

Give and Take

Exchange in Wola Society



Paul Sillitoe

The Wola people of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea place unusual emphasis on the sovereignty of the individual. Their society places few constraints on its members; they have no government, no authoritative leaders, no formal judicial system. If to paraphrase Rousseau, man is born free but is everywhere in chains, Wola man is very lightly shackled.

Order in Wola Society is based on the exchange of wealth, the effect of an elaborate exchange system that allows the handing round of wealth—pearl shells, pigs and other, minor items.

Exchange among the Wola is an important social principle. It requires co-operation and constrains the fractious individual to maintain an ordered society.

This book presents a vigorous, new analysis of a Highlands people that is a substantial contribution both to the ethnography of the New Guinea Highlands and to anthropological theory.

Dr Paul Sillitoe has conducted research at both the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Cambridge. He has spent over two years living, with his wife, in the remote Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea collecting the ethnographic material recorded in this book. During this time he has learnt the Wola language and come to know these people well by sharing in their life.

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Paul Sillitoe

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For my mother and father

14. a man travelling into a far country, . . . called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them five other talents.

17. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . .

22. He also that had received two talents came . . .

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said . . .

25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth . . .

26. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant . . .

27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the ex-changers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

Matthew XXV: 14-27

All contacts among men rest on the scheme of giving and receiving the equivalence.

Georg Simmel in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1908: 387)

the gift or other service is given as to a friend, although the giver expects to receive an equivalent or greater return.

Aristotle *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Preface

The exchange of such objects of wealth as pigs and pearl shells is very important for the Wola. It is a major interest in their lives and they respect highly those who excel at it. This study sets out to explain why this is so. Its argument rests on the premise that exchange plays a fundamental part in maintaining order in this otherwise too flimsily structured society, and at the risk of reducing a complex and subtly organised society to an over-simplified model of a few sentences, the gist of the argument is as follows.

An important Wola ethic is that individuals should be free to govern their own actions, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others to do likewise, and this poses problems for their effective social organisation. The first chapters of this book show that although they are collected together into discrete named groups which occupy specific territories, the value which the Wola place on the sovereignty of the individual makes it impossible to account for the order of their society in terms of recognised obligations to them. They do not organise themselves according to obligations to any corporate political groups under the direction of acknowledged leaders, action groups in their society are *ad hoc* collections of people who unite to pursue common goals.

Later chapters go on to argue that in the absence of established sociological mechanisms for encouraging co-operation in an acephalous society, it is the exchange of wealth which gives order to Wola social life.¹ Various events prompt exchanges and oblige men to give or receive wealth with those to whom they stand in a certain relationship. These are often elaborate and may involve a series of transactions spread over a number of years. They oblige people to interact amicably and with consideration for one

¹ This book presents a considerable amount of quantitative evidence on different exchanges to support this argument. It presents this largely in diagrams and graphs, which are easier to read than tables. But any reader interested in following up this evidence in detail will find it recorded in tables in my Ph.D. dissertation at Cambridge.

another, and by co-operating in them men keep up smooth relations with one another. And exchange maintains order without interfering unduly with an individual's freedom; indeed it is in their interests to excel at it and achieve renown.

This study deals with the traditional constitution of Wola society. Where pertinent it mentions any changes that have resulted from contact with the outside world, but the society described here is essentially the one which I studied and in which I am currently living. Indeed it is arguable that the social checks and balances centring on exchange are as important for maintaining order now as they were in the recent stone age past, what with the gradual breakdown in law as imposed by the central government and peoples' increasing tendency to settle their differences in the old way—through revenge and war.

I have carried out the fieldwork on which this study stands while living in the settlement of Haelaelinja, which is situated in the Was river valley in the Nipa district of the Southern Highlands. My wife and I lived there from July 1973 until September 1974, and it was during this stay that I collected the greater part of the material presented in this book. I have supplemented it, and corrected some points, since our return to the Was valley in late 1976 to pursue further fieldwork, in which we are currently engaged.

The research which has gone into this work has depended on the help and co-operation of many people, and I owe them all a debt of gratitude for which the few words of thanks I offer here can only be a token exchange repayment.

My largest debt is to my wife Jackie who has shared with me the experience of living in a remote place with strange people whose ways have sometimes frustrated and confused us. During the fieldwork and while I struggled to write up the material we collected, she has given freely of her help, advice and, most importantly when the going became difficult, her encouragement. Without her this book would have been incomparably poorer than it is, and I cannot thank her enough.

I also thank my parents for their encouragement, and particularly my mother who has helped us in so many ways, notably while we have been abroad and have needed someone reliable to take care of affairs at home.

The next debt of gratitude I owe is to the people of Haelaelinja

who, after a suspicious start, have accepted us and taught us about their way of life. I owe a special note of thanks to Wenja Neleb who is my field assistant. His intelligence and sensitivity, as shown by his ability to understand my aims, is an enormous help, and I am particularly grateful to him for the way he gives of his utmost to achieve my goals. Other special friends to whom we owe thanks are Maenget Pes (a reliable friend and constant help to my wife), Mayka Kuwliy, Maenget Kem, Wenja Unguwdiyp, Mayka Pes, Maenget Waebay and Mayka Balen. To them all I say *chay tenol hombuwn ninor kongon oberoeb bizuwt bisiymindis niy turiy biy ondup ora*.

We also owe our thanks to the following members of the administration: Mr John Gordon-Kirkby, one time A.D.C. at Nipa, who was a constant friend and source of much help. Mr Graham Setchell and his wife Diana who took us in when we first arrived in Nipa. And everyone else on the station who gave us help, particularly Mrs Jan Jones and her husband Russell. We also owe a great deal to the staff of Tiliba mission, particularly Ed and Jan Staich and Tom and Cathy Fuller, who have done so many things to help us during our stays.

The intellectual debt which I owe to others shows through this study. I am particularly grateful to Dr Michael Young and Dr Gilbert Lewis who have helped in so many ways with the work which has culminated in this book. Before my departure for the field Dr R. Rappaport and Mr Tom Ernst gave generously of their advice, and Professor A. Strathern, on a flight bound for Papua New Guinea, advised me to come and work in the Wola area and has encouraged me throughout my work. I am also grateful to Dr Marilyn Stathern, Dr Alan Macfarlane and Mr Jerry Leach whose valuable criticisms of my work led to considerable improvements. I also acknowledge thanks for the help given by several other anthropologists, too many to list, in both discussion and by letter.

The financial support of the following bodies made my work possible and to them I extend my thanks. The Social Science Research Council for a Research Studentship; Trinity College, Cambridge for the award of a Senior Rouse Ball Research Scholarship and an award from the William Wyse Studentship Fund; the University of Cambridge for a grant from the Smuts Memorial Fund; the Royal Anthropological Institute for an Emslie

Horniman Anthropological Scholarship; and the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Cambridge for a grant from the Crowther-Benyon Fund.

When we first settled in the Was valley I relied on Melanesian Pidgin for communication, but only a small number of people have even a rudimentary knowledge of this language and I endeavoured to work in Wola as soon as possible. Since my first six months in the field I have worked in the language and am able to understand and participate in everyday conversation, but even after more than two years, although I doggedly refuse to use any other means of communication, I still find myself struggling to express some things and to understand others. There follows a brief note on this difficult, but fascinating, language.

PAUL SILLITOE

Haelaelinja, Papua New Guinea
September 1977

A Note on the Wola Language

An accurate linguistic study of the Wola language remains to be made. Other than superficial work by the missions, the only linguistic data of any use covers related languages.¹

Table 1 shows the orthography used in this book for transcribing Wola words.² As far as possible the transcription has been kept simple; it uses ordinary English letters in preference to less familiar linguistic signs (such as those of the International Phonetic Alphabet), and where possible it represents sounds by the letters used in New Guinea Pidgin.³ The aim is to remain simple but maintain a linguistically acceptable level of accuracy in distinguishing and representing the sounds of Wola. The transcription is not intended to represent a vigorous scientific analysis of the sounds of Wola nor does it account for the variations which occur between dialects—a phonemic account of this complexity would be out of place in an anthropological study.⁴

A brief grammatical note is also necessary to explain the meaning of the Wola words which occur in this book. The structural emphasis which Wola places on the verb makes it similar to other Highland languages, which some writers refer to as 'verb

¹ Notably the Enga and Kewa languages (see Franklin 1971; Lang 1973).

² There are three diphthongs not included in table 1 and they are ai (for example *nice*, *nais*), oi (for example *boy*, *goiz*), and au (for example *how*, *nau*).

³ As specified by Mihalic (1971: 2-8).

⁴ Rule (1965) has made a preliminary study comparing a few phonemes of the Mendi and Wola dialects. She has studied the phonemic variation between the dialects of these two areas as represented by sound changes (particularly the voiceless aspirated stop) in the same words.

The sounds in table 1 represent those of the Was river dialect. I consulted Rule's (1965: 99-100) paper when deciding on the notation to use and followed her where appropriate, but my notation does not agree in all respects with hers, nor that of any other linguist, although I found reference to Pike (1947) and Gleason (1955) helpful. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Dr B. Comrie of the Linguistics Department in Cambridge, who patiently listened to a tape of Wola speakers and corrected my mistakes.

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		Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	voiceless	p pill pila		t table ten		k kill konay	
	voiced	b bad iyb		d door den		g good g ^{en} k	
	nasal and voiced	mb mbet		nd ndai		ng ngo	
Affricatives	voiceless				ch chair chay		
	voiced				j jar jiy		
	nasal and voiced			nj hinge inj			
Fricatives	slit voiceless						h house haezbiy
	voiceless			s sill suwp	sh shoe iysh		
	voiced			z zip woktoiz	zh rouge olzomb		
Lateral	voiced			l lake el			
Nasals	voiced	m mill menday		n not haen			
Semi vowels	voiced	w wind wol		r rest iriy	y yet ya		
HIGH	FRONT		CENTRAL		BACK		
		unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded
	close	iy bean kwiy					uw true nuw
	open	i bā wil					u put hul

		FRONT		CENTRAL		BACK	
		unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded	unrounded	rounded
MID	close	ay say nay		e nit h ^{eg}			ow toe showmay
	open	e bet det					or shore hort
LOW	close	ae bat aend					
	open	a father sab					o hot sol

TABLE 1 Orthography used for transcription of Wola words

The first word under the sound is an English example and the second word is a Wola example. There is free variation in some words between the pronunciation of two consonants. For example all Wola words with p in them are spelt with a p but in some cases the p sounds like an f. Sometimes a d sounds like dr, dt or ld. And there is a close resemblance in some words between g and k.

dominated' for this reason. This book conjugates verbs according to the sense conveyed by the English; for example if an event is written in the past the verb is conjugated in the past with the relevant person and condition markers. Often the verb is conjugated with no specific tense or person marker because the ethnographic present implies the action was done in the past, is done now and will be done in the future. The Wola convey this meaning with either the verb stem only⁵ or by adding the suffix *ay* to the stem. This study uses both conjugations in this customary sense; for example a particular exchange in the mortuary exchange sequence, freely translated, means 'to make a man' and in Wola may be expressed as *ol buw* or *ol bay* (lit: man make).⁶

After each Wola phrase or word this study gives a literal translation in brackets, for example for one of the many payments made by the Wola: *chay kondisha* (lit: hind quarter of a pig, lumbar region of back). Where the Wola were unable to comment on the

⁵ By and large linguists working on other Highland languages use the stem in this situation.

⁶ Missions use the suffix *btuw* (*bur* in the Nembi valley where they are situated) to indicate an infinitive tense, but this is a contrived construction—strictly speaking Wola has no infinitive tense. The mission conjugation would be *ol bwtuw* and in certain contexts this means the same as *ol buw* or *ol bay*, but in other contexts (for example as a medial verb) this conjugation can have a different meaning and for this reason this book does not use it.

etymology of a phrase, only the literal translation occurs without any interpretation. I think that the current trend for anthropologists to offer their own imaginative derivations of words is unwise because it is not easy for the reader to know where fact ends and imagination starts—by leaving such fanciful constructions to readers there is no such danger. In many cases I do not know why the Wola give the names which they do to different things and I was unable to encourage them to reflect on the formation of abstract phrases. For example when asked why they call a certain gift *chay kondisha* men always looked a little baffled and patiently explained that they called it that because that is its name. Nobody mentioned parts of the anatomy and when I mentioned this they agreed that *chay* is a pig's hind quarter and *kondisha* the lumbar region of the back, but *chay kondisha* does not mean this, it is the name of a payment. Perhaps readers will appreciate the situation better if they imagine themselves pestered by a persistent anthropologist inquiring into the etymology of the word *accelerate*, and that English is not a written tongue and that they cannot resort to a dictionary and trace the origin back to the Latin word *celer* for swift. Suppose the foreign anthropologist calls on his imperfect knowledge of English to point out that there are three words in *accelerate*: axe seller ate. A perplexed Englishman would have to agree that indeed this is so, but point out that these three words run together do not keep their individual meanings in any sense. But the mind boggles to think of the imagination of the anthropologist running riot and speculating on the etymology of the word. I think that the literal translations given in this study are better than nothing, and I include them because they might give an insight into the way the Wola think, but I advise the reader to treat some of them with scepticism.

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The Problem and the People

The aim of this first chapter is to set the scene for this study. It introduces a Highland people of Papua New Guinea who call themselves the Wola and whose way of life is the concern of this book. It does this by describing the place where the Wola live, how they live, and their history since their discovery by the outside world in the 1930s. But firstly this chapter draws attention to a philosophical paradox which faces all men, and argues that an appreciation of how the Wola have mediated this paradox makes sense of their otherwise too labile, and consequently unstable, society. Later chapters go on to show how the Wola do this by using the all-important social principle of exchange.

The Problem

The Wola, like most other Melanesian peoples, have an elaborate exchange system which prompts them continually to hand round items of wealth—in fact exchange is so important to them that they accord high status to men who excel at it. This prompts the following questions, the answers to which make up this study. Why have the Wola developed exchanges to such lengths, why do they expend so much effort participating in them, and why do they accord renown to men who excel in them? In order to answer these questions this book examines the social implications of exchange because it assumes that it is here the answer lies. This assumption leads to the realisation that exchange is an integral part of the Wola view of their world, and that it is an aspect of human interaction which they have elaborated into a principle upon which articulates the organisation of their society. Exchange is the sociological principle which forms the backbone of Wola society and for this reason it constitutes the central theme of this work, around which everything else hangs.

In general all Melanesians mark important social events with an exchange of valuables; they exchange wealth at births, marriages,

deaths, settlements of conflicts, religious rituals, and so on. But there is considerable ethnographic variation in the pattern of these exchanges. Some people emphasise certain transactions, and others emphasise different ones; for example there are the sea-borne exchange expeditions of coastal people such as the Motuans and the Massim Islanders, the competitive exchanges which settle disputes among the Goodenough Islanders, and the cyclical exchanges of some Highlanders who compete in this way for status. The variation in the items which people exchange adds to this regional diversity. The only thing which most Melanesians value as wealth is the ubiquitous pig, otherwise tastes vary considerably so that some people value sea shells, others value birds' feathers, others value tubers, others value man-made products, and so on, the list stretches interminably through numerous ethnographies and includes many objects. But these cultural variations on the theme of exchange and the regional differences in the valuables which people give to one another do not hide the fact that exchange constitutes part of the common bedrock upon which all Melanesian societies stand. The fact that the exchange of things is commonplace throughout Melanesia suggests that the approach of this study, which takes exchange as a social principle of crucial significance for the understanding of Wola society, may well provide insights into the fundamental concepts and processes upon which people throughout this part of Oceania have built their way of life.

The importance of exchange comes to the notice of most visitors to Melanesia. The Wola have always impressed upon outsiders their obsession with wealth, as illustrated by some of the amusing anecdotes recounted in the outline of their history since the time of their discovery. Likewise in other places the people were not slow to impress upon visitors their interest in valuables and transactions. Even some of the first explorers, who stayed only briefly in the region, noticed the importance of exchange to Melanesians; Cook noted how chiefs from the Polynesian island of Tahiti had no intention of arranging repayment to cover the goods grabbed and stolen by their followers from his ship, whereas in contrast, people from the Melanesian island of Malekula made earnest efforts to give objects back to the individual members of the crew who gave them presents.¹ Later visitors, notably mis-

¹ See Forge (1972: 529-30) who quotes the texts in full.

sionaries who dabbled in ethnographic inquiries, continued to record the occurrence of exchange and offered explanations for this behaviour (for example see Codrington 1891: 323-8), but unfortunately they committed an ethnographic *faux pas* when they described valuables as money and conceived of their exchange as economic transactions (a myopic judgment which continues to some extent to obscure a proper understanding of the purpose of exchange). And so references to exchange, as an important feature in Melanesian societies, recur throughout studies right up to the present day, few of which omit to mention it before passing on to the subject which constitutes their main interest (for a recent example see Lewis 1975: 29-35).

It is puzzling that while reports, written from the time of the earliest contacts and right up to the present day, note the importance of exchange to Melanesians, anthropologists have not yet developed a thoroughgoing explanation which takes it into adequate consideration as a fundamental principle in the organisation of the societies concerned. Although anthropologists have not incorporated the principle of exchange as the focal point in their studies of Melanesian societies, there have been some uncoordinated moves in this direction. The work of Malinowski (1922, 1926) is a landmark in this respect, as in so many others, because, in his efforts to understand Melanesian society, albeit from the point of view of one small island, he seized upon what he called reciprocity as a fundamental principle, and tried to see how it articulated and functioned with other elements to bring order to social life.

It is disconcerting to record that nearly fifty years passed before any more studies appeared which take exchange as their central problem (see Elmberg 1968; Strathern 1971; Young 1971; Schwimmer 1973; and Weiner 1974). But these studies do not extend the ideas of Malinowski by proceeding from the vantage point which he reached; instead they try to explain exchange in terms of currently established anthropological theory, and this means they accept uncritically certain assumptions about the fundamental issues which are at stake. The crux of the problem is their acceptance of the emphasis which current anthropological theory places upon the group, at the expense of the individual, in explanations of society. On the one hand there are the ideas of

social structure as developed by Durkheim and introduced with good effect into anthropology by Radcliffe-Brown, and on the other hand there are the fashionable ideas of structuralism as developed by Lévi-Strauss, which are only just beginning to find their way into studies of Melanesian societies.

The question is: where is the individual in these theories of society? Malinowski asked a similar question many years ago and pointed out that it is individuals who make up a society, which exists because it benefits them. This is Melanesian philosophy pure and simple, which suggests that to understand their society we need to keep the individual in view. This study attempts to do this by basing its explanation of Wola society upon an abstract model put together by picking up the threads of Malinowski's ideas from the theoretical backwater where the mainstream of group oriented anthropological ideas pushed them, and trying to expand upon them and reintegrate them in the light of subsequent theoretical developments.

The premise of this study is that to understand Wola society it is necessary to appreciate how these people resolve a universal paradox which faces mankind. This paradox concerns individual freedom and the restrictions which society places upon this freedom. That is, how does society curb the self-interested drive of the individual, and control behaviour so as to allow social co-operation between people, without detracting too much from the individual's freedom of action, because, after all, society exists for the individual's benefit and, on the face of it, restrictions on freedom are not immediately in the individual's interests. This problem has worried social philosophers since they started to ponder the nature of society, and it has confounded the logical integration of supposedly comprehensive theories of society based upon ideas of an absolutely orderly social system because, as the problem is a paradox, it cannot be solved but only mediated.

Like the social philosophers who have tried to resolve this paradox, the Wola have worked on two assumptions as, by trial and error, they evolved their society. The first assumption is, as Hobbes noted in the quirky English of his day, that man's natural condition is one of Warre where self-interest and natural lust dictate his actions and pit him against everyone in a struggle which makes life nasty, solitary, brutish and poor. The second assump-

tion is the reverse of the first. It assumes that man has an innate propensity to be sociable and join together with others (see Simmel 1910). It is a moot point why this should be so; for example to ask when the ancestors of the Wola developed this instinctive urge to socialise or what prompted it. (With regard to these problems it is worth noting that ethological studies suggest that the ancestors of mankind had evolved some degree of sociability before they reached hominid status.) In addition to satisfying a sociable instinct the ancestors of the Wola learnt that co-operation also brings economic, social and other benefits to the individual, which means, as Locke noted, that it is in his interests to reach a mutual agreement with others about relinquishing some of their freedom as individuals and entering one community.

A free interchange in any society between these opposed forces results in a compromise where the majority think that the benefits which they gain from social life compensate them for the freedom which they relinquish to achieve this co-operation. A society only reaches this optimum point when all its members are equal and nobody has the authority to force others to act against their will in a way which benefits at their expense the social order, and hence the powerful person who is a privileged member of this order. The maintenance of equality between all men is one of the values which Wola society sets out to uphold. This means that it does not vest power in offices which give the incumbents the authority to control individual behaviour so that it falls within the guidelines of the social order. But this poses a problem because any society requires some checks upon behaviour, such as those embodied in positions of authority, to maintain a balance between the opposed forces of individual interests versus community interests.

Exchange is the mediating agent which the Wola, like other Melanesians, hit upon to solve this problem and maintain a balance between these opposed forces. The act of exchange is eminently suitable for the resolution of the social strain generated by man's schizophrenic nature because it has latent within it two opposed features which complement the opposed forces inherent in man's nature. On the one hand, to give encourages sociability because to exchange men must act considerately towards one another to engender the co-operation necessary for their two-sided transaction. But on the other hand men can also compete with one

another when giving and this is an outlet for their primeval urge to secure the best for themselves.

Every time two or more people interact socially their behaviour entails some kind of an exchange. This is true of all human social interaction (in the same way as genealogical descent is a component of some relationships in every society), and it is this which makes exchange such an apt principle for the Wola to use as the linchpin to hold the disparate elements of their society together. It is surprising to record that although Melanesian people such as the Wola have long realised the social value of exchange and have developed it into a fundamental part of their social organisation, social theorists are only slowly coming to realise the potency of this social principle. This is puzzling because exchange is so obviously a part of everyday social life, as shown by such proverbial folk sayings as 'life requires give and take', and such common conversational phrases as 'that argument took a lot out of me'. The pedigree of ideas relating to social exchange is short, although philosophers have been aware that social life involves exchange at least since the time of Aristotle,² and a far-sighted sociologist called Chavannes suggested as early as 1884 that we extend the idea of exchange to cover non-material social transactions (see Knox 1963). In a Melanesian context Malinowski (1926) made some illuminating remarks about reciprocity as an aspect of social control, and Mauss (1925) used Malinowski's (1922) ethnographic account of the Trobrianders (along with ethnographies from other parts of the world) to further our understanding of the gift. Since then Lévi-Strauss (1949) has argued that reciprocity is a fundamental principle which marks off cultural behaviour from natural instincts, and Homans (1958, 1961), Blau (1964), and Barth (1966) have developed the idea that individual interaction consists of social exchange transactions.

