the 1960s, have neglected the historical-structural context in which transfers of population take place. This general limitation has also been emphasised by McGee (1976:14):

Many of the conventional approaches to the study of rural-urban mobility were inadequate because they failed to recognize the important role of processes operating at a national level. By far the most important process is the penetration of capitalism into the precapitalistic system of production ...

Ward (1980:14), in a passage cited in Chapter One, has criticised most migration studies in Papua New Guinea in a similar vein for neglecting the broader context of migration, i.e., the structure of the economy as it has been incorporated into the periphery of the world capitalist economy.

The criticism that most migration studies were too narrowly focussed on the individual led (in Chapter One) to the argument that a level of explanation was needed which aimed to penetrate surface appearances and offer a theoretical model of the underlying structures. An important aspect of this level of explanation is its ability to incorporate an understanding of the power relations involved and the inequalities between individuals and groups which result.

Dependency and the modes of production debate

Gunder Frank (1969) launched a major critique of the classical dualism theory, mainly because of its simple view that backwardness of the traditional sector was the cause of underdevelopment. Frank's alternative model of dependency explained underdevelopment as the product of the destructive incorporation of the periphery into the world capitalist economy by the core countries. He maintained that the penetration of capitalism from the sixteenth century, at least in the case of Latin America, drew the periphery into market relations with the centre, thereby destroying and totally transforming the pre-capitalist social and economic systems existing there.

A number of critics, reacting to Frank's polemic, have acknowledged the dominant role played by the expansion of capitalism from the sixteenth century, but dispute that this expansion has

necessarily destroyed most pre-capitalist economies with which it has come into contact. An alternative analysis emphasises how key elements of pre-capitalist economies persist, despite or perhaps *because* of their widespread involvement in modern marketing systems based on commodity exchange. One benefit of such an arrangement to the capitalist economy is a release from the obligation to meet the full costs of the reproduction of the workforce which are borne by the non-capitalist economy.

Much of the debate about different modes of production and their inter-relationship has remained at the level of 'grand theory' and of disputes over terminology (see Foster-Carter 1978, Harriss 1979). Swindell (1979:251), commenting on the role of imperialism and its effect on labour migration states his reservations about 'explanations which invoke monolithic forms of capitalism and colonialism ...'. He argues that the explanation of the factors behind labour migration in West Africa cannot be lumped together with what happened in east, central or southern Africa. There have been few attempts within the historical-structural perspective to explore 'how the general and specific determinants interact in particular and concrete situations' (Palma 1978:910). This thesis has set out to provide just such detail.

The MLS as the link between the two modes of production

In Papua New Guinea, beginning in the 1880s, the specific mechanism which served as a bridge between the pre-capitalist and capitalist economies was the MLS. In this respect, it is an illustration of the theoretical models of Wolpe (1972) and more particularly, Burawoy (1976). Their models demonstrated how the MLS could operate

to create and recreate the link between two economies to the overall benefit of one. The MLS arranged, over time and in a systematic way, the transfer of labour and surplus from one economy or mode of production to another. The state, in the interests of the dominant economy, initiated and supervised the MLS to provide low-cost labour to employers while the alternate economy had to bear the full cost of what was needed to replace the workers in the next generation. Thus the MLS and the context it operated in, forced the migrant labourer to develop a *dual dependence*. This came about because, on the one hand, alternative sources of cash income were restricted and wage labour became the only means of earning money and, on the other hand, the low level of the bachelor wages, the terms of employment and conditions and rights at the workplace made it necessary for the worker and his family to maintain a long-term dependence on his home economy. Thus the operation of the MLS required the physical separation of the worker from his family. This separation was enforced through specific legal and administrative controls which regulate geographical and occupational mobility. The controls operated against a background of social conditions which denied the migrant worker basic citizen rights of equality before the law. Burawoy's model used Southern African and Mexican-American data to illustrate his analysis.

The limitation of Burawoy's model when applied to Papua New Guinea is its failure to account adequately for the consequences of the MLS and its continuing impact on relations between the non-capitalist and capitalist modes of production *after* the formal institutional arrangements have apparently dissolved. This thesis has addressed the question Burawoy did not consider: Did the end of the MLS and the colonial state mean the end of the need for migrants to

maintain a *dual dependence* on the two economies? Or, if the question is put in another way: Have all the former barriers to the growth of a proletariat gone with the end of the MLS? This question was taken up in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight. The earlier chapters explained the MLS and its effects on the patterns of population mobility.

The colonial state, the MLS and the cultivation of a *dual dependence*

Chapter Two described the institution of the MLS as it operated, first in German New Guinea and later in the Australian Territory of New Guinea. The chapter focussed on the period from 1883 until the onset of the Pacific war in 1941.

