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Badili canoe settlement

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## Foreword

This account of a Port Moresby canoe settlement is part of a wider study of Port Moresby which is being undertaken by the New Guinea Research Unit. It is one of a number of studies of migrant groups settled in the town.

My thanks are due to a number of my colleagues, and in particular to Dr Ann Chowning and to Mr A. Rew, for their criticisms and advice. They are also due to Mr K.D. Mitchell for drawing the maps. I am also grateful for suggestions made in the course of a number of discussions by Mr Brian Amini of the Papua and New Guinea Department of Information and Extension services. Finally I must thank Mr Kamu Iwa Maa and Mr Keto Babaka for taking me into their household and thereby making the study possible.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

A number of writers have criticised Wirth's theory that towns have characteristic social structures within which relationships are 'impersonal, superficial, transitory and segmental', and are based on association rather than community (Wirth 1938:12). The work of writers such as Dewey (1960), Gans (1962) and Bott (1955) indicates that Wirth's theory has limited applicability even in modern industrial cities; and the work of writers such as Epstein (1967) and Bruner (1961, 1963) shows that it does not apply to a number of towns in developing countries. In opposition to Redfield's theory (1941:343) of the folk society in which relationships are based on community, being personal with a stress on kinship, other writers have pointed out that there are many types of rural society. McGee (1964:178), for example, classifies towns as pre-industrial, colonial or industrial, and rural areas as folk, farm or peasant.

The populations of many towns in developing countries are heterogeneous and there are often wide cultural differences between the different ethnic groups. Geertz (1965:4) says of a Javanese town that 'in earliest stages the town was more a loose collection of established social units than an integrated municipal unit': it was a 'hollow' rather than a 'solid' town. Before a satisfactory classification of different types of town can be made, it is necessary to determine whether there are a number of distinct social systems which embrace the whole population.

Port Moresby is a colonial town. Approximately a quarter of its population are of European descent, and most of the remainder are indigenous inhabitants of Papua and New Guinea.

This paper analyses the network of relationships in which the residents of a migrant canoe settlement in Port Moresby are involved, and discusses the economic implications of these relationships. In conclusion, I consider whether Wirth's theory applies to the pattern of relationships in which the settlement population are involved, the extent to which the social structure of the settlement population is similar to that of other groups living in the town, and the factors which give rise to differences between residential groups.

### Method of study

The village of Hula<sup>1</sup> is situated on the coast at Hood Point, approximately seventy miles south-east of Port Moresby, and in 1963 I began to study the Hula people both in their village and as migrants in Port Moresby and elsewhere in Papua and New Guinea. I owned a thirty-five foot double canoe which I used mainly for travelling between Port Moresby and Hula Village. From the end of 1963, I left it when not in use in the care of a Hula man who was living in his own canoe on the beach at Badili in Port Moresby.

In 1962, this Hula man began to draw his canoe up onto Badili beach in the intervals between carrying passengers and goods along the coast to the south-east. As his voyages became less frequent, his canoe was drawn up on the shore for long periods. In 1964 he began to be joined by other canoes until in 1965 there were fifteen canoes, including my own, on the beach.

I decided to study the residents of the Badili canoe settlement for several reasons. I wished to continue my study of the people of Hula Village: there were three Hula canoes in the settlement, which was a convenient centre from which to carry out my enquiries. I knew several of the residents well and I spoke the Hula language. The canoes were beached close together and the line extended for less than one hundred yards. It was therefore easy to observe the activities of the people living in them. The majority of residents of the settlement came from different types of villages within the Hula language area: some of them were situated on the coast and some inland. Finally, it would have been difficult to find accommodation in a house in one of the crowded settlements built on land. My own canoe was serving as an annexe to the canoe of the man who was looking after it, and by living in it I became a member of his household. His distant consanguineal kinsman and the kinsman's adopted son lived in my canoe with me.

I lived in the Badili canoe settlement for nearly three months from September to December 1965, except when I was making a number of short trips by canoe along the coast. In May 1967 I re-visited the settlement for a period of two and a half weeks. In September 1965 I recorded the number, age, sex and relationships within the settlement, and work histories of the residents. In October 1965 I recorded the incomes and expenditures of the occupants of three

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<sup>1</sup> Hula is the name of the village, and also of the Melanesian language which is spoken from Round Point to Cape Rodney (Capell 1947:40-5). Elsewhere (1967a:2) and in Bibliography I have used the term Vulaa to describe the tribe inhabiting six villages, including the villages of Hula and Alukuni which were both represented in the settlement.

canoes for seven days. The occupants of each canoe in the settlement ate together and pooled their resources, and I was therefore able to treat the occupants of each canoe in the sample as a single household. The three households were chosen because the canoe owners came from different villages and followed different occupations: one was a fisherman, one a carpenter, and the third worked for a European as a storekeeper and crocodile-skin curer. I recorded the budgets of only three householders because the time available in the evenings was short, and it took a long time to obtain a full account of their economic activities during the day in the course of general conversation. As far as possible, information was obtained by observation and by taking part in settlement activities, rather than by formal interviews. I attended church services, went fishing and took the residents in my Landrover when they visited relatives or had business to transact. During my research among the Hula I became known as their 'lawyer', and the residents and people living outside the settlement consulted me about problems ranging from avoidance of prosecution for debt to the destruction of bedbugs which were infesting a canoe. My presence is likely to have affected the behaviour of the residents in a number of ways, but I do not think that these seriously affected my analysis. To avoid unnecessary embarrassment, I have obscured the identity of the residents by referring to them by letters of the alphabet and by being deliberately vague about villages of origin and about residential locations within the settlement.

### Port Moresby

The indigenous population of Port Moresby consists of members of two landholding groups, the Motu and Koita, and migrants. The Motu and Koita live in five urban villages (if the Hanuabada complex is treated as one village). The migrants live in housing rented from the Administration, housing provided by employers (including the Administration), and migrant settlements. Since 1949 migrants have established twenty-two discrete nucleated settlements in Port Moresby. With the exception of one settlement on Administration land and two canoe settlements on the sea and on the shore, all of them are on native land. Fifteen of these migrant settlements are inhabited by people from the Gulf of Papua, and four of the remainder, including the Badili canoe settlement with which this paper is concerned, are mainly occupied by people from the Hula language area.

Development of the town is dispersed over a wide area. This has come about partly because of the hilly terrain, but mainly because the Administration, as a matter of policy, refrained from the compulsory acquisition of rights to native land. About one fifth of the town area is still native land held under customary tenure. The town has four main focal points: the main commercial area near

the harbour; the government headquarters at Konedobu; the commercial centre at Boroko; and the Papuan centre in the Koke (Koki) and Badili area. The Papuan market is located on the shore by a small bay at Koke to which fish, vegetable foods, meat of small game, betel nut and betel peppers are brought by canoe, truck and air from different parts of the Central District. There is also a European-owned cold store and fish shop, which is supplied with fish by canoes. In the shallow bay at Koke there is the canoe settlement which was described by Belshaw (1952). Close to the market is an area of land held by mixed-race people on which they live with their Papuan kin and affines, some of whom are related to residents of Badili canoe settlement. Some twenty stores, many of them owned by Chinese, straggle through Koke-Badili along the road which connects the various centres of the town. The Papua Ekalesia,<sup>1</sup> the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist missions all have churches in the area. The Roman Catholic Mission also has a maternity hospital at Badili. The Administration, the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions and the Salvation Army maintain primary schools in the area. Badili is the main industrial area of the town and includes a brewery, a small tobacco factory, the headquarters and workshops of the Australian Petroleum Company, and a number of workshops and transport undertakings. Both European and indigenous employees live in the area (Map 1). To the east of Badili, three housing settlements for government employees, four urban villages, and ten migrant settlements are inhabited by a large indigenous population.

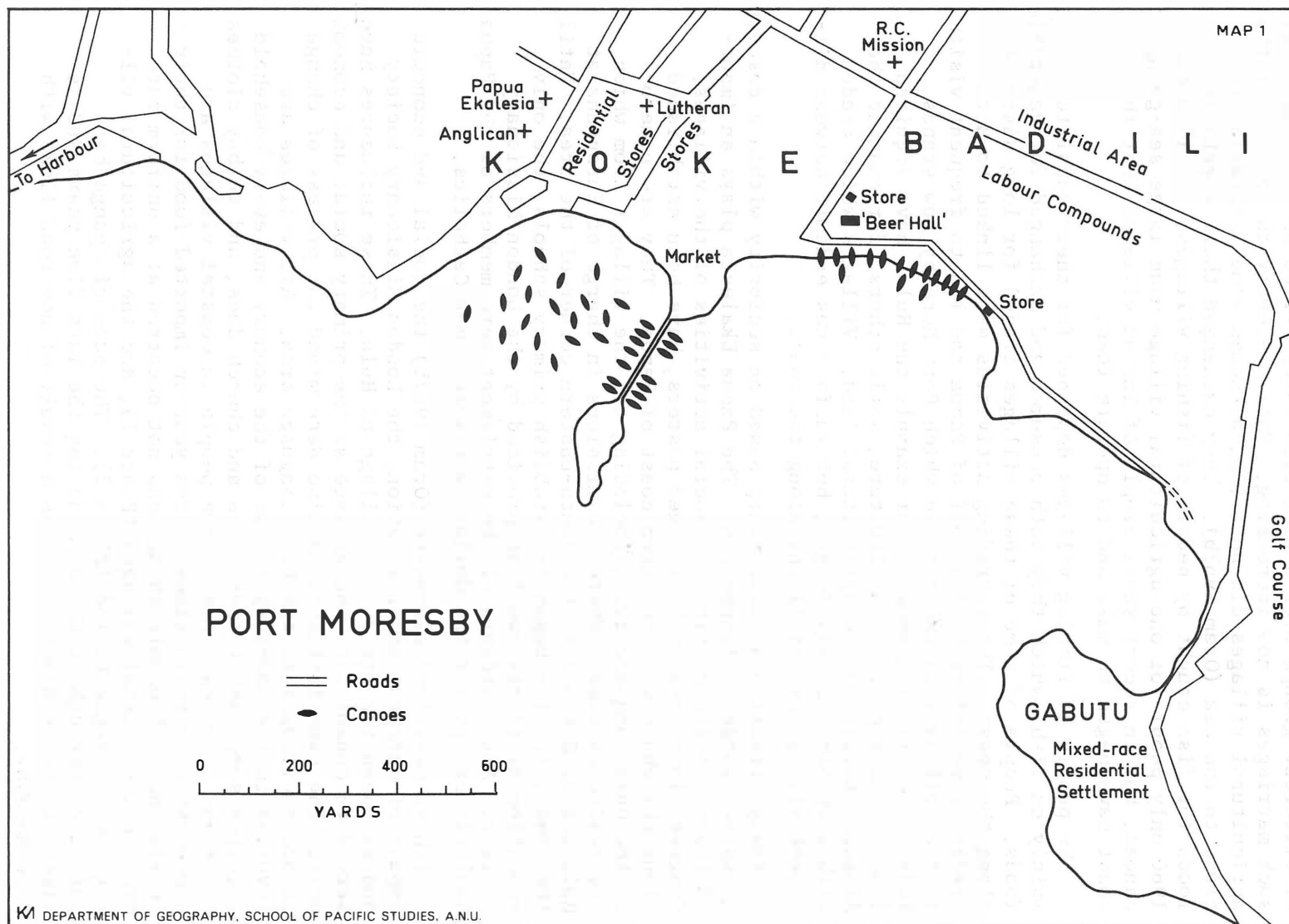
### The rural background

Rainfall is low and soil poor over a large part of the coastal areas of the Central District of Papua. Population is sparse and is concentrated in a large number of discrete, nucleated villages. The groups living in villages in the Hula language area are alike in language and culture, and this cultural continuity extends throughout the Melanesian-speaking areas of central Papua. Village populations are divided into patrilineal descent groups. Marriages are ideally patrivirilocal but there are many exceptions. All village groups from pre-contact times have been prepared to allow strangers to settle among them and become members of a descent group in certain circumstances, for example marriage to a female member of the descent group, and adoption. The two residents in the settlement whose fathers came from the Gulf District would be allowed to claim land rights in their mothers' villages in the Hood Peninsula and to settle there.