It is the ideas of these latter theorists which are particularly relevant to an understanding of Wola society because they rest upon an avowedly Melanesian perspective and look at the actions of individuals. Their premise is that self-interest guides the behaviour of individuals so that when they interact socially and exchange with one another they expect some return for what they

² Aristotle refers to exchange as a part of social life in *Nicomachean Ethics*.

put into any transaction. The rewards which individuals expect are diffuse and many-sided, they range from the straightforward gratification of a friendly urge to the gain of some tangible reward, and expectations vary from one person to another and from one time to another. But, as a general rule, the proposition is that people expect to gain more than they lose in social interaction—if this were not so then it would not be worth their while expending the effort required to interact with others and mankind would find itself back at square one in Hobbes's jungle (this does not mean that people do not tolerate short-term losses for a calculated long-term gain). So, in order to obtain whatever reward they desire by interacting with someone, a person must give something back to his partners to compensate them adequately for their efforts and so make the relationship mutually satisfying to both parties.³

Although the ideas which underlie this transactional approach to social life deal with the competitive aspect of interaction, as a time when people try to score off each other, to the exclusion of the other, equally important for an understanding of Wola society, side of exchange, as an expression of sociability and an act which in itself promotes sociability, this study of Wola society accepts these ideas, and their associated perspective upon the individual, and takes them as profitable for achieving an appreciation of the essence of Wola social life. But there are one or two assumptions made in this approach which require refining if the theoretical model is not to fall down because of logical flaws. There are two considerations which particularly require explanation to justify the use of these ideas to interpret Wola social life and they are how the participants judge effort and reward, and why they compete for these things.

It is not possible to think in economic terms of measurable cost and profit because the things people exchange in social interaction, such as esteem, friendship or help, are not measurable. But it is possible to establish the principles by which people judge behaviour in an exchange situation.⁴ The central issue is one of

³ Although most behaviour is explicable in this way, not all of it is (for example the behaviour of parents to children is also under the control of instinctive urges related to reproduction and the continued biological existence of the species).

⁴ This does not mean that individuals consciously calculate their behaviour during any interaction, their behaviour is spontaneous and controlled by the constraints outlined, in a 'culturally instinctive' way.

values—what the people concerned think are valuable goals. It is axiomatic that all the members of any society hold certain goals in common and that to achieve these they agree to control their behaviour according to mutually acceptable norms. These norms indicate to all persons how they ought to behave and they are based on an overriding value to which they all subscribe, namely the continued and harmonious existence of the community. The fact that people conduct themselves according to the values which they hold means that while self-interest motivates their exchange behaviour, this is not a hedonistic rush but a socially conditioned urge. It is an aspect of the two-sided nature of social reality that society uses the self-interested drive of individuals to support itself by harnessing it to values which guide behaviour so that it feeds back and reinforces the social order. An assumption here is that individuals struggle in social transactions to live up to the values which the majority hold true because this earns them respect (see Bailey 1971). Why the Wola, like all other human beings, should be concerned with their respect is a knotty problem to answer, but it probably springs to some extent from their natural urge to socialise which prompts them to act in accordance with the values held by others in order to make themselves acceptable in their eyes and win their companionship—this answer again brings up the circularity and two-sidedness of social life.

But the situation with regard to the values which guide behaviour, and peoples' concern with reputation prompting them to act according to custom, is not as straightforward as this because each individual carries in his head a slightly different set of values and hence a different picture of his society. The values held by the members of a community constitute a pool, and while all the members hold most of them in common, each one of them holds a few which are different from those held by anyone else. No community demands for its continued existence that it program all its members like social robots with the same values and aspirations, and it is this fact which gives variety to social life.⁵

⁵ Although small-scale traditional societies, such as that of the Wola, are more uniform in this respect than technologically advanced societies with high populations where the variety and differences in values gives rise to sub-cultures.

But this variation has important consequences for the behaviour of people in any exchange situation.

If both parties in any interaction sequence could only compete for the same goal, which one of them would win at the expense of the other, then the loser would withdraw from the relationship because there was nothing in it for him. But it is not often that people engage upon this kind of one winner interaction in which the competitive aspect nullifies the sociability content, it is more usual for them both to give and receive. And they can engage upon such reciprocal behaviour because they have slightly different sets of values controlling their actions and different circumstances behind their current social position—this means that they have different goals in view or a goal which they can share.

The variation in the weight which people give to different values also means that any social action cannot unambiguously earn respect. There are costs and rewards to any behaviour, and it is for an individual to judge according to his values which course of action will bring him greatest satisfaction and respect. This is the social equivalent of the economic maxim of opportunity cost which means that you cannot have your cake and eat it. An ambitious man, for example, might act ruthlessly with someone and shout him down to get his point of view across, and so earn the respect of others for his oratorical ability (which people value in an acephalous society—for example the Kuma, see Reay 1959—because it brings them together as a group and gives a guide to their otherwise unco-ordinated individual actions), but at the same time he offends the man he shouts down and this is bad for relations within the community. The man he shouts down on the other hand may earn respect for his easy-going and friendly nature, which he shows by giving way to the ambitious man's bombastic behaviour to avoid a dispute which would disrupt amicable relations.

As the propositions of the model upon which this study stands unfold it is becoming clear that the two-sidedness of social life makes it necessary for Wola society to balance delicately several opposing forces and to use them, although they are mutually incompatible, to maintain each other in a symbiotic and harmonious relationship. But harmony sometimes crumbles and conflict results when persons compete for goals which are antithetical.

This is not surprising when so many opposed elements co-exist in one society, but there exist social mechanisms, as described in later chapters, which contain disputes and prevent the destruction of society and the eruption of chaos. More significant for this social model are those conflicts which over a period of time result in a change in the normative structure of society. This happens when there is a gradual change in the values held by the majority, values which the previous social order repressed. It is significant that it is individual acts which cause the conflict which heralds such changes; it does this by feeding back and modifying the views of the community so that there is a shift in the values held by the majority. But in traditional societies, such as Wola society, such changes usually take generations to have effect, and even though such changes may occur, certain overarching values must remain constant if society is to exist—man cannot reconcile chaos and lack of social order with the existence of society.⁶

In the context of conflict, power is important because access to power is the source of the bitterest conflict which society has to control. The control of power is particularly significant in the constitution of Wola society where the fundamental process of social exchange requires that people are free to interact with one another as they choose and participate in transactions only when they think it is favourable to them. To maintain a social environment which allows this, Wola society keeps power latent and labile and out of individual reach by a number of carefully placed normative safeguards which protect the valued sovereignty of the individual. So they carefully circumscribe the source of bitterest social conflict in many parts of the world, although, as outlined later, these safeguards do demand conflict to protect their explosive prize.

Many years have passed since Rousseau made his immortal observation that 'man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains',

⁶ In this respect traditional societies stand in contrast to societies exposed to rapid social change caused by extraneous factors such as an environmental disaster or the arrival of a more powerful conquering culture. The confusion which may follow such events can result in the virtual collapse of many values overnight and bring a society to the verge of collapse (in this context see Turnbull's (1973) disturbing account of the Ik, which the Royal Shakespeare Company recently dramatised in a conscience-pricking and thought provoking way).

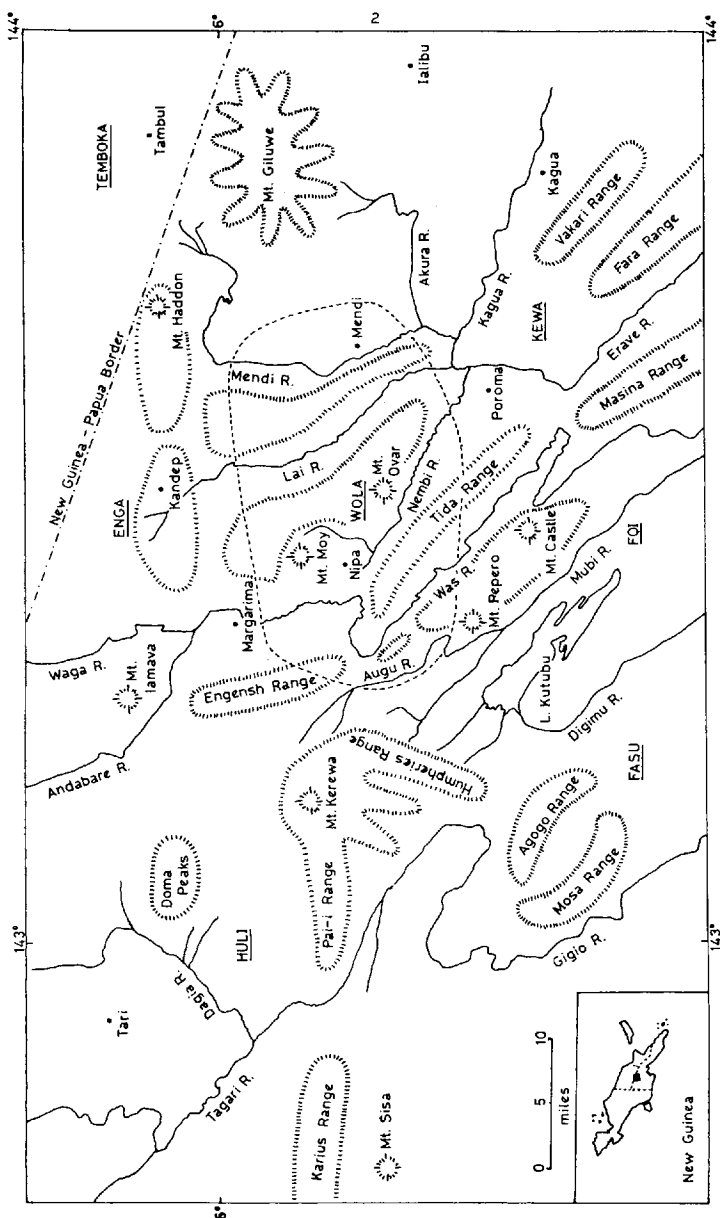
but his philosophical resolution of the individual versus society paradox, which via Durkheim has become the philosophical basis of established sociological theory used to explain Melanesian societies, is too restrictive to explain Wola society, which gives more apparent, if not real, freedom to the individual. While the Wola recognise that a coalition is in their interests, their society has evolved in such a way that it is not necessary for the general will to supersede private wishes and overtly control behaviour for the common good, because the values which individuals hold encourage them to act of their own free will in ways which achieve this end. The interests of the individual, rather than the group, are the focus of Wola society, but an individual's actions are not free and unpredictable because values, many of which the individual learns from his community, govern and guide behaviour so that it benefits the community. The question of how any individual comes to hold a set of values is complex and depends upon a concatenation of psychological, environmental and social factors which place it beyond the purview of this study, which simply tries to locate the principal values held by the Wola and find out how they articulate to constitute their society.

This short theoretical excursus points out the viewpoint from which this study proceeds to explain Wola society, but it makes no attempt to discuss the propositions which it draws from previous studies of social exchange (for this I refer the reader to the relevant works cited); it simply draws attention to those significant issues which are not clear in them or which are particularly relevant to this work. But before proceeding to discuss the implications of this approach, to find out what constitutes Wola society, and to locate the values and norms with which it guides behaviour, this chapter introduces the Wola, the place where they live and how they live.

The Place

The Wola people live in the Was (Wage),⁷ Nembi and Lai river valleys of the Southern Highlands administrative district of Papua

⁷ The Wola call the river the Was. The name Wage is a government corruption of the word used by the Huli and Enga speakers who occupy the valley to the north of the Wola.



MAP 1 The Wola and surrounding people. (Adapted from the 1:1,000,000 series sheets for Lake Kutubu and Wabag, Division of National Mapping, Canberra.)

New Guinea (map 1). The people who occupy the Mendi river valley, who call themselves *ib Mend ol* (lit: river Mend men) and not Wola, speak a dialect of the Wola language⁸ and have a similar culture to the people occupying the valleys to their west.⁹ According to the typology of Highland languages formulated by Wurm (1964) the Wola are members of the Mendi-Pole sub-family.¹⁰

The following people surround the Wola. To the north, from the region of Kandep, are Enga speakers; to the north-west, from the region of Margarima, are Huli speakers; to the south-east, from the region of Poroma, are Kewa speakers; to the north-east, from the region of Tambul, are Temboka speakers; and to the south-west are the Fasu and Foi speakers who live around Lake Kutubu.

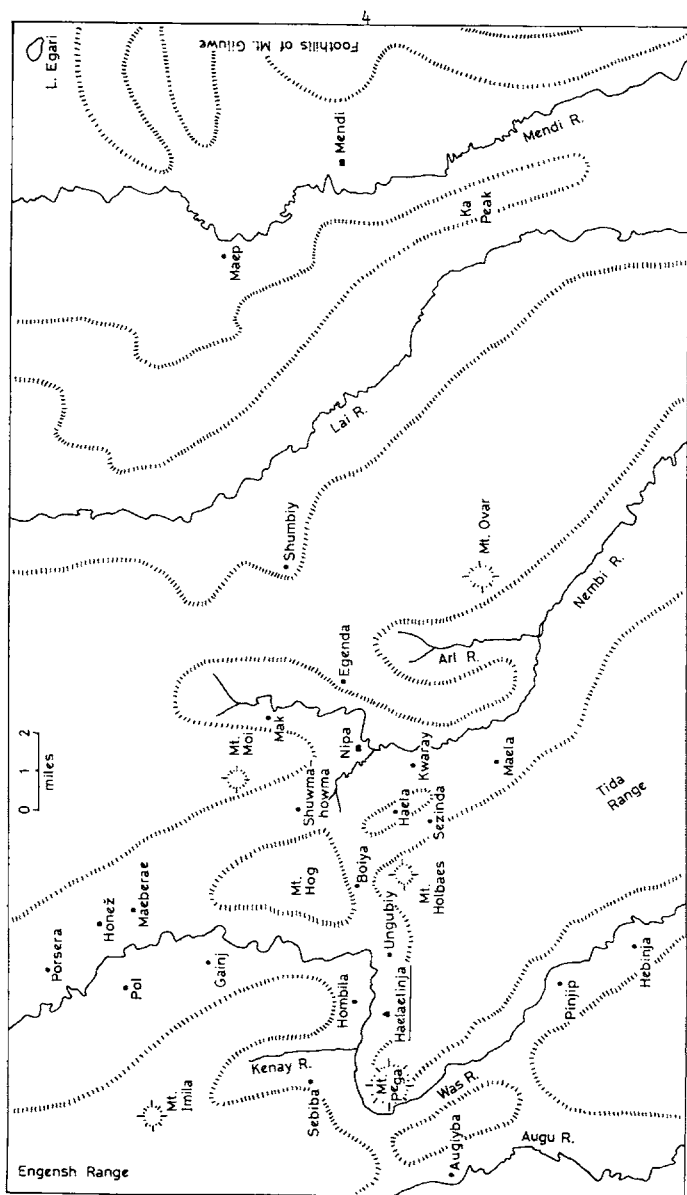
The area where I conducted the field work upon which I base this study is on the western side of the region occupied by the Wola and is situated close to the boundary with Huli speakers. The exact location was a place called Haelaelinja, which is a settlement situated on a large bend in the Was river (map 2).

The region occupied by the Wola is mountainous (Haelaelinja is situated at approximately 6100 feet above sea level). The countryside is precipitous and rugged, and in the valley bottoms flow turbulent rivers crossed by frail vine bridges. The Wola cultivate and live on the valley sides. Where there has been extensive cultivation in the valleys there are dense stands of pit pit cane. These are interspersed with the grass clearings of recently abandoned gardens and the brown earth and dark green foliage of current gardens. On the mountain tops and in the

⁸ Only a detailed linguistic study will decide whether Wola and Mendi are dialects of the same language or two closely related languages (see Rule 1965: 98-9 for a discussion of this point). I refer to them as dialects of the same language because while in Mendi I made myself understood speaking the language which I had learnt on the Was valley.

⁹ See Ryan 1961.

¹⁰ Wurm's (1964) map showing the distribution of languages in the Highlands is incorrect for the Was river. The Huli language does not extend as far south as his map shows but stops a little way south of Margarima patrol post. The language spoken by the people at Augu (a settlement pioneered within living memory by men from Sebiba in the Was valley) is identical with the language spoken throughout the Was valley and the people living in the Was valley speak a dialect which differs only phonetically, not structurally, from the language spoken in the Nembi valley.



MAP 2. The Wola area. (Adapted from the 1:50,000 series, sheets 20, 21, 26 and 27 of the Wabag-Mendi area and a series of aerial photographs of the region. Division of National Mapping, Canberra.)

unpopulated areas of valleys montane rainforest predominates; in these damp forests moss covers everything. The area consists mainly of marine clastic sedimentary rocks (notably limestone) and to the north-west there are lavas and pyroclastic rocks of volcanic origin.

The fauna of the region is not varied or bountiful and the majority of animals are marsupials—wallabies, tree kangaroos, cuscuses and possums. The avifauna of the region, in keeping with Papua New Guinea in general, is rich and varied, ranging from the large flightless cassowary to the majestically colourful birds of paradise and the less spectacular, but more numerous, parrots, lorys and cockatoos.

The climate of the region is equable and usually follows a predictable pattern. The mornings are bright and clear with cloud settled in the valley bottoms. This cloud clears by about 8.00 am and the temperature soon rises to reach an average maximum of 23.8°C. At this time of day the sun is hot and there is little cloud in the sky. During the early afternoon clouds build up and the temperature falls a little as the sky becomes overcast. Invariably there is rainfall later in the afternoon and the average for a day is 0.32 inches. Evenings are usually clear with stars clearly visible in the night sky; the average minimum temperature is 11.7°C.¹¹

History of Contact

The Wola people who inhabit the Was river valley were first discovered in 1935 by a patrol led by Jack Hides and Jim O'Malley. After a gruelling trek across the sparsely populated Great Papuan Plateau and an exhausting climb through the desolate wastes of the Karius Range the patrol entered the Highland area populated by the Huli people. From here they crossed the watershed into the populated Was valley which Hides called the Waga Furari.¹² The wigs worn by the men here reminded Hides of 'black Pharaohs' and entering the valley he notes, 'We were now in a country of

¹¹ The average temperature and rainfall figures recorded here are taken from weather readings made at Haelaelinja throughout the period of field work.

¹² Waga is the name given to the Was river by the people living to the north of the Wola. Furari is I think, a corruption of a Huli word which means: Go! It appears the people told the patrol to go to the Was valley and Hides misconstrued this to be the name of the place.

different people—bewigged, dark-skinned men, with voices deep and guttural' (1936: 111-12).

The Wola were not friendly towards the patrol and refused them food with shouts of 'nahai',¹³ and their attitude towards the starving and weak patrol prompted Hides (1936: 116) to write of 'these despicable people'. The unco-operative attitude of the Wola and the aggrieved feelings of Hides's enfeebled party resulted in a stormy passage for the patrol through the Wola area and there were several tense encounters, some of which culminated in violence. At one place a group of yodelling warriors attacked the patrol and some Wola men were shot. Although the people made gestures of appeasement after this attack warriors continued to harass the patrol as it proceeded south-east, and one night numerous bowmen again attacked Hides and his party and pinned them down.¹⁴

In spite of their treacherous, surly and suspicious attitude towards the patrol the Wola soon impressed upon Hides's party that their overriding interest in life was wealth. Hides notes (1936: 114) that 'All these people wanted pearl and cowrie shell, though

¹³ Hides's spelling of *nae hae* (lit: not stands) which means 'there is none'.

¹⁴ Unfortunately Hides failed to draw an accurate map of his route and the exact location of these encounters is not certain. Hides refers to the Wen valley but to my knowledge there is no such place. *Wen* is the Wola word for soon and it is possible that the people answered Hides's questions, which were totally unintelligible to them, with *wen wen* (soon soon). During journeys I often received this reply when I asked my guides how much longer before we reached our destination and it has connotations of 'be patient'. The other two terms given by Hides for the place (Bangalbe) and the people (Injigale) are Wola phrases. *Paengael bay* (lit: hear?) is 'do you hear me?' and *injakal bay* (lit: no say?) is 'did you say no?'. Dr W. Gammage (University of Adelaide), a historian interested in the early exploration of the Highlands, has pointed out to me that accounts of the local people are often confusing when trying to work out the routes taken by early patrols because they may refer to gold prospectors who wandered into the region and not to administrative patrols. Bearing in mind the dubious nature of the evidence, I was shown a place near to Sezinda (a settlement S.E. of Nipa) where the people claimed to have attacked the first white men. Sezinda stands at the end of a narrow valley bounded by craggy limestone ridges and this is possibly Hides's Wen valley. To the east opens the wider Nembi valley—Hides's Name valley.

When asked why they attacked early patrols the Wola said they thought the white men were spirits (they have a belief in the malicious spirit of a white woman). They also stressed the fact that the patrol shot their relatives and this meant that they were obliged to seek revenge; so once the patrol had killed one man repeated attacks were inevitable as the Wola sought to exact revenge.

I could see little of this among them. They held up little broken pieces of pearl shell and with a questioning look asked if we had any'. One one occasion Hides was forced to unpack the medicine box to prove that there were no shells in there, and on another occasion some thwarted Wola men were so desperate that they picked the pearl buttons off the patrol officers' shirts! In his biography of Hides, Sinclair refers to his decision to take steel tools for trade as 'a fatal choice' because the people the patrol was to meet were different from other Papuans, they were 'people who worshipped shell, and in particular the gleaming, iridescent mother of pearl' (1969: 126).

The importance of wealth to the Wola recurs again and again in the reports of patrols into this region. Following the Hides/O'Malley patrol an aerial reconnaissance was flown over the area. The government anthropologist F. E. Williams took part in this reconnaissance flight and in his report (Williams 1936) he refers to the shells which he threw in handfuls from the plane and he notes that 'they could be seen for a long time as diminishing white specks far in our rear. No doubt some of them were found, picked up and marvelled at as gifts from the great bird'. In a dry comment Williams mentions the mislaid parachutes his wife had made for the shells and his hopes that none of the shells hit an upward-gazing person between the eyes.

In 1936 Champion and Adamson led a patrol which crossed the Was valley and went on to the Lai and Mendi valleys. Following this patrol the administration established a post at Lake Kutubu and accounts of the Wola desire for wealth continue to appear in the reports. On one occasion Champion had some tins of rice smashed open because the people thought they contained pearl shells. On another occasion Adamson thought he would encourage some men to bring food and he threw open a patrol box full of pearl shells and held up a handful. Instead of encouraging them to bring food the sight of so much wealth overawed the men and they ran off in confusion.¹⁵

In 1939 F. E. Williams came to Lake Kutubu and spent six weeks of his stay at Augu.¹⁶ This is a small Wola settlement

¹⁵ Both events recorded in the *Annual Report for Papua 1939-40*.

¹⁶ Augu is a government corruption of the Wola name for the place which is

situated in the rainforest between the densely populated valleys of the Highlands and the sparsely populated lower region around Lake Kutubu. As a result of his stay Williams produced a superficial and descriptive account entitled 'The Grasslanders' (accompanied by a vocabulary list and sketchy grammar) in the *Annual Report for Papua*.

The administration abandoned the station at Lake Kutubu during the war and reopened it in the late 1940s. In 1950 they established a station at Mendi. From 1954 until 1958 D'Arcy Ryan worked for varying periods in a settlement north of Mendi, and the results of his fieldwork are available in various publications (see bibliography), the major one of which (Ryan 1961) shows that the importance to the people of giving gifts struck him, as it does any visitor, as an important feature of their life. A comparison between the ethnographic facts reported in this book and in Ryan's work shows that there are a number of minor differences in custom between the people living in the Mendi valley and those in the Was valley, which is not surprising because they are on opposite sides of the Wola speaking region. But the theoretical postulates which underlie Ryan's interpretation of Mendi society lead him to draw conclusions with which this study cannot agree, although it does not intend to discuss or criticise specific points of difference. The only other anthropological work done near the Wola is that of Meggitt (1956), who has written a descriptive account of a patrol he made into the Huli and Enga speaking area of the Was valley to the north of the Wola.