Evidence was presented, drawing mainly on the Australian period, in support of the seemingly opposed propositions that the colonial state both fostered a dependence on the capitalist economy and at the same time insisted upon a set of conditions which ensured that the migrant labourer, as an unaccompanied male, maintained only a temporary dependence on wage employment. These conditions had their origin in the German period when much of the labour legislation was formulated. They were then continued and reinforced by the Australian colonial administration in the two decades before the Pacific war began in 1941. Chapter Three explained how these conditions, in a slightly modified form, were continued in the post-war period.

During the period before World War Two, the colonial state caused villagers to become dependent on the capitalist economy by permitting the use of recruiters in areas of minimal administrative control and by doing little to discourage the use of force and other less direct inducements (see Townsend's comments and Beazley's account).

Further pressure was applied with the introduction of a head tax (to be paid in currency) on those males of work-age who were not indentured labourers. The state therefore used head tax quite explicitly as an inducement to wage labour, although individual field officers may have eased this pressure. At the same time the colonial state recognised the vital importance of the village subsistence economy to the exotic commercial economy by requiring the early return of migrant labourers to their home villages.

Data from the Annual Reports, only available for the period 1931-1940, were cited in Chapter Two to demonstrate the high level of circulation of labour, with a complete turnover of the workforce every three to four years. Formal and informal restrictions on the migration and residence of women at the workplace served to retain them in the village to maintain subsistence production. These restrictions were highly successful. By the late 1930s only 3.3 per cent of the indentured workforce were accompanied by their wives. Legislation and field officers sought to ensure that a particular village kept its capacity to replace its own population. Villages were closed to recruiters when it appeared that the number of women of reproductive age greatly exceeded the number of 'virile' men. Finally, the more general colonial situation which enforced a colour bar on the occupational mobility of migrant workers against a background of their political powerlessness (illustrated by the conflict on the New Guinea goldfields in the late 1930s) served to reinforce the need for migrant workers to maintain a *dual dependence*.

It was argued in Chapter Two that the cultivation of the *dual dependency* was in the interests of the colonial state which wished

to maintain the stability of traditional society. The narrow economic interests of individual employers of labour (mainly planters) who wanted low costs per 'unit of labour' were satisfied by the provision of labour at a low bachelor wage. On the other hand, as the discussion of labour conditions on the New Guinea goldfields in the 1930s demonstrated, the management of the more sophisticated industrial organisations on the goldfields saw little economic advantage in the 'cheapness' of a high turnover, unskilled workforce.

The indigenous response

Dual dependence also served to reinforce the resiliency of a non-hierarchical traditional social structure based, for the most part, on small-scale subsistence agriculture. The reaction of the isolated village societies was neither passive nor uniform. The villagers, in reacting to the use of force, the inducements of recruiters and the imposition of head tax responded in a variety of ways. The resistance, manipulation or active participation and collaboration are touched upon in Chapter Two, in Beazley's narrative in the appendix to the Chapter and discussed in considerable detail in Chapter Five. The narratives of the participants themselves in an appendix to Chapter Five provide some first-hand accounts by those involved. Warring villages on the Sepik River used the pretext of the inducements of recruiters to settle old scores with neighbouring villages. The anger of some villagers at being forced to send their young men away contrasted elsewhere with the role of village elders in actively assisting recruiters. One 'big man', Maringini, saw the opportunity to assert his authority over neighbouring groups by working through the patrol officer (see Otto Invahosi's narrative, p. 246). Other New Guineans

saw no harm in acting as recruiters and even using force on neighbours regarded as traditional enemies (see the narratives of Nalmerninki and Yekirai, pp.243 and 246). As well, some actively sought out the chance to be transported away to work in a strange, largely unintelligible world beyond (see Mingisin's narrative, p. 254). Direct forms of coercion and inducement in the older labour reserve areas became, by the late 1930s, progressively less necessary (Reed 1943:263). The demand for money and the simple commodities it could buy had become part of the village economy, although labour migration remained as the only easily available means of acquiring cash in most areas.

'Casual' labour and the continuing need to maintain a *dual dependence*

In Chapter Three, the operation of the MLS in the post-war period was examined. The conclusion was reached that despite the removal of penal sanctions and the greater tolerance of 'casual' labour, the general conditions and many of the specific legal injunctions of the MLS still applied, at least until the mid-1960s and later. These general conditions were the wage levels, terms of employment, conditions at the workplace and the political rights of all employees, regardless of whether they were under formal contract ('agreement' labour), or employed by verbal agreement only ('casual' labour). The increase in the numbers of 'casual' labourers to one-third of the workforce in the early post-war period did not signify a shift to the emergence of 'free' labour. This is an important point to recognise because the conventional distinction between contract and independent migration in many studies in Papua New Guinea is misleading when the more general context of migration and employment is taken into account.