In the past, the peoples of the different villages interacted in feasts, marriage, warfare and trade. In pre-contact times members

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<sup>1</sup> Until 1961 known as the London Missionary Society.



of different groups over a wide area intermarried and the number of such marriages is now increasing. Until recently the people of the agricultural villages did not fish, although some villages were close to the sea (Oram 1967b). They exchanged their vegetable foods for fish caught by people of fishing villages. Until about 1960 only people of one agricultural village made large sea-going canoes, but in recent years people of inland villages near the coast have begun to make and to operate them.

The people of fishing villages depended for their subsistence mainly on fish, which they both consumed and exchanged for vegetable foods. People of some of these villages traded for long distances along the coast. Their trading activities were linked to Motu trading expeditions to the Gulf of Papua and led to frequent visits to Motu villages in the area in which Port Moresby now stands. Today, some fishing peoples, for example the Hula, have acquired land and also practice agriculture, while others, for example the Alukuni, still have no agricultural land. Villages which traded with each other rarely fought, but warfare was endemic between different village groups living along the coast.

Today, traditional leadership based on seniority within a descent group has largely disappeared. The Papua Ekalesia plays an important part in integrating the social activities of the villages. Congregations, headed by trained pastors, have been established along the whole south-eastern coast of Papua. They are numerous in the Hula language area, including all the villages from which the residents came. There are missions in charge of Europeans at Hula and at Gavuone in the south-eastern corner of the area. Until the Administration began to establish primary schools, the only education available was that provided by the London Missionary Society. All residents of the settlement were members of the Papua Ekalesia except for the Goilala who were Roman Catholics.

I have described elsewhere (Oram 1967b) the social and economic impact of European administration, the London Missionary Society and European traders on the village of Hula. These influences have served to consolidate the village as the primary social and economic unit. The same institutions also determined the process of change in other villages in the Hula language area. All villages are involved in the monetary sector of the economy and every household requires some cash to pay taxes and church dues, and to buy clothes, tools and imported foods. Some people in coastal villages are dependent at certain times of the year on imported food for their subsistence. Economic change has not occurred at a uniform rate even in the coastal villages (Plate 1), and the agricultural villages have lagged behind (Plate 2). The pace of change has quickened throughout the area during the last five years and is likely to be even more rapid as a result of new road links with Port Moresby.



Plate 1. Hula: a coastal village with modern houses



Plate 2. Alomarupu: an inland village with traditional houses



## Chapter 2

### Badili canoe settlement

At Badili to the east of Koke harbour there is a shallow, sheltered bay where the beach slopes gently to the water. There were formerly boatbuilding yards along the shore, but these have been replaced by woodyards and small workshops. Behind the shore are several labour compounds, a bar licensed to sell alcoholic drinks (locally known as a 'beerhall') and two European-owned stores. The beerhall and the stores are situated within a hundred yards of the canoe settlement. Rights to land above highwater mark are held by the Administration and the beach has been gazetted as a public careening area where boats could be cleaned and repaired. Although the canoes had been drawn up on to the beach without the permission of the Administration, no attempt had been made to remove them by the end of 1965. In 1964, however, the Building Inspector ordered canoe owners to remove shanties which they had built on the shore, and they complied with his order after some delay.

No public services were provided by the Administration for the canoe dwellers. They bought water from one of the stores or from a nearby house for two shillings a fortnight. The European householder at first allowed those who so wished to pay him with fresh fish instead of money but subsequently only money was paid. Most of the canoes had toilets in the bows, which were mainly used by women. The majority of residents relieved themselves on the beach, which was cleansed when the tide came in, and in the bush by the shore. At infrequent intervals a gang of workmen was sent by the Department of Public Health to unblock the noisome open drain which discharged into the sea in the middle of the settlement, and which quickly became blocked again.

### Life in the settlement

The canoes varied in length from thirty-five feet to nearly fifty feet and were up to ten feet in the beam. Each canoe had a house which varied from fifteen to twenty feet in length and covered the width of the canoe. The best built house was constructed of marine-ply roof and walls, and had doors and louvred windows (Plate 3): the worst house was made of scrap timber, pieces of flat iron and canvas. All canoes except one were seaworthy. At any one

time there would be four or five outboard motors in the settlement, but other canoe owners possessed motors which they had lent to kinsmen because they did not need them at the time.

Canoes were kept moderately clean and the beach near each canoe was sometimes swept. The sea near the shore and the beach itself was usually covered in a black, dirty seaweed. Meals were cooked on stoves made from paraffin drums (Plate 4), and many households also owned primus stoves. All households used aluminium cooking utensils and china plates and cups, but the Alukuni also used traditional wooden platters. Most households owned dogs, which scavenged among the cooking utensils. The interiors of the canoes were furnished with mats, and with wooden and tin boxes with locks in which valuables were kept. Each canoe had a pressure lamp, but there was not always enough paraffin to light them.

Older men wore coloured shirts and shorts or waistcloths to work. On more formal occasions, such as church services, they put on a white shirt, sometimes with a tie, and a white waistcloth, and some wore sandals (Plate 7). Younger men wore shorts or long trousers, and either wore a waistcloth for formal occasions or shorts, shoes and socks. All women wore European type dresses, and the younger women owned at least one smart modern dress. Women seldom wore shoes, but a few owned shoes which were worn on special occasions. Children of both sexes had one tidy outfit in which they were dressed up when the occasion demanded.

The day began early. Singing could often be heard as early as 4 a.m., and at dawn between 5.30 a.m. and 6 a.m. men began to light fires on canoes and to smoke and talk. The members of the households washed and dressed outside their houses on the canoes. The Alukuni fishermen came back about dawn with their catch, which was collected and cleaned by women. In the morning food was eaten according to the state of the larder, and might consist of tea with cold vegetables left over from the evening meal, or rice and perhaps fish. Men left for work between 6.30 and 7.00 a.m., and a little later children went to one of the schools in the Badili area. A stream of passers-by, some of whom stopped for a chat, were seen from the canoes.

During the day the Alukuni fishermen and their wives worked incessantly at repairing their nets and other fishing equipment (Plate 5). Other men in the settlement built or repaired canoes or sat and chatted with visitors. After women had finished their light domestic duties, which included sweeping the beach near their canoes, they sometimes collected shellfish when the tide was out.

At about 3.30 p.m. children came back from school and men began to return from work after 4.00 p.m., when another stream of passers-by passed the settlement. The men who had returned worked on canoes or sat and talked. Children played together on the beach.

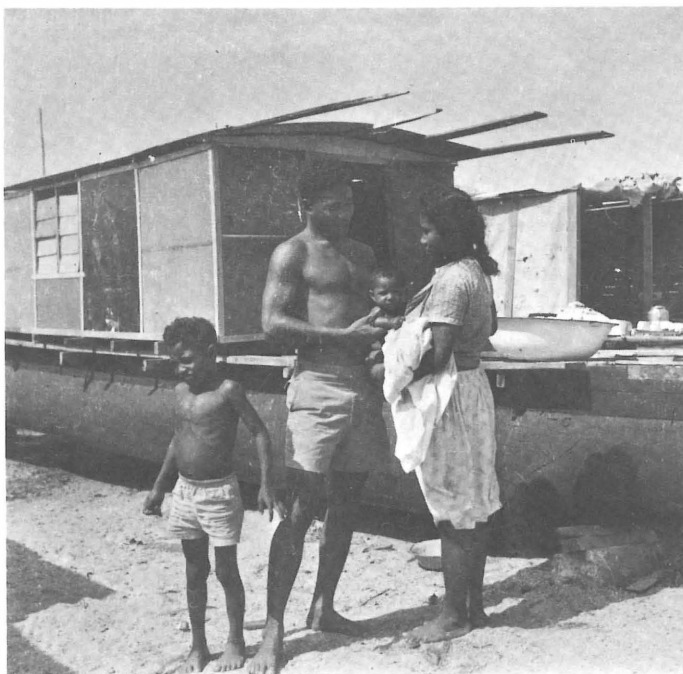


Plate 3. Canoe family: well-built canoe house with  
louvres in background



Plate 4. Canoe deck showing cooking stove



Adolescent girls played tag or some other game with older boys and any young unmarried men who were there. Evening meals were eaten at dusk at about 7.00 p.m. Lights were out in most canoes by 8.30 p.m. or 9 p.m., unless occupants sat up to talk for some particular reason.

Men who were employed during the week preferred to go fishing on Friday evenings so that they could rest on Saturdays. Saturday was spent in carpentry, resting and going to the market. Sunday was enjoined by the Papua Ekalesia as a day of rest and services were held on the beach. Visits were made and received.

Life was mainly lived in the Koke-Badili area, in which the majority of the men worked. Visits were made to relatives elsewhere in the town, but these were infrequent. During a seven day period only one journey was made by bus, for example, by one person out of the three canoe households whose budgets I recorded. Older children liked to go to the cinema if occasion offered but were not enthusiastic filmgoers, and no other interest was shown by residents in urban forms of entertainment. Except for occasional disputes, life in the settlement was orderly and peaceful as the residents went quietly about their daily routine.

There were usually two or three visiting canoes from the residents' natal villages anchored at the settlement. People living in the Hula and Alukuni settlements on Daugo (Fisherman's) Island, which is four miles west of Port Moresby, frequently came by canoe to the settlement after selling their fish at Koke Market.

#### Characteristics of the settlement population

The place of origin of the settlers, the majority of whom came from the Hula language area, is shown in Table 1.

With the exception of one household, the Hula-speakers came from the neighbourhood of Hood Lagoon, including the Hood Peninsula. This area is seventy miles south-east of Port Moresby and can be reached in less than ten hours by canoe, and in three to four hours by truck. All the residents whose place of origin was outside the Hula language area were linked by cognatic or affinal ties, or both, with Hula-speakers: the mother and the wife of one man whose father came from the Gulf of Papua, and the wife of the other, came from the Hula language area. Table 2 indicates the place of origin of canoe owners and their wives.

The canoes were beached in three main groups along the shore. The owners or wives of owners of canoes numbered 1, 3 and 4 came from Hood Peninsula agricultural villages, and the owner of canoe number 2 and his wife came from a coastal village some fifteen miles to the south-east. Three of the next five canoes were owned by Hula villagers. The occupants of my own canoe (number 8) formed part of the Hula household of canoe number 9, and canoe number 1

Table 1

Badili canoe settlement - place of origin of men and women  
aged 20 years and over\* - September 1965

| Area of origin                        | Men | Women | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|
| Hood Lagoon (fishing)                 | 10  | 8     | 18    |
| Hood Lagoon (agricultural)            | 3   | 3     | 6     |
| Other Hula language area              | 1   | 4     | 5     |
| Sub-total: Hula language area         | 14  | 15    | 29    |
| Central District (Motu)               | 2   | 2     | 4     |
| Central District (Goilala)            | 2   | 1     | 3     |
| Gulf of Papua                         | 2   | -     | 2     |
| South-eastern Papua                   | 1   | -     | 1     |
| Sub-total: Outside Hula language area | 7   | 3     | 10    |
| Total                                 | 21  | 18    | 39    |

\* All residents under 20 were children of residents.

Table 2

Village of origin of canoe owners and their wives living in  
Badili canoe settlement, 1965, in order of canoes from  
north to south

| Canoe | Owner           | Wife        |
|-------|-----------------|-------------|
| 1     | Kerema*         | Kalo**      |
| 2     | Maopa***        | Maopa       |
| 3     | Makerupu**      | Boera#      |
| 4     | Iokea*          | Makerupu    |
| 5     | Hula#           | Hula        |
| 6     | Keapara**       | Kelerakwa## |
| 7     | Hula            | Hula        |
| 8     | European (self) |             |
| 9     | Hula            | Tubusereiaφ |
| 10    | Alukuni#        | Alukuni     |
| 11    | Alukuni         | Alukuni     |
| 12    | Kapa Kapaφ      | Alukuni     |
| 13    | Alukuni         | Alukuni     |
| 14    | Alukuni         | Alukuni     |
| 15    | Tafadeφφ        | Keapara**   |

\* Gulf District.

\*\* Hood Lagoon (agricultural).

\*\*\* Hula language area (fishing).

# Port Moresby Sub-district (Motu).

# Hood Lagoon (fishing).

## Hula language area (Marshall Lagoon) (agricultural).

φ Rigo Sub-district (Motu). φφ Goilala Sub-district.

was owned by a man from Keapara, a village which has long been closely associated with the Hula village (Oram 1967b). Four of the next five canoes were owned by people from Alukuni village, and the fifth was owned by a Motu man living with his Alukuni wife and her parents. The remaining canoe was owned by a man from the Goilala sub-district which is in mountainous country inland from Kairuku (Map 2).