The administration patrolled the valley intermittently from Mendi and Kutubu but they did not bring the area under control until they established a station at Nipa in the Nembi valley. The people in the Was valley were still attacking patrols in 1963 and one warrior had his hand shot off for his troubles, and in an area towards Poroma patrol post there were attacks on patrols as late as 1968. The missionaries soon followed on behind the administration and by 1965 the three missions present in Nipa today were established.

The impact which the administration and missions have had on

Augiyba. One old man living at Haelaelinja remembered Williams and is even named in the 'Grasslanders' article.

Wola life varies from place to place. On the Was river the people's way of life is virtually unchanged. There are no cash crops and the indigenous economy is unaltered except for the introduction of steel axes and some new crops. The exchange of wealth, the principal interest of this study, continues as it always has done, except for inflation in the number of shells available and the marginal introduction of Australian dollars as an item of wealth. The politics of influence, as discussed in this book, continues unchanged, although it is subject to the introduced power of the Australians. An artifact of this power is the Local Government Council established by the administration, but this does not interfere with the traditional way men reach the decisions which influence them, they treat it as an alien, outside body invented by, and at the beck and call of, the *kiaps* (Pidgin for patrol officer), and think that it deals with matters of no real consequence. The administration has suppressed warfare and people take serious disputes, which are beyond arbitration in the traditional way (and therefore likely to lead to a fight), to the patrol officer in Nipa. The missionaries disapprove of several aspects of traditional life but their efforts to discourage their practice have achieved only limited success. The Wola consider the principal benefits of Australian administration to be medical aid and the suppression of war. Their attitude towards economic development is the bane of a patrol officer's life but in the future, when communications improve, the area will probably develop quickly.¹⁷

The People

In many ways the Wola are similar to the other Highland people who surround them and whose way of life other anthropologists, geographers and linguists have documented. They are shifting cultivators and their staple crop is sweet potato, which they supplement with various other crops such as taro, bananas, sugar cane and several varieties of green leaf vegetables. Men do the initial work required to prepare new gardens by clearing and fencing the area which their families intend to cultivate. Women follow them and do most of the routine garden work—they prepare the soil, plant the crops, tend the garden and harvest the food.

¹⁷ The Highlands Highway is scheduled to pass through Nipa.

Women also herd the pigs which, unlike their gardens, are not simply a source of food but are also a source of wealth and prestige. Other valuables include pearl and cowrie shells, crude salt, birds' feathers, large bladed stone axes and a thick, strong smelling oil extracted from trees at Kutubu. The exchange of these items on prescribed occasions, for example at marriages, following deaths and in reparation payments to allies after a war, is an important activity for all Wola men and their examination is the main theme of this work.

The Wola say that they accord high status to those who excel in these exchanges, and an analysis in later chapters of quantitative data on exchanges shows that men of renown are, as the Wola claim, those who handle more valuables than other men. It is sometimes possible for these more able men, by virtue of their success, to exert a marginal degree of influence over the decisions reached by several men united to pursue a collective act. But, unlike some other Melanesian societies, their success does not earn them the status of leader, and they are unable to control the actions of others because this would openly offend against their society's ethos of equality.

Explanations which postulate that leaders, the so-called big-men of Melanesia, control corporate political groups, notably groups resulting from the application of concepts of unilineal descent, do not fit Wola society. Anthropologists developed unilineal descent theory (which states that in some places corporate groups form when people, obliged to support the group, unite along lines of descent) to explain how acephalous societies maintain social order, but, while many acephalous Melanesian societies, like the Wola, do not fit the model well, if at all, several anthropologists take this idea, either directly or by implication, add some kind of achieved leadership, and think, albeit with some embarrassing contradictions, that it also explains how these societies work.

The Wola do have permanent groups, which at a casual glance an observer might think correspond to segmentary descent groups. But this is not so, they base their social organisation on a different premise altogether. Their settlement is scattered and men interperse gardens between their homesteads. They and their sons occupy men's houses (called *enza*), either alone or with other close

male relatives. Women live in separate houses (called *tenda*) which they may share with their co-wives, their daughters, other close female relatives and their pigs. While it is usual for a man and his wife to live in houses which are close to one another, there is little in the way of communal family life. But there is considerable variation in this, the members of different families behave in different ways towards one another; for example some men see little of their wives (particularly some of the older, polygynous men whose co-wives' squabbling tires them, they are sometimes even glad to see their wives take their pigs and leave them to live for a few weeks with their relatives elsewhere) while other men see their wives more often and show more concern for their welfare, and in a few cases even co-habit with them in the same house. Similarly there is considerable variation in the composition of families, which may consist of a man's wife or wives, other adult female relatives such as his widowed mother or unmarried adolescent sister, and the dependent children of these women. Families belong to men and not to women (in conversation people indicate a specific family by prefixing the word for family (*sem*) with the possessive form of the father's name—for example *Koton sem* is Kot's family)—and this reflects the jural superiority of men over women which leads to their separation in all aspects of Wola life—the housing pattern is a reflection of this separation, and men's fears of the polluting and weakening influence of women, especially during menstruation, is a dramatic manifestation of it, which men use to justify their fears of too close and regular a contact with women in everyday life.¹⁸

The Wola have used the family as the building block for the other permanent groups of their society. Several families, which are genealogically related by male and female links and which reside and garden in the same area, form a small, named group, and a number of these small groups (the exact number varies from

¹⁸ Perhaps I can plead that the concern of this book with men is the result of this separation between the sexes made by the Wola, who rarely permit women to handle wealth except under the guidance of men, and not, as some people in our women's lib conscious society have suggested, the result of my own male chauvinism—it is noteworthy though that women do not entirely lack ways of redressing this male dominance (see Strathern 1972 on the position of women in a neighbouring Highland society).

two to ten or more), which people think share a genealogical connection in the dim past (they may forget the precise genealogical relationship) and which occupy a specific territory, constitute a named community. These communities, consisting of related people, are exogamous and their members ought not to marry one another. When girls marry they move from their parents' homestead to their husband's, but sometimes men settle with their wife's relatives.

The primary force behind the formation of these permanent and named groups is access to garden land. They result from the collection of several related families on territories where they have rights to garden land. Men can claim these rights through a variety of connections to a place (both kin and situational factors play a part) and while they speak of a preference for residence on their fathers' land, men are eclectic in their choice of where to live and the empirical constitution of these permanent groups is bilateral and not agnatic. A significant point with these permanent territorial groups is that their related members do not recognise any obligations to support the group in specific situations, and this means that they do not constitute the action groups of Wola society.

The groups which unite to pursue any activity, for example to kill pigs, to stage one of the colourful dances for which Highlanders are famous, or to fight a war, are temporary and result from the individual decisions of the participants who think that it is in their interests (not the interests of the group) to join together and take part in the planned event. While the resident members of a permanent territorial group will constitute the nucleus of any *ad hoc* action group, their relatives living elsewhere may also join in the event, and the important point is that nobody participates to support the group, they all take part for reasons of self-interest. This pattern of recruitment is the direct result of the attempt by the Wola, as outlined earlier in the discussion of the problems faced by this book, to resolve the individual versus society paradox so as to give as much freedom as possible to the individual to do as he wishes and to pursue his own ends. This leads the Wola to behave in a way which nullifies the assumptions of segmentary theory that obligations to groups maintain social order.

If this is so then the Wola, like any other acephalous society of

reasonably dense population, must have some other social principle which integrates them and encourages social order. This study argues that the Wola have developed the exchange of wealth, which is based upon the fundamental assumptions relating to social exchange as described at the beginning of this chapter, to facilitate co-operation and harmony in their social life. An analysis in later chapters of empirical data from the Was river area establishes the social and geographical networks within which wealth flows, shows the many relations which men maintain through exchange, reveals the wide geographical spread of their transactions, and shows how this social and geographical criss-crossing of numerous exchanges serves to hold Wola society together. Exchange, unlike other institutionalised mechanisms for the maintenance of social order, does not overtly infringe upon the freedom of the individual, and the Wola value exchange highly, and accord high status to men who excel at it, because it encourages social order and also allows for a potentially disruptive and asocial mediation of the individual versus society paradox.

This thumb-nail sketch of Wola life concludes with a brief outline of their religious beliefs. These rest upon a belief in the malevolent powers of ancestor spirits (called *towmow*) to return and cause sickness and death to their descendants. The Wola think that *towmow* lead a nomadic existence and reside temporarily at such places as small houses containing ancestor stones¹⁹ or the skulls of ancestors, under the fireplaces in houses and in certain deep pools of water.²⁰ If someone falls seriously ill, a man with the required knowledge divines the current residence place of the attacking *towmow* and the victim's relatives make an offering of a pig there to placate the offending ancestor spirit and, as the Wola say, stop it from 'eating' the sick person. Occasionally several men combine to perform a large ritual for their collective benefit. They do not conduct these rituals to relieve a specific illness, but to please the *towmow* and lessen their malevolent attacks on their descendants.

¹⁹ These stones are ancient mortars, pestles, war club heads and other peculiar shaped stones found in gardens and the rainforest.

²⁰ Often down potholes in the limestone.

2

The Society and the Community

This chapter sets out to explain the meaning of society and community to the Wola, and so lay the foundations for the study in later chapters of group action, the extent of individual influence, how individuals achieve influence, and the part played by exchange in Wola life. In order to facilitate these aims this chapter defines key terms, outlines relevant theoretical concepts, and sketches the ideas of previous studies germane to the issues under investigation.

The Society

The definition of society in Melanesia is not easy. At the highest level of abstraction we may bracket together all the people living in this region of Oceania and, on the basis of the underlying social features which are common to them all, speak of Melanesian society. But before the arrival of European explorers and administrators these people occupied regions which were inaccessible to one another, and they were unaware of each others' existence or their common Melanesian heritage. Today these people still speak hundreds of different languages and each of their linguistic groups maintains a unique culture.

On a less abstract level we can speak of these linguistic, cultural and geographical groups as Melanesian societies. It is to such a group that the synonymous terms Wola society and Wola people refer. But in reality this is also an artificial social grouping because the Wola people do not think of themselves as a clearly identifiable entity distinguishable from other such groups—in fact before contact nobody was aware of the extent of Wola society. The Wola have no word for society. Even their name Wola, which some of them use to refer to themselves and which some neighbouring people use to refer to them, does not include all the people who

speak this language and share its associated customs.¹ The geographical area delimited on map 1 shows the area occupied by all the speakers of the language which people in the Nembi and Was valleys call Wola. But the people living in the Mendi valley, who speak this language, call themselves *ib Mend ol* (lit: river Mend men) and use the name Wola for the people living to their west in the Lai valley and beyond. The fact that the Wola have no all inclusive name for themselves or word for society should make us wary of theoretical concepts developed to explain a society as an integrated and smoothly functioning whole. Efforts to impose logical categories where there are none to facilitate such an explanation must inevitably result in some distortion. In this respect the names which administrators and others have given to people in other parts of Melanesia to indicate bounded linguistic groups are a lesson because translated they are silly; for example Siane is a greeting, Arapesh means friends and Gnau means no (where people were not obliging enough to repeat one word continually in their efforts to communicate with alien newcomers then the standard procedure was to resort to geographical labels, such as the Mendi, Hagen or Kutubu people).

While the Wola do not have an all-inclusive name for, or know of the existence of, all the speakers of their language, this does not mean that they do not classify the people in the area known to them. Where two languages occur in an area, for example, they have names to differentiate between them, although these names do not include in their minds all the speakers of the languages, who are spread over a wide geographical area the extent of which is unknown to them. The boundaries between people who speak different languages are indefinite, although the fact that the Wola are not in close contact with another language group along a wide front serves to reduce this fuzziness. They meet neighbouring language groups along geographically narrow and restricted fronts; for example in the narrow Was and Nembi valleys, and around the lower slopes of the uninhabited Mount Giluwe.²

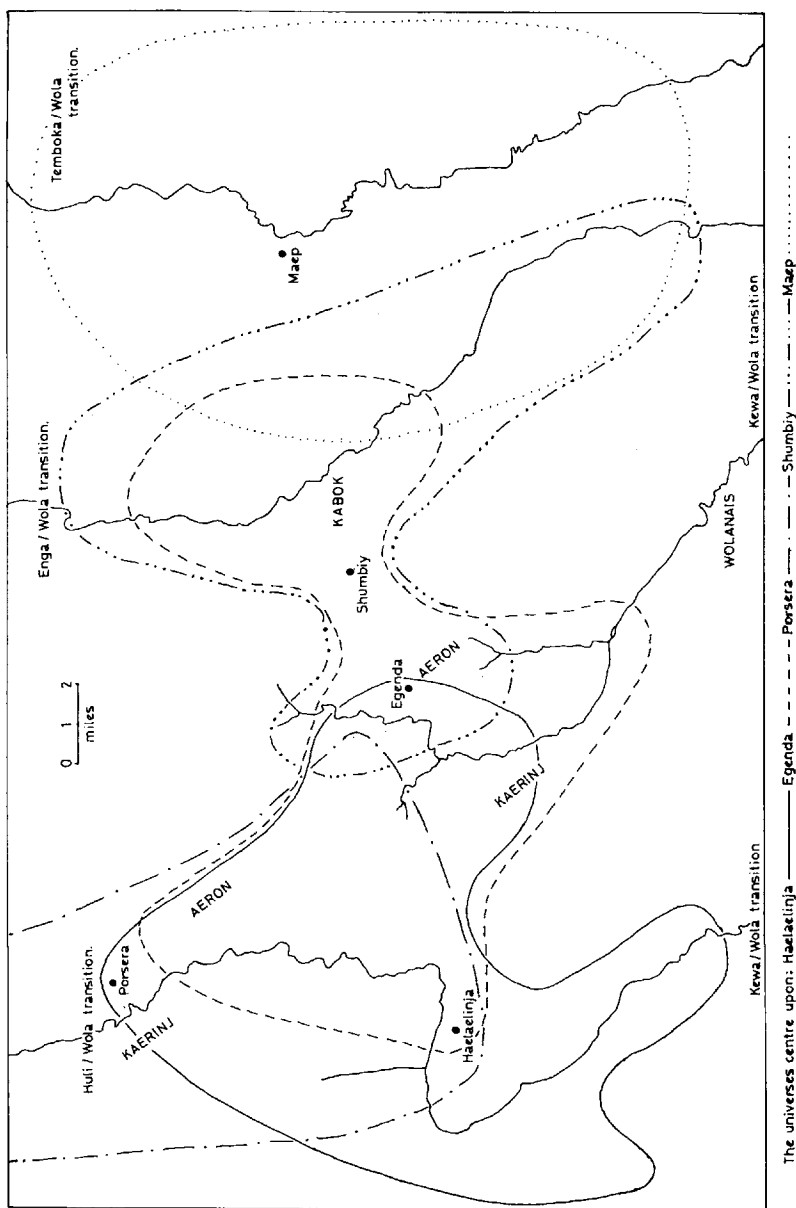
¹ The Wola also call their language *aengael henenzh* (lit: words true) which means, with a dash of characteristic conceit, the true or real language.

² I do not know how true this is for boundaries between other language groups but the location of geographical barriers may be of significance for anthropologists or linguists studying the change from one culture and language to another.

One of these transition areas is in the north of the Was valley, towards Margarima patrol post, where the Wola give way to Huli speakers who they call *ol Hul* (lit: men Hul).³ The transition from one people to the other is gradual and there is an area of hybridisation where some men dress with a wide bark belt like the Wola and other men dress with a string belt like the Huli, and where some men even wear a mixture of clothing, such as a Wola bark belt and a Huli crescent wig. In this area few people are unable to speak both languages, although they usually have a preference for one language or the other which their dress preference reflects. They interact closely with one another and marry, exchange, fight wars and carry on other activities between themselves in the same way as do people who live in areas where there are all Wola or all Huli communities. From a casual observation of the transition areas, the situation is the same between Wola and Kewa speakers, and Mendi and Temboka speakers. But the large expanse of unsettled rainforest between the Highland valleys and Lake Kutubu marks a clear cultural and ecological boundary between these two regions. The Wola do not have too much to do with the Kutubu people who they call *Kutuwb ol* (lit: Kutubu men), although some people in isolated communities near to the lake (for example at Augu) do interact with them. One of the consequences of this relative lack of contact is that the Wola think that the Kutubians are diabolical sorcerers who they fear as cannibals, and they associate their region with debilitating sickness and horrible frightening creatures.

The Wola not only distinguish between the speakers of different languages but they also divide up the region known to them into named areas according to differences in dialect, which usually correspond also to minor variations in custom. The people living on the Was river, for example, refer to the people who live to the west of a line following the north Was and Nembi valleys as Kaerinj, and people living to the east as Aeron. People living beyond the watershed with the Lai river they call Kabok and people occupying the Nembi valley to the south-east they call Wolanais (see map 3 for the location of these dialect areas). But

³ *Hul* is the Wola word for bone, a possible reference to the cassowary bone dagger carried by all Huli men, although nobody ever said so.



MAP 3 The extent of some social universes in the Wola area

such divisions are relative to one place only. People who live elsewhere, as the Wola realise, may divide up the region differently and use similar or different names to refer to the dialect areas which they recognise.⁴ The fact that there are no sharp boundaries between different dialects, which change imperceptibly from one place to another, makes the rigid division of an area impractical, and contributes to the variable and flexible social classifications of the Wola, a flexibility which the absence of a standard division of any region by all the people living in it reflects. This variability indicates that the classification of large numbers of people is not important to the Wola, and this is consonant with their sociological emphasis upon the individual as opposed to the group.

This account of the gradual linguistic and cultural changes which occur between different language and dialect groups indicates the imprecise meaning which the terms *society* and *people* carry for the Wola. But while the language and institutions of their society change imperceptibly within, from one dialect to another, and without, as they merge gradually into neighbouring societies, it is useful to refer to Wola society or the Wola people so long as it is remembered that these terms refer to generalisations about the language and customs of the people who live in a certain area of the Southern Highlands, and not to an organised or united social group in any sense. While this idea of society is useful for general statements about the way of life led by the speakers of one language, who order their lives according to the same customs and values, it is of no use for an understanding of the actual processes which operate to control their behaviour. These restraining influences operate within a more restricted area.

This study calls this restricted area the social universe. Every community has its own social universe which consists of all those settlements in which its members have social relations. The

⁴ To give a few examples of these variations: Meggitt (1956) has Karintsu (lit: Karint ground) on one of his maps for an area north of that occupied by Wola speakers; A. F. McNeill (a former A.D.C. at Nipa) has written in Patrol Report No. 1 (1969-70) that the people living to the west of any large river (Mendi, Lai, Nembi or Was) are called Kaerinj and those living to the east are Aeron; and the Huli living in the region of Margarima, so I was told, refer to themselves as Kaerinj and to the Wola living to the south as Wola.

members of a community do not have face to face relations with all the people living in their social universe, but at least one person from their community has relations with at least one member of any community included in it. The social universe is not an organised social group, it is simply a geographical area centred upon a community which marks spatially the extent of the social interaction of its members, and it rarely includes persons living in settlements ten or more miles away, as map 3 shows.⁵ This map also shows how the social universes in the Wola area interlock with one another (it shows only a few universes because the actual situation with the social universes of all the communities in the area is too confusing to draw on a diagram—it would consist of many circles all tightly packed and overlapping with one another).⁶

In order to define the social universe of any community it is necessary to restrict focus to only the relations which the members of that community have with people living elsewhere. The members of another settlement will maintain different networks of relations, and so interact within different social universes. But the extent to which the social universes of communities differ varies. The social universes of neighbouring groups differ slightly if at all (for example the people living at Haelaelinja, Ungubiy and Hombila all have the same social universe) but as the geographical distance between groups increases so the extent of the differences in their social universes increases (for example compare Egenda with Haelaelinja) until a point is reached where the groups are so far apart that they pass out of each others' social universe (for example compare Shumbiy with Haelaelinja). People at Haelae-

⁵ Although the Australians have suppressed warfare and people can travel safely to more distant areas, the social universe of any settlement remains unchanged. The Wola still fear unknown areas where they are strangers and suspect poisoning or sorcery attempts, if not direct physical assault, on their lives.

⁶ A comparison of map 3 with map 2 shows that the social universes follow the topography of the region; this is because communities line the valleys and only an occasional bush house, which people occupy temporarily, occurs in the high forested regions. Another point with regard to map 3 concerns accuracy. The extent of the social universe centred upon Haelaelinja, and enclosed by a solid line, is exact, and includes all those communities in which people living there have relations (as found out by intensive fieldwork). The extent of the social universes centred upon the other settlements are estimations based upon brief visits to each place.

linja are vaguely aware that Shumbiy exists because people with whom they interact in the Egenda region have told them about the Lai valley, but before contact they did not have anything but hazy notions about the Mendi valley or the existence of people beyond. This brings up an interesting problem concerning the extent to which word of mouth knowledge of others' existence carries from one place to another before it shades off into either a mythical account (as displayed by some aspects of Wola thoughts about the Kutubu people) or dissipates itself into no knowledge at all.

This slow change in the social universes of different communities parallels the gradual transition described for changes in language, dialect and custom from one area to another. In fact the social universes of some communities include people who speak a different language and, as pointed out, this shows that while the Wola distinguish between different languages and recognise variations in culture, these differences do not represent for them barriers to social interaction, as they do for some ethnographers who interpret such variations as the hallmarks of discrete and different societies. In some places on the other hand people know that others exist but they do not interact with them, and in a sociological context these people are irrelevant (for example many Wola people know of the Kutubuans existence by a large lake but they have never been there).

The Community

The organisation of individuals into communities is an important aspect of Wola social life. Along with the higher level social universe groupings, which centre upon them and within which their members interact, they constitute the social framework within which transactional processes take place between people. But the importance which Wola society places upon the autonomy of the individual makes the community a flexible group, and in some ways it is difficult to decide what gives it reality and what contributes to its continued existence. This problem of fluid groups has vexed anthropologists studying other Melanesian societies, but they have compounded it by using inappropriate concepts which, drawn from corporate group theory, cannot adequately explain how these societies work. Nevertheless, permanent, if somewhat vague, groups do occur and play a prominent

part in the organisation of Wola life, and their constitution, if not wholly amenable to analysis according to concepts formulated for other parts of the world, must articulate according to certain other principles, and this chapter looks for these because an understanding of them is necessary to pave the way for an appreciation of the part played by exchange in Wola life.

Unfortunately the confusion caused by the use of inapplicable concepts to explain Melanesian societies has resulted not only in a clouded approach to the issues in question but also in the imprecise use of terms to designate groups (clan, lineage, parish, district etc.) so that they no longer have a specific meaning. These discrepancies may indicate real differences in the organisation of Melanesian societies, but this is not always so. Sometimes the ethnographic variety displayed by cultures in this region blinds visitors to the common fundamental features which underlie them—a situation which makes people in different places both familiar and strange at the same time. But this is no excuse for different writers to use the same term for different types of group or different terms for the same type of group. Such imprecise use of terms will lead to false assumptions about the groups concerned, and can only convey fuzzy ideas and woolly explanations. It is important that anthropologists agree what their terms mean and then use them precisely for this and nothing else, but in the absence of such agreement this study tries to avoid the ambiguity of anthropological jargon by using the words the Wola use for their groups.

The difficulty a visitor has picking out settlement groups on the ground is a foretaste of the problems to come when he tries to locate the hazy groups of Wola society. Although homesteads occupy demarcated territories, they are scattered about and this makes it difficult to pick out communities because they run into one another.