The conditions that required the vast majority of migrant workers to maintain a short-term *dual dependence* were still very much in force throughout most of the post-war colonial period. The master-servant contract relationship in law, for all employees, made it illegal for workers, until the early 1960s, to organise among themselves to press for more secure terms of employment, better pay and conditions. 'Casual' workers who had been employed for less than six months, could be dismissed without notice. Low bachelor wages were paid to all but a few public servants until 1972, mainly because the newly formed unions under tight government control were largely ineffective. A majority of employers provided single accommodation only. These conditions applied to both 'agreement' and 'casual' labour alike. So the MLS, in the more general sense of a set of legal, political and social conditions, including guaranteed repatriation, employment of single males only, restricted geographical and occupational mobility, can be said to have remained in force in the post-war era, incorporating both 'agreement' and 'casual' labour.

Ward (1980):15) has recently supported this view that the distinction between contract and independent migration was more apparent than real when considered as a reflection of the interaction of wider systems. Ward's reassessment lends further support to the view outlined in Chapter Three that the early colonial period and the colonial period after 1945 should not be considered as two distinct periods of migration when the broader context is taken into account. A level of explanation which views individuals in the period after the war as migrating voluntarily in the hope of long-term reward infers that 'free' labour and hence a proletariat is about to emerge. A consideration of the general context of both 'agreement' and 'casual' labour in Chapter Three showed that it was not possible

for any but a few migrants to forsake even a short-term *dual dependence* on the two economies.

Continuing forms of controlled migration. Another important qualification to the apparent distinction between 'agreement' and 'independent' migration emphasised in several migration studies in Papua New Guinea is the continuation of widespread government and private employer-directed migration. The cessation in 1971 of the government's involvement with the recruitment and repatriation of unskilled plantation workers has not meant a withdrawal from other forms of controlled migration. Data from the migration histories of respondents in the East Sepik study villages in Chapter Five showed that alongside negligible numbers under contract in the 1965-74 period, a significant proportion of the male migrant stream were 'posted' migrants (Pagwi migrants 21.4 per cent, Yangoru migrants 14.7 per cent). These migrants were paid their fares from the village, directed to specific destinations for education or employment, guaranteed (married) accommodation and provided with regular return fares every two years for themselves and their families to their home village.

Ward (1980:18) has referred to the continuing role of supra-market institutions in influencing the migration of individuals. Chapter Six demonstrated the significance of controlled mobility as one important factor likely to hinder a permanent commitment to urban residence and a continuing long-term dependence on the home village. Government and private employer-directed mobility requires of the migrant a number of residential moves between various work locations, facilitated by the provision of low-rent, institutional married housing. This, together with the opportunity to make regular return visits home

on leave, greatly promotes the likelihood of an eventual return migration there, on or before retirement age.

The spatial impact of the MLS

To explore the spatial impact of the MLS required a return in historical time to the German colonial period in Chapter Four. By determining the source and direction of movement from the 1880's, the operation of the MLS, in effect, allocated certain areas into five non-contiguous zones of large-scale export production, indigenous cash crop producing areas, labour reserves and auxiliary labour reserves area. Other areas with minimal contact with the capitalist economy remained part of a frontier zone.

The location of some of these zones changed over time as labour reserves were able to develop alternative sources of income through the cultivation of cash crops. The Highlands changed its status from frontier zone to that of labour reserve and auxiliary labour reserve subject to an expanding labour frontier. Parts of the Highlands also became part of the export production zone surrounded by widespread indigenous cash cropping.

The Sepik as labour reserve

Within this framework of five functional zones adapted to colonial enclave development, attention was focussed on the emergence and continuing prominence of the Sepik as a labour reserve. The number of recruits from the Sepik River itself (as distinct from near Aitape) rose rapidly between 1926 and 1930. Figure 4.5 showed that over the four time periods for which data are available (1923-31, 1932-40,

1948-53 and 1966-70) the Sepik, of all districts, has the consistently highest proportion of its recruits exported to other districts (except perhaps in the most recent period when the Highlands, as a whole, not only employed large numbers within its boundaries, but also 'exported' large numbers of recruits). The 1966 census figures show that the Sepik ranked second behind the Highlands as a net 'exporter' of migrants. In 1971, the Sepik could still claim second place with a deficit of 16,003 migrants. The Sepik retained its status as a major labour reserve over several generations.