As shown in Table 3, the total population of the settlement was seventy-six. The average number of occupants of each canoe was therefore five, the largest number being ten and the smallest two. The ages of the majority of the adult residents of the settlement were between thirty and fifty years.

Table 3  
Population of Badili canoe settlement by age and sex -  
September 1965

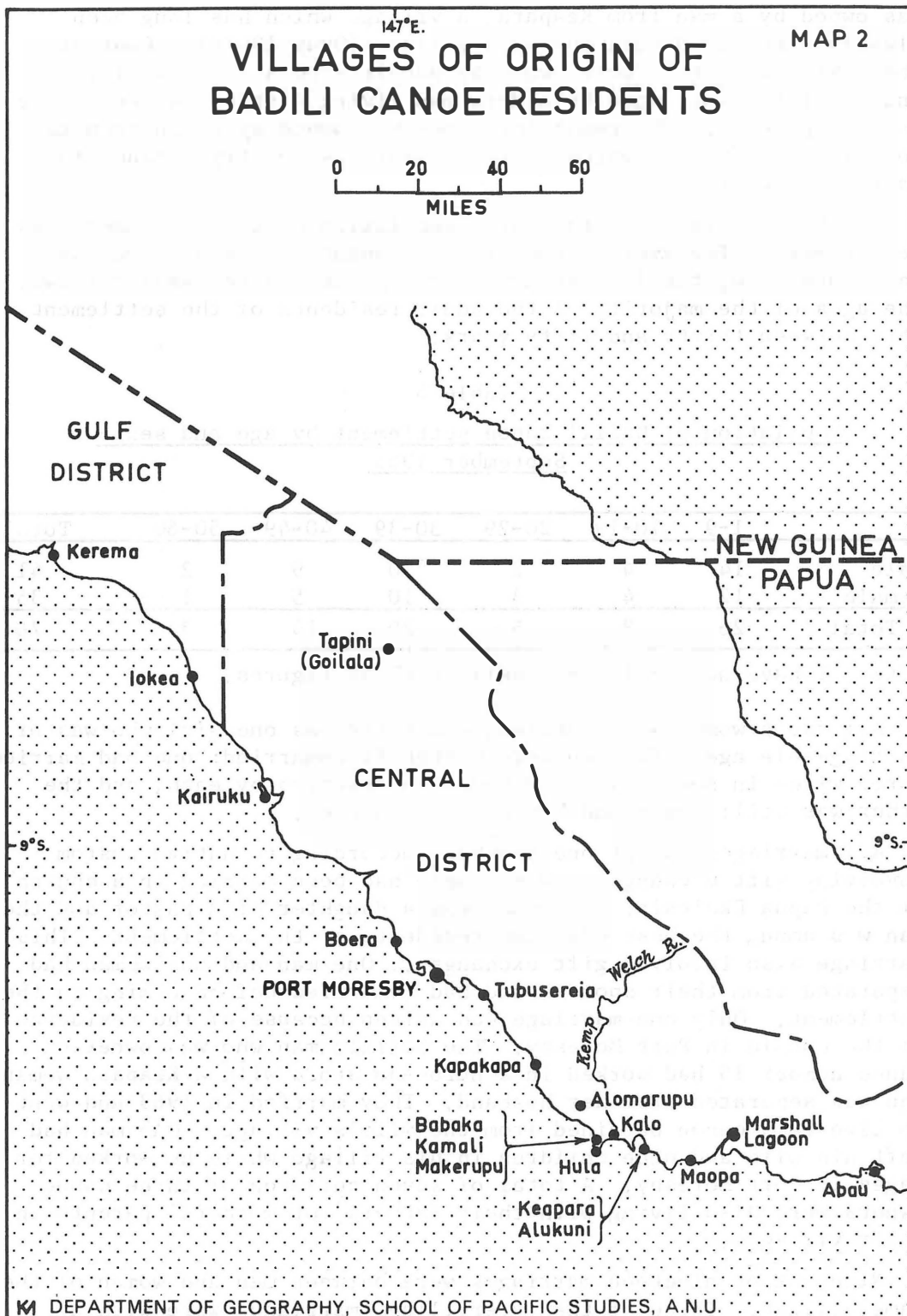
|        | 1-9 | 10-19 | 20-29 | 30-39 | 40-49 | 50-60 | Total |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Male   | 14  | 4     | 2     | 10    | 9     | 2     | 41    |
| Female | 12  | 4     | 3     | 10    | 5     | 1     | 35    |
| Total  | 26  | 8     | 5     | 20    | 14    | 3     | 76    |

Note. I have not included myself in these figures.

All adult women were married, and there was one girl who was of marriageable age. Two men were currently unmarried: one had married three wives in succession and had been deserted by each, and the other was still young and had not yet married.

All marriages except one had been according to native custom involving gift exchanges. One couple had been married in a church of the Papua Ekalesia: the woman was a daughter of a pastor and the man was among the best educated residents of the settlement. This marriage also involved gift exchanges. One man and one woman had separated from their spouses and had remarried before coming to the settlement. Only one marriage had arisen because of the residence of the couple in Port Moresby. The Goilala man who was owner of canoe number 15 had worked in a European store with a Keapara woman who was separated from her husband. They married in 1963 and went to live in a canoe obtained from the wife's village. One man had left his wife and nine children in his village while he worked for wages in Port Moresby. A total of seven children of three canoe owners were also living with their fathers' or mothers' parents in their villages.

Nine out of nineteen marriages were between men and women of the same village. Three of the intervillage marriages were with a woman of the man's mother's village. One man's wife came from his



mother's village while his wife's mother came from his own village. Two examples illustrate the number of villages with which a man can have close ties.

The father of A left his village, Iokea (Map 2), with two other young men because of intervillage war, and travelled by boat to Port Moresby. They worked in Port Moresby, and eventually went to the Hood Peninsula village of Kalo where they married local women. It is probable that they had worked on plantations in the upper reaches of the Kemp Welch river where many Gulf people were working before the first world war. A first married a Kalo woman, but they separated while he was working in Port Moresby, and he subsequently married a woman from the Hood Peninsula village of Makerupu. In September 1965, A was living with his second wife in his canoe.

The father of B was killed by a shark in 1935 when B was about ten years old. His mother, who was from the Hood Peninsula agricultural village of Kamali, then married a man of the eastern Motu village of Tubusereia. She went to live at Tubusereia with her children by her Hula husband and when B grew up he married a Tubusereia woman. He has built himself a good house in his mother's village of Kamali. He is reluctant to spend any time in Hula, although his brother, who visits him frequently in Port Moresby, lives there. He says that people are jealous because he has rights to a large area of land and he is afraid that they may harm him through sorcery.

Schools were established by the London Missionary Society in the Hula language area before the declaration of a Protectorate in 1884. Today the majority of people living in the Hula- and Motu-speaking villages represented by residents of the settlement can read and write with varying degrees of efficiency in their own vernacular. The older adults living in the settlement had only reached one of the first four standards in mission primary schools and knew little English, although it had always been taught in the larger mission schools. Their children were much better educated. One man, who was a student at the Administrative College, and his wife, had both received some secondary education; one man had been to a technical school; and one had reached the top standard of a government primary school. Three men could speak English with some fluency. One canoe owner's son, who was then working in the New Guinea highlands, had been to a technical school and the daughter of another canoe owner was a trained child welfare nurse. All the children of school age living in the settlement, except three children from one household who did not go to school, attended schools in the Koke-Badili area.

All men in the settlement had had considerable experience of life in Port Moresby. The six Alukuni fishermen had only come to live in Port Moresby during the previous two years and had no history of employment for wages, but they had been accustomed to

come to Port Moresby on fishing expeditions since their childhood. The remaining men, with the exception of one who had left his family in his home village and who had only worked in the town for four months, had spent all their adult lives in some gainful occupation, although not only in Port Moresby. The following is an example of a varied occupational history.

C carried supplies to troops in forward areas for one and a half years during the second world war. After the war he was employed on a plantation as a shooter of pigs and birds. From 1952 to 1954 he was being trained in Port Moresby as a medical orderly, but he left through fear of sorcery, which he believed had caused the death of one of his fellow students. From 1955 to 1960 he worked with his distant consanguineal kinsman, B, as a carpenter for three European employers, one of them the manager of an inland rubber plantation. He and B worked from 1960 to 1963 with a 'merry-go-round' which was based in Port Moresby, but which toured other parts of Papua and New Guinea. They then joined with other kinsmen to form a fishing company, but this collapsed when half their out-board motor was lost on a reef. He subsequently obtained employment as an office cleaner. He continued to live with B and B's wife and children in B's canoe.

The residents said that they came to Port Moresby to earn money, which they needed to bring up their children. Besides the underlying economic motive which led the residents to earn money in the town, there were a number of personal reasons why each man had left his village. One canoe owner had been a lay-pastor<sup>1</sup> in a rural village when his son contracted poliomyelitis. After his son had been sent to Port Moresby hospital, he abandoned his pastoral duties and obtained employment as a carpenter. He said that he stayed in town because his previous wages had been too small and he wanted to provide adequately for his children, of whom one was attending a secondary school in Port Moresby. One canoe owner said that he had left his village through fear of sorcery.<sup>2</sup> One was said by others to have rights to only a small area of land in his village, though this is likely to have been only a contributory reasons. Five of the Alukuni canoe owners had come to Badili because they wished to stay with their children. Either their sons, or their daughters' husbands, were working in the town. A close relative of the sixth Alukuni canoe owner's wife (her mother's brother's son) was a student at the Administrative College. His wife and child lived on the canoe and he visited them at weekends. Two

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as a catechist, a lay-pastor carries out the duties of a pastor in the Papua Ekalesia, but has not attended the training college for pastors in Fife Bay.

<sup>2</sup> See p.19.

Alukuni canoe owners continued to live in Port Moresby, although their sons had left with their families to work elsewhere. One was staying in Port Moresby to earn money to meet his son's marriage exchanges; and the other wished to be near his sister, who was living with her husband in a neighbouring canoe.

The canoe owners settled at Badili both because of lack of alternative accommodation and because of its convenience as an anchorage. Unless they were prepared to pay the high rents demanded at the predominantly indigenous suburb of Hohola, those who were self-employed could only hope to find accommodation with relatives. Only a few employers were able to provide their married employees with accommodation. By living in their canoes they obtained free accommodation and also retained their mobility, which for the fishermen was essential. The bay at Badili provided a good anchorage and beach, it was near the market and contact was easily made with people coming from their villages. Badili was preferred to the canoe settlement at Koke because Koke was crowded and largely occupied by people from another part of the Hula language area.

While a number of residents say that they will stay in Badili as long as the Administration allows them to do so, considerable movement takes place. During my stay in 1965 one canoe household returned to its village after a stay of one and a half years because the owner had finished a contract with the Commonwealth Department of Works. One canoe moved to another anchorage because, the residents said, the owner's wife wished to take her husband out of reach of the beer hall. By May 1967 only seven of the original canoe owners were still living in their canoes. Three others had left their canoes at Badili and kinsmen were living in them. One of these three canoes was occupied by the canoe owner's daughter and three other girls who were working in a store at Koke. The residents expect the canoe owner to return some time in the future.

The settlement, however, continued to grow. In May 1967 there were twenty-six canoes in the settlement. One canoe was occupied by a Kerema man and his family, whose European employer had bought the canoe from an Alukuni man for \$160 and had built a house for him on the canoe. The total population of the settlement was 120. The mean number of people living in each canoe was approximately the same as in 1965.

## Chapter 3

### Patterns of relationships

Within the network of relationships in which the residents were involved, I distinguish between six main bases: kinship, reciprocal relationships between non-kin, neighbourhood, church membership, employment, and relationships with public officials. Content of relationships involves other elements than the basis on which the relationship is formed: relationships based on church membership, for example, contain affective and economic elements. While it is difficult to make any assessment of the affective element in its content, it is possible to measure economic implications of any relationship. In a number of primitive societies, 'The span of social distance between those who exchange conditions the mode of exchange' (Sahlins 1966:149). In this paper I attempt to fit the economic activities of the residents along a continuum with, in Sahlins' terminology, 'generalised reciprocity', which refers to transactions which are putatively altruistic, at one extreme; 'generalised reciprocity', which refers to direct exchange in which the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay, at the midpoint; and 'negative reciprocity', which is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity, at the other extreme (1966:147, 148).