The Wola divide up the territories of communities into named localities. Where the population is concentrated these cover small, well demarcated areas, but in the uninhabited rainforest they cover large, less well defined areas. When there are houses standing on a locality the Wola call it an *aendtay* (lit: house base), but otherwise these localities, like the territories of which they are a part, have no generic term. In fact territories, unlike the localities

of which they are composed, do not even have a specific name—if necessary the Wola indicate a specific territory by referring to the ground of such and such a settlement group (for example *Aenda suw*; lit: Aenda ground). This means that when the Wola wish to refer to the members of a settlement group as the people living at a certain named place they have to take the name of the locality (for example Haelaelinja) where the majority reside, and people understand that this includes those who live in other localities.

A stranger to the Wola region slowly comes to learn the names of social groups because people prefix personal names with them to specify particular individuals. They do this because while everyone has one, and often more than one, personal name, there are fewer names than people, which means that in any area these are several persons who share the same name.⁷ The random way in which the Wola ascribe these names is also instructive for the newcomer because it reflects the flexibility of the social groups; any group with which a man has a commonly known connection will do, whether he resides with it or not. At Haelaelinja, for example, there are two men called Kot. One is specified as Aenda Kot, after the name of the *semonda* at Haelaelinja where he has an unbroken agnatic connection with the original colonist of the area. The other man, who has the highest status in the area, is called Pol Kot after the name of the *semonda* and place where his mother was born.

The people living on one territory not only constitute a single large settlement group, they also divide themselves into several smaller social groups, which their settlement pattern will reflect to some extent. The Wola refer to all these various sized groups as *sem*. In a specific sense *sem* refers to the variably composed families of single men. In a qualified sense it may refer to either several related families residing on the same territory, which constitute a small group the Wola call *semgenk* (lit: family small),

⁷ See Ryan (1958) for an account of naming in the Mendi valley where the situation is similar to the Was valley. The combination of a personal name with the name of a small *semgenk* group invariably refers to one person only because no two members of such a group should have the same personal name. The Wola believe that it is foolhardy for a living person to have the same name as a dead relative because to say the name may bring the speaker to the ghost's attention and provoke it to attack and cause illness.

or it may refer to all those occupying the same territory, who constitute a community or settlement group, the largest social group recognised by the Wola and called *semonda* (lit: family large). When the context of a conversation shows to which level of group a person refers they simply speak of *sem*. The qualified use of this word for progressively larger social groups indicates that the Wola conceive of their society to some extent as built up from the collection together in one place of a number of related families which have the right to reside on the same territory.

It is important to understand what makes *sem* corporate groups, and what differentiates them from similar groups elsewhere. *Semonda* and *semgenk* are permanent social groups which stay in existence for generations regardless of the deaths of individual members (although over the years the vagaries of population growth may result in the shrinking of some groups and expansion, and possible division into two, of others). They have names; for example the *semonda* at Haelaelinja is Aenda and its constituent extant *semgenk* are Mayka, Maenget, Puwgael, Huwlael and Wenja. They occupy a specific geographical territory. Although people may forget the precise genealogical relationship which joined together the ancestors of two constituent *semgenk* of a *semonda*, their members must all be related in some way to qualify for residence rights on the same territory, and as a result they must all fit on a single genealogy of sorts—as figure 7 shows for Aenda *semonda* and its neighbour Ebay *semonda*. The fact that the members of a *semonda* refer to each other in a general sense as brothers (*haemay*) shows that the Wola recognise the significance of kin relationships in their constitution, and appreciate the value of this idiom for the encouragement of smooth everyday relations within them. The fact that the members of a *semonda* are related means that these groups are exogamous, although on occasion distantly related members of different *semgenk* do marry one another, and while people frown on this it is not a morally reprehensible act like marriage between closer relatives (such in-marrying is only really possible when a *semonda* is very large, and this often augurs its split into two marriageable groups, although it is arguable that marriage within renews distant links and may serve to put off rather than precipitate any such division).

The small size of these social groups is a point of difference

between them and similar groups elsewhere. It is important to realise this because their smallness allows for their continued ordered existence as groups, instead of as mere categories, when they play no corporate part in the group activities that punctuate Wola life, which later chapters discuss. The *semonda* of Wola society, like the settlement groups found in other parts of New Guinea,⁸ are small compared with the large groups found in some other parts of the world such as Africa. Table 2 lists the population figures for the *semonda* within the social universe of the residents at Haelaelinja. Their average population is 158 persons and their average number of adult males, the persons involved in the group activities discussed later, is 45 men.⁹

In order to qualify as a member of a *sem* a man must reside on its territory, and to do this he must have a right to garden land there. It makes sense that the land tenure system constitutes the rules which govern the composition of *sem* because the Wola are gardeners, and access to this unmovable asset is essential for their livelihood. But, although it is reasonable to argue that access to land governs the constitution of these permanent communities,¹⁰ social factors also influence their composition. Before a man can

⁸ See Forge (1972) for a discussion on the size of settlements in New Guinea.

⁹ The census data are not accurate and reliable (except for Aenda and Ebay *semonda* where accurate census data were collected) because in the government surveys used to compile table 2 patrol officers who made them tended to lump together several *semonda*. Also they were not fastidious about the exact place of residence of people which meant that individuals did not consistently attend a census at the same place, and they missed some people out altogether and counted others twice. But in spite of these inconsistencies the figures give a reliable indication of the small size of the groups under discussion.

¹⁰ Leach (1961) argues for the consideration of economic factors, such as access to land, as matters determining to some extent the form of social groups, and in the context of Papua New Guinea Langness (1964), and more recently Strathern (1973), argue that access to land is an important factor influencing the pattern of settlement.

* This table gives an average figure for each area calculated from the various census data listed in patrol reports (which never tally exactly where two or more census patrols have covered the same area at different times). The figures for adult men in the Electoral Roll differ considerably from these patrol censuses (a difference which it is difficult to explain) and for this reason the table lists them separately, and then gives an average figure calculated from all the available data (census and electoral roll). Patrol officers recorded their census data according to the site of *haus kiap* and where these cover two or more *semonda* they are bracketed together.

<i>Semonda</i>	Place where majority of <i>semonda</i> members settled	Total Pop. (Av. census patrol reports)	No. adult men (Av. census patrol reports)	No. Adult men (Nipa electoral roll 1971)	Av. no. adult men (census & electoral roll)
Aenda	Haelaelinja	207	48	68	72
Ebay	Andwariy	98	28		
Hoboga	Ungubiy	212	48	?	?
Laerop	Paym				
Wolol	Dayowtinja				
Kal	Tiyba				
Silol	Boiya	369	97	115	106
Wolharok	Shaeriyp				
Kolba	Ya				
Hobol	Shompaengay				
Laerop	Hinjip				
Kawiym	Obera				
Maendop	Aengariya				
Tombera	Haela	397	91	136	113
Bat	Bat				
Kalol	Sezinda	210	52	95	73
Pe'rep	Korpay				
Yarol	Ndidiym	244	61	104	82
Shobera	Somsebel				
Hinjip	Mungtay	537	107	148	127
Pinjip	Merep				
Kariyl	Pongael				
Luwimb-Haegop	Timtay				
Luwimb-Haegop	Hebinja	266	67	120	93
Hiypdowba	Nenjuwa				
Wolol	Kwaray	381	86	113	99
Puliym	Puliym-aenda	290	61	138	99
Twenj	Egenda	519	119	153	136
Soi	Imila	267	60	110	85
Bora	Komiya	289	75	98	86
Bora	Ngin	165	47	54	50
Mak	Mak	196	52	56	54
Shuwma	Shuwma-howma	353	82	116	99
Enja	Aelamaenda	271	86	85	86
Pol	Maebora	258	71	154	112
Saeluwpiyziy	Honezh				
Minya	Kapenda			85	
Solbaem	Solbaem	298	86	98	92
Songera	Songera	286	74	106	90
Wenja	Porsera	519	132	186	159
Keberob	Orlaem				
Waenjop	Senat				
Pe'riysem	Hul				
Sebelol	Iyb-bombol				
Haenda	Hombila	214	47	20	33
Ombael	Gainz	476	121	131	126
Homol	Obael	227	54		
Saendaep	Obael				
Ak	Sebiba	313	66	105	114
Huwiael	Huwlael-howma	108	30	73	51
Henep	Henep-aenda	153	37	39	38
Uwliym	Suwsuwt	125	30	13	21
Naip	Pinjip	163	41	50	46
Jay	Kawariy	138	31	51	41

TABLE 2 The number of adult male members and total population figures for *semonda**

join a group he must have some remembered connection with a person at the place, a connection which other people living there acknowledge gives him rights to claim garden land and take up residence, and this means that he must have actively maintained social relations with some of the people living there—he cannot move in with strangers. The rules which control access to land and restrict the membership of social groups thus define only the potential extent of a *sem*; the actual composition of a group is unpredictable and depends upon the way variable social factors influence the decisions of eligible persons who also have rights elsewhere.

The rules controlling land tenure have a wide bilateral scope, which even gives a man access to the land of his wife's relatives, and the wide choice which this affords reflects the importance that Wola society places upon the sovereignty of the individual because it allows for the maximum of freedom by instituting the minimum of rules necessary to maintain order in the allocation of land. The result is that any social group is a motley collection of people, and the dispersed pattern of their garden holdings throughout its territory reflects this variability. Although by and large the members of a *semonda* cultivate land on the same territory, they do not systematically order their holdings according to their *semgenk* allegiance, in fact single men do not even order their gardens in one place. This discontinuous pattern of holdings of land, the resource access to which defines the composition of communities, makes it difficult, as the scattered settlement pattern also does, to pick out permanent groups on the ground, and this is further evidence of the flexible nature of Wola social organisation and it suggests, as this study goes on to argue, that these permanent groups do not play an important part in the everyday life of the Wola.

A man can claim rights to land in any one of the following ways. He can cultivate any unclaimed land on the territory to which his *semgenk* lays claim. This land is *hombuwnon suw* (lit: everybody's ground) and it covers those areas to which no member of the *semgenk* has prior rights because one of their relatives gardened there within living memory. Once a man clears and gardens an area the title passes from the *semgenk* in general to him and his descendants. This means that a man has a right to garden any land

used by his father or a more distant ancestor. This is *obun hunguwm suw* (lit: his only ground) and men know the location of these areas by boundary marks such as trees, rocks, streams, and old fence sites marked by silted up ditches and rows of *Cordyline* shrubs. All of a man's children, both his sons and daughters, have cultivation rights to his old garden sites, and if more than one of them wishes to cultivate an old garden they divide the area up amongst themselves (a man does not divide up his land between his children before he dies, they inherit joint rights and sort out individual shares when the time comes for them to clear a garden). If someone does not cultivate some of his father's old garden sites his children do not lose their rights to the land, these rights remain in the possession of a man's descendants until people forget them. This happens after a few generations if nobody with rights to the land renews them by clearing it for a garden. When rights to unclaimed land slip from memory it passes back by default into the general pool of unclaimed land held by the *semgenk*. Similarly, if a man dies without offspring then his land is likely to pass back into the *semgenk* pool of unused forest land, although a close relative of the deceased (for example brother or nephew) may stake a prior claim to it.

The fact that land rights pass to both male and female children means that a man can claim rights to land cleared by his wife's or mother's father, or, because title to land passes on through several generations, by his mother's mother's father or father's mother's father or some other distant ancestor. But claims to land not used for some generations are not common because, as pointed out, a man will not try to move in with distantly related strangers—it is not genealogical relationships that count for the Wola but active social relations. Land claimed through wife is *obun weren suw* (lit: his wife's ground) and through mother is *obun amon suw* (lit: his mother's ground). A man can claim rights to his mother's land title whether or not his father claimed this land through her as his wife. The rights to land claimed through a female title pass to the children of the man, although if a man has more than one wife then only his children by the woman whose title he claims inherit rights to the land, co-wife's children have no rights. But there are exceptions to these rules, which is in line with the general flexibility of Wola social organisation, and some men do make

anomalous claims to land, such as that belonging to their stepfather.

Sometimes men wish to clear gardens on land to which they have no rights, usually because it is convenient for them; for example the land is near their homes or other gardens. When men wish to do this they approach the man who has rights to the land in question and ask him for permission to garden it. The granting of such a request depends upon the circumstances which surround it; for example whether or not the owner plans to cultivate the area himself, and his relationship with the man making the request. There is no shortage of suitable land in the Wola region so an owner will usually give permission so long as he has no plans for the piece of land and he is on good terms with the man making the request. To seek permission to cultivate another man's land is *suw turiy homay* (lit: ground happy feel). When a man secures permission to garden on the land of another he assumes only temporary rights of cultivation, which last as long as the garden he clears. The Wola have no idea of the permanent alienation of land. Rights remain with the owner and his descendants in perpetuity (or at least until they pass from memory), although the granting of cultivation rights to others can spawn disputes over the land years later, if descendants of the men concerned make conflicting claims for it (the temporary gardener's descendants mistaking his use of the land as evidence that it belongs to them). It is rare for men to rent land for cultivation by giving the owner wealth such as shells, although if for some reason a man's gardens do not produce enough food for his family he may purchase the right to harvest the crop from an area of another man's garden.

Some men live near enough to another territory where they have rights to land to lay claim to these, in addition to having gardens at the place where they live. This situation can result in land changing hands over time from the potential pool of one *semgenk* to another because, if the gardener's descendants cease to use the land for some reason after several generations, when people forget the source of the title, it will pass to their *semgenk* where they live. Similarly, land can change hands between different *semgenk* within the same *semonda* if some of their members intermarry. This drift in land rights typifies the flexibility of the permanent groups of Wola society which even manage to hand round the

unmovable resource which gives them permanence. If a man claims land in two territories which are not close together he will adopt a migratory life style and maintain a house and gardens on both territories and move periodically from one to the other.¹¹ But the majority of men garden on one territory only, and if they clear land elsewhere they will change their place of residence and abandon their former gardens and home. But men do not often move, and the majority never move during the course of their lives (the motives which prompt men to change their place of residence vary, sometimes a serious dispute precipitates a move whereas on other occasions men move because they desire a change or because they think they will benefit by moving to live with a certain relative).

While the rules governing land tenure give the Wola a wide choice, they prefer to claim land through certain relatives above others. They prefer to claim land on the territory where their fathers lived, which means first option on their fathers' old garden sites and rights to cultivate any land held communally by their *semgenk*. This preference brings up the hoary debate about the relevance of unilineal descent concepts to Highland societies¹² because some anthropologists take similar preferences voiced elsewhere to indicate that the resulting groups have an agnatic descent basis, and think that the cumulative result of this preference is communities which take on the appearance of agnatic descent groups when looked at on a genealogy, although, as figure 7 shows, perhaps this requires a little wishful thinking. The theme of this book, plus lack of space, precludes a detailed discussion of this topic, and other topics related to Wola social organisation, but it is necessary to make certain observations from the context of this study.

While these descent-like groups possess some characteristics, outlined below, which give them an agnatic appearance, it is erroneous to think that they can be explained in terms of corporate descent theory. The first feature which gives these permanent

¹¹ In this respect, and in several others, the social organisation of the Wola is similar to that of their neighbours the Huli as described by Glasse (1968).

¹² For the latest comments on this issue see Strathern and La Fontaine in Goody (1973). See also Barnes (1962), Langness (1964), Meggitt (1965), de Lepervanche (1967-8) and Strathern (1969).

groups an agnatic appearance is the paternal residence preference which prompts people to distinguish between patrilocal residents and men who claim residence rights through women. The Wola call men *mausha* if they can trace their connection with a group back through agnatic links only, and *aysha* if they have a female or anomalous link somewhere in their ancestry. But these terms are relative. In everyday life there is a blur between *mausha* and *aysha* status so that it is not always clear when the descendants of a man who claimed land through a woman become *mausha*. They usually classify as *mausha* any man who has a continued agnatic residential connection with the place where he lives that consists of two or more ancestors (that is, at least his father and father's father lived there before him). Beyond these two forefathers a man may have a female ancestor joining his pedigree to the genealogy of the original colonists of the territory, and when this happens people will classify the small group of which he is a member as *aysha* (Huwlael, Puwgael and Wenja are *aysha* status *semgenk* in Aenda *semonda*—see figure 7). So depending upon the context a man may be both *mausha* and *aysha* at the same place.

If a man does not reside patrilocally then he will prefer to live at the place of his mother or mother's relatives rather than reside at the place of his wife which, along with anomalous claims to land rights, is the least popular choice. But this is simply an order of preferences, and so long as a man has an extant social connection at a place, through which he can claim rights to land, he suffers no social disadvantages residing there. The result is that permanent groups have a distinctly bilateral appearance, and this alarming fact has frustrated the explanation of similar societies throughout the Highlands, where anthropologists have misconstrued the paternal preference as indicative of a descent ideology, because when they try to explain them according to the tenets of segmentary descent theory they are flummoxed to find the so-thought descent groups have too few agnatic members to really fit, without some twisting of the material, this explanatory model. The skeleton genealogies of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*, reproduced in figure 7, show the situation for two Wola communities, and table 3 summarises the residential preferences of living men.

It is clear that descent itself is not a principle behind group formation. The swift absorption of newcomers shows this, as does

Father's place		Residential preference		Other (e.g. step-father's place)
<i>Mausha sem</i>	<i>Aysha sem</i>	Mother's place	Wife's place	
34	23	12	6	4

TABLE 3 The residential preferences of members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*

the rapid conversion of their descendants to *mausha* status. The Wola think it a little ridiculous, for example, to suggest that a man who has an unbroken residential history at a place since his father's father moved there to claim land through a woman, should move back to live with distantly related strangers at the place from which his agnatic ancestors originated, and so re-establish an unbroken, 'pure agnatic' connection. Present day relations concern the Wola, not past connections. But it remains to explain why they voice a preference for patrilocal residence, a preference which, as table 3 shows, prompts about two-thirds of the men at any place to be living where their fathers lived.

While there is no discrimination in favour of patrilocal residents, and people do not consider other residents as slightly inferior members of a community, men who change their place of residence do put themselves at a disadvantage, at least temporarily. When they move elsewhere men have to build up a number of new relations at their new place of residence because, before their move, they will have only had a few acquaintances there, apart from the relations they have with one or two people that allows them to claim rights to land. The initial difficulties which men face establishing new relations discourage moving, and combined with the predominantly virilocal residence pattern this explains why men prefer to live at their father's place. The jural superiority of men explains why women usually go to live with their husbands because men, who do not wish to relinquish the relations which they have established during their lives, can force their wives to relinquish theirs and move.¹³ So the paternal preference results from the inertia encouraged by the conditions of everyday life, men wish to stay where they grow up (which, for the same reasons, is usually their father's place) because it is here

¹³ Seen, for example, in the land tenure system which gives possession of land to men, not women—although men may claim rights through women.

they have their friends—but men have rights to land elsewhere and maintain relations with people living at these places, and they are free to move if, for some reason, they choose to do so.

While the present day operation of a preferential land rights system gives rise, by a process Barnes (1962) calls 'patri-filiation', to the growth of settlement groups, this is not the only factor which contributes to their descent-like appearance. Another feature which gives these permanent groups a descent-like look is the way people account for their existence. They do this by describing how they grow up from the descendants of a distant founder, and one way they symbolise this genealogical growth is to liken the connections between *sem* to the branches of a pandanus tree, so that a *semonda* is the tree trunk (*aenk tay*; lit: pandanus base (of trunk)) and its constituent *semgenk* are the branches (*aenk pega*; lit: pandanus branches).¹⁴ When people use descent in this way to explain how present day communities came into existence they are using it in a historical sense, that is they are explaining how the residential decisions of dead men, who were related in some way and had access to land at the same place, have resulted in the formation of the present groups. This does not mean that descent is a principle which regulates the membership of *semonda* in the present and that men are expected, or socially obliged, either to reside at a place and support a group because of this, or that to become members of a group they have to trace, or failing this, claim putative, descent from its founders. All they need is an acknowledged relation with other residents (which logically means descent from a common ancestor, but this is not the point at issue) which will allow them to claim garden land.

As figure 7 shows, the hierarchical nesting of the *semgenk* which composes a *semonda* gives them a further resemblance to segmentary descent groups. But, although the members of a *semgenk* usually fit onto a remembered genealogy, the fact that people cannot always fit the constituent *semgenk* of a *semonda* onto a single genealogy is a further indication that descent itself is not an important principle in their constitution. The fact that nobody can claim rights to land unless he has some relationship with the

¹⁴ The use of trees and branches to facilitate genealogical calculation is common throughout the world (see Barnes 1967).

settlement group occupying it means that it is biologically inevitable that everyone in a *semonda* ought to fit onto one genealogy—the fact that people forget specific links is irrelevant and does nothing to upset the explanation of their evolution in terms of descent.

A quick look at the way Wola people explain the evolution of *semonda* gives a clearer understanding of what descent means to them. They explain the origin of these groups in myths which recount the adventures of someone who, in the primordial past, found himself on the group's then unclaimed territory, where they settled and started to garden. These origin stories are *ol maerizor injiy* (lit; man was born (carried) story), and they invariably associate the groups' founders with some animal, bird or plant which helped them in the mythical past to establish themselves on the territory of the *semonda*. The following two abbreviated stories, which account for the origins of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*, illustrate the form which these myths take.

*Aenda Origin Story*¹⁵

Long ago a woman working in a garden across the river from Haelaelinja hung her baby from a tree in her bag.¹⁶ A large bird of prey [of a variety the Wola call *shor sel*, possibly an eagle or goshawk] swooped down and snatched the bag and carried the baby off to its eyrie on mount Pega. Here it fed and cared for the child who grew into a strong young man called Kiyer. When he had grown up Kiyer came down from the mountain and started to clear gardens near the Was river. His bird stepfather realised that he would need a wife and so it flew off to the Nembi valley where it landed in a garden in which some women were working. The bird stole some *kor*¹⁷ and two young girls went to hit him with digging sticks. The crafty bird feigned injury and limped off with the girls in pursuit, and after a while they became lost. They decided that the safe thing to do was to follow the bird rather than try and find their way home, and eventually they came to Kiyer's gardens and he took them as his wives. After some bother with them trying to leave him, Kiyer gave pigs and other wealth to the girls' relatives and so formalised the marriage

¹⁵ This is an abbreviated version of the story told to me by Wenja Unguwiyp.

¹⁶ Wola mothers invariably carry their baby children on a bed of dry leaves in a net bag slung from their heads.

¹⁷ Edible pit pit, *Setaria palmifolia*.

and established relations with them. Kiyer had two sons called Aenda and Tomind, who in turn had children as detailed on figure 6, and from their descendants the large family called Aenda grew up.

*Ebay Origin Story*¹⁸

Long ago, before any men lived on the Was river, there was a young unmarried girl called Hayhaembulaem who lived in a house all on her own at Ungubiy. One day a marsupial [of the variety the Wola call *sab yaeliyp*, which is the mountain cuscus *Phalanger vestitus*] saw the girl and her house from the mountain where he lived and he decided to investigate. When he arrived the door was closed, but the stem of a bamboo plant which grew beside the house overhung the eaves.¹⁹ The cunning marsupial climbed up this and worked a hole in the eaves through which he squeezed into the house. He stealthily had intercourse with the sleeping girl and then slipped off. Although the girl was unaware of it, the marsupial came back regularly on many nights and repeated the procedure and so built up a foetus inside her.²⁰ She gave birth to a son Payp who in turn had a son called Ezendal, who in turn had children as detailed in figure 7, from whom the two neighbouring *semonda* of Ebay and Hoboga descended. When the baby was born the marsupial came back regularly to feed him leaves, and it roused the mother's curiosity to keep finding these and smelling the strong odour of the animal. One night she resolved to find out what was happening and feigned sleep, and she saw the marsupial curled up with her son and realised that he was the father!