Within the Sepik region itself, the labour frontier kept moving farther afield, changing the role of particular areas from large exporters of manpower to the status of auxiliary labour reserve.

Emerging new destinations

Although the Sepik remained an important source of migrants in the post-war period, new destinations became increasingly important. By 1966, 40 per cent of Sepik migrants lived in towns, reflecting the shift from rural to urban destinations. By 1971 Lae and Madang towns contained more Sepiks than the older destination of Rabaul. The Bougainville mining complex at Arawa-Panguna and the Cape Hoskins Resettlement scheme were also important new destinations. But the most dramatic increase of all was in the number of East Sepiks in the province's own urban centres: the numbers of village migrants in Wewak, Maprik, Angoram and Ambunti doubled from 7,969 in 1966 to 14,223 in 1971. This was perhaps the most significant departure from the period of tight control of mobility enforced by the MLS. The transition from long-distance, directed migration to short-term, short distance

mobility of large numbers of villagers to nearby towns reflects the changes in the rural economy discussed at length in Chapter Five. They include the availability of roads, transport and money from cash crops, all aspects of a greater incorporation of the Sepik rural areas into a market-based peasant economy from the mid-1960s.

Sepik responses to colonial control

The different structures of the subsistence-based economies of the Sepik region responded in contrasting ways to the demand for labour. The sexual division of labour of the traditional social structure, under the effects of colonial pacification, seems likely to have hindered male outmigration in one instance and encouraged it in another case. Thus, in the first instance, the inhabitants of the Prince Alexander foothills are horticulturalists. Their subsistence economy is based on the swidden cultivation of yam and taro, supplemented in lean periods by sago. In contrast, the river villagers are mostly sedentary hunter-gatherers, subsisting on a diet of sago and fish. These two modes of subsistence production are carried out with quite different divisions of labour.

The crucial variable would appear to be the reliance of the subsistence economy on able-bodied males. The marked differences between the two areas in the productive and ceremonial role played by men, particularly for married men over 30 years of age, suggest that some traditional social structures may exert far more pressure than others in requiring the male migrant heads of household to return home to maintain production. The possibility of maintaining a strategy of *dual dependence* for a peasant household able to straddle two modes

of production is greatly facilitated by the social organisation of production of particular societies. Knowledge of the different forms of social structure of pre-colonial subsistence economies is an important part of an understanding of the factors influencing migration and the form it takes.

Nevertheless, the established patterns of behaviour of pre-contact societies were dramatically changed under the impact of colonial control. Head-hunting parties were stopped, thus depriving men of their pre-eminent role in defending their village and attacking their neighbours, while the women alone took care of the subsistence livelihood. The loss of their prominence in their own social structure disposed the men to accept the recruiters' inducements.

The post-contact circular labour migration of men from the inland villages was not simply an extension of the limited group movement of small parties of well-armed men and the marriage migration of women to nearby villages. The pressure to migrate, the selection of migrants, their destination and for how long were largely determined by the colonial state. This constituted a new environment irrevocably and qualitatively changed from that of pre-contact society. In these two cases, it is difficult to agree with Chapman (1979) that contemporary migration patterns of circularity can often reflect the persistence and reinforcement of traditional forms of mobility.

The remainder of Chapter Five traced the history of the gradual incorporation of a series of isolated villages into a wider world. The pressure from recruiters, the local discovery of gold, the massive disruption caused by the Japanese and Australian Armed Forces, all brought about a variety of individual and group responses

by villagers who were anything but passive. Their frustrations and enthusiasms were expressed in cargo cult activity in the pre-war and post-war periods and in various attempts at establishing a reliable form of cash income. Wage employment emerged as the most stable source of money. The pre-contact organisation of production, colonial pacification and a dramatic 'invasion' and the uncertainties of *kago* and cash crops *all* combined to induce a steady outflow of migrants. But these changes did not result in permanently divorcing migrants from their means of production, the land.

Land and *dual dependence*

The reluctance of the government of Papua New Guinea in its early years of self-government and independence after 1973, to allow the alienation of land for commercial production demonstrates the persistence of a non-capitalist economy and society in the face of the forces of capitalism. Townsend (1980) discusses in detail the capacity the peasant economy has for disengagement from the world capitalist system. The relative autonomy and self reliance of the peasant economy remains an important bulwark against the uncertainties of the international market and a strong incentive for workers in the wage economy to keep close ties with home.