#### Kinship

In considering relationships based on kinship, a distinction must be made between relationships between residents of the settlement and their kinsmen living in the settlement; their kinsmen living in the Port Moresby area; and their kinsmen living elsewhere. The composition of households in the settlement is set out in Table 4.

Four sets of two households were linked by ties of kinship. The wives of two canoe owners were sisters and the mothers of two other canoe owners were sisters. The father of one canoe owner and the mother of another were closely related. The canoe owner A was a distant agnatic kinsman of C.

In many developing countries, for example in Stanleyville in the former Belgian Congo (Clement 1956:371), urban residence has enabled married women to achieve greater independence from the control of



Plate 5. Fisherman: nets are hung on frames to dry and to be repaired

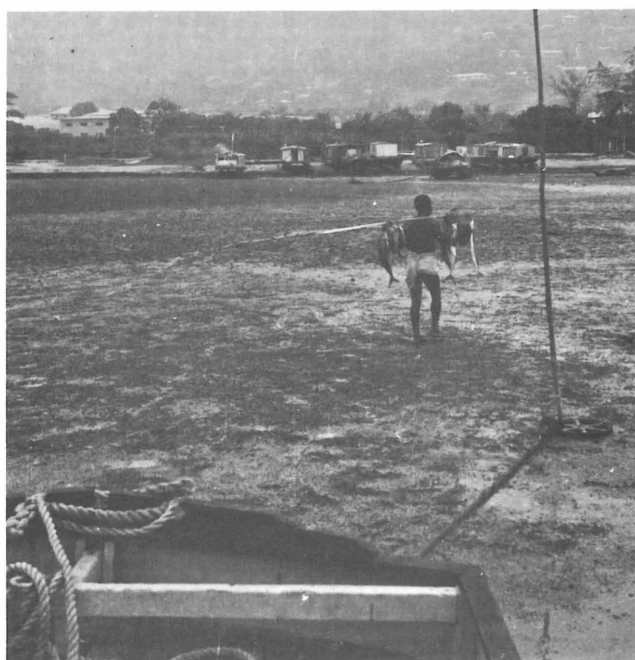


Plate 6. Fisherman setting out to sell his fish in a labour compound



their husbands and kin. Married women living in the settlement, however, devoted themselves to their light domestic tasks. They left the settlement only to go to the market, when for reasons of necessity or interest they were accompanied by their children or by neighbours, and occasionally visited relatives accompanied by their children. During the two years in which I was in contact with the settlement there were no scandals affecting married women.

Table 4

Composition of fifteen households at Badili  
canoe settlement, 1965

|                                                                                                       |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Simple nuclear families                                                                               | 9  |
| Nuclear family + wife's brother                                                                       | 1  |
| Nuclear family + husband's brother + wife's father + wife's mother                                    | 1  |
| Nuclear family + daughter's husband + daughter's child                                                | 1  |
| Nuclear family + wife's brother's son's wife + wife's brother's son's child (+ wife's brother's son*) | 1  |
| Nuclear family + husband's brother + husband's brother's wife + husband's brother's children          | 1  |
| Single man + adopted son**                                                                            | 1  |
| Total                                                                                                 | 15 |

\* At weekends.

\*\* My own canoe excluding myself.

The activities of married women were limited mainly because they had found no new economic roles in the town to replace those which they had played in their villages. Only the wives of Alukuni fishermen made a significant contribution to the economy of their households. They collected fish and equipment from the canoes when their husbands returned in the morning, cleaned the fish and helped their husbands to sell it either by hawking it round the labour compounds (Plate 6) or by selling it in Koke market. During the day both husbands and wives incessantly repaired their nets when they had no other occupation.

Two households owned sewing machines, with which women made garments for their own families. They also occasionally made clothes for neighbours, who later repaid them by gifts in kind rather than by money. The household in which I was living owned a sewing machine but the wife of the canoe owner made no clothes for outsiders while I was there. The household was probably too

affluent to make this necessary. Women in the settlement occasionally collected shellfish, but engaged in no other form of economic activity. In some households only men did the marketing, but in others it was done by both men and women. Children were frequently sent to nearby stores to buy small quantities of food and other commodities to meet immediate needs.

Control over girls who had reached adolescence was strict. When one household was living on an inland rubber plantation, the elder daughter had attended a secondary school as a day girl. When the household moved to the settlement, her father would not allow her to stay as a boarder for fear that she might be 'spoiled'. One canoe owner fetched his daughter, who was employed at Koke market, from work every evening and he escorted her when she went to a dance. She was married soon after I left the settlement. Older girls and youths and young unmarried men played on the beach together every evening, but they did not leave the area. Evidence gained from my own study of other urban groups such as the Motu and people of Hula village, and from Belshaw's account of Hanuabada (1957:177), suggests that such strict control was not the norm, but that attitudes among parents varied greatly.

Strong ties were maintained between adult children and their parents. While no parents of canoe owners lived either in the settlement or in Port Moresby, frequent contact was made with parents living in their villages. These contacts were face to face, or made by correspondence or by messages and by gift exchanges through an intermediary. While I was living in the settlement, two fathers, a father's brother and two mothers visited their sons who were canoe owners in the settlement and some of them made several visits. One son, who had previously lived with his parents in their canoe but left to work in the New Guinea highlands, visited them once and one daughter, who was working near her home village as a mission child welfare nurse, twice visited her parents. All informants stressed the duty which lay on children to support parents when they were old. As indicated in D's budget in Table 5, for example, his daughter who was living with him gave him her wages; and the child welfare nurse sent all her savings, amounting to \$22, to her father from the village. The obligation extended to father's siblings, and possibly to mother's siblings should need arise. It extended, though less strongly, to all elderly relatives.

Men in the settlement claimed that they maintained very close ties with their full brothers wherever they were living but it was not possible to substantiate this. One man said that he was unwilling to visit his father's village in the Gulf District for fear of sorcery, but that his three brothers visited him frequently. Contacts between full brothers were frequent while I was staying in the settlement. Two canoe owners were sharing their canoes with their brothers, and frequent contact was made with brothers living

in Port Moresby and elsewhere. The brothers of two canoe owners were living in the Koke-Badili area, and visits were frequently exchanged between the pairs of brothers and their families. The following is a brief account of such a relationship.

B's brother lived with his wife and children in an employer's compound, half a mile from the settlement. Accompanied by their wives and children the brothers constantly exchanged visits. Whenever B's brother quarrelled with his wife, he slept in B's canoe. They also became drunk together, and their relationship was punctuated by frequent quarrels. One brother, for example, accused the son of the other of causing his own son to play truant from school. A serious quarrel which took place after I left the settlement was ended by a formal reconciliation. In accordance with custom the brothers bought a pig which was killed and eaten at a meal which the families shared.

Many canoe owners were regularly visited by their brothers who lived outside Port Moresby. One man from Alukuni went frequently to Port Moresby to sell fish. When he did so he brought his brother, a canoe owner, a load of firewood which the latter sold in small bundles for 20 cents a bundle. Another man carried passengers and goods in a native-owned truck between Hula and Port Moresby at least once a week. Whenever he did so he stayed with his brother in his canoe, and gave him food from the village.

The residents were members of patrilineal societies in which male siblings traditionally co-operated in such activities as fishing and gardening, and the content of sibling relationships contained a large element of utility. Close and regular contact between brothers was expected and the relationship can also be assumed to include a strong affective element.

Utility played a more important part in causing contacts to be made between more distant kin, although the obligation to assist each other remained strong. There appeared to be little visiting for the sake of maintaining contact, except in such special circumstances as the birth of a child. If individuals needed help they could choose between a number of relatives; when, for example, they were seeking hospitality in Port Moresby.

Relatives living within the settlement constantly assisted each other to overcome the problems of daily life and in this their behaviour differed little from that of neighbours. They were also obliged to give assistance when more serious problems occurred, such as the need to raise money to pay a fine imposed by a court of law. During the domestic dispute described below,<sup>1</sup> one canoe owner gave the canoe owner (a distant agnatic kinsman) involved in

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<sup>1</sup> See p.32.

Table 5

Budgets of three households at Badili canoe settlement: 25-31 October 1965

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1. D's household

| Income                   |                                  |             | \$    | Outlays                   |                                       |  | \$    |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------|
| A. <u>Cash</u>           |                                  |             |       |                           |                                       |  |       |
| 1.                       | Cash in hand                     |             | 3.38  | 1.                        | Indigenous food                       |  | 1.15  |
| 2.                       | Income from employment           |             | 5.10  | 2.                        | Imported food                         |  | 4.14  |
| 3.                       | Other income: daughter's wages   |             | 15.00 | 3.                        | Clothing                              |  | 2.10  |
| 4.                       | Transfers:                       |             |       | 4.                        | Household goods                       |  | 0.35  |
|                          | (a) wife's father's mother's son | 0.40        |       | 5.                        | Tobacco                               |  | 1.00  |
|                          | (b) brother's daughter           | <u>0.50</u> | 0.90  | 6.                        | Betel                                 |  | 1.17  |
| 5.                       | Excess of outlays over income    |             | 0.00  | 7.                        | Beverages (soft drinks)               |  | 0.15  |
|                          |                                  |             |       | 8.                        | Transfers to neighbour                |  | 0.20  |
|                          |                                  |             |       | 9.                        | Other expenditure                     |  | 0.00  |
|                          |                                  |             |       | 10.                       | Excess income over outlays            |  | 14.12 |
| <u>Total cash income</u> |                                  |             | 24.38 | <u>Total cash outlays</u> |                                       |  | 24.38 |
| B. <u>Kind</u>           |                                  |             |       |                           |                                       |  |       |
| 1.                       | Transfers - food                 |             |       | 1.                        | Transfers - cooked food to researcher |  | 0.10  |
|                          | (a) researcher                   | 1.50        |       | 2.                        | Goods consumed                        |  | 1.80  |
|                          | (b) neighbour                    | <u>0.40</u> | 1.90  |                           |                                       |  |       |
| 2.                       | Transfers - other                |             | 0.00  |                           |                                       |  |       |
| <u>Total kind income</u> |                                  |             | 1.90  | <u>Total kind outlays</u> |                                       |  | 1.90  |
| <u>Add cash income</u>   |                                  |             | 24.38 | <u>Add cash outlays</u>   |                                       |  | 24.38 |
| Total income             |                                  |             | 26.28 | Total outlays             |                                       |  | 26.28 |

2. E's household

|                          |                                                             |              |                           |                        |              |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <b>A. <u>Cash</u></b>    |                                                             |              |                           |                        |              |
| 1.                       | Cash in hand                                                | 3.21         | 1.                        | Indigenous food        | 5.80         |
| 2.                       | Income from employment                                      | 0.00         | 2.                        | Imported food          | 5.10         |
| 3.                       | Other income                                                | 0.00         | 3.                        | Clothing               | 1.20         |
| 4.                       | Transfers: from sister's husband<br>for looking after child | 2.00         | 4.                        | Household goods        | 0.00         |
| 5.                       | Excess outlays over income                                  | 9.47         | 5.                        | Tobacco                | 0.91         |
|                          |                                                             |              | 6.                        | Betel                  | 0.50         |
|                          |                                                             |              | 7.                        | Beverage (soft drinks) | 1.17         |
|                          |                                                             |              | 8.                        | Transfers              | 0.00         |
|                          |                                                             |              | 9.                        | Other expenditure      | 0.00         |
| <b>Total cash income</b> |                                                             | <b>14.68</b> | <b>Total cash outlays</b> |                        | <b>14.68</b> |