The fact that few members of a community know its *ol maerizor* story in any detail²¹ is significant for an appreciation of the imprecise meaning which the Wola give to descent when they account for the evolution of their groups, but more significant is

¹⁸ Hoboga Makwes told me this story, which a Silol man subsequently elaborated upon in some detail.

¹⁹ The Wola cultivate small stands of bamboo (*Bambusa* sp.) near their houses because it has several uses, for example in making knives, tobacco pipes and cooking containers.

²⁰ The Wola think that it requires several acts of intercourse to build up a baby inside a pregnant woman.

²¹ This is not because people deliberately restrict their knowledge to certain men. Though it may be related to story-telling ability, with those who can spin a good yarn embellishing upon the bare bones of a story which is common knowledge.

the fact that no man knows the complete genealogy for his *semonda*, or has any interest in tracing out connections.²²

Once they have pointed to the mythical origins of their *semonda*, and possibly recounted what they know of the story, men go on to explain how the mythical founder figure had children who shared between themselves the land gardened by their father and also cut new gardens in the virgin forest. Each child in turn had a family which later reproduced, and so on through the generations from the mythical past to the present day. Over the years, with the tacit approval of neighbours, the group established rights to a certain territory, and the men of each new generation, as described above, shared rights to the land used by their forefathers and cleared some uncultivated forest on this territory. Some of them left to claim land at other places, and in return some men came from elsewhere. And so, over several generations, the descendants of the founder grew into the present community.

This process of land allocation and group formation continues unhampered in the Wola region where, unlike a few areas of the Highlands (notably in the Enga and Chimbu areas), there is sufficient land to allow for the gradual expansion which it entails. The expansion of *semonda* as they evolve and grow results in their fragmentation into several *semgenk*, and sometimes this expansion continues until the community reaches a point where it is too large and divides into two. When this happens the neighbouring *semonda* usually have the same origin story, and the Wola agree that this indicates that they once formed a single *semonda*.²³ But, other than acknowledging a common origin in the dim past, members of such groups have no obligations to one another; although the situation with recently divided groups may be confused, for example several people may still consider intermarriage between their members wrong.

²² In fact some of the relationships turned up by my probings intrigued men, who were apparently unaware of them. Also, because of this lack of interest, it took several months to collect from several old men the genealogy in figure 7, and I suspect that it still contains some errors—but this brings up social issues such as telescoping of genealogies which are beyond the scope of this book.

²³ Lack of space prevents a discussion of the expansion and contraction of Wola social groups, but see Ryan (1959, 1961: 13-55) for his interpretation of the expansion and contraction of social groups in the Mendi valley—although his emphasis on segmentary-like groups is at odds with this study.

This account of Wola social organisation describes a situation similar to that found by anthropologists in other Highland societies. It outlines how the Wola explain the evolution and existence of their largest discrete territorial groups, which they call *semonda*, by reference to a rationale of descent, and argues that, although men prefer to live at their fathers' place, they do not calculate membership of groups in terms of descent but leave the individual free to live where he wishes so long as he has an extant social relationship with a member of the group where he decides to reside, which allows him to claim rights to land on their territory. It is access to the unmovable and essential resource of land, and not social rules, which determines the make-up of these communities and gives them permanence,²⁴ and because of this they differ in some crucial respects from those permanent groups found in other societies which are recruited according to social criteria and to which the ingenious segmentary model applies. The next chapter goes on to show that the action groups which mobilise in Wola society in times of trouble, when the segmentary model comes most forcefully into operation, are not explicable in terms of this model. While the maintenance of social order between both the members of the same community and between the members of different communities is essential for the continuance of Wola society, the way in which it achieves this reflects its concern for individual freedom as opposed to corporate group interests, and shows the inapplicability of the segmentary model, which has formed the basis of acephalous political theory since it was put forward in the 1940s.

²⁴ Of course social circumstances influence the decisions of individuals, but they do not dictate to their actions like social norms.

Social Order

This chapter looks at the way the Wola maintain social order within the *semonda* and between people living in different *semonda*. Although it follows on from the account of the permanent groups found in Wola society and furthers understanding of them, it also introduces two other important issues into this study. These two issues are the temporary action groups of Wola society, and the position of men of high status, the so-called big-men of other Highland societies. The recruitment and constitution of action groups comes out in the second half of this chapter in the discussion of war, and the discussion of men of renown runs throughout but restricts itself simply to an investigation of the way these men may try to use the marginal influence which their success earns them to manipulate group actions to their advantage; it looks at the opportunities which occur and the motives behind the possible use of influence in the settlement of disputes and the uniting of men to fight a war. It restricts itself to this topic because a later chapter takes up a detailed discussion of their position, as those who achieve high status for their ability with wealth in the exchanges which are the central theme of this work. This chapter also introduces this main theme with a discussion of compensation payments and the *shombaynol* contest which epitomise its ideals.

In this way this chapter leads away from the idea of the corporate group as a political body which constitutes the action group in Wola society, and it also questions the validity of explanations which suggest that successful men have some kind of power to lead such groups. The recent proliferation of terms used to identify persons usually called big-men (for example 'director' and 'executive' by Salisbury (1964), 'manager' by BurrIDGE (1971), 'magnate' by Goodenough and Chowning (1971), and 'strong men' by Berndt (1971)) parallels the confusion which exists over the nomenclature used for different social groups, and like this imbroglio it indicates not only differences between Melanesian societies but also disagreement over the concepts which adequately account for leadership and political action in

them. In an attempt to avoid judgment on the basis of pre-conceived ideas formed for other New Guinea societies this study calls successful men of high status and renown by their Wola term *ol howma* (lit: man grass clearing),¹ in the same way as it uses Wola words for their permanent social groups.²

Social Order within the Semonda

The fact that all the members of a local group must be related to claim land on its territory is an important feature which helps to facilitate an orderly social life because it encourages them to control their behaviour according to certain norms. The basis of these norms which effect social control is the recognition by everyone that it is in their personal interests to regulate their behaviour with one another, and so allow for the co-operative and sociable behaviour which benefits them all. This self-regulation, which is a concept found in many societies where there are no authoritative leaders or judicial institutions to maintain order (see Nadel 1953), rests upon a reciprocal understanding between residents that they all gain by exercising consideration (so that their behaviour does not infringe upon each others' rights) and tolerance (so that the behaviour of others may infringe within recognised limits upon their freedom of action). This means that men give up some of their freedom of action in return for social order.

Inevitably there are occasions when members of a *semonda* wrong each other, but there are sanctions to discourage self-interested actions which take place at the expense of group harmony. When one man wrongs another man and a dispute

¹ A *howma* is a small park-like piece of common land planted around with casuarina trees (*Gymnostoma oligodon* Johnson, which the Wola call *naep*) and often situated in front of a men's house. The space belongs to the men who live nearby, and they carry out group activities here (such as pig kills, dances and some exchanges). In some ways it is similar to an English village green. See Williams (1939: 42) for an idealised description of *howma*.

² This way of avoiding the problems posed by the translation of critical indigenous terms into English (where there are rarely single words which accurately convey their meanings) is common in ethnographies (for example Oliver (1971) uses the Siuai term *mumi* and Pospisil uses the Kapauku term *tonowi* for the leaders in those societies), and a convincing case could be made for its wider use—leaving translation to comparative studies which carefully define the meaning of their terms.

results, the general term for their actions is *aeret biy* (lit: dispute do). There are various ways a man may wrong somebody. The theft of material possessions (*paz miy*; lit: steal take) or food (*paz nor*; lit: steal eat) is a common cause of dispute. Another frequent cause of disputes are the various sexual offences recognised by the Wola which include sex out of marriage with an unmarried or married woman, rape (*ten paz haeruw puw*; lit: woman steal together go), and sex with a woman who is a member of a group into which the man is prohibited to marry because it is the natal *sem* of a close relative (*ten mboliy tuwmuw*; lit: woman sister climb). Women sometimes cause a dispute when they either leave or are sent away by their husbands for some reason and there is a demand for the return of the bridewealth (*ten injiykab aeret biy*; lit: woman bridewealth dispute do). The usual reason why women desert their husbands is because they fight (*naenainjliy*; lit: spouse (?) hit). Sometimes there are disputes over rights to land (*suw aeret biy*; lit: ground dispute do) and frequently there are disputes over the destruction of gardens by pigs (*showmay em nor*; lit: pig garden eat). Sometimes there are disputes over the repayment of debts (*saen aeret biy*; lit: debt dispute do) and less frequently there are disputes over the wealth offered in exchanges (*olombul aeret biy*; lit: exchange dispute do).³ Any wrongdoing can lead to a heated argument and a physical assault or fight (*liy liy biy*; lit: hit hit do). An assault can lead to a death (*pay paen liy*; lit: dead hit), which is a very serious offence. In addition to physical attack a man may kill someone by giving them poison (*mogtomb nor homay*; lit: poison eat feel), or by directing sorcery at them (*woktoiz* (or *hultort*)⁴ *liy*; lit: sorcery hit).

If a man finds that someone wronged him and he does not know the identity of the wrongdoer he will attempt to identify him. He may search the scene of the crime for some clue to his identity, such as a personal possession or footprints which he may follow. In an attempt to ascertain the identity of the culprit a man will also seek for witnesses (*muwagay*) to question. In some cases there is

³ *Olombul* refers to exchanges in general. If a man wishes to specify the exchange which caused the dispute he will mention the exchange and add *aeret biy*; for example *haypuw aeret biy* (lit: reparation dispute do).

⁴ *Woktoiz* and *hultort* are two different kinds of sorcery; the latter comes from the Huli people.

no evidence and the wronged man may think back to try to remember anyone who has a grudge against him which may have led them to commit the crime in revenge. But sometimes it is impossible to discover the wrongdoer and the wronged man can only vent his grievances in expletives of imaginary revenge; this is often the case in poisoning when the victim dies without giving a clue as to the identity of the poisoner.

If a wronged man ascertains (or thinks he has ascertained) the identity of the culprit he will accuse him of the crime. In some cases a man manages to establish the identity of the wrongdoer beyond doubt, but more often there is little evidence and sometimes none. An argument (*aengael aeret biy*; lit: talk dispute do) usually follows an accusation, and denials, counter-accusations and admissions of guilt characterise the ensuing dispute. If a man admits that he is guilty he will usually justify his actions either as redress for a previous wrong done to him, or as an act for which he was not responsible because it was due to negligence on the part of the injured man (this is the argument often heard in cases where someone's pig breaks in and damages the garden of another man—the owner of the pig admits it was his animal but argues that the responsibility rests with the gardener whose fence was unsound).

A dispute is not a group activity for which men arrange a venue and a time. Nobody organises a dispute. When one man accuses another man of committing a wrong against him this will start an argument and such accusations can take place anywhere and at any time. Sometimes only the two protagonists are present at the accusation but on other occasions several people may witness the start of the argument. Other people will slowly gather as the two disputants warm to their argument with accusations, claims for evidence and motives, demands for compensation, and the other allegations which characterise the invective of a dispute. The number of people who turn up varies with the time of day, the length of time the dispute lasts, and where the argument takes place, but the average attendance at a dispute is approximately thirty-six persons of whom about twelve will actually contribute to the argument while the others will listen and chatter among themselves. The argument may last for some two hours and if the plaintiff is not satisfied with the outcome he may bring the matter

up again with the wrongdoer several times after the initial accusation. The number of times a man brings up an unsettled grievance varies with the seriousness of the wrong (for example men may rake up disputes over outstanding war reparation payments again and again for several years). On average there are one or two disputes a month within a *semonda*. Men do not conduct disputes in an orderly way. They come and go as they choose and sit or stand around where they please and chatter among themselves with one ear on the argument. Men speaking at a dispute are obliged to shout over the general babble and constant interruptions from other men. Cries of '*aengael nae kay*' (lit: 'words not say' (be quiet!)) and '*paengael bay*' (lit: 'hear?' (do you hear me?)) frequently punctuate a dispute. Men do not listen more receptively to the words of an *ol howma* and these men have to battle against the conversations going on around them in the same way as other speakers. The end of a dispute is not marked in any way, men drift slowly away when the debate becomes repetitive and the argument dies away, sometimes with no settlement reached.

The group which assembles at a dispute is not really an action-set because, although the people present wish to see an amicable settlement and return to order, they do not actively try to adjudicate in the case. Neither do opposed factions crystallise and demand justice for the man they support, although close relatives and friends may support one of the disputants and argue in his favour. The settlement of a dispute is a problem for the disputants to solve, and the placing upon them of the responsibility to settle the dispute is a reflection of the value placed upon the autonomy of the individual, a value which prohibits the intervention of an impartial third party to impose a settlement upon them. Other men comment on the issue and offer their advice but the settlement is the responsibility of the disputants. The importance of the plaintiff and the accused in the conduct of a dispute is illustrated in table 4 which analyses the behaviour of members of Aenda and Ebay *sem* in the following dispute.⁵

⁵ Although these detailed figures refer to only one dispute (and only one argument relating to that dispute) the pattern is typical of the other disputes which I observed but did not record in such detail (except where disputes involved minors, when a close relative argued the case). It was calculated that on average a man spoke 2.35 words a second and the calculations in table 4 are worked out

Dispute 1: Tensgay versus Pundiya over bridewealth pig

In this dispute Maenget Tensgay accused his father's brother's son Maenget Pundiya of owing him a pig which he refused to hand over when he was in a position to do so. Several years ago Tensgay contributed a pig towards Pundiya's bridewealth, and the Wola have a convention that if a man has a daughter he should return the equivalent wealth from her bridewealth when she marries to men who contributed to his marriage. Two or three months before the dispute recorded in table 4 Pundiya had received the bridewealth for his eldest daughter and the argument had started when Tensgay, in accordance with convention, demanded a pig from the bridewealth to repay him for the pig he had contributed to Pundiya's bridewealth. Pundiya denied Tensgay had contributed anything to his wife's bridewealth and refused to give him a pig. Tensgay and Pundiya are members of the same *semgenk* who have lived as neighbours all their lives and during this time they have squabbled numerous times. They brought up some of these previous disputes incidentally to the main issue, as evidence of the poor character of the other party and as reasons for their present behaviour. They revived the details of unsettled exchanges in which they have been involved, in particular an outstanding series of war reparation payments, and each man claimed the other had swindled him in the past and was not going to get away with it again. Another issue which rankled was the marriage itself. Pundiya's daughter had married within her *semonda* which the Wola frown upon and in a self-righteous mood at the marriage Tensgay had refused to accept any valuables. But once the marriage was a *fait accompli* and looked like a stable and lasting union Tensgay decided he ought to push his claim for his dues. Pundiya resisted all of his claims in the face of several witnesses, one of whom was his own wife, who testified in favour of Tensgay. At one stage, amid jeers of derision, Pundiya walked off in a huff threatening to leave Haelaelinja and move to his mother's natal place. He returned a little later when the argument had cooled down and several men had left.

on this basis. Only the names of men present at the dispute are recorded and where two members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have the same name the letter in brackets indicates their *semgenk*. Only the women who spoke in the dispute (and not all those who were present) are recorded on the table (the last five entries). Men's names are in the order of *ol howma* status (with the highest status at the top) as expressed in an opinion poll conducted among all the adult members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* (see chapter 5 for details). In all tables relating to *ol howma* status the names of men are listed in this order.

Men's names	Relation to disputants	Present at beginning	Arrived late	Present at end	No. times spoke	Total no. words spoken	Total time spoke (mins. and secs.)	Average length of each speech (secs.)	% of dispute time spent speaking
Kot (H)	Aenda sem	*							
Tensgay	Pundiya's FBS	*		*	132	2075	14.43	6.7	27.5
Waenil	Aenda sem	*		*	15	128	.54	3.6	1.7
Em	Aenda sem	*		*	29	275	1.57	4.0	3.6
Kayshya (I)	Ebay sem	*			3	76	.32	10.7	1.0
Kot (M)	Aenda sem	*			8	45	.19	2.4	0.6
Sazi	Aenda sem	*		*	41	416	2.57	4.3	5.5
E'row	Aenda sem		*	*	2	14	.06	3.0	0.2
Ongol	Ebay sem	*			2	3	.01	0.5	0.03
Korobol	Tensgay's FZSS	*			3	7	.03	1.0	0.1
Pis	Ebay sem		*	*					
Pes (May)	Aenda sem	*			18	248	1.46	5.9	3.3
Hiyp	Tensgay's S	*		*	31	240	1.42	3.3	3.2
Sal	Aenda sem		*	*	1	5	.02	2.0	0.06
Kobiyaeb (H)	Aenda sem	*			4	48	.20	5.0	0.6
Pundiya	Tensgay's FBS	*		*	120	1686	11.57	6.0	22.3
Izuwm	Aenda sem	*							
Muwlib	Aenda sem	*		*					
Olnay	Aenda sem		*						
Kal	Aenda sem	*		*	37	622	4.25	7.2	8.2
Haegaes	Ebay sem	*							
Sorliy	Aenda sem	*		*					
Uwhay	Ebay sem	*							
Ton	Aenda sem	*							
Dul	Aenda sem	*							
Kem	Pundiya's FFZSS	*		*					
Non	Ebay sem	*			2	7	.03	1.5	0.1
Shong	Ebay sem	*		*	4	19	.08	2.0	0.2
Duwaeb (M)	Aenda sem	*			8	20	.09	1.1	0.3
Yogbal	Aenda sem	*		*					
Soi	Aenda sem	*							
Saendway	Tensgay's FBSS	*		*	1	4	.02	2.0	0.06
Muwi	Aenda sem	*		*					
Pes (Maen)	Pundiya's iB		*	*	2	14	.06	3.0	0.2
Kuwliy (H)	Aenda sem	*							
Haendaep	Aenda sem		*	*					
Neleb	Aenda sem	*			1	9	.04	4.0	0.1
Yaera	Ebay sem	*							
Pebet	Aenda sem	*							
Waeby	Tensgay's S	*							
Duw	Ebay sem	*							
Kuwliy (May)	Aenda sem	*							
Lol	Tensgay's FBDS	*			2	16	.07	3.5	0.2
Ganonk	Pundiya's FW	*			30	233	1.39	3.3	3.1
Orlaem	Tensgay's 1st W	*			13	222	1.34	7.2	2.9
Kwalten	Pundiya's W	*			20	166	1.11	3.6	2.2
Yaeb	Tensgay's 2nd W	*			1	7	.03	3.0	0.1
Piriyn	Tensgay's 3rd W	*			1	4	.02	2.0	0.06
General babble of everyone							6.43		12.5

TABLE 4 The dispute between Tensgay and Pundiya showing attendance and participation according to length of speeches

The two disputants spoke for 49.8 per cent of the time the dispute lasted and the contributions of other men are small in comparison.⁶ There is little indication in table 4 that men of success (whose names appear at the top of the list) have more to contribute than average. Even men related to the disputants do not contribute significantly more than other men. The fact that successful men are more likely than other men to speak out during a dispute is not an indication of influence in action, but is simply a reflection of the zealotry with which they tackle any activity (but notice that in this dispute the most successful man in the area walked off after a short period in attendance without saying a word).

Although *ol howma* do not try to use their marginal influence to organise a dispute or to effect a settlement (unless they are personally involved), their ability with wealth points to the way in which the Wola try to restore order with an exchange. To achieve a settlement once a dispute starts the Wola aim to obtain a balance between the accused and the plaintiff, and there are basically two ways in which they do this. The plaintiff may be satisfied either with a payment of compensation from the wrongdoer who admits his guilt (there are two types of compensation payment, one to recompense a theft-like wrong and called *ombuwguw* (lit: compensation payment), and the other to indemnify a physical injury and called *mbet biyuw* (lit: palm wood tipped arrow fire)) or, failing satisfaction with a payment, he may in turn wrong the culprit to redress the balance (*aekwa buw*; lit: redress do). This latter course can make matters worse if the man accused in the dispute thinks he was justified in what he did; he in turn may have been seeking to redress an earlier unsettled dispute.

⁶ The figures for Kal and Sazi are high because they are respectively the councillor and committee member elected to the local government council in Nipa. The Wola think that these men ought to have some knowledge of European ways and are capable of settling disputes by resorting to the authority of patrol officers. If men fail to settle a dispute in the traditional way they take their case to Nipa for arbitration by a patrol officer, but the awe in which an average Wola man holds a white man means that their elected representatives have to accompany them to court and act as intermediaries with authority (along with one of the interpreters employed by the administration). The elected representatives of a group speak out more than average in disputes because the Wola think (albeit incorrectly) they have easier access to patrol officers and an understanding of their judicial system.

It is not possible to predict the outcome of any dispute on the basis of previous settlements because circumstances will influence it, and these vary from one wrongdoing to another; for example the relation between the disputants, and previous disputes between them will affect their behaviour. But it is possible to classify different disputes in an approximate way and to see a correlation between the nature of a wrong and the type of settlement which is likely to restore order. This is what the following case histories do. They illustrate the four types of wrongdoing which occur in Wola society and the kind of settlement which is likely to follow them. This prepares the way for an explanation of how the Wola resolve the opposition between individual interest and group interest, or self-willedness and self-restraint, which faces them when they have to settle a dispute.

Not all disputes result from the breach of the norms of self-regulation, and threaten social order. In some the accused is justified in his actions, and the plaintiff usually settles them by taking no further action. This kind of dispute and settlement commonly occurs over land rights or actions taken by an injured man to redress a wrong which he has suffered.

Dispute 2: Lem versus Tensgay over land rights

Huwlael Lem decided to extend his garden at Haelaelinja and proceeded to clear the pitpit from the slope below it. Several years earlier Maenget Tensgay had worked a garden further down the slope and he challenged Lem's right to the land he was clearing. Tensgay claimed the land belonged to him because, although he had not gardened there himself, one of his ancestors had gardened there long ago. An argument developed and Tensgay's son Hiyp came to support his father. Huwlael Em (Lem's FFFBSSS) arrived on the scene and in anger started a fist fight with Hiyp who was acting in an intimidating way. Work on the garden stopped and the men sought the advice of some older men (it is usual to refer to old men in land disputes in the hope that they can remember who gardened the land long ago). Three old men, Wenja Ungu-diyp, Huwlael Pel (Lem's FFFBSS) and Maenget Kem (Tensgay's FFFBS), were unanimous in their opinion that the land further down the slope was Tensgay's but the land immediately below Lem's garden, which he was clearing, belonged to Lem. Lem returned to the site and cleared the extension for his garden and the incident was forgotten.

**Dispute 3: Hond versus Mondowgay semgenk over a reparation pig⁷*

Kolomb Hond stole a pig belonging to a member of Mondowgay *semgenk* of Haenda *semonda*. In a war against Huwlael *semonda* Hond's FZS, a member of Haenda *semonda*, had been killed. A member of Mondowgay *semgenk* had been responsible for starting the war which had erupted following a series of sorcery deaths, but neither he nor his relatives had offered to pay for Hond's FZS. Hond stole the pig as his share of the reparation which never materialised, and he killed it and shared the cooked pork with his relatives. The pig's owner came across the river with some relatives when he heard of the theft and there was an argument which developed into a fight. Some men fired arrows but they seriously injured nobody, and after this fracas the Mondowgay men dropped the issue and grudgingly conceded that Hond's action was justified.