In contemporary Papua New Guinea as in the colonial past, there has been a strong degree of mutual self-interest between employers of labour, the state and rural peasant communities in maintaining the rural village economy in a good state of health and in encouraging migrants to maintain a *dual dependence* on the two modes of production. In each instance, however, the supporting reasons have been different:

firstly, employers gain from a low-cost workforce; secondly, the state does not incur the costs of social welfare payments, including unemployment benefits; and thirdly, villagers are able to retain their cultural traditions and some measure of economic security. Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five demonstrated how, at the national, regional and local levels, two modes of production, one subordinate to the other, can coexist over a long period of time. The circulation of the migrant worker, keeping a foot in both camps, has been a crucial means of maintaining this linkage.

Continuing *dual dependence*

Evidence of the persistence of a short-term *dual dependence* was borne out by the age and sex profile of the New Guinean workforce 1956-65 (pp. 90.) and the data available from the 1966 and 1971 censuses on the age, sex, marital status and mobility patterns of the residents of the two migrant sectors compared with the rural village population (pp. 95, 97, 100). This was supplemented by further evidence from a sample of 50 villages in ten different districts of varying but nevertheless high levels of circular migration. The overall impression was of a migrant flow predominantly composed of unaccompanied young males currently absent, with heavy return-migration from those aged 35 years and above.

Despite the continuing importance of short-term *dual dependence* for most migrants, there were changes from the mid-1960s that reflected a shift away from a high turnover, unskilled urban workforce. The colonial state began to provide greater access to education and, at the same time, a number of restrictions on occupational mobility within the Public Service were lifted. The spread of migrant

settlements which could provide cheap married accommodation was condoned by the Administration. These changes were the result of pressures from an expanding small industrial, commercial and public sector in the towns which required a more educated workforce with a substantial commitment to long-term employment and the acquisition of skills.

The need for workers to maintain a short-term physical separation from their families was becoming less important. The most dramatic indication of changes in the composition of the urban population was the increase in the ratio of women to men. Between 1966 and 1977 the masculinity ratio in Port Moresby fell from 185 to 139 (males per 100 females).

Nevertheless, a number of qualifications about this trend need to be made. A tendency towards a more balanced sex ratio in the towns is not a clear-cut indicator of changes among all components of the urban population. The 15 years-and-over age cohorts in 1971 are more biased in favour of males, particularly in the 15 to 44 age groups (see Figure 3.6). Although the proportion of young men in town had decreased significantly between 1966 and 1973, the 20-24 year old males were still the largest adult cohort at the time of the UHS (see Table 3.6). The urban population, while becoming less divergent from the age, sex distribution of the country as a whole, was still, nevertheless, quite different to the rural village population (see Figure 3.4 and Table 3.6). A number of clear indications of a temporary migrant urban population remain. At the 1971 census, only 37 per cent of the urban males 15 years and over were married and accompanied by their wives. This picture was confirmed by the age, sex profiles of the Rural Survey villages in 1974-75 from 10 districts which showed a

pattern of continuing circular migration from the varying but high levels of absenteeism among the 15 to 24 age group and indications of substantial return-migration in the older age groups.

The extent of an urban proletariat

The extent of urban proletarianisation was assessed in Chapter Six within the context of a rural peasantry based on the non-convertible ownership of land. A major influence on mobility in a peasant society, if not the most important, is the peasant's relationship to the land tenure system and the accompanying social arrangements. The extent that peasants possess and control their own land provides the base on which short- and long-term migration revolves.

A continuing close relationship to a rural land base by most urban East Sepik migrants is evident from a number of indicators such as length of time in town, gifts sent and received, return visits, propensity to build a rural house and extent of urban home ownership. Nevertheless a small group (between perhaps 15 to 30 per cent) mostly from the poor river districts appear to be divorced from their home villages. Three groups of East Sepik urban migrants were identified from the 1973/74 UHS data: short-term visitors and young men seeking work, permanent urban residents from mostly the poor rural areas, and the educated migrants in stable employment who seem to be merely semi-permanent urban residents.

The first group consists of a high turnover floating population who may represent up to a quarter of the urban population at any one time. These people, either as visitors or young job seekers, are still firmly integrated into the rural peasant economy. As visitors,

they may act as a link between town and country by transferring gifts of food in one direction and money in the other. The young job seekers are not accompanied by a wife. They are most likely to go directly from the village to the nearest town (Wewak or Madang) to try their luck and after a short period of job search, return home. The former are still firmly integrated into the peasant economy although temporarily absent. The latter group of unskilled young job seekers are engaging in a strategy of short-term *dual dependence*. At the other end of the spectrum, are the permanent urban residents. Apart from Wewak's own residents of traditional villages sited within the town's boundaries, permanent migrants appear to come from the poorly endowed river districts of Ambunti and Angoram. These areas have few opportunities to partake in a viable peasant economy based on some form of cash cropping.