|                                                         |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------|--|----------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------|
| B. <u>Kind</u>                                          |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| 1. Transfers - food                                     |             |       |  | 1. Transfers - food to neighbour             |             |      | 0.10  |
| (a) New Guinea visitor                                  | 5.89        |       |  | 2. Goods consumed                            |             |      | 7.60  |
| (b) Son                                                 | 1.31        |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| (c) Neighbour                                           | <u>0.20</u> | 7.40  |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| 2. Transfers - other                                    |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| (a) Betel from son                                      |             | 0.30  |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| Total kind income                                       |             | 7.70  |  | Total kind outlays                           |             |      | 7.70  |
| Add cash income                                         |             | 14.68 |  | Add cash outlays                             |             |      | 14.68 |
| Total income                                            |             | 22.38 |  | Total outlays                                |             |      | 22.38 |
|                                                         |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| 3. <u>F's household</u>                                 |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| A. <u>Cash</u>                                          |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| 1. Cash in hand                                         | 12.00       |       |  | 1. Indigenous food                           |             |      | 0.00  |
| 2. Income from employment                               | 12.00       |       |  | 2. Imported food                             |             |      | 2.53  |
| 3. Other income                                         | 0.36        |       |  | 3. Clothing (baby clothes, toilet articles)  |             |      | 6.22  |
| 4. Transfers                                            | 2.00        |       |  | 4. Household goods                           |             |      | 0.30  |
| 5. Excess outlays over income (drawn from savings bank) | 6.00        |       |  | 5. Tobacco                                   |             |      | 0.59  |
|                                                         |             |       |  | 6. Betel                                     |             |      | 0.00  |
|                                                         |             |       |  | 7. Beverages                                 |             |      | 0.00  |
|                                                         |             |       |  | 8. Transfers to relative in domestic trouble |             |      | 6.30  |
|                                                         |             |       |  | 9. Other expenditure:                        |             |      |       |
|                                                         |             |       |  | (a) hospital fees                            | 4.00        |      |       |
|                                                         |             |       |  | (b) bus fare                                 | <u>0.10</u> | 4.10 |       |
|                                                         |             |       |  | 10. Excess of income over outlays            |             |      | 12.32 |
| Total cash income                                       | 32.36       |       |  | Total cash outlays                           |             |      | 32.36 |
|                                                         |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| B. <u>Kind</u>                                          |             |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| 1. Transfers - food                                     |             |       |  | 1. Transfers                                 |             |      |       |
| (a) brought by father from village                      | 5.90        |       |  | (a) food to neighbours in return             | 1.70        |      |       |
| (b) given by wife's brother                             | <u>0.50</u> | 6.40  |  | (b) food to relative                         | <u>0.20</u> | 1.90 |       |
| 2. Transfers - other                                    |             |       |  | 2. Goods consumed                            |             |      | 7.10  |
| (a) betel brought by father                             | 0.10        |       |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| (b) shoes given by wife's brother                       | 2.50        | 2.60  |  |                                              |             |      |       |
| Total kind income                                       |             | 9.00  |  | Total kind outlays                           |             |      | 9.00  |
| Add cash income                                         |             | 32.36 |  | Add cash outlays                             |             |      | 32.36 |
| Total income                                            |             | 41.36 |  | Total outlays                                |             |      | 41.36 |

the dispute \$6.30 to express his sympathy and to help him in the crisis. This transfer is recorded in F's budget (Table 5).

Contacts with relatives living in Port Moresby were made to serve a particular purpose. One man, for example, went to a relative, who was employed by a building contractor, to obtain scrap timber for firewood. Relatives coming to Port Moresby rarely did so for the specific purpose of visiting residents of the settlement but visited them during the course of transacting other business. When they did so they brought food to the settlement dwellers. If they stayed in a canoe their hosts would give them presents of money, which might amount to \$10 or even \$20 if their stay was prolonged, when they left. Such visits were made more frequently by people of coastal villages, but since trucks have replaced canoes as the principal means of transport in the Hood Lagoon area (Oram 1967b), people from agricultural villages will find it equally easy to visit the town.<sup>1</sup>

The extent to which settlements in Port Moresby serve as staging camps for members of the same ethnic group appears to vary. Rabia Camp served as a staging camp for Purari migrants coming to Port Moresby (Hitchcock 1967:52). Hula coming to Port Moresby found lodging with their nearest relatives wherever they were living, and the settlement at Taikone was not a staging camp (Oram 1967c). Unrelated people rarely stayed in the canoe settlement but newcomers would seek the hospitality of their kinsmen. One boy, who had been at a secondary boarding school outside Port Moresby, was undecided whether to return to school after his father died. He stayed for some weeks with his father's eldest brother's son, a canoe owner, until he joined the Port Moresby Teacher Training College.

Relationships were activated when the co-operation of a group of kin was required, for example, at life crises. A relative of a canoe owner wished to raise a contribution from his own kinsmen for the mortuary rites of his wife's father. He borrowed the canoe owner's outboard motor to earn money by selling fish. The relative was collecting contributions from all his kin, and the canoe owner said that he would later give him some money as well as lend him his engine.

All informants said that there was no obligation to return the gifts and services of kinsmen: in explanation it was always said 'we are one family'. One woman frequently visited a Badili canoe household with her husband and children while her husband was fishing off Port Moresby. Her mother and the canoe owner's father were siblings. She went by air to Lae in New Guinea where she

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<sup>1</sup> A road is now being constructed which will also connect the south-eastern parts of the Hula-speaking area to Port Moresby.

visited her own and her husband's kinsmen. Four days later she returned with \$127 which they had given her. A large part of the sum was given to her by her husband's brother. She and her relatives in the settlement said that the money had been given to her for no other reason than as an expression of kinship ties. They agreed that the donors would make no attempt to obtain any return, even indirectly, in the future. They said, however, that she would distribute most of the money among her own and her husband's relatives.

Transactions relating to property did, however, cause disputes among kinsmen. The following is one example of such a dispute. G lent his outboard motor to two sons of his father's brother who were living in their village. They used it for commercial purposes for two years without making any return to G for its use. G asked for payment but they said that as near kinsmen they were under no obligation to give it. After a violent quarrel between the two fathers, the two men paid G \$50 and returned the motor. G continued to grumble that he had been badly treated.

G regarded his outboard motor as part of the stock of his 'business', and this and similar disputes may indicate new attitudes to property, especially property of a non-traditional kind. Disputes over rights to property and its distribution were frequent in the past, however, and it cannot be assumed that such a dispute was specifically the result of involvement in a modern economic system.

A number of examples occurred of reciprocal relationships being maintained between affines, and especially of a husband meeting his obligations towards his wife's relatives. These can be divided into three main categories: wife's parents, wife's full brothers and other relatives of the wife.

The parents of one canoe owner's wife were living with their daughter and her husband, and the daughter of another canoe owner, with her husband and child, were living in his canoe. In both canoes the husbands supported their wives' parents. Parents of wives of three canoe owners visited them and stayed for one or two weeks at a time. The parents of one woman visited her because she was in an advanced state of pregnancy. The parents of another woman twice visited their daughter during my stay bringing a canoe load of produce for sale in Koke market. They gave, however, little food to their daughter and her family. When a wife's parents left they would be given imported food and sometimes sums of money depending on the length of their stay.

Among the Hula-speaking groups represented in the settlement, men are expected to maintain close relationships with their married sisters and their husbands. Traditionally the importance of the relationship was expressed through a number of ceremonial exchanges, and in coastal villages men co-operated in fishing activities with

their sisters' husbands. The man was expected to watch over his sister's interests, and her husband was obliged to make valuable presents to him from time to time: in Port Moresby, for example, I found two clerks who had no wrist watches because they had given them to their wives' brothers. An incident occurred during my stay in the settlement which illustrated the strength of a man's obligation towards his wife's brother.

G was a canoe owner whose wife's unmarried brother H lived with them and their three children in their canoe. H had been captain of a Papua and New Guinea soccer team and regularly played football. He made no attempt to find work and the residents considered him to be very lazy. G grumbled frequently about having to keep him. G worked as a driver and before he left Port Moresby for a week in the course of his employment he asked H to finish a double canoe which he was making. When he came back and found that H had done nothing, he drove his wife and her brother from the canoe and they found shelter in the nearby house of a relative. The next morning, which was a Sunday, G's wife added fuel to the flames of her husband's anger by asking him why he had not finished the canoe himself instead of going away. Replying that he had to earn money to food his children, he took an axe and destroyed his two canoe hulls and the house which he had built on one of them. A few days later, the family, including H, were living together in a shelter on the beach.

When discussing the incident a number of residents considered that G had acted foolishly but they sympathised with him for having to keep anyone as lazy as H. They did not, however, greatly blame H for his idleness. All agreed that G could not send H away because of the disapproval he would incur from people in his village.

An example of the consequence of offending affines occurred shortly after I left the settlement in December 1965. D's son married a girl from the same village and approximately \$800 was given to the father of the bride. This was the highest marriage payment ever to be paid in that village. D's son and his son's wife went to live with him in his canoe. When the wife became pregnant she went to live with her father in their village. The wife's two brothers frequently visited D's canoe where they were given food and other gifts. They played records on a gramophone belonging to D which they broke. D then sent them away from the canoe, saying that he had fully paid for their sister as a wife for his son. The two young men reported his behaviour to their father, and the father threatened to take his daughter away from her husband. After some time, the wife wrote to her husband and told him that she would only come back to him if his father and mother left the canoe and did not return to it. D and his wife accordingly went to live with a married daughter in another coastal village.

The reciprocal nature of affinal relationships was illustrated by the case of F, who had from time to time made gifts to his wife's

brothers. When his wife gave birth to a child, F said that all the men of his wife's generation whom he called brother-in-law would give either him or his child a present. One such gift was a pair of shoes which is entered in F's budget (Table 5).

While the balance of the system of exchanges appeared to have favoured rural visitors, no one in the settlement complained of the financial burden which this imposed. One canoe owner said that the obligation to give departing visitors \$20 or \$30 in cash was a heavy burden for someone like himself who was earning \$12 a week. He said this, however, as a matter of information rather than of complaint.

### Relationships with unrelated persons

Relationships which the residents had formed with unrelated persons ranged from those based on fictive kinship to those involving purely commercial transactions.

In the past, fictive kinship relationships were formed between members of different coastal Melanesian-speaking groups of the Central District of Papua as a result of trading activities. Some of these relationships have persisted through three generations. They are of economic importance to members of groups living in Port Moresby because they are able to replenish their food supplies by visiting their fictive kinsmen in times of need and especially before Christmas. One example recorded in the settlement concerned B, whose family had been connected for several generations with a family in the inland village of Alomarupu. In the past Hula fishermen provided fish and were given vegetable foods in exchange when Alomarupu gave a feast (Oram 1967b). B used to visit Alomarupu frequently when he was a small boy. When he was carrying passengers and goods in his canoe between 1963 and 1965, he obtained vegetables and betel nut from the Alomarupu family and gave them imported food such as sugar and rice in exchange. While I was living in the settlement, a widow who was a member of this family stayed for two weeks in B's canoe with her three unmarried daughters. They were given a number of presents including handbags, clothes, household utensils and a return fare which cost \$8.

Not all fictive kinship relationships are long established. A Mekeo man from the northern part of the Central District living near the shore used to stroll along the beach in the evenings and one day a canoe owner invited him to have food. Thereafter the Mekeo and the canoe household continued to exchange food and other presents, and the Mekeo gave the canoe household betel nut (which they bring to Port Moresby by air) whenever he passed by.

Several canoe households became involved in a form of relationship which was solely the product of urban residence. Two young men from the Mumeng Sub-district of New Guinea had attached

themselves to different canoes. The relationships had been formed when they wandered along the beach in the evening and they became friendly with the children of residents. They came down after work in the evenings, at weekends, and sometimes in the early morning. They played with the older boys and marriageable girls living in the settlement, helped carry out household tasks such as cutting wood and drawing water and ate with the households. They were smartly dressed in shirts, pressed shorts, and sometimes long socks and shoes. One sometimes brought a small boy, whom one of the young sons of the canoe owner described as his 'friend'. The second canoe owner referred to 'our New Guinea boy'. They were sometimes accompanied by three or four people from the same area, who sat silently on the canoes for an hour or more.

By May 1967 the number of relationships between canoe households and New Guineans had increased. There was a young unmarried man from Minj Sub-district living on one canoe. After his father and mother had died, he went to work on a rubber plantation on the Sogeri Plateau to the east of Port Moresby. He ran away from work because, he said, he was beaten and ill-treated in other ways by a European, and the brother of the canoe owner, who was a foreman in the plantation factory, took him to live in his home. After some months he went to live on the canoe and found employment in a bakery.

A young New Guinea man regularly visited another canoe. He came from the Goroka Sub-district of the Central Highlands District and was employed in the beerhall near the settlement. He used to wander along the beach but no one offered him any food. One day he told the canoe owner and his wife that they were his 'Mamma and Papa'. They thereupon gave him food and continued to do so while he brought food and other presents in return.

These relationships involved frequent economic exchanges. The residents supplied the New Guineans with food and the service of cooking it. They also provided shelter and company in leisure hours. In return the New Guineans gave the canoe owners bags of flour, and a gift of food valued at \$5.89 is included in E's budget. They also gave the canoe dwellers such articles as torches and left their transistor radios in the canoes.