In other disputes the evidence is not clear enough to declare someone unquestionably guilty. In this case the plaintiff may drop the dispute and take no further action. But if he is convinced of another man's guilt, he may try to redress the wrong or continue the dispute with claims for compensation. Any type of wrong may occur for which insufficient evidence hinders the satisfactory settlement of the case for the plaintiff.

Dispute 4: Waenil versus Naenainj over a lost dog

One day Wenja Waenil's dog failed to return home. He assumed that the dog was lost in the rainforest and decided to start a search with the help of Wenja Puwn (Waenil's $\frac{1}{2}$ ZS) and Wenja Yogbal (Waenil's $\frac{1}{4}$ B). Before leaving they requested that no one go into the rainforest because they feared the dog had been killed in a marsupial trap and they did not want the owner to arrive first and dispose of the evidence. They feared this because it is the custom that if a man's dog or pig is killed in a marsupial trap the owner of the trap pays compensation. The three Wenja men started a search of all the sites where they knew men had traps located, and at a place called Hombiyhae they found the remains of a recently destroyed trap which had belonged to Huwlael Naenainj. They searched the site and found fresh footprints and signs of recent activity, and when the three men returned to

⁷ Throughout this book if an asterisk precedes a case history it indicates that the event occurred before my stay.

Haelaelinja they learnt that Naenainj had been to the rainforest that day. Waenil found Naenainj and accused him of finding his dog in the trap at Hombiyhae, and taking the corpse and disposing of it after destroying the evidence of the trap. Naenainj denied these accusations and said he went to the rainforest to collect edible fungus, and that he had dismantled the trap several days before the dog disappeared. After an argument Waenil dropped the matter and took no further action.

Dispute 5: Pabiym versus Nonay over an attempted rape
Meng Pabiym⁸ and Wenja Nonk, two unmarried girls, went to a distant garden to harvest some sweet potato. They returned home by different paths and Pabiym met Huwlael Nonay. When she arrived at Haelaelinja Pabiym was distraught and claimed that Nonay had put his hand inside her grass skirt and made some indecent suggestions about sexual intercourse. News of the accusation soon spread and men gathered at the men's house where Nonay slept. Nonay admitted that he had met Pabiym on the path but claimed he had only whistled at her. Two young men, Wenja Muwiy (Pabiym's stepfather's FMBSS) and Huwlael Haendaep (Nonay's FF $\frac{1}{2}$ BS) went to the scene of the alleged assault to look for any evidence of a struggle but they found nothing other than footprints. There was an argument in which men inveighed against the wrongs and dangers of sex out of wedlock but they took no further action.

In other disputes there is sufficient evidence against the accused to condemn him. In these cases the wronged man may settle for a payment of compensation or, failing any such offer, he may try to redress the balance by wronging the accused man. Sometimes the dispute is of such a nature that if the plaintiff wins his claim to the subject of the dispute this is sufficient to settle the case without recourse to compensation or redress; for example if a man takes something which belongs to someone else and in the ensuing dispute returns the object undamaged then the plaintiff will probably let the matter rest. In other cases, while the accused

⁸ Meng is an almost extinct *semgenk* at Haelaelinja (only Pabiym's younger half-brother Liyp remains). When Pabiym's father died her mother married a Wenja man who has since left Haelaelinja to live at Sezinda. Pabiym sometimes returns to Haelaelinja with her stepfather who still maintains a house and garden in the nearby rainforest.

admits to the wrong he and the plaintiff may disagree over who is responsible for the wrong; this often happens when a pig breaks into and damages the garden of another man.

Dispute 6: Tensgay versus Unguwdiyp over his dead pig

Wenja Unguwdiyp felled a large tree for firewood and unknown to him the tree fell on a large pig belonging to Maenget Tensgay. Tensgay's wives searched for the missing pig when it did not return home in the evening, but four days elapsed before Maenget Pes (Tensgay's FBS) found the corpse in the forest. When Tensgay first challenged Unguwdiyp he denied felling the tree, but during the ensuing argument he admitted he had felled the tree but not on the pig. Tensgay asked how else the pig could have got under the tree and finally Unguwdiyp admitted that he must have been responsible. Unguwdiyp paid compensation of one pig, four pearl shells and six dollars to Tensgay, and in return he received the dead pig which he cooked and shared with his relatives.

** Dispute 7: Pes versus Hiyp over stolen pandanus nuts*

Maenget Hiyp stole pandanus nuts from three trees belonging to Mayka Pes. When accused of the theft Hiyp denied he was responsible and his attitude so annoyed Pes's elder brother Kot that he had a fist fight with him. Later Pes found a large ripe pandanus nut in one of Hiyp's trees and he took it, and then felled the palm to secure satisfactory redress. Hiyp tacitly accepted this and took the dispute no further.

Dispute 8: Waip versus Sol over a banana support

Wenja Sol stole the forked stick which was supporting a bunch of Wenja Waip's (Sol's ZH) ripe bananas. When he discovered the theft Waip was indignant and went to Sol's house to claim the return of his forked stick. Sol denied he had stolen the stick and went to stop Waip from removing it from where it was supporting a bunch of his ripe bananas. The two men had a fist fight over the stick and Waip won his claim to it and carried it back to his banana tree.

** Dispute 9: Pet versus Kot over garden damage by pigs*

Two of Mayka Kot's pigs broke into Kolomb Pet's (Kot's MF½BSS) garden and damaged his crops. When he saw the pigs Pet attacked them with an axe and killed them both. Kot was furious and demanded compensation because he argued the fence to the garden was no good (a strong fence must have beading lashed along the top edge to prevent pigs pushing over

individual pales and gaining access to a garden). Pet disagreed and maintained Kot was in the wrong. Kot stormed off to Pet's wife's house where he forced an entry and killed one of Pet's pigs in its stall. Although there was some bad feeling between both men for some time after these events neither of them offered compensation or tried to take further redress.

The final type of dispute distinguished in this chapter is where the culprit commits a crime which is morally wrong. That is, his actions are bad and morally reprehensible, whereas the wrongs which lead to other disputes are not evil but simply an inevitable result of life where several men live in close proximity. For example to default in the repayment of a debt or to clear land under the mistaken impression that it belongs to you or to own a troublesome pig which damages the gardens of other men can all lead to disputes but they are not evil wrongs. Morally wrong crimes are the worst because they encourage social disorder, and openly flout the norms of self-regulation. The wrongdoer may pay compensation to settle such a crime or the wronged man and his relatives may take revenge action in retaliation (the relation between the disputants is an important factor because a morally wrong crime is more likely than other types of wrong to spark off violence and war). These crimes concern serious infringements on the rights of others, such as sexual offences,⁹ the intentional theft of valuables, and attempts on another's life.

* *Dispute 10: Dul versus Pabiy's relatives over an affair*¹⁰

Huwlael Dul had illicit sexual intercourse with Wenja Pabiy, an unmarried girl who was a member of his *semonda*. The affair continued for some time until one day a Wenja man stumbled across the couple *in flagrante delicto* and the matter became public knowledge. In fear of the consequences of his actions Dul fled into the rainforest where he remained for a month. At Haelaelinja there was a hue and cry over the crime and men denounced Dul's bad behaviour. Pabiy's father went to Dul's house and killed his largest pig, which he cooked and

⁹ Sexual crimes are not only anti-social, they are also dangerous and foolish because of the risks of pollution run by a man who indulges in sex with a woman against whom he has not been protected by a series of rituals which follow marriage. Sexual crimes carry added disgust and fear because of these dangers.

¹⁰ The names of the people involved in this and the following dispute have been changed to avoid them any possible embarrassment.

shared with his relatives. Dul's relatives made no attempt to restrain him because his behaviour was justified; to redress a sexual offence by taking a pig is *taz showmay bokay* (lit: pig pig return).

* *Dispute 11: Pis versus Kombaem's relatives over an affair*
Over a period of several months Mayka Pis had illicit sexual intercourse with Maenget Kombaem, an unmarried girl who was a member of his *semonda*. The couple, nervous and fearing discovery, ran off together to Hul (near Porsera) where Pis's father has a house and gardens. This hasty flight confirmed any suspicions which people had, and Kombaem's relatives started an argument with Pis's relatives and denounced his bad behaviour and demanded compensation. The couple remained at Porsera for a week before returning shamefaced to Haelaelinja. Her relatives again raised the matter of compensation on their return, and within a week Pis had mustered together sufficient wealth to marry Kombaem (in spite of complaints from his first wife and objections from some people who fulminated against members of the same *semonda* marrying). Where a couple have indulged in sexual intercourse before their marriage the bridewealth is reduced in size and is called *hort bay* (lit: cough do), and in this case it totalled fourteen pearl shells, two pigs and ten dollars. Pis contributed four pearl shells and one pig, his father contributed two pearl shells and one pig, his FZS contributed one pearl shell, his F $\frac{1}{2}$ B contributed one pearl shell, his FFFBSSS contributed one pearl shell, his brother four dollars, his FFFBSS one pearl shell, and five members of Dom *semgenk* who live near Porsera gave a total of four pearl shells and six dollars (these men contributed because Pis's FFFF was a member of their *semgenk* who moved to reside at Haelaelinja which was the place of his wife, and today Pis's father still maintains social relations with them).

The four categories of wrongdoing and their correlated types of settlement illustrated by these case histories are not exclusive. In some cases it is not easy to assign a wrong to one category because it falls on the blurred boundary between two types of disputes; for example the accused man in a dispute may think there is insufficient evidence to indict him but the plaintiff may think there is sufficient evidence to justify his taking action in revenge. But this rough classification does indicate what the Wola think in different contexts is fair behaviour.

These examples also illustrate the fundamental problem which faces Wola society when settling disputes. This problem is to resolve the interests of individuals with the contrary interests of the community. This conflict of interests arises because the value which the Wola place upon the sovereignty of the individual, to which they give explicit recognition in a dispute by making the disputants responsible for reaching a settlement, encourages men to claim that they are always in the right. This is one of the ways in which this value encourages social disorder. So the problem is to convince a man who is in the wrong that this is so because it is only then that he will settle a dispute by offering compensation or by not making unfair claims or by accepting an act of redress as fair. There are three mediating factors which help to resolve this paradox and transcend the potentially disruptive emphasis placed upon self-interest, and so reaffirm social co-operation and an ordered life without encroaching upon the autonomy of the individual, and they are the value which men place on self-regulation, on others' opinions and their reputations, and on the use of wealth.

People who live together in the same community are obliged to co-operate during their daily lives and they realise that the fair settlement of disputes is in the interest of everyone because unsettled disputes, which encourage acts of redress and uncontrolled behaviour, could make social life impossible. A society cannot continue to exist and allow individuals to do as they choose regardless of the wrongs they do to other men. The norms of self-regulation make this clear and one of the sanctions which prompts individuals to honour these conventions is the loss of the social benefits which come from obeying them. That is, other members of the community may withdraw their support from a culprit and not co-operate with him and help him in the everyday affairs of life, which means that he loses those benefits fostered by the observance of the mores of self-regulation. Only in very serious offences might many of the people who compose a miscreant's social network repudiate their social obligations to him. A collapse of this magnitude is unlikely because it is rarely in the interests of all the relatives and friends of a wrongdoer to withdraw from and repudiate relations with him and make him an outsider. It is more usual for the injured person, and possibly also

some of his relatives, to withdraw from any relationship which they have with a wrongdoer who ignores the expected standards of conduct and fails to regulate his behaviour. In the unlikely event of somebody completely failing to regulate his behaviour (in all probability a subnormal person who fails to realise how important it is to control his conduct) it is probable that one of his actions will provoke someone to kill him, and while this is the ultimate infringement on his freedom, the deviant's relatives will tacitly accept that this was the only course open to curb his behaviour, which interfered seriously with the freedom and rights of others.¹¹

The threat of ostracism (even if only partially disruptive of somebody's social life) is a powerful sanction which means that a wrongdoer's self-interested behaviour does him more harm than good because he forfeits all the benefits of sociability and co-operation which come from the orderly social life his behaviour threatens. But it is not often that people need to resort to this sanction. The indirect sanctions of ridicule and public condemnation are the real and effective punitive measures which follow wrongdoings. They may accompany the curtailment of a relationship but alone they have remarkable coercive powers in small communities where men not only realise the benefits of social order, but also worry about maintaining their reputations, which suffer if their behaviour is anti-social.¹² The above sanctions are drastic and are a last resort because they mean the termination of social relations, and men do not wish to do this unless forced to do so because to terminate relations within a community is to undermine its existence. It is in the interests of disputants to settle a dispute, not only because it places their relationship (and may be those of others too) in jeopardy, but also because their behaviour is in contradiction to the sociable interests which they

¹¹ It was such an execution of a persistent wrongdoer at Paliym by Wenja Holay, Mayka Aeguwla, Mayka Minay and their relatives which resulted in their move to Haelaelinja and other settlements because, although they paid compensation (called *ol sond*—see later discussion of reparation payments) to show they did not wish to repudiate their relations with the wrongdoer's relatives, and the latter accepted the killing as just, they still feared possible revenge attempts on their lives.

¹² Ritual sanctions are of limited significance for the Wola who, unlike some other peoples, do not believe that their ancestral spirits act in a quasi-judicial fashion and attack wrongdoers, rather their attacks are random and malevolent.

invest in the *semonda*. Wola society capitalises upon this, and upon men's concern for their reputations, in a way which usually brings about a settlement without detracting either from the freedom of the individual or resorting to such drastic measures as curtailing relations. In many cases the settlement involves payment of compensation, but this has significance beyond the mere indemnification of a wrong. An act of exchange is sociable and marks the resumption of amicable interaction threatened by a dispute. It means the handing over of valuables, and these are a symbol of sociability because their formal exchange has important social purposes in Wola society.¹³ The only problem is to persuade the man in the wrong to make an exchange of his own volition.

The Wola solve this problem in a subtle way during the argument over the issue at dispute. Although the disputants do most of the arguing, the other men present make comments and express their opinions, and they act as jury of opinion. If they think the accused man is guilty of a wrong he will be aware of their opinion and his next act will influence his social status. If they think that he is in the wrong then the accused is obliged to offer compensation or concede to the plaintiff's claim over the subject of the dispute. But a man is only expected to act in this way and he cannot be forced to comply with the opinion of the majority (although the plaintiff may take this opinion to mean that he can seek redress with justification if compensation is not forthcoming). The sanction which encourages a man to comply with the verdict of the majority is loss of respect, because if he is accused of a wrong where the evidence proves him unjustified in his actions, then he must offer compensation to retain the respect of other men.¹⁴ If the wrongdoer refuses to acknowledge his guilt and pay compensation, the aggrieved man may achieve satisfaction, without resorting to direct redress, by bringing up the matter on a few occasions and damaging the wrongdoer's reputation in the eyes of other men.

Tensgay, for example, was satisfied to do this in his dispute with Pundiya over the pig he owed him. Pundiya refused to hand over

¹³ Some Melanesians, for example see Young 1971, have seized upon this and have elaborate exchanges following a dispute.

¹⁴ Not only the men present at the dispute. The news of a dispute spreads because people comment on the argument among themselves for a few days after the event and express their opinions on the behaviour of the disputants.

a pig in spite of evidence from several people who testified in Tensgay's favour, and when he threatened to leave Haelaelinja and live at his mother's place men jeered at him and urged him to go. Pundiya lost face, and although Tensgay would have preferred a pig, he did not attempt to redress the situation by taking one but satisfied himself with the scorn which he brought upon Pundiya. The damage which an inadequately settled wrong does to a miscreant's reputation is not short-lived. Although, after a few days have elapsed, people do not discuss a dispute where a wrongdoer failed to give satisfaction, the plaintiff may later renew his demands or other men with whom he embroils himself in a dispute may bring up the issue, and so people will again jibe at him for his previous uncompensated misdemeanours.

In this way the Wola maintain social order without placing restrictions upon the freedom of the individual because, contrary to the initial tendency towards disorder, the self-interested aims of the wrongdoer to maintain his reputation prompt him to admit guilt and offer compensation. So wealth serves as the medium of mediation and helps maintain social order by turning the potentially divisive value placed upon the individual to a social advantage.

It is necessary to remember that there are different kinds of dispute and that they damage a man's standing in varying degrees. A man who commits a morally wrong crime openly courts with social disorder and loses some respect in the short term even if he settles the dispute adequately. If an *ol howma* committed such a crime the respect others had for him would fall, although he would remain known as a man of wealth. After an interval of time people will more or less forget the crime, and so long as the man does not commit a similar offence he will regain his respect. Similarly men's attitudes towards disputes affect their reputations. A man who is determined to protect his smallest rights and provokes disputes over relatively trivial matters will lose the respect of others because his behaviour embroils him in many disputes and leads to unnecessary social friction. One such man is Maenget Tensgay who is renowned for his ability to handle wealth but is held in lower esteem than his ability merits because he is frequently embroiled in disputes and annoys other men with his predilection for protecting his smallest rights.

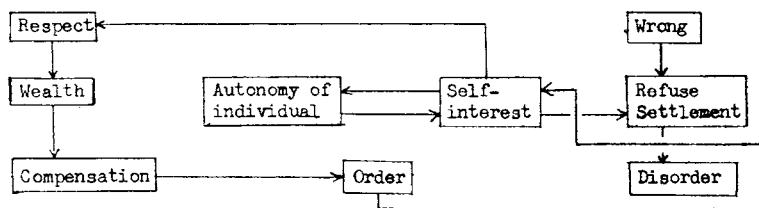


FIG. 1 The feedback in dispute settlement which maintains the freedom of the individual

The feedback diagram of figure 1 summarises the argument and shows how the exchange of wealth mediates between social order and the freedom of individual action.

The settlement of a dispute thus depends upon exchange, that principle which runs through Wola social organisation. This may be either an exchange of wrongs to redress the balance or preferably an exchange of wealth which both symbolises and restores the sociable relations and orderly co-operation threatened by the dispute. Yet, although the successful manipulation of wealth is the foundation of renown, there is no indication in figure 2, which shows the disputes and settlements in which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* can remember they have been involved as the accused party, that *ol howma* (whose names are at the top of the list) settle more disputes than other men with a payment of compensation. But this is expected because for these men to give more compensation payments it would be necessary for them to commit more wrongs than other men, and for the evidence to prove them guilty. If their actions are justified or the evidence is not clear then the sanction of diminished respect, which encourages compensation offers, does not operate. Also, the compensation payments made by *ol howma* to settle wrongs are not larger than those made by other men because, as this study argues later, it is the act of giving an exchange which is socially important and not the content of the transaction (so long as it makes good any damages done). The Wola have not elaborated compensation exchanges into competitive transactions for individual aggrandisement, but they do allow for some disputes to lead to contests with wealth which, as inversions of compensation payments,

convey a cryptic message about the part valuables play in the mediation of individual and group interests.

In a *shombaynol* contest men settle a dispute not by paying compensation but by competing in the collection of wealth, and as fig. 3 shows (which records the *shombaynol* contests in which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have participated) *ol howma* (whose names are again at the top of the list) do tend to muster more wealth in these contests than other men. This indicates that men of renown are concerned with their reputations when involved in disputes and not, as this chapter makes clearer later, with attempts to use their marginal influence to exercise tenuous control over other men and persuade them to settle disputes as they think best for their political ambitions.

When both of the parties to a dispute think they are in the right and they are unable to resolve the deadlock in any other way they may resort to a *shombaynol* contest in which they will compete with the wealth which they think the other party ought to have paid over in compensation to mend their breach and re-establish amicable relations. When they amass valuables in a *shombaynol* contest men make a number of statements. They say something in their actions about life in general because a collection of valuables, those items which play an important part in the maintenance of social relations and which consequently have a powerful emotive value for the Wola, carries a message of sociability and signifies the amicable relations which they desire—but it does not represent an olive-branch. While they express their dissatisfaction with the disruption of social relations caused by the dispute the contestants do not try to repair their rift in an exchange but struggle to accumulate the most wealth and humiliate each other by demonstrating their ability to handle the medium which plays such an important social role. In this way rivals show how they are able to maintain good relations by meeting exchange commitments, and insinuate that their opposite

* The material presented here was collected by asking members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* for details of the disputes they could remember being involved in as an accused party. The data are incomplete because they remembered only the more outstanding disputes in which they had been involved (with the exception of recent disputes), and in some cases (from cross-references) they omitted to mention disputes which were an embarrassment to them (particularly disputes of a sexual nature). In spite of this the trends shown support the argument developed here.