All or most permanent urban residents are not necessarily part of a proletariat. They may not be compelled to sell their labour to survive if they have managed to gain access to urban land through inter-marriage with urban customary land owners and are able to supplement subsistence gardening through the sale of goods or services through the informal sector. The latter case is most likely in Wewak where a large number of long-term male residents without wage employment were accompanied by a wife and settled on customary-owned land. Following McGee's (1976:16-18) formulation, these people are part of a peasant urban sector.

The remaining section of the urban population is generally regarded as likely candidates for permanent urban residents. These are the families supported by a well-educated breadwinner in stable

employment. But temporary proletarian status does not necessarily lead to a permanent status when urban conditions are not conducive to permanent residence and the rural economy does not dispossess even long-term absentees of their land rights. There are a number of indications that many urban migrants are likely to return to their home villages on or before retirement.

The intention of migrants to return home was dismissed as an unreliable and inconclusive indicator (50 per cent of respondents were undecided). A high proportion of longer-term urban male residents in wage employment said they sent and received gifts from home (Garnaut *et al.* 1977:69), but as Chapter Eight showed, regular remittances were of minor importance. Intent and gifts, therefore, can tell us little about future intention. Two more concrete indicators were examined: visits to the home village and whether or not the urban migrant had built a house at home. Fifty-three per cent of all longer term residents had visited home, but the proportion was much higher (69 per cent) for the better educated migrants in wage employment. This closer link for the educated is doubtless encouraged by biennial leave provisions offering return fares home for most middle level public and private sector employees, and their families.

Many longer-term urban residents also owned a rural house. Even among the 15 to 24 year olds with jobs based on their high educational levels, as many as 41 per cent had built a rural house. These figures were closely paralleled by a 1977 survey of the urban and rural housing situation of a sample of middle-level public servants. Eighty-two per cent of the respondents who were migrants claimed they would return home either on or before retirement. Many had already built their house in their village and most of the remainder intended to do so.

These actions and the attitudes they reflect are not surprising when the institutional constraints on permanent urban residence are considered. Over 50 per cent of urban accommodation is employer-provided or rented. This accommodation is therefore available to the urban migrant only as long as he continues with his employer or is receiving an adequate income to cover the payment of rent. Very few urban residents (only 2 per cent) had taken steps to purchase government-built housing. There is little incentive for those in subsidised government housing to purchase. A large number of public and private sector employees, as was evident from the migrant histories discussed in Chapter Five, are posted at regular intervals to positions around the country. This high degree of directed movement is likely to hinder greatly a commitment to permanent residence in any one urban centre.

The phenomenon of a long-term circular migration based on dual residence in a number of Third World countries has been discussed by Nelson (1976:744-747). The reluctance of Papua New Guinean urban residents to buy urban housing and their tendency to build a rural house is paralleled by studies from Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania and Eastern Nigeria (Nelson 1976:744-746; see also Odongo and Lea 1977, Ross and Weisner 1977). As Nelson (1976) has commented:

Temporary or uncommitted migrants will be reluctant to invest more than an essential minimum in housing, even if they can afford to spend considerably more. Usually they will prefer to rent rather than purchase, or build their own shelter ... While temporary migrants are reluctant to invest in housing in the city they are often eager to do so in their homeplaces (pp. 744,745).

The associated claim that despite long-term urban residence, many employees will return home eventually is also supported by a

number of comparative studies. For example, Elkan (1976) has presented evidence of a more stable workforce developing in Nairobi without the severance of ties with the rural economy. His conclusion is that despite spending a considerable period of their lives in the city, they maintain close social and economic links with their villages. In this sense he sees them as migrants because 'nothing that could conceivably be described as a permanent proletariat is emerging in Nairobi' (Elkan 1976:705).

Nelson (1976) makes the point that unfavourable urban conditions (such as housing, wage levels, inter-ethnic conflict) themselves do not explain the strong likelihood of return movement for many migrants because it is the more successful who are likely to return home. Ross and Weisner (1977:367) in their study of Nairobi migrants also conclude that rural-urban ties, rather than being a transitional phase for insecure migrants, are actually greater among the more established and successful migrants. This is partly because they could afford the financial burden of such ties and also seek to win respect and deference from those at home.

The 44 per cent of the middle-level public servants sampled in 1977, who claimed they owned an urban house, comprised those able to obtain housing in the migrant settlements. But their security of occupancy is likely to be minimal. Being able to claim ownership of a house means little if the householder has no rights to the land it stands on. Except for the site-and-service schemes (e.g. the Sisiak settlement in Madang), most East Sepik migrant settlements are located on customary-owned land with varying degrees of permissive residency. The uncertainty of occupancy has recently led some migrant groups in

Lae to initiate informal direct leasing with the traditional land owners (A. Ward 1979:14). If such arrangements can become more widespread and bring 'some order into a confused and uneasy situation', one significant constraint on permanent residence for many migrants will be lifted.