The raison d'etre of these relationships requires careful examination. After hearing a passer-by making an obscene suggestion about one of the New Guinea men's intentions towards the daughter of a canoe owner, I considered the possibility that the aim of the New Guineans was to establish marital or extra-marital relationships with the adolescent girls who were living in each of the four canoes concerned. Certainly marriages occurred between New Guinea men and coastal Papuan women. I noted several examples in Port Moresby of Papuans accepting advance payments for a girl from a New

Guinea man, whom subsequently the girl did not marry. The father or guardian then tried to avoid paying back the money to the New Guinean. The brother of a canoe owner was involved in a dispute caused by a payment of this kind, and the canoe owner himself was accused by a woman resident of failing to pay back money paid in similar circumstances.<sup>1</sup> A number of disputes also arose because New Guineans married Papuan women and took them away from Port Moresby without completing the marriage exchanges. Papuan informants considered that New Guineans tried to obtain wives cheaply without making full payments for them.

Residents with whom I discussed these relationships, including those who had not formed any friendships with New Guineans, denied that either parties had any ulterior motives beyond the obvious benefits which the relationships produced. The New Guineans, who were single men living in labour compounds, were able to relax in a family atmosphere and enjoy well cooked food. The canoe residents were likely to gain financially from the goods which the visitors brought. On one occasion in discussion these relationships were described in fictive kinship terms. The values involved in the exchanges appear to be those of 'balanced reciprocity'.

Residents were frequently involved in commercial transactions with people with whom they had formed no previous relationship, and these transactions frequently led to disputes. Two examples occurred concerning the sale of canoes. A canoe owner agreed to pay \$80 for a canoe hull for which he paid \$20 in advance. When he took the canoe to the beach he discovered that the hull was rotten under the paint and patches. He made strenuous efforts to persuade the owner to agree that he should pay only \$50. After the owner threatened to take the matter to the Assistant District Commissioner, they agreed that he should pay a total of \$70. Another canoe owner bought a small canoe in poor condition and skilfully restored and painted it. When the former owner saw the refurbished canoe, he tried without success to regain the canoe in return for the original sale price.

I recorded similar examples elsewhere in Port Moresby of failure to honour an agreement both between unrelated Papuans and between Papuans and Europeans. Those causing the dispute relied on the strength of their position to obtain better terms for themselves, irrespective of the original agreement. Equally with disputes between kinsmen, these disputes were not the product of an urban environment and they also occur in Western societies. Failure of Papuans to honour agreements, however, occurs sufficiently frequently to cause mistrust on the part of expatriates in dealing with Papuans.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 37.

### Neighbourhood

Co-operation was close between members of each of the three clusters into which the settlement was divided. It was closest between the Alukuni households because the men co-operated in fishing. One Alukuni man who owned an outboard motor often towed one or two canoes behind him. His wife and the wife of another canoe owner were sisters and no return was made by the second canoe owner for this service. Other Alukuni who were helped in this way repaid him with small gifts of food, betel nut and tobacco.

There was also frequent contact and co-operation between the different clusters. The Hula, who were members of the same tribe as the Alukuni and also had close ties with the agricultural villages of the Hood Lagoon area, linked the different clusters together. As residents passed up and down the line of canoes, they stopped to chat with the occupants, discussing their carpentry and exchanging news. The residents treated the small outrigger canoes possessed by each household as common property and took them without obtaining permission from their owners. When large canoes were launched or drawn up onto the beach all available men, women and children helped to pull them. There was also constant contact and co-operation between immediate neighbours. They helped to look after each other's children and performed other services, and supplied each other with small quantities of food and cigarettes when they ran short. When G quarrelled with his wife's brother, E's wife sent the household a dish of food in sympathy and G's wife sent food in return two days later. Both these transactions are entered in E's budget (Table 5).

The Goilala canoe owner and his brother, however, had little contact with the other residents of the settlement. They reached the road by a footpath leading directly from their canoe and rarely chatted to members of other households. They associated mainly with members of their own ethnic group who visited them. The wife of the Goilala canoe owner interacted with her immediate neighbours but because she was unpopular for reasons discussed below,<sup>1</sup> her contacts were limited. While the Goilala men had little contact with other members of the settlement, attitudes towards them were friendly and the Goilala canoe owner was described as a 'quiet, good man'.

Apart from the domestic disturbance described on p.32, the only threat to the peace of the settlement was caused by J, the wife of the Goilala canoe owner. She had already caused trouble before I went to live in the settlement, and residents said that they had

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<sup>1</sup> See p.37.

reported her behaviour to the District Office. Another canoe owner had agreed that his daughter should marry a member of J's husband's group, but the marriage did not take place. The canoe owner said that he had refunded the money which had been given him but J continued to abuse him. Several quarrels arose during which the parties shouted at each other late into the night. During a day-time quarrel a resident called the police, and within half-an-hour of his doing so J had boarded a canoe bound for her own village. She returned three weeks later after, some residents said, her brother had hit her over the head with a stick. She continued to cause trouble. A canoe owner reported her to the police after she had accused his daughter and another girl of running after men, but the police took no action. She later threatened the Alukuni with sorcery because she objected to their paying the house owner for their drinking water with fish instead of money. She felt that this might endanger her own supply of fish. This caused a further quarrel.

The residents had evolved no machinery for dealing with a problem such as that posed by J, who was probably psychologically unbalanced. Their only resource was to call in the authorities.

### Church membership

The only activities in which residents joined as a group were those which resulted from their membership of the Papua Ekalesia. Each urban village has its own pastor and church and there are two missions with European missionaries in charge. The mission at Koke, which ministers to the needs of the migrants living in the town, is staffed by a Papuan pastor as well as by a European missionary. The pastor came from a village in the Hood Lagoon area and served for several years at Hula until he was transferred to Koke in 1963.

When I began to live in the settlement, only two men regularly attended services at Koke Church. E, who had been a lay-pastor until he came to Port Moresby, aided by one of the residents who was a deacon, organised the singing of religious songs and held church services on the beach on Sundays. These followed closely the form of service in village churches. There was a chairman who conducted the service, and different people read lessons, said prayers and gave short addresses. Nearly the whole population of the settlement attended in their best clothes, men and women sitting apart on the sand. Sometimes the pastor from Koke took the service. On one occasion a European missionary from the Hula-speaking area came to the beach attended by a number of leading Papuan church members living in Port Moresby (Plate 7).

Considerable efforts were made by Papuan church leaders to ensure that church members stayed within the fold. All the residents except the Goilala people had been brought up as members of

the Papua Ekalesia. One resident was an unbeliever on principle, although he attended the services on the beach. He said that he agreed with the views of his former European employer, who said that Europeans' true god was money, and that he felt that this also applied to Papuan pastors. Considerable pressure was brought to bear on him to stay within the church fold. On one Sunday the Koke pastor conducted the service at the settlement and the leading local government councillor of the man's village attended it. The councillor said that as the resident's grandfather had been one of the first Papuan missionary teachers in the Gulf of Papua, he should be ashamed not to be a church member. The pastor threatened his family with illness and himself with hell-fire when he died.

Church membership had important economic consequences. A migrant living in Port Moresby may be simultaneously involved in three different church organisations and pay subscriptions to each: the church in his own village; the church at Koke; and the church organisation in the settlement in which he is living. The residents of a Hula settlement calculated that they paid \$36 a year in church dues. These dues were not yet being paid in the Badili canoe settlement (with the exception of the Alukuni and some others who paid dues to their village churches) but residents were asked to contribute one or two shillings after each service. After each service, one of the residents in co-operation with members of his village group provided a 'table' (Plate 8). This consisted of tea with sugar and biscuits or bread. There was sometimes rice and tinned fish. One duty of church members was to give food to the Koke pastor, whose cash income was low. On one occasion church leaders at Koke arranged for two female residents to collect food for the pastor from other residents and from church members living in the Badili area.

The gatherings at church services provided the only forum at which matters of general interest were discussed. At one meeting, for example, the drinking of alcohol by church members was considered. The Papua Ekalesia discourages its members from drinking alcohol and in some Hula-speaking villages the local church vigorously opposes it. The consensus of opinion at the meeting was that church members should not drink in public, for example, in licensed bars. If they drank in their own houses, however, this was a matter for their own consciences, provided that they did not cause a disturbance. The same opinion was expressed in private discussion after the meeting. Church activities in the settlement, however, were much more limited than in the villages or in the Hula settlement at Taikone. This was a reflection of the diverse origins of the residents. Where members of a single village group, such as the Hula, live together in an urban settlement, they organise a large number of social activities connected with the church, but a sense of corporate unity was not yet sufficiently developed in the settlement for this to be done.



Plate 7. After a church service: residents and visitors.  
The beerhall is in the background



Plate 8. After a church service: the 'table'



Although the residents belonged to a widespread church organisation, membership did not involve them in contacts with members of other urban groups. There was no increase of attendance at services at Koke Church; and as I have noted elsewhere (Oram 1967c), such attendance involved little contact with members of other village groups. Church members at the Badili canoe settlement were invited to attend services at the canoe settlement at Koke and at the Hula settlement at Taikone, but this only brought them into contact with people from their own language area.

### The work situation

Contacts made during employment were the direct result of urban residence. They were made with Europeans and with people from different parts of Papua and New Guinea. The occupations of men resident in the settlement are set out in Table 6.

Table 6

### Occupations of men living in Badili canoe settlement in September 1965

| Occupation                                         | Number |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Carpenter                                          | 1      |
| Canoe crew/research worker*                        | 1      |
| Contractor - drainer**                             | 2      |
| "    - stonewall**                                 | 1      |
| "    - painter**                                   | 1      |
| Domestic servant                                   | 1      |
| Driver                                             | 1      |
| Fisherman**                                        | 6      |
| Office cleaner                                     | 2      |
| Plant operator                                     | 1      |
| Public servant (student at Administrative College) | 1      |
| Storekeeper/crocodile-skin curer                   | 1      |
| Stonemason                                         | 1      |
| Unemployed                                         | 1      |
| Total                                              | 21     |

\* Employed by me.

\*\* Self-employed.

All the men who were working were employed in the Badili area with two exceptions. One was a contractor who went to work by bus and one man was provided with transport by his employers.

With the exception of the two Goilala men, who were employed as a domestic servant and as an office cleaner, and the one unemployed man, all the men in the settlement were doing work which demanded some education and skill. The second office cleaner also did some

clerical work. The plant operator had been given special training and was highly skilled. The majority of the remainder were versatile and had achieved limited expertise in a number of occupations: one man, after serving in the police band, had worked as a painter and then as a carpenter, and was currently building a dry stone terrace on contract. The office cleaner whose work history is described above,<sup>1</sup> and my canoe crew had previously been employed as carpenters, and most of the men in the settlement could have obtained employment as carpenters if they so wished.

Ten out of the twenty-one men were self-employed, but the high proportion was due to the inclusion of six professional fishermen who would not be found in any other urban settlement. Self-employment was considered by all informants to be the ideal way of earning an income. Three men then in wage employment had previously been self-employed; and the storekeeper/crocodile-skin curer hoped to establish his own business of shooting crocodiles and curing the skins.

Most of the residents were in the Papuan middle to upper income brackets. Incomes from employment varied greatly. During the week D's budget was recorded (Table 5), he only earned \$5.10 from sale of fish but weather conditions were bad. The fishermen claimed that they sometimes earned as much as \$20 a week from fishing, but exchanges of fish for bowls of flour and rice within the settlement made calculation of their cash income from this source difficult. Only one man had a formal contract but he left the settlement before I could record details. The remainder of those described as contractors were paid according to piece-work rates, which they distributed among those who were working with them. The man who was working on the stone wall said that he retained \$20 a week for himself. The highest individual wage was \$23 a week earned by the plant operator and the lowest was \$8 earned by one of the office cleaners. Wages of many employees varied considerably according to the amount of overtime worked. The plant operator, who worked long hours, said that he frequently received as much as \$20 in overtime.

Only one woman was in wage employment in 1965. She was D's daughter and she worked at the fish freezer at Koke market. It was owned by a member of a religious sect who on principle distributed part of the profit among his employees. As indicated in D's budget (Table 5), she received \$15 which was a high wage for a woman. She married some months after I left the settlement and ceased to be employed. In 1967, however, eight girls from the settlement were working in a large store at Koke.

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<sup>1</sup> See p.20.