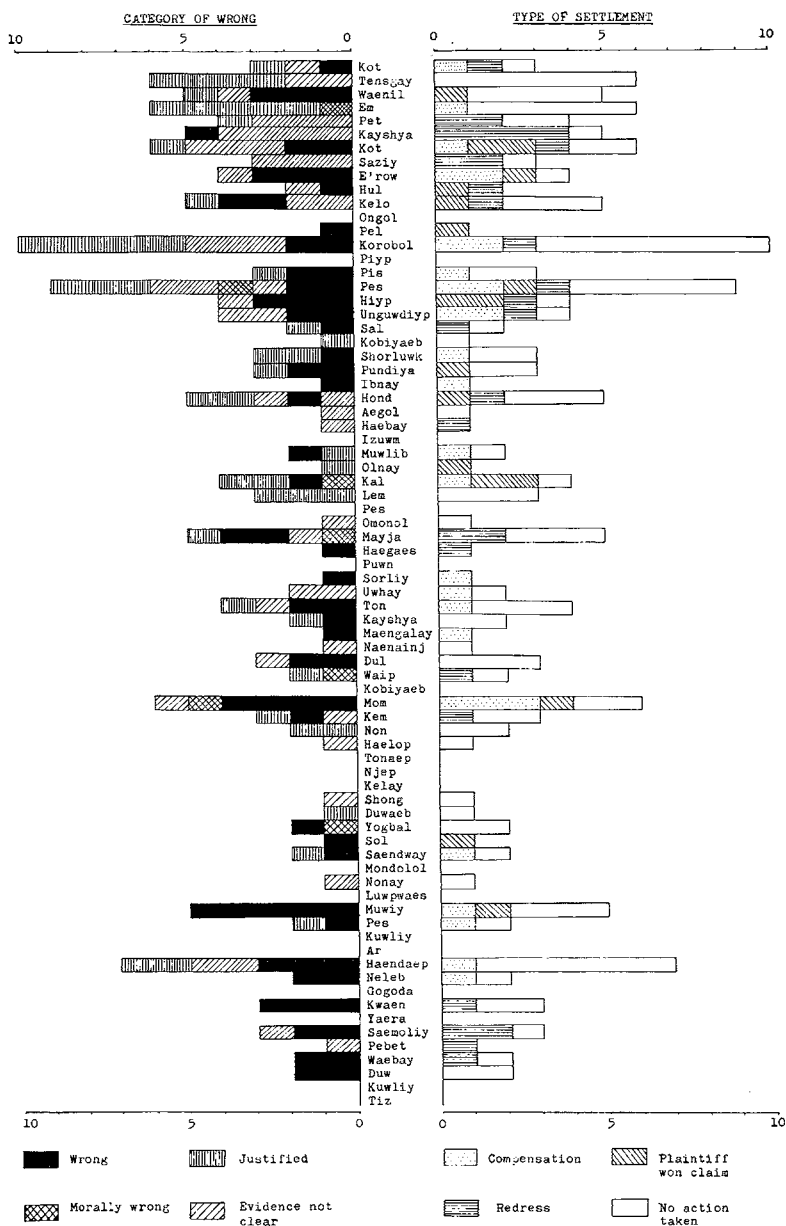


FIG. 2 Disputes and their settlement*

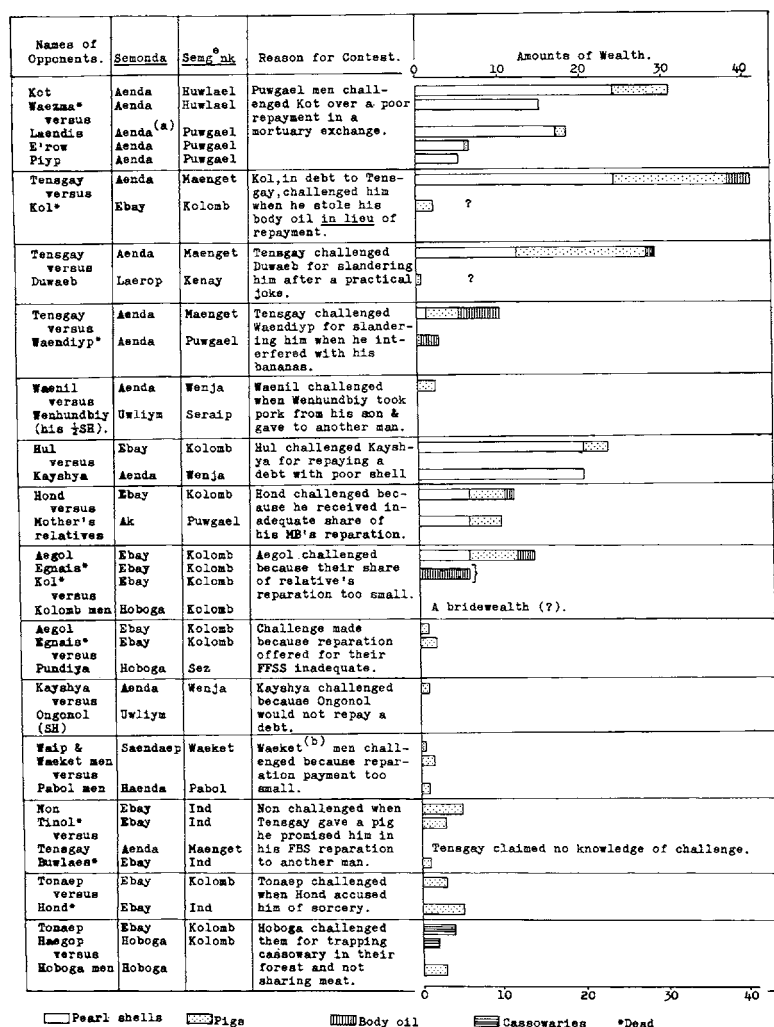
number is a man of poor character who causes disputes that upset the smooth flow of life which they, as upright men, work hard to maintain through exchanges. The problem is to maintain good relations but not to let others trespass on your rights, and when men cannot reach an agreement the *shombaynol* contest is a way out which serves to underline the value of wealth not only for mending social relations with compensation payments, but also for mediating in general between self-interest and self-restraint in the maintenance of social order.

Any dispute can result in a *shombaynol* contest, although it is more common for a man to challenge when he thinks someone both insults and wrongs him. The contest between Huwlael Kot and some Puwgael men started, for example, when there was a dispute over the standard of the pearl shells given by Kot to Piyp as part of the mortuary exchange following the death of a member of Kot's father's *semgenk* (Kenay *semgenk* of Laerop *semonda*). The Puwgael men thought the pearl shells offered by Kot were of poor quality and in disgust Laendis insulted Kot by passing one of the shells under his leg,¹⁵ and then followed this with a challenge to a *shombaynol* contest, a challenge which Kot was only too willing to accept in view of the insult. The usual way to issue a challenge is to catch some blood trickling from the snout of a clubbed pig and throw it onto your rival's fire. To issue a challenge is *wil iyba koiyay* (lit: snout blood pour) and the challenged man is said to eat the blood of his rival (*iyba nay*; lit: blood eat). A man who receives a challenge is obliged to reply by killing a pig and signalling his acceptance by in turn throwing blood onto his challenger's fire. If a man fails to accept a challenge (as some men in fig. 3 have) the contest does not proceed and he concedes defeat.

¹⁵ To pass an object between the legs is called *kongba koba* (lit: step over) and is insulting because of associations with sex and women. Women can pollute men and make them sick and weak (for example, if a menstruating woman stepped over a man he would resort to a purification ritual to prevent his death from contact with her in this dangerous condition), so to step over someone or their possessions is insultingly bad behaviour.

* (a) Puwgael Laendis used to reside at Haelaelinja. He now lives at a place called Naenk where his mother's father used to have gardens.

(b) At the time of this contest Waip resided at Obael, the place of his father. He has since moved to Haelaelinja, the place of his wife.

FIG. 3 Disputes leading to *shombaynol* contests*

A man who fails in this way loses status and tarnishes his reputation.

The contest starts in earnest once a challenge has been made and accepted. The length of time a contest lasts varies according to the amount of wealth involved, a contest between successful *ol howma* for instance can go on for months. The contestants collect all the wealth they can muster and periodically they display the valuables they have collected. The contestants in a *shombaynol* use all the avenues open to them to collect wealth. They call in their debts as creditor and enter into new debts as debtor (the number of debts which a man can make is an indication of his status in the eyes of other men because giving a loan to a man at a *shombaynol* is an expression of faith in his ability to repay). They try to force along exchanges where they stand to receive wealth. They trade for items of wealth where possible. In short the contestants give themselves whole-heartedly to the collection of wealth.

In the contest between Huwlael Kot and the Puwgael men, Kot collected wealth from the following sources: Waezma (Kot's mother's second husband's FFSSS) contributed ten pearl shells to the contest and was in effect a participant because he expected no repayment on the loan (the shells remained his property throughout the contest); Kot entered into debts with his second wife's father for four pearl shells, a member of his second wife's *semgenk* for one pearl shell, the son of the dead man for whom the mortuary exchange which precipitated the contest was arranged for two pearl shells, members of Aenda *semonda* (five men) for eight pearl shells, friends in Ebay *semonda* (two men) for two pearl shells, and friends living elsewhere (three men) for four pearl shells. Kot had five pearl shells and five pigs in his possession at the time of the challenge, and he purchased another pig for two pearl shells and he received the seventh pig in a reparation payment for his stepfather who was killed in a war.

The Puwgael men collected wealth from the following sources: Puwgael Piyp entered into debts with his wife's brother for one pearl shell, his father's sister's sons (two men) for two pearl shells, and friends living elsewhere (two men) for two pearl shells. Puwgael E'row had four pearl shells in his possession at the time of the challenge and entered into debts with two friends living

elsewhere for another two pearl shells. E'row also contributed two pearl shells for the purchase of a pig (Laendis contributed another two pearl shells towards the purchase of this pig, but further details of his contribution to the contest were not collected because he lived elsewhere during the period of fieldwork).

Each time a man manages to secure another item of wealth to add to his collection he and his relatives shout out *yaelay kor* (lit: *yaelay say*) to inform his rival and other men. The *yaelay* is as follows:

One man	Chorus
<i>Shobarpuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Shobarpuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Pilipuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Iyb Kutuwb</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Lake Kutubu	Exclamation
<i>Shobarpuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Pilipuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Shobarpuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Pilipuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Untranslatable	Exclamation
<i>Iyb Kutuwb</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Lake Kutubu	Exclamation
<i>Wola wem tuw</i>	<i>Wa-a</i>
Expression of pleasure when seeing large amount of wealth displayed.	Exclamation

When, as is customary during the course of a contest, a man displays the wealth he has collected, his rival does not come to view the valuables. It is other men who attend the display and judge the show of wealth. The rival hears from these men how his wealth compares with that collected by his opponent. When a man displays he shouts out challenges to his rival to come and take everything if he is such a successful man. The shouting of challenges is *mogol liy* (lit: *mogol hit*) and carries the insinuation: 'how dare he wrong me, a man who shows that he maintains good

relations by his ability to handle wealth?' If a man displays live pigs he will shout '*kolow tuwk piyp*' (lit: care take go). If he kills pigs he will shout '*tok tuwk piyp*' (lit: pole (on which sides of pork hang) take go) and '*iyba nok iyb*' (lit: blood eat come). In the case of pearl shells he will shout '*goiz tong tuwk piyp*' (lit: palm tree bark bundle (of pearl shells) take go).

People do not mark the end of a *shombaynol* contest in any way. When it is over the contestants distribute in exchanges and other transactions the wealth they have accumulated. Maenget Tensgay, for example, used the wealth he collected in the *shombaynol* contest against Kolomb Kol to marry his third wife, the wealth he collected in the contest against Kenay Duwaeb he contributed to his younger brother's bridewealth and the long bamboo tubes of body oil he accumulated in the contest against Puwgael Waendiyp he traded to men elsewhere. It is usual, each time a man uses an item of wealth from his *shombaynol* collection, for him to shout out challenges (*mogol liy*) to his rival to better his performance and to come and take the wealth as he is so righteous in his disruptive behaviour.

Although two or three men may combine to collect the wealth for a *shombaynol* contest,¹⁶ they do not pool their wealth so that other men do not know who contributed which items. In keeping with Wola group activities it is individual effort which is on show, and in a *shombaynol* contest we can see Wola politics in action with men out to maintain their individual reputations by demonstrating their ability to handle wealth. The men who witness the displays of wealth form an opinion as to the winner (*shombay kay*; lit: *shombay* say) and they communicate the drift of this opinion to the competitors. There is no formal declaration of the winner and in some contests men are divided in their opinions. If there is a winner he gains in reputation and status at the expense of his rival, but the extent to which he gains prestige depends upon the amounts of wealth involved, the margin by which he wins, and the status of his opponent. In the contests in which they have participated, for instance, Huwlael Kot and Maenget Tensgay have validated their successful reputations (see fig. 3), in fact the

¹⁶ I was told men are most likely to combine in a contest where the cause of the dispute is a sexual offence against one of their female relatives.

previous successes of the latter allowed him to ignore a challenge from a lesser man without any damage to his high status, but this was an exception. In most cases where a challenged man fails to meet a challenge he loses prestige. Although he also, in a way, thwarts his challenger in his attempt to validate his status because he makes the contest null and void.

Social Order between *Semonda*

The regulation of behaviour between members of different communities follows a different pattern from that described above for members of the same community. The only people living elsewhere towards whom men acknowledge an obligation to act according to the mores of self-regulation are their relatives and friends. Towards others they act with less consideration, and if the opportunity presents itself they may even openly flout the mores of self-regulation and try for some gain at the others' expense. But the way the relations between the members of a *semonda* and those living elsewhere criss-cross reduces the likelihood of flagrantly anti-social acts between unrelated persons because men realise that it is in their interests to control their behaviour with strangers who live in communities where their fellow residents have relations, and so promote smooth relations for them, because in return their fellows will control their behaviour towards people related to them, and so make their lives easier. But while these restraints prevent the outbreak of open Hobbesian lust for personal gain, they are brittle and break easily, and if there is a dispute men are more likely to resort to arms than try to settle their differences by discussion.

It is not always unambiguously clear in a dispute who is in the wrong, as already pointed out, but members of the same *semonda* will try to resolve their differences and reach a settlement by discussion. Yet it is not uncommon for tempers to flare and sometimes a fight occurs when the patience of the disputants reaches breaking point. If a brawl does erupt, the relationship between the two protagonists controls its seriousness. If they are closely related (for example members of the same *semgenk*) they may exchange a few blows (they may grapple with one another, called *mahanol buw* (lit: wrestle do), or strike one another, called *gaimb togonol jinyol buw* (lit: pitpit stem body hand do—that is

fight with fists and sticks)) before other men, not blinded by rage, intervene and part them for fear that such behaviour may threaten the continued existence of amicable relations if one of them seriously injures the other. It is unlikely that other men will join in the fight, and if a dispute does escalate into a fight between the disputants' relatives, they will not try to injure seriously or kill one another because to do so would be an unthinkable and heinous offence.

When the disputants are members of separate *semgEnk* within the same *semonda* this increases the chances of a serious fight, but men should still not resort to lethal weapons, although it is not unknown for hotheads to fire arrows. If a death occurs in a fight within a *semonda* or between relatives from elsewhere the killer will offer wergild (called *ol sond*; lit: man compensation) which the dead man's relatives are more likely to accept than resort to war to exact revenge. If a dispute does escalate into a war between the disputants' relatives then this will probably mark the splitting of a large *semonda* into two because it has grown to a size where the process of self-regulation is under a strain and breaking down.

When the disputants are members of different *semonda* and a fight starts the consequences can be serious because men use lethal weapons. A death in this situation usually results in a war.¹⁷ In addition to the weaker control over behaviour exerted by the mores of self-regulation, there are two other reasons why an argument between members of different *semonda* is likely to escalate into a fight. Firstly, the fiery and excitable temperament of the average Wola man makes violence probable when tempers are frayed. The people themselves associate the start of a war with anger, and they say that feelings of *kogiyt biy* (lit: anger feel) make them violent. The lack of an impartial third party to impose justice exacerbates a wronged man's feeling of impotence, and consequently his anger, if the miscreant behaves in an unco-operative and defiant way not conducive to a fair settlement. Secondly, the response of a mob explains why a fight between two disputants escalates into a fight between all the men present. A wave of mob

¹⁷ The last war involving members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* occurred in approximately 1963, and this account bases itself upon the descriptions of informants and not upon observed events.

excitement sweeps men into the fray, and they explain their actions as prompted by indignant rage felt for their relative or friend embroiled in the dispute and attacked by the other party. This violent eruption occurs quickly and the resulting fight is confused. Sometimes, for instance, relatives who are not closely related to either disputant find themselves on opposite sides, and the prudent simply beat a hasty retreat. When their tempers simmer down men take a cooler look at the situation which has developed, and the initial *mêlée* may become a more organised encounter with two opposed sides. The important question, which decides whether this fracas leads to a war or simply peters out after some skirmishing, is whether or not someone has lost his life.

If someone kills a man in a fight which erupts from an argument or by sorcery or with poison, the deceased's relatives have a moral obligation to seek revenge on the man responsible and his relatives. The Wola call revenge *oluwzimb miy* (lit: man revenge take) and they explain that both anger and sorrow (*hond biy*; lit: sorrow feel) prompt them to seek it. But only close relatives of the dead man feel these emotions deeply enough to resort to arms, yet many other men also acknowledge a revenge obligation and come to fight. All the members of the deceased's *semonda* of residence will acknowledge that they have an obligation to seek revenge, and so do his relatives living elsewhere and also some of these relatives' relatives at the places where they live. The two following situations illustrate the nature of the revenge obligation. If in the fight which erupts from a dispute the man killed is not either a close relative of the disputant or a resident member of his *semonda* then, although some of the deceased's close relatives will come along to fight out of rage and sorrow, it is the disputant and his relatives who are morally responsible to unite and seek revenge, not the deceased's relatives who live elsewhere. Similarly, once a war is under way, if the enemy kill a man who is not directly related to the disputant whose argument started the war or is a member of his *semonda* then once again, although some of the deceased's relatives will feel a genuine wish for revenge and so come to join in the fighting (if they are not already doing so), it is the disputant and his side who are morally responsible to seek revenge. Members of the deceased's *semonda* of residence and his relatives elsewhere do not mobilise themselves and come to seek revenge

on the killer, who in turn is quite possibly a resident member of a different *semonda* from the other disputant on whose behalf he is fighting. Wars do not effloresce in this way; if they did people living in the Wola region would be permanently locked in a confused state of war. The dead man's relatives receive reparation (as detailed in the later discussion of exchange) for his death from the disputant and his relatives, and accepting this absolves them of any revenge obligation, which rests with those responsible for making the reparation payment.

Beyond saying that it is unthinkable not to wreak vengeance, the Wola are not capable of explaining why they fight—although some men add to this that it is in their interests to join forces to meet the enemy who are certain to attack and will find it easy to kill them if they fail to unite. A violent death triggers an automatic response, and the relatives and friends of a slain man unthinkingly unite to seek revenge and so oblige the killer's side to unite in the face of this threat so as to defend themselves against it because revenge may be taken on any one of them. But this is not the expected reaction knowing the emphasis which the Wola place upon the sovereignty of the individual. Instead of rallying to the support of a relative embroiled in a homicidal dispute, it would make more sense if men avoided trouble and considered the fight someone else's problem. It is not even possible to say they join in because they calculate that it is in their immediate interests to do so; for example that it ensures them support in return if they are ever involved in a killing, although it is possible that this is an unconscious consideration. A man says that he fights simply because he has a moral obligation to do so, and that failure to honour this will damage his reputation in the eyes of others. Some men may decide not to fight, but to act as a *saend pak ol* (lit: war frighten man) diminishes a man's social standing because no respectable person will shirk his obligation and fail to seek revenge on behalf of a slain relative or friend.

The question to answer in order to understand war is why Wola society has instituted a norm which places men under a moral obligation to seek revenge, and not why the individual observes this obligation for fear of sanctions from others or loss of prestige. When the Wola say that they fight in wars for reasons of revenge they are expressing an obligation of deeper significance than one



I A view along the Was valley towards Pinjip and Hebinja



II A man surveys the pearl shells offered him in a reimbursement payment

III The groom's brother hands to the bride the tethering rope of one of the pigs given in the bridewealth



which simply allows vent to emotional feelings of anger and sorrow. Revenge is the principle which supports war, and it is a social obligation to the living, not to the dead, because it plays an important part in the Wola social model by denying individuals access to power, that potentially dangerous disruptive force which unchecked could destroy the delicate balance of their society. The principle of exchange, that fundamental concept which pervades all aspects of Wola life, is the basis of this restrictive process, but in war it takes on a socially negative part and does not encourage amicable relations but prompts payback killing along the lines of the maxim an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

The significant point in the context of a dispute leading to a war is that when someone wrongs another person he encroaches upon his freedom beyond the limits people accept to allow for social co-operation. When this happens the men concerned ought to try to reason out a settlement in which they consider one another's equal rights and resolve their differences without encroaching upon each others' freedom more than is necessary to effect a balance in their relations, which the wrong has upset by taking something from one side without giving anything back. But if they reach a deadlock they may resort to violence in an attempt to secure the settlement they want, which means each man tries to force the other to accept his view against his wishes. So violence is an attempt to deprive someone of their freedom to do as they please in some matter, and it can result in the ultimate infringement upon an individual's freedom, namely the taking away of his life.

The obligation to seek revenge helps maintain the ordered anarchy of Wola society by dissuading men involved in disputes from trying to force each other to comply with their ideas as a matter of course. Life outside the *semonda* would be very difficult if men could wrong and kill with impunity those people towards whom they recognised no obligation to regulate their behaviour, and the threat of war is an additional check which encourages them to control their behaviour with strangers and not to resort to violence in a dispute because to start a war carries large responsibilities (the effectiveness of this sanction can be judged by the relative infrequency of wars—see table 7). A man whose dispute starts a war is answerable for all the deaths of people who come

to his aid and he is ultimately responsible for all the reparation payments necessary to indemnify the relatives of these men.

Without the threat of war to check conduct not only would life be difficult beyond a small circle of relatives, but also the strongest men in an area would have power in their hands to force others to comply with their wishes. It is a short step to the megalomaniac who, finding himself with power and faced by no organised resistance, forces more and more people to do as he says, and if this happened Wola society would fall like a pack of cards because its purpose is to give the individual the maximum of freedom possible while maintaining an orderly social environment. It is an axiom of Wola society that no man should have power over another, that is deprive him of his freedom and subject him to his will. It is to prevent this that it invests importance in the moral obligation of revenge, which acts through war as the guardian of power by keeping it latent and out of men's reach. The threat of war ensures an acephalous society by mobilising a group of people against any man who tries to seize power by physical force. So revenge prompts a group reaction by individuals who, by heeding their obligations, maintain their own freedom and support the *status quo* of a society which holds dear the sovereignty of the individual.

The isolation of power beyond men's reach brings up the question of leadership and the position of *ol howma* in times of war. It means that rival *ol howma* do not lead factions and try to extend political control over one another through war.¹⁸ The Wola think that war is a bad, and regretfully an inevitable, part of life and *ol howma* stand to gain nothing from it. They do not initiate wars (unless involved in the dispute which led to the first death) or direct their conduct, nor do they play a prominent role in the establishment of peace. The only time that *ol howma* stand out above average in the context of war is following the cessation of hostilities when men make reparation payments to the relatives of dead allies—their ability with wealth ensures this.

It would be wrong to think that as wealth earns men renown in Wola society, plunder is a reason for war. Although one side

¹⁸ *Contra* Sillitoe (1978) which argues this from the evidence reported for other Melanesian societies.

sometimes musters enough men to arrange a surprise attack on several houses and routs the inhabitants, they do not stand to gain much booty. The people who *pak puw* (lit: fear go) flee to other houses belonging to members of their *semonda* or if the enemy rout the greater part of their *semonda*, they seek refuge with relatives elsewhere (usually in a neighbouring ally settlement). After a rout the victors burn down houses, chop down banana, casuarina and pandanus trees, uproot crops and generally raze the area to the ground. If they find wealth they will take it but the chances of finding any are small. Men who occupy houses near to enemy territory calculate that the destruction of their homes is a possibility and remove all their wealth and hide it in small houses concealed in unfrequented regions of the rainforest and called *muwpaengow aenda* (lit: hide house). They also hide pigs in this way or farm them out to relatives for the duration of a war. Some men also take the precaution of sending their wives and children elsewhere. In a rout therefore it is only unmovable property which is lost. The victors do not annex the land because there is no shortage of land in the Wola area.¹⁹ In fact once they have established a stable truce (about six months after the cessation of hostilities) the routed men return to their land and rebuild their homes and rework their gardens.

The organisation of military engagements shows the absence of leadership and the way men are free to decide their own actions—two characteristics which also typify other group activities. In wartime the Wola engage in two types of military action. They lay ambushes for one another which they call *ol lubtu maemb bor beray* (lit: man hit trap at sit), and they fight battles which they call *saend onda biy* (lit: war big do).

During a war men are careful in their everyday lives and they proceed cautiously along paths because ambushes are a popular tactic. These usually consist of three or four men who decide to conceal themselves in the dense cane by the side of a path and wait for an unsuspecting member of the other side to come along. Some men arrange ambushes on the paths which lead to their houses and they act as sentries; in fact men build small concealed lean-to

¹⁹ Some writers (see Rappaport 1967; Vayda 1971) suggest that shortage of land explains why wars occur in some New Guinea societies.

shelters (*saend bayaek aenda*, lit: war sentry house) at these places. Other, bolder men arrange ambushes on paths within the territory of the enemy. These are effective but their situation makes them dangerous because if the attackers shoot a man they are unlikely to escape undetected and are in danger of in turn falling victims to enemy arrows. To advance under cover of night and surround the house of an enemy (*haep haep buw liy*; lit: round round do hit) is also an effective but dangerous tactic because once the attackers launch their raid help for the beleaguered inhabitants will soon rally from other houses in the vicinity.