The general reluctance of migrants to commit themselves to a permanent urban residence may also alter if a number of similar constraints are lifted. It seems likely that the government, in the 1980s, will offer much of its stock of housing for purchase on easy terms. Interprovincial mobility will become less likely as public servants become tied to employment in one province, and probably their home province. If superannuation payments on retirement are geared towards the urban cost of living, another major constraint on urban retirement would be lifted.

Nevertheless, urban conditions are not the only or even the main factor in the reluctance of migrants to forsake their rural base. A crucial factor in high levels of return migration is the importance to absentees of guaranteed access to land. According to the Rural Survey, *village residents* claimed that 82.5 per cent of male absentees have clear, unchallenged land rights with a further 13.8 per cent having rights which are open to dispute. The figures on the land rights of absentees were even higher among the East Sepik study villages (Table 7.4). The reality behind these data is the considerable hold the peasant economy maintains on absentee migrants, not only because the land is a means of livelihood, but also because of the strong cultural significance it represents.

Dual dependence and migration: past, present and future

The continuance of a short-term *dual dependence* for many in the form of the physical separation of the migrant worker from his family is evident from the profile of the resident village populations examined in Chapter Seven. The migrants from the study villages included not only those to be found in urban centres but also those resident in the rural non-village sector. The historical pattern of young, unaccompanied male outmigrants and a high level of return migration was still in evidence for the Yangoru villages. The Pagwi study villages, on the other hand, also showed a pattern of high female outmigration and a low level of return-migration for both sexes. The Yangoru pattern reflected a clear tendency towards circular migration over a generation while the Pagwi villages' migration profile indicated both some circular migration and a pattern of permanent family-oriented outmigration.

The continuing trend of men to migrate and of women to remain behind was clear from the low male to female sex ratio in the 15 to 44 age groups among village residents. In contrast, there is also a significantly lower proportion of married male absentees in each age group over 24 years compared with the marital status of the resident men. The relative propensity to migrate is also influenced by an individual's position within his household.

There is a strong indication that women and older male heads of village households remain, or return home, to maintain rural production. Current absentees are more likely to be dependent members of the household and therefore less essential to rural production. The relative propensity of different members of a household to migrate

points to a peasant strategy of survival in which the household straddles the two economies. While the women and older males maintain production in the rural peasant economy, younger male dependents within the household seek employment in the wage economy to accumulate funds rapidly which can be reinvested in the rural economy.

Village land in the peasant economy is only one of the factors of production; labour migration becomes an integral part of many peasant households' survival. Thus the peasant household straddles both the village and urban/plantation economies. It is a strategy aimed at making the 'best of both worlds' in a social formation composed of two economies. This strategy is likely to be successful only where rural resources permit the establishment of cash cropping. The lack of these resources for the Pagwi river village together with a social structure that accords the adult male a minor role in food production, most likely accounts for the greater tendency towards permanent outmigration and for the higher proportion of older heads of households and their wives absent. Despite a high level of regular contact from migrants through visits, mail and remittances, the river villages appeared less capable of sustaining a viable rural production sufficient to encourage high levels of return migration.

Evidence presented in Chapter Seven demonstrated that a number of peasant households continue to engage in a short-term *dual dependence* on the two economies. The prominence of this strategy is likely to depend upon a relatively low population density per unit of arable land and other favourable features of the physical environment. Chapter Five also stressed the importance of the division of labour in particular societies which require the adult male to participate actively in production.

The detrimental effect of migration

Chapter Eight attempted to assess the costs and benefits to the rural economy of the strategy of *dual dependence* adopted by most migrants. The overall impression was that migration drained the rural economy of its most capable people at the most productive periods of their lives and laid a corresponding heavy burden on those remaining at home to maintain production. At the same time, little help was offered through regular remittances as compensation by absentees. In some cases, the village may provide greater help through gifts of food. A more long-term detrimental impact was suggested by a number of indicators demonstrating an association between migration status and rural inequality.

Although it is inaccurate to suggest that migration has introduced substantial differences in wealth and status into what is assumed to be a traditionally egalitarian society, it is highly likely that migration has accentuated greatly a growing rural stratification produced by a mixture of traditional and post-contact factors.

The labour reserve status of the East Sepik has combined with the region's poor physical endowment (which contributed to the use of the area as a labour reserve in the first place) to perpetuate its backwardness. The East Sepik Province in 1978, on a composite index of socio-economic indicators, ranked some 40 to 50 index points (on a scale of 100) below the three top-ranking provinces (Berry and Jackson 1978).