The nature of their employment, such as carpentry for example, brought some of the residents into close contact with a limited group of people. The contractors worked with relatives or members of their own village group. The stone wall contractor employed two relatives and two men from his own village. One carpenter was working on a building for a religious sect on which five men were employed. The majority of the residents' fellow employees came from the Central District but included some men from the Gulf of Papua and elsewhere. Contacts among members of different groups were friendly and resources were often pooled to buy tea and food for the midday break. Drivers, however, were involved in a large number of casual contacts. Few relationships formed during working hours were maintained after working hours. The association formed by two residents who were working together on a plantation is described above.<sup>1</sup> They were, however, related and were working in isolation, and there are many instances in Port Moresby of men working together in isolated places away from their homes who formed close friendships. A number of migrant groups were allowed to establish themselves on village land because of such friendships. One canoe owner, however, taught a young man from the Southern Highlands District of Papua how to paint a house. The young man frequently visited the canoe, bringing presents and receiving food in return.

A situation occurred in the settlement which was the result of a relationship formed by two men working together. While D's son had been living in his father's canoe he had become friendly at work with a man from another Hula-speaking village. This man had married a woman from the Kairuku Sub-district (see Map 2). D's son and his friend were sent by their firm to work elsewhere, and the friend left his wife in Port Moresby in the care of his father. One day the wife arrived at D's canoe and asked to be allowed to stay with him. She said that she was frightened because her father-in-law 'had tried to pull off her blankets at night'. D allowed her to stay and she was still with him two weeks later when I left. D was annoyed at the woman's intrusion but the relationship between the woman's husband and D's son made it impossible for him not to offer her hospitality.

As a result of the nature of their employment many of the residents came in frequent contact with Europeans who employed them or who were in charge of them. The owner of the store came to the beach out of working hours to see his employee; and a transport supervisor frequently came down to the beach to discuss the driver's itinerary. While there were a number of examples in the Hula settlement at Taikone (Oram 1967c), no examples occurred in the Badili

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<sup>1</sup> See p.20.

settlement of Europeans and residents joining in leisure activities such as shooting and fishing. Only one example occurred of an attempt by Europeans to maintain a relationship outside the work situation: three slightly drunk Europeans tried to persuade a former employee among the residents to go home with them to have a party. A Papuan visitor sitting in my canoe remarked that they were probably after women. One indication of the nature of the relationships between Papuan employees and their European supervisors is that all males in the settlement, including small boys, had a fluent and accurate knowledge of English swear words.

In contrast to the lack of obligation towards strangers with whom they were involved in commercial transactions, the residents appeared to feel an obligation to do adequate work in return for their wages. This was indicated both by their opinions and by their actions: they were rarely absent from work unless forced to stay away by some overriding obligation such as the death of a relative. There are a number of possible explanations for their attitude. Plenty of work was available for skilled workmen and there appeared to be little fear of dismissal. The mission may have inculcated the importance of working hard, and strict enforcement of early labour legislation relating to indentured labour may also have instilled a respect for work. It is more probable, however, that the responsible nature of their work and a feeling of craftsmanship, combined with frequent face-to-face contact with their employers, were the main determinants of their attitude.

### The Administration

As I have shown elsewhere (Oram 1967c), the activities of the Administration impinge very little on the indigenous inhabitants of Port Moresby. There are few government agents below the town headquarters level, and in 1965 the Badili canoe settlement was not included within the boundaries of a local government council. Residents rarely came into contact with government officials. They were, however, involved with public authorities in three ways. They paid their taxes to their rural local councils; they looked to the Administration to maintain law and order; and they benefited from government health and educational services.

The villages from which the majority of residents came were within the jurisdiction of either the Rigo or Marshall Lagoon local government councils. Councillors periodically visited Port Moresby to try to collect taxes from migrants in the town. No councillor came to collect taxes from residents of the settlement while I was living there; but a councillor from a Hood Peninsula village, whose relative lived in the settlement, anchored his canoe there while he collected taxes in the town.

The residents were generally law-abiding. The majority of the residents did not drink alcohol, and drunkenness occurred only

occasionally in the canoes. Residents did not drink at the beerhall nearby. One resident was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for being drunk and disorderly but the incident occurred elsewhere in the town. There was no gambling in the settlement although at that time it was still rife among most migrant groups.

There were fights at the beerhall every weekend which were watched by the residents, but they were not disturbed by violence from outside. They lived, however, in constant fear of theft. They battened down their canoe houses at night, and when there was a rumour that thieves from the Gulf District were abroad, one canoe owner patrolled the settlement armed with a stave. No thefts occurred while I was there. One resident told me that he had seen a shotgun being stolen by a 'large Kerema man' at night but as he heard the gun being loaded, he said nothing for fear of being shot. The sewing machine of one of the residents was stolen shortly after I had left. On two occasions European and indigenous police chased people through the settlement without disturbing the residents. During one night, indigenous police boarded the canoes without warning and shone torches into the houses in search of an absconded offender. The residents showed little resentment of this invasion, although they grumbled because their women often slept naked in the airless canoes.

Whenever they were ill or met with an accident, residents availed themselves of the free medical treatment provided by the Administration. In their villages the London Missionary medical organisation had for many years sent serious cases to the government hospital at Port Moresby, and consequently the necessity for such treatment was accepted. The wife of a resident, however, gave birth to a child at the Roman Catholic maternity hospital at Koke. Residents said that they preferred this hospital to the government maternity ward, although they had to pay a standard fee of \$4 (F's budget, Table 5). Food at the Roman Catholic hospital was better than at the government hospital, and the sisters were kinder to them than the government nurses, treating them 'just like Europeans'.

While most of the households included some children who were at school, parents had little contact with their children's teachers even when they were given opportunities to meet them through parents' and citizens' associations and through open days. When, for example, one boy said that he had been dismissed from his school for truancy, his father was too shy to find out what had happened. Such absence of parent-school contact appears to be general in Port Moresby and in other large urban centres in Papua and New Guinea (van der Veur and Richardson 1966:71).

The residents looked to the police for protection against violence and theft, and to officers of the Sub-district Office for help in settling their disputes. Few complaints were made against the Administration. Only one man, who was one of the best educated

men in the settlement, blamed the government for living conditions in the settlement, and said that his children would enjoy good houses and not live like their father. A number of men complained about conditions of employment but their complaints were directed against private employers. Yet the attitude of the residents towards the government was one of extreme passivity. When, for example, members of the police force used their official authority against the brother of a canoe owner to obtain the payment of a private debt, his attitude was one of fatalistic acceptance.

There appear to be two reasons for this passivity: fear and a feeling of impotence in face of administrative authority; and lack of indigenous institutions which provide a buffer between them and the colonial administration.

In casual discussions, residents frequently spoke with bitterness of the arbitrary and harsh behaviour of government officers in the past and especially during wartime. They also criticised the racial discrimination that had existed in the past. All agreed that there had been a great improvement in these respects during the previous four years. From their past experience, however, appears to stem their reluctance to assert their rights against the actions of government officials.

There was no administrative institution in the urban area which stood between them and the small group of European officials who administered the town; and there was also no tradition in rural areas of participating in the work of administrative agencies. In many British territories in Africa systems of native authorities with native treasuries, native courts and a hierarchy of chiefs or headmen had been established shortly after the first world war if not earlier. Where large tribal groups did not already exist, such institutions served to weld small disparate groups into large tribal entities. The sense of belonging to a large and organised group gave its members a feeling of pride and importance. No institutions of this kind were established in Papua and the largest political unit remains the village. Local government councils were not set up in the Hula-speaking area until the late 1950s, and they have as yet done little to instil a feeling of common identity among the numerous village groups in their areas.

With the exception of infrequent single-stranded contacts with government officials, the residents' lack of involvement with the activities of government was marked.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

There is no way in which the value of a total relationship can be measured; and the relative value to the individual of one kind of relationship compared with another can only be guessed unless the individual makes a choice between them. Some comparison can, however, be made between different attributes of various kinds of relationship. In terms of content and persistence, relationships between kinsmen were important; and relationships between parents and children and between siblings were frequent wherever they were living. The most frequent contacts were between neighbours, but they were not likely to be persistent because they might end when the people concerned no longer lived in the same place. Relationships formed at work also involved frequent contacts, but their content was limited and were also likely to end when their raison d'etre disappeared. A number of attributes were united in relationships based on church membership: they were persistent; they involved frequent contacts; they performed the important function of emphasising the solidarity of the residents as a group; and their content included both affective and economic elements.

A number of relationships were multiplex. Kinsmen might work together, and neighbours might also be members of the same church.

As with Hula migrants in Port Moresby (Oram 1967c), the pattern of relationships was not determined by the administrative, industrial and economic structure of the town. The most important kind of relationship which arose from urban residence was formed at work, but contact was limited to working hours. The residents were not 'joiners', and except for their pre-existing church membership, were not involved in relationships based on association.

There was an economic element in the content of all relationships. As Sahlins suggested, the span of social distance in general conditioned the mode of exchange: the closer the kinship tie, for example, the greater the obligation and the smaller the expectation of a direct return. The economic element appeared to become increasingly important as the span of social distance increased. As the residents expressed it, close kin felt obliged to maintain contact with each other wherever they were living, and such contacts were frequent. Exchanges underwrote their relationships rather than

caused the contacts to be made. Contacts with more distant kin were frequently made to serve specific economic ends. In exchanges between all blood-kin, however, generosity without expectation of return was the norm: generalised reciprocity was the mode of exchange within the kin-group.

Obligations and expectations between affines were more precisely defined and tended towards balanced reciprocity. The pattern of exchanges is built up on the transfer of the services of a wife, particularly her reproductive services, to her husband's group, and there is no way of measuring the value of her services against goods. The flow of goods was asymmetrical and to the advantage of the wife's natal group, but it was not one way. While the occasions for exchange, for example the birth of a child, were defined, the value of goods to be transferred was not. Both parties were expected to show generosity in the amount of goods transferred.

While social distance largely determined behaviour of partners in a relationship towards each other, there were many exceptions to the norm. It would be oversimplistic, for example, to suggest that kinship relationships were always marked by values of generosity.<sup>1</sup> Besides the disputes between kinsmen over property described above, many instances occurred outside the settlement of rapacious conduct towards kinsmen. Conversely, people between whom no reciprocal relationship existed did not always try to get the better of each other. Church influence, and possibly the growth of political awareness, was modifying attitudes towards strangers: the sentiment that 'we Papuans are brothers' was occasionally expressed. The sense of obligation involved in employee-employer relationships has been noted,<sup>2</sup> and acts of generosity towards strangers were not uncommon.

### Economic implications

The system of exchanges in which the residents were involved developed from the traditional economies of their village groups which were based on the production and distribution of food. This raises the question whether the economic values of the residents continued to be related mainly to the traditional economies of their village groups irrespective of the changed conditions which they experienced in the town. This question can only be answered, however, in terms of their own goals.

Weber (1947:185) points out that 'economic activity is orientated to ultimate ends (Forderungen) of some kind, whether they be ethical, political, utilitarian, hedonistic, the attainment of social distinction, of social equality, or of anything else'. I suggest that

<sup>1</sup> See p.31.

<sup>2</sup> See p.44.

the main goals of the residents were to play a creditable part in the system of relationships in which they were involved; and by this means to enhance their status among those with whom the relationships had been formed. They were achievement-orientated in accordance with the norms of their own society. This society was neither urban nor rural but included all the people, wherever living, with whom an individual had formed relationships, and were included in what Barnes (1967) calls an individual's 'personal zone of relationships'. One way to achieve higher status was by becoming a church leader. One resident, for example, was energetic in his church duties and was one of the two men who regularly attended services in Koke Church. During my stay he preached his first sermon at the Hula settlement at Taikone, and volunteered to provide a 'table' after the Sunday service at Badili. Other residents said that he was aspiring to election as a deacon.

The part which transfers and income in kind play in the economies of the households is illustrated in Table 7. Similar figures have been provided for the Purari at Rabia Camp (Hitchcock 1967:98) and the Hula in Taikone (Oram 1967c). The sample is too small and the period during which the budgets were recorded was too short to provide a complete picture. Incomes and outlays varied greatly from week to week: they were affected, for example, by the arrival of a canoe load of food or of a number of visitors. The balance of transfers is markedly in favour of the householders but over a longer period, as I found for the Hula (1967c), they are likely to transfer more money and goods to the villages than they receive from them. The exchanges are unlikely to increase their incomes except temporarily.