Thus the *dual dependence* fostered by the colonial state and continued today by most migrants (either in the short- or long-term) has *not* been to the mutual benefit of the two economies. The peasant

economy of a labour reserve area such as the East Sepik Province has retained a degree of self reliance, but it is within the framework of a subordinate relationship to the capitalist economy, subsidising the latter at the cost of its own development.

The colonial state, through the MLS, was able to provide subsidised labour to the plantation and mining sectors by requiring the subsistence economy to bear the costs of maintaining the migrant worker's family while the employer paid only a minimal wage to the single worker. To cope with an increasing demand for a cash income while at the same time having to provide for his and his family's long-term future, the migrant worker was forced into dependence on both the wage economy and the village subsistence economy.

A structure of *dual dependence* continues as a legacy of the MLS and is manifest in the continuing pattern of circular migration over the migrant's life cycle. The persistence of circular migration over a number of generations results from the conditions of employment and residence in the wage economy set against the background of the security of rights to land and a guaranteed subsistence livelihood in the rural economy. Where the rural resource base is inadequate, as in the case of a number of villages on the Sepik River, there is likely to be a tendency towards permanent outmigration.

The major consequence of the operation of the MLS has been to inhibit the formation of a large proletariat which accompanied the expansion of capitalism in the metropolitan economies. Labour migration and the increasing commercialisation of rural agricultural production transformed the village subsistence economy into a larger peasant economy separate from, but in a dependent relationship to, the capitalist enclave economy.

The future importance of a strategy of *dual dependence* for migrants will depend upon factors both in the rural subsistence economy and the wage economy. The ability of the rural peasant economy to support the reproduction of its population, including absentees, depends upon the viability of its subsistence base. Tendencies towards less labour-intensive and nutritious food crops could adversely affect the rural economy's capacity to support a rapidly growing population.

A second factor likely to reverse the capacity of the rural economy to accommodate an expanding population is any change to the current system of communal land tenure. This is likely to occur as a class of rich peasants or rural capitalists develops through the accumulation of land by means of individual ownership. This, in turn, will cause poor villagers to lose their land and to become a landless proletariat. Growing rural stratification will transform the rural peasant economy, dispossessing the poor peasants of their land and produce migrants who will become part of a permanent proletariat.

In the wage economy, the post colonial state has accepted some responsibility for the cost of renewal of the workforce through an urban family wage indexed to the cost of living, publically funded education, health services, workers' compensation and superannuation payments to some workers. But other costs normally provided by the state in a metropolitan country are not met: unemployment benefits, family welfare payments, pensions to unskilled or semi-skilled workers, or superannuation payments geared towards the urban cost of living. A continuing reliance on the peasant economy also remains necessary because of the migrants' lack of secure tenure over urban housing and land:

Should the tendency towards *dual dependence* continue, as seems likely, an implication can be drawn about the future level of urbanisation in Papua New Guinea. If a pattern of circular migration, whether short- or long-term, is likely to continue for most migrants, then the relative proportion of the total population which is urban should stabilise or at least expand very slowly, although absolute numbers will increase. The future urban population therefore will come from three major sources: firstly, higher rates of natural increase in the towns; secondly, the influx of migrants from depressed rural areas; and thirdly, from among the children of first-generation migrants. But this growth is likely to be offset by the return migration of long-term urban employees to their villages on retirement; and because the short-term floating population, moving between town and village, not only represents a fairly constant proportion of the urban population at any one time, but also contributes very little to the urban population as its children are usually raised in the village.

Despite the temporary proletarian status of most migrants at present, a small group of urban residents permanently divorced from the rural economy is emerging. This group may be part of a permanent proletariat compelled to sell its labour to survive, or part of the urban peasant sector able to cultivate urban gardens and acquire a supplementary cash income through the informal sector.

Politicians in certain provinces in recent years have called for the expulsion of long-established migrant groups, especially the unemployed, from their provinces (see Talyaga 1978). These demands have been based on the common assumption that everyone has a village to which he can return, and ignores the adverse conditions prevailing

in some migrants' home areas. The Sepiks and others now living in the provinces of New Ireland, East New Britain and Morobe have been the subject of such pressure. The failure of provincial politicians as well as the national government to accept and provide for those permanently divorced from the rural peasant economy is causing considerable hardship to people originally from areas such as the Sepik River. Unless security of land tenure in urban migrant settlements is made possible and urban employment or other cash earning opportunities made available for these people, the plight of poverty-stricken urban residents will become worse.

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