Table 7

Transfers in cash and kind, and incomes in kind, as percentage of total incomes of three households in the Badili canoe settlement, October 1965

|           | E           |             | D           |             | F           |             |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|           | Income<br>% | Outlay<br>% | Income<br>% | Outlay<br>% | Income<br>% | Outlay<br>% |
| Transfers | 85.4        | 0.4         | 9.8         | 1.1         | 26.5        | 19.8        |
| Kind*     | 34.4        | 34.4**      | 7.2         | 7.2         | 21.7        | 21.7        |

\* This includes transfers in kind.

\*\* Goods consumed.

The system does, however, provide short- and long-term security. The group of people involved in the network of relationships acted as a mutual insurance society which provided relief when emergencies, great and small, arose. Help would be provided by different

categories of people according to the nature and extent of the crisis. The system also provided longer term security in the villages. Migrants' land rights were safeguarded by their kinsmen in the village, although instances of such relatives encroaching on their rights were recorded. They were provided with hospitality when they returned to their villages for varying periods. Finally, they were supported by kinsmen in the village in old age. At different periods of their lives they would contribute to, and be beneficiaries of, the favourable balance which accrued to the villages from the exchanges.

The security which they gained was social and psychological as well as economic. The migrant coming to town was not an isolated individual but was involved in a network of relationships which provided moral support in times of stress, and opportunities for social activities in his leisure hours.

In studies of two urban settlements in Kampala, Uganda, Southall and Gutkind found a high degree of social disorganisation, reflected in the high incidence of crime and in the uncontrolled character of marital and sex relations. According to Southall (1956:106): 'Mobility of job and residence, the local mixture of tribes and races and the passage to a money and exchange economy are the main factors which have brought about change so rapid as to cause the breakdown of consensual behaviour.' Gutkind considered that two kinds of social control, that exercised by kin-groups and that exercised by those holding some degree of concentrated power, had broken down (1956:231-2). Elsewhere Southall says that 'Where situations are new and many of the persons brought together in them previously unrelated we must say that both structure and norms are relatively lacking' (1961:18). There was no evidence of similar social disorganisation among residents of the Badili canoe settlement. While many of the residents had formed no previous relationships with each other, they were part of the same social system. They were little affected by the 'situational change' (Mitchell 1966:44) which they experienced when they left their villages to go to Port Moresby. To a great extent social controls exercised through kin-groups and through their churches continued to operate in the town.

Not only the Alukuni fishermen but nearly all the men of the settlement worked hard to achieve their economic goals. During their leisure they worked on canoes or went fishing. Their lives were of an almost puritanical simplicity and they spent little on luxuries or clothes. One resident said that he was not prepared to waste his hard earned money on drinking and gambling. Most of the men attempted to save money. D had saved \$300, which he kept in his canoe, towards his son's marriage exchanges. F had been saving to start his own business but his savings were greatly reduced as a result of his wife's confinement. During my residence E bought a second hand outboard motor for \$90. After I had left

the settlement B bought a second hand 30 hundredweight truck for \$1,500: he paid one third of the purchase price as a deposit and was repaying the remainder by instalments. He claimed that he had accumulated the amount of the deposit from his own savings without assistance from others. Such savings were accumulated in spite of pressures from relatives to disburse them. When I had recorded E's budget a fortnight before he bought the motor, he told me that he had balanced his budget by drawing on his savings. He would not tell me how much they were except that they were small. I encountered a similar unwillingness to reveal the amount of savings among other people who were otherwise willing to discuss their finances freely, and I concluded that they did not wish their relatives to learn how much they had saved. While men were able with difficulty to achieve their economic objectives, these objectives were limited by the need to play their part in the exchange system. This may explain why Papuan entrepreneurs failed to build up their businesses with permanent premises and other capital equipment. There was only one indigenous enterprise in Port Moresby in which considerable capital had been invested. The owners had achieved this by withdrawing from the exchange system. They did not employ members of their own village groups, and a relative told me that they had caused great offence among their kinsmen by their failure to distribute their resources among them.

Involvement in a set of exchange relationships based on kinship therefore acts as a brake on the economic initiative of the individual but provides him with social security. Among other migrant groups, such as the Batak in Medan (Bruner 1963:7) with a longer tradition of urban residence, individuals can become wealthy above their fellows and yet play their part in the kinship system. This situation may occur in Port Moresby, but discussion of the factors which may bring it about is beyond the scope of this paper.

### The total network

The people involved in the personal zone of relationships of each resident were to be found over a wide geographic area. Two residents, for example, were affinally connected with two well-known Papuan political figures: one of whom came from the Purari Delta in the Gulf of Papua to the north-west, and the other from the Trobriand Islands which lie some one hundred and fifty miles off the east coast of Papua. These were the people in what Barnes (1967) calls the 'primary zone' of relationships of each resident - the people with whom he or she had formed direct relationships. The total network in which the whole population of the settlement was involved is the sum of all the residents' personal zones. The network was densest in Port Moresby and in the Hula language area. Density decreased as it extended through the Melanesian-speaking coastal areas to areas beyond. Insofar as the residents had formed relationships with people living outside Papua and New Guinea, the network was 'unbounded' (Barnes 1967).

The aspect of this network which is significant for the social development of Port Moresby lies in the potential for the formation of new relationships. The people who form the resident's 'second-order contacts' are those with whom people in his primary zone had formed relationships (Barnes 1967). A large diversity of people living over a wide area come within an individual's first- or second-order zones of contact. Gossip helps to make this identification possible.

### Gossip

Except when they were sent away on a job and when they paid occasional visits, the residents lived their lives within the very small area of Koke-Badili. When moving within this area, the residents met and gossiped with a large proportion of the people with whom they had formed the relationships, at work and as church members for example, discussed above. Gluckman (1963:313) suggests that gossip and scandal are enjoyed by people when it is about others with whom they are in close social relationship, that to join in such gossip is a privilege which is extended to members of a particular set or group, and that gossip serves to mark off a particular group from other groups.

The residents of the settlement were in close social relationship to each other. They observed and criticised each other's behaviour, and gossip served as a form of social control and helped to enforce observance of norms which the majority shared. Gossip did not, however, serve to mark off the residents as a group from other groups. The households lived together at Badili because the site was convenient and they wished to be among people with a common language and culture. While members of the different households were linked by a number of ties, they did not conceive of the settlement as forming a separate social entity. They did not, for example, subordinate their identity as members of a particular village group to their common membership of the canoe settlement. The residents did not unite for a common purpose as a group except for religious observances, and they exhibited no exclusiveness towards outsiders. The exclusion of the Goilalas from gossip was the result of the Goilalas' own choice and lack of common interests rather than their exclusion by other residents.

The subject matter of gossip was not, however, the behaviour of residents alone but involved all the groups with which the residents' own village groups had established relationships. Gossip was exchanged with all the people with whom the residents had formed relationships who were either visiting or living in Port Moresby. Koke market was a centre for such gossip. The residents came to the settlement with a knowledge of the history of those groups based on stories and songs, and of many individual members both dead and alive. One day, for example, a resident casually

mentioned that a male passer-by from another village had never married because he had a spiteful tongue. News travelled fast: a resident gave a detailed account of a suicide of a man from a village not his own some eighty miles from Port Moresby. I was able to confirm the accuracy of his account when I visited the village in which the suicide occurred, shortly afterwards. Gossip therefore performed the functions suggested by Gluckman, but the group involved consisted of inhabitants of the whole southern coastal region of Papua. Because it provided knowledge of members of different groups, gossip facilitated the formation of relationships between newcomers to the town.

Cultural and economic differences between groups did not form a barrier to the establishment of relationships between their members. The Goilala are regarded by Melanesian-speaking groups living in Port Moresby as savage and dangerous people who are responsible for many of the crimes of violence in the town. The residents, however, did not appear to disapprove of the marriage of a woman from a long-established and sophisticated coastal village with a Goilala man. The Elema people from the Gulf of Papua despise the Melanesian-speaking people of central coastal Papua for 'their willingness to marry anyone'.<sup>1</sup> This willingness is borne out, for example, by marriages of women from this area with members of an unsophisticated group, the Purari, at Rabia Camp (Hitchcock 1967:55) and by out-group marriages among the Hula (Oram 1967b:58). There appeared to be an absence of any sense of social stratification among members of the settlement, or sense of superiority over people from less sophisticated areas. On one occasion a man from relatively isolated Alomarupu, who had not previously met me and had had little contact with Europeans, was asleep on my canoe. When he awoke he saw me with terror and hid his head under the blankets. He told the story without any signs of embarrassment, and it was always greeted with a shout of friendly laughter.

There is also an absence of the phenomenon variously described by writers on African towns as 'urban tribalism', 'supertribalism' and 'ethnicity'. In this sense the tribe 'serves as a means of classifying a heterogeneous urban population into a limited number of meaningful social categories' (Epstein 1967). In Port Moresby, members of groups who were traditionally in contact with each other in pre-European times are precisely identified as belonging to a particular village if they live within the Melanesian-speaking central area; and as belonging to a slightly larger group, for example a linguistic group, if they live beyond it. Strangers from New Guinea are frequently identified by the name of the region from

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication by Dawn Ryan, who is making a study of Toaripi-speaking people in Port Moresby.

which they come, such as Sepik, or of the main town in the region, for example Madang or Rabaul.

### Conclusion

Relationships among members of the Badili canoe settlement do not follow the pattern posited by Wirth. The residents form part of a regional social system which extends far beyond the boundaries of the town. The pattern of social relationships is still primarily based on community, and especially on kinship. Relationships based on association which Wirth considers to be typically urban play only a minor part in the pattern of relationships. One important form of association, church membership, is general, but has its roots in church activities in rural areas. While the churches help to coordinate and to provide leadership for social activities within the groups, their influence does little to diminish group exclusiveness and intergroup rivalry.

While the settlement may be a transient phenomenon, the residents, with the exception of the Alukuni fishermen, have similar residence and work histories to members of other groups in Port Moresby. The pattern of socio-economic relationships in which the canoe settlement residents are involved is not atypical and appears to be similar to that found in other groups studied. Differences in the social and economic organisation of the various ethnic groups living in discrete urban settlements appear to be the result of three factors: level of education and degree of acculturation in the home area; distance of the home area from Port Moresby; and the extent to which a residential area is occupied by members of a single village group. The residents of the settlement are literate at least in their own vernacular and this enables them to obtain jobs which demand some skills and for which they are paid good wages. They are better educated than some of the migrants from inland, such as the Goilala and Koiari people, who are mainly employed in unskilled work including the operation of the sanitary service. The residents are less well educated than the people of Hanuabada, many of whom are employed in executive and clerical capacities by government departments and by private enterprise. Because their home area can be reached quickly by sea or road there is a large volume of exchange between town and village. The Purari, living in the town, however, are involved in few exchanges with their distant home area in the Gulf of Papua (Hitchcock 1967:102). Group activities in the Hula settlement at Taikone are highly developed (Oram 1967c). They play a less important part in the lives of residents of the Badili canoe settlement who come from different villages and in the lives of residents of the heterogeneous suburb of Hohola (Barnett 1967).

Port Moresby is a hollow town in the sense employed by Geertz and its population consists of a 'loose collection of established

social units'. Judging from evidence obtained in the canoe settlement and described in the other studies of Port Moresby mentioned above, there are factors which are operating to break down the solidarity of the different groups. One is the willingness of the Melanesian-speaking peoples of central Papua to admit strangers to their groups. This has followed a progression as improvements in communications with more distant areas have brought them into contact with members of different ethnic groups. At first they only absorbed people with similar language and culture. After peace had been established by the British administration, they began to take in people from the Gulf of Papua and elsewhere, as illustrated by the history of the Iokea man.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by intermarriage with people from the coastal areas of New Guinea and New Britain. Now that people from the New Guinea highlands are coming to work in Port Moresby, relationships are being established with them and intermarriage may follow.

The population of Port Moresby began to expand rapidly after 1945, largely as the result of the long-term settlement of migrants with their families in the town. Only an early stage of the urbanisation process has been reached: children of many early post-war migrants, for example, have grown up in the town and are now reaching adulthood. Such factors as achievement of higher levels of education, higher incomes and increasing political awareness are likely to produce rapid social change among the indigenous population. Relationships based on association, for example, may become more important, and the development of a high-income earning élite may lead to a measure of social stratification. The new forms of relationship which emerge, however, may lead to a further breakdown in the solidarity of the different ethnic groups in the town. As communications improve and the frequency of inter-group marriages increases, a homogeneous society based on people from the Melanesian-speaking areas of southern Papua may develop in Port Moresby.

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<sup>1</sup> See p.19.

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