The daily pattern during a war is for small parties of warriors to make cautious advances towards the enemy's territory with the aim of killing an unsuspecting man in a cunning ambush. These movements are dangerous because of enemy ambushes, and sometimes two groups of warriors meet and an open fight develops. During a war the only men who pursue hostilities every day are those with a burning desire to personally exact revenge for a relative, it is more usual for men to fight in a desultory way—lying in ambush one day and gardening another. But when they hear a fracas men usually hurry to the place and take up arms in the battle which has started. Battles also start when a body of warriors advance to challenge the enemy. They usually occur on the land which forms the boundary between enemy territories because it is here advancing parties of warriors are likely to meet; they call the trampled gardens and trodden down vegetation of this area the *saend howma* (lit: war cleared ground).

A battle is not an organised military encounter and no one assumes command. Warriors continually run back and forth dodging enemy arrows or parrying them with their shields, and in turn firing arrows into the enemy ranks. The front line is a seething group of warriors which continually changes as men come forward from the rear to replace those who are tired. A battle is the result of numerous individual actions by men who base their decisions on the situation where they are fighting, and the result is a concerted group effort because each man aims at a common goal—to kill one of the enemy and not to be killed. Even when men plan tactics which rise above these confused encounters there is no leadership; for example if a few of them decide to outflank the enemy by approaching under the cover of the vegetation on either

side of the battlefield in a tactic called *saend maeriy pay* (lit: war carry go), their strategy is only the result of individual decisions to try to outwit the enemy.

After fighting for an average of three or four months, when losses on either side average between six and seven men,²⁰ the desire to maintain hostilities diminishes. When discussing the war and airing their views the majority gradually reach the decision that they wish to end the fighting because it has disrupted the natural flow of life for long enough. They yodel their opinion to the enemy (*saend kort bay*; lit: war yodel do), who will also be considering among themselves the end of the war.²¹ If both sides agree to end the fighting they do not immediately relax their guard but remain alert for a treacherous attack or ambush. Life slowly returns to normal as they both become assured that the other side intend to stop fighting. Wola call this anxious time *saend pol* (lit: war sleeps), and the tension lasts for some years after the cessation of hostilities. Individuals who have relatives in an enemy *semonda* do not openly renew their contact at this time, but continue to meet in secret. They tentatively resume open relations after a few years and their first visits to one another are tense and cautious, not because they are likely to fight each other but because a member of their respective settlement groups may hunger for revenge and attack them. Once these people have renewed their relations other members of their communities may meet and slowly renew their social contacts.

The war is over when men have renewed their social relations with the enemy, and the Wola call this *saend pa bay* (lit: war finish do). When they have established *saend pa bay* the former enemy groups will not go to war against each other again unless another dispute causes a fight in which a death occurs—thus giving rise to new revenge obligations. Individual members of these groups may fight as allies on opposite sides in another war, ostensibly to help

²⁰ These figures are an average for thirteen wars which I documented in detail. Some wars last longer and more men are killed, other wars are shorter with fewer fatalities.

²¹ The balance of deaths on either side influences the feelings of men because if one side has several revenge debts to square they are less likely to agree to finish the fighting. If a war drags on for several months and one side has outstanding revenge obligations to settle they may agree to cease fighting and resort to sorcery and poison to obtain a balance.

their relatives and friends, but also to express old animosities (which although they hide them in everyday life, men take a long time to forget) without the onus of the responsibilities which fall upon the person who starts the war.

It is the sum of several such individual decisions which gives rise to any group activity, and the following chapter addresses itself to this issue because it is necessary to understand the constitution of action-sets in order to appreciate the part which exchange plays in Wola society.

Action-sets and Networks

In order to fight a war men must organise themselves into a group, and this chapter looks at the way men do this, not only to fight wars but also to stage pig kills, rituals and dances. A later chapter looks at the way men organise themselves for exchanges of wealth, to which the general comments made here also apply. This chapter turns to the ideas of action-sets¹ and networks to explain how the Wola do this, and argues that these take account of the importance of the individual and self-interest, fit in with the relative flexibility of permanent groups, and accommodate the diffuse nature of leadership founded upon influence.

The way Wola men organise themselves into action-sets characterises the *laissez faire* nature of their social lives, and stems from the emphasis they place upon the autonomy of the individual at the expense of obligations to any group. An important difference between Wola society and societies in some other parts of the world is that it lays down no norms which require men to support specific groups in certain activities. In many societies, notably in Africa, there are corporate political groups and the members of these, by and large unilineal descent groups, recognise a norm of jural equality which prompts them to unite in certain circumstances and to act in the interests of the group. The Wola have no concept of jural equality, and the following, and similar statements, which imply its presence in other Highland societies, do not apply to them. According to Strathern (1971: 220), for example, the *moka* exchanges of the Hageners 'enable the individual to serve his group [and that] what he is helping to maximise is clan prestige', and Brown (1971: 219) records that 'the universal desire for the enhancement of tribal reputation may override private interests' for the Chimbu.

So while men are identified as resident members of *semonda*,

¹ See Boissevain (1974) for a discussion of relevant issues about action-sets, quasi-groups, coalitions, and other temporary groups, and also for further references on these topics.

they do not take part in activities because they are in the common interests of these permanent groups—*semonda* never mobilise as corporate action groups. Their members are free to decide for themselves whether or not to participate with others in a proposed collective activity, and if they do not think that it is to their advantage to join in then they are free to abstain—though they will usually attend the event as spectators, and if closely related to participants they may act as spectator-helpers and lend a hand in the activities. The reasons for non-participation are either a lack of incentive, which leads men to think that it is not in their best interests to take part, or the absence of something which precludes participation (for example no pigs to kill at a pig kill).

The groups which unite for any activity are therefore *ad hoc* collections of people who think that it is in their individual interest to co-ordinate their actions temporarily to achieve a particular goal. Sometimes the majority of participants are members of the same *semonda* and the action-set corresponds closely to this permanent group, but this does not mean it is corporate in any active sense. It follows that men will prefer to take part in activities initiated by members of their *semonda* because it is here they spend their lives and their reputations are known best. Although they interact (and consequently, at some time, exchange the wealth which is fundamental to the achievement of high status) with their relatives and friends who live elsewhere, it is by acting in unison with the people they live with that men stand to best improve their status. In short, a man is more concerned to impress the people at the place where he resides and which is his home than to impress the members of another *semonda* where other relatives or friends live (who will anyway probably attend, or at least hear about, any activity in which he participates elsewhere). Physical inertia also encourages men to take part in activities at the place where they live because it is easier for them to join in events here than travel elsewhere.

But although a man is more likely to join in an activity with the people he lives among and with whom he interacts every day, he is free to join in events initiated by the members of another group where he has relatives but is not himself resident. It is often the case that the men who initiate an event and the other members of their *semonda* who join them constitute a host-like group to which

participants from elsewhere come. The Wola do not think that a man owes a stronger allegiance to some relatives because he lives with them, although as pointed out these relations are of a stronger nature in practice because the people concerned live in close proximity and co-operate with one another in daily tasks—but like the paternal residence preference, this is a practical result of life and not the result of ideology. Men who decide to join an action-set which focuses upon a group of men from a relative's *semonda* elsewhere do not relinquish any rights at the *semonda* of their domicile by so doing. The coalition which they join will be a temporary group, which will disband after the event and may never unite again with the same members, because each time an action-set forms individuals decide whether to join or not on the basis of the planned event and not on obligations to the previous group. So while *semonda* are fixed points within society, which remain relatively constant in spite of men sometimes changing their residence, the composition of action-sets is variable and unpredictable—although it is possible to make a reasonable guess who will probably participate in any event if the circumstances surrounding it are known.

The circumstances which influence a man's decision to throw in his lot with a coalition are many, complex and interdependent. There are personal factors such as a like or dislike for other participants. There are situational factors such as the time of the event and the availability of wealth to a man on that day. There are psychological factors such as a drive to prove himself in some activity. In other words the gamut of inter-related factors which impinge upon and influence the behaviour of any Wola individual affect the make-up of an action-set. But above these imponderable and complicated issues there are some readily understood canons which guide men when they decide whether or not to join in a mooted activity.

Sometimes it is in men's interests to combine because there is a strength in numbers which helps them to achieve greater success—this is the case in some economic activities such as house building and the heavy labour of gardening, although Wola men do not often combine to do these tasks. On other occasions men unite not so much to make a more effective work force (although this might be an indirect result, for example in making the

preparations for some event), but because their activity gains in importance with large numbers of participants, for example with the large amounts of wealth which several men bring to an event. In other cases a man's reputation suffers if he fails to join in some activity, and this is the prime consideration which prompts men to join action-sets. A man's reputation suffers, for example, if in a war he funks his moral obligation to seek revenge, or if in an exchange he is unable to find shells to give or pigs to kill.

Society prompts men to join action-sets through considerations like these without either inducing them to do so with rules or forcing them in some other way to do so against their wishes, and it is important to know how this recruitment process operates given the constitution of Wola society. It is neither the solidarity of groups nor the organisation of individuals as members of corporate groups which are of interest, but how individuals behave as points within a network of relations which links them both directly with the members of their *semonda* and with people in its social universe, and indirectly through these direct relations with others in their community's social universe.

The idea of analysing social relations as a network has been implicit in anthropology for many years (for example Fortes's (1949) use of the word web and Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) use of the word network), but it is only recently that anthropologists have followed the lead of Barnes (1954) and Bott (1957) and have started to use it as an analytical tool (see Mitchell 1969; Boissevain and Mitchell 1973). Although currently restricted to studies of urban populations, the concept of the network is well suited to further our understanding of Wola society.

War

In an attempt to show how the concept of the network applies to Wola society this section takes a simplified and schematic example to illustrate the recruitment of action-sets in time of war. It does this by taking a few individuals and putting them together in a network of unreal simplicity which makes it easy to follow the principles at work. The want of information on an actual war also makes it necessary to invent a hypothetical example.²

² Although I have details of wars in which individual men have fought, these do

Figure 4 represents this hypothetical network. Each numbered dot on the diagram represents a person, and a line between two dots indicates a direct relationship in which the two persons concerned control their behaviour towards one another according to the mores of self-regulation. Each lettered solid circle represents a *semonda* with a membership of five men, and the large broken circles represent the social universes centred upon communities A ($=\alpha$), B ($=\beta$), and G ($=\gamma$).

The resident members of each *semonda* constitute a close-knit network³ where they all have many-stranded face-to-face relationships with one another—although the strength of these varies because a man is closer to some people, such as his kin, than others. Outside the *semonda* each individual has his own network, but these egocentric networks have no clear boundaries because they criss-cross one another to create a complex mesh. It is difficult to fix the limit of the effective network because of this ramifying of relations. It would be artificial to limit it to only those persons in the combined primary stars of the members of a *semonda* because people without direct relations with them, that is members of their second-order zones and possibly even people beyond, will influence their lives. So the boundary of their effective network will correspond to the boundary of the social universe of their *semonda* and include all the people in this area (and in some situations beyond), but in reality this makes for an overburdeningly complex situation.

But to return to figure 4, which sets out in a simple and

not constitute a reliable record of the actual people who took part in any encounter or the men who came from elsewhere to fight. Also, it is not possible to take a real life example of a dispute to illustrate these processes because the men who take part in these constitute temporary groups but not action-sets. They do not act in concert but collect together to hear persons air their grievances, and although they possibly express their opinion on the rights and wrongs of the issue, they do not form opposed groups and try to force a settlement upon the disputants who are responsible for reaching an agreement. So while it is feasible to take the persons present at a dispute (for example as detailed in the previous chapter) and show them as a network of people with various relations with one another, and so throw light on their behaviour and opinions in the context of the specific matter at issue (see Kapferer 1969), this would not be the study of an action-set.

³ See Barnes (1969) for definition of terms and outline of general concepts of network analysis.

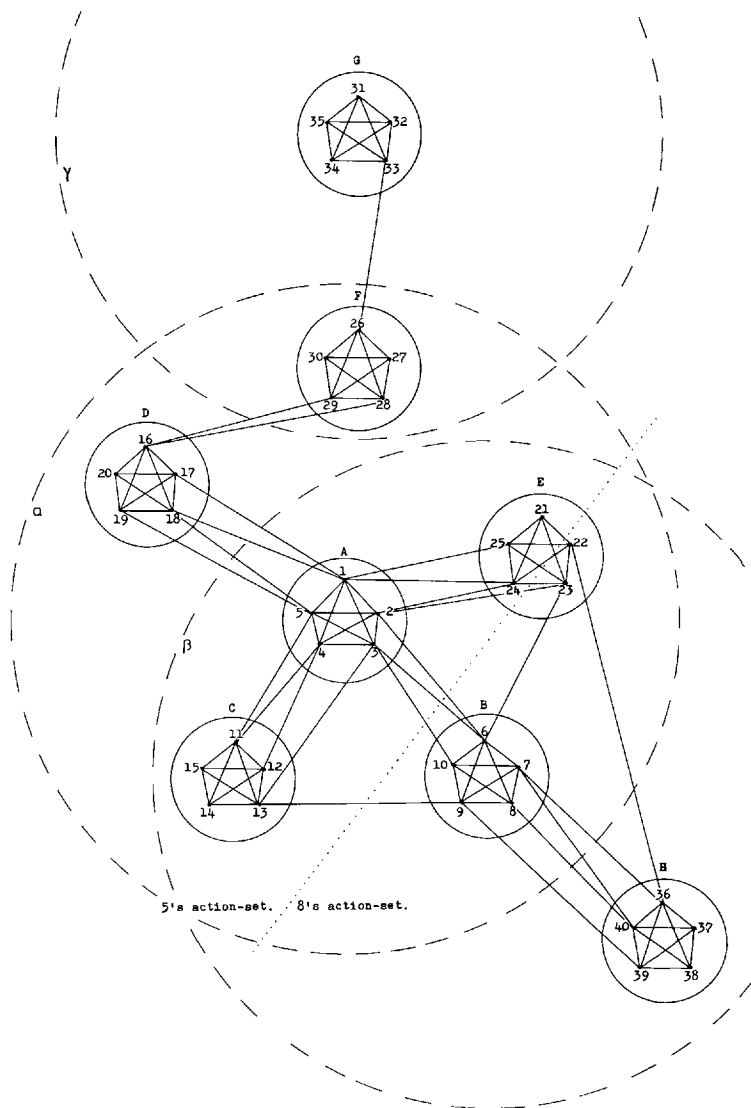


FIG. 4 A simple network showing the recruitment of an action-set

mechanical way the recruitment of an action-set. In this hypothetical example 5 and 7 have a dispute that erupts into a fight in which some men kill 8. The Wola call the two disputants *saend tay* (lit: war base) because they are at the root of the war. But the meaning of this word varies according to the relation of the speaker to the disputant. If the speaker is a member of another *semonda* then any member of the disputant's *semonda* is a *saend tay*. If he is a member of the disputant's *semonda* then any member of his *semgenk* is a *saend tay*. If he is a member of the disputant's *semgenk* then the disputant himself is the *saend tay*. This devolution of responsibility down to the disputant is an affirmation of the value placed upon the individual, and is important for the reparation payments which follow a war.

The *saend tay* can expect a group to form, without any overall direction, as individuals related to him comply with their obligations to seek revenge or to unite in defence. He can look to most of the members of his *semonda* (in 5's case 1, 2, 3, 4) who feel a strong obligation to support him because they live with him, and he can also rely on his relatives who live elsewhere (in 5's case 11, 18, 19). To this nucleus other men aggregate themselves according to their ties with its members, which means that relatives and friends of the disputant (especially those with whom he has a close relationship) in turn recruit some of their relatives to come and fight (in 5's case for example 1 may recruit 17, 24, 25, and 4 may recruit 12). It is not only members of the disputant's *semonda* who recruit people in this way via their networks, or people with whom he has a direct relationship elsewhere, the process ramifies throughout the area, and it does not necessarily stop short at the second-order zone but continues on, so that 17 enlists the help of 16 who pulls in 29 from *semonda* F (it is unlikely that 26 will come and he will never recruit 33 who lives outside the social universe α of community A).⁴

The Wola distinguish between two kinds of ally. When several men from a *semonda* (such as C) come to fight they constitute a recognisable group called *moraeret* (lit: ally). These ally groups

⁴ This raises the problem of boundaries and the effectiveness of indirect links, but this example shows in a crude way how the density of a network diminishes away from the *semonda* of focus, which simply means that people interact more with those who live closer to them.

come from neighbouring *semonda* with which members of the *saend tay* community have many relationships, and this prompts a group-like response when they enlist aid through their connections with several men.⁵ When only one or two men from a *semonda* (such as F) turn out to fight they are *saend paek ebay* (lit: war ? come).

The enemy (centred in this example upon 7) recruit an action-set in the same way, but persons who have relatives on both sides—members of the two opposed *semonda* (for example 2, 3, and 6, 10) and people who live elsewhere (for example 13 and 23)—experience a clash of interests. It is probable that persons in the situation of 2, 3, 6, 10 will fight with the people with whom they live, but this is not invariable and they may decide to fight for the other side. People in the position of 13 and 23 will go to where they have the strongest relations, but their choice is not always straightforward (for example 23 may decide to help 6, his daughter's husband, rather than 2, his son's wife's father, but in so doing he finds himself fighting on the opposite side to 24, his brother, who helps 2, his wife's brother). When relatives support people on opposite sides they do not damage their relationship or actually fight against each other (for example when they return home in the evening to E the two brothers 23 and 24 may well sleep in the same house). People in the position of 2, 3, and 6, 10 do not cut off their relations because of the war but maintain them in an attenuated way and meet each other in secret.⁶ This shows that men do not think in terms of group obligations or revenge interests, and the paradoxical situation in which some of them find themselves results from the freedom of choice afforded them to decide by the canons of self-interest whether or not to join an action-set. Some men with conflicting loyalties to both sides may decide not to fight (for example if 10 is 3's mother's brother he will probably abstain) as may those who for some other reason think that it is not in their

⁵ This polarises the *semonda* in any region into ally blocs, but this is not a static situation and any two previous *moraeret* allies may stand opposed as enemy *saend tay*—although the large number of individual relations between such neighbouring *semonda* (for example as between Aenda and Ebay *semonda*) reduces the chances of a dispute escalating into war.

⁶ A man exercises care when arranging meetings with members of the enemy because unless he trusts them implicitly he fears they may arrange *enj kaeruw liy* (lit: ? cut hit), which is a treacherous ambush to revenge one of their losses.

interests to help (for example if 19 is locked in a dispute with 5 he may decide to withhold his support).

In this way action-sets form in wartime, and because the same conditions apply to both sides they recruit groups of approximately the same size. During a war the composition of the active fighting forces varies from one encounter to another as men come and others drop out, but at any time their opposed strengths remain in balance; a balance which reflects the aim of war which is to secure an equal number of deaths on either side, and not to defeat the enemy.

Pig Kills

A pig kill is an occasion when several men arrange to slaughter their pigs, cook them and distribute the pork together on the same day. A man is not obliged to wait until his relatives are ready to kill their pigs, and he may stage a pig kill on his own. The advantage of waiting is that the more men who kill their pigs together the bigger the occasion, and those who take part in an event which attracts large numbers of people benefit from the reflected glory.

This section looks at the way men organise themselves into action-sets to carry out pig kills, and a later chapter discusses the exchange aspects of these events. But the fact that these are occasions for exchange explains the ethos behind their organisation. As in other exchanges, the way men perform at pig kills affects their reputations, which suffer if they fail to participate in a reasonable number of events and distribute pork to their relatives and friends. When asked why they have joined an action-set which has coalesced to put on a pig kill men reply that they have a pig or pigs not committed to any exchange, and that it is in their interests to take part and distribute pork. An action-set forms when a number of men find themselves in this favourable position and decide to put on a kill, but they do not think they are supporting the interests of the group, helping a relative or joining in because of a close relationship with some other participant—although, as argued earlier, they are keener to take part in events sponsored by members of their *semonda* because it is here, where they live, that they wish to earn respect. The result of these individual decisions is a random collection of persons, and the only thing which they hold in common is a surplus of wealth over and above their

exchange obligations, which they have converted into pigs and wish to butcher for distribution so as to earn the respect of others. This was the case in the two pig kills which I witnessed that members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* sponsored—in these events only members of the sponsoring *semonda* took part, that is persons who came from a close-knit network in which they had many-stranded relationships with one another, and there was no indication that any factors other than sufficient wealth prompted them to join in.⁷

When they think that they will have some pigs to spare after they have met their exchange commitments men moot the idea of a pig kill. The first suggestion for such an event comes several months before it takes place, and on average some members of a *semonda* will arrange one every three or four years. Once some men decide to hold one some time in the coming months they start their preparations. The material necessary for the kill slowly accumulates on the appointed *howma* as men collect stones and firewood when they have the time and inclination. The tempo of the preparations speeds up a week or so before the event, as men dig the oven pit, collect banana and fern leaves in which to cook the pork, and construct a rough table and horizontal pole for the display of butchered pork. There is no direction at these preparations because each man knows what has to be done and slowly does his share. During the preparations, and also at the kill, it is not only the men who plan to kill the pigs who do the work. Relatives and friends, both members of their *semonda* and from elsewhere, come to help them.

When the preparations are under way, men who are eligible to participate in the event try to arrange their affairs so that they can participate. But this can lead to dissension over the timing of the pig kill because participants have to arrange their exchange obligations to dovetail with the event so that they have none

⁷ The random composition of the action-sets which formed for these events can be seen by looking at the men who took part in them (listed in table 5 and figure 40) and their relationships, compared to the other members of their *semonda* who were eligible to participate and would have if they had had the pigs (compare with figure 7). As these examples show the result of these conditions is that the number of men who participate in any event varies, at Haelaelinja for instance twenty out of forty-eight members of the *semonda* killed pigs.

► IV Piywa Haegaes's wife receives *showmay hentiya* payment prior to the Ebay pig kill

▼ V At the display of *ol gwat* wealth men discuss the distribution





VI A dance called *mol liy* (lit. drums hit)

outstanding at the time of the kill. The Wola reason that a man cannot afford to kill off pigs if he is still in debt, and if he does so he will meet with anger from his creditors and disdain from other men for the reckless disposal of wealth⁸ which he should have used to pay off his exchange obligations (current mortuary and reparation payments). Ideally a man should also pay off all his ordinary debts, particularly those of long standing, but if he has insufficient wealth to meet all of them after making his obligatory exchange payments he may fail to pay them and still kill his pigs.

There are also specific payments which arise from, and precede a pig kill. A man is obliged to give one or two items of wealth to his wife for working hard on his behalf and looking after his pigs. This payment is called *showmay hentiya* (lit: pig rope (a rope tied to a front trotter to secure a pig)) and a woman passes on the wealth she receives to her male relatives (usually to her father or a brother).⁹ If a man intends to kill a pig which he received as a piglet from another man in an arrangement called *showmay ma ha* (lit: pig cause stand) he must pay the original owner for the pig before he kills it. This payment is also called *showmay hentiya*. Men who intend to kill pigs display the wealth for these payments and make them a day or two before the pig kill. The relatives of a woman do not argue over the wealth her husband gives her as *showmay hentiya* for her services, but the givers of *ma ha* pigs sometimes contest the payment offered as insufficient for the piglet which they originally invested. Sometimes men bargain for hours and if they reach no agreement they may decide to halve the pig and take a side of pork each.¹⁰

⁸ Reckless because when a man kills a pig he is not investing wealth but removing it from circulation for ever.

⁹ The Wola sometimes refer to this payment as *ponay* (lit: nothing) because the men who receive it do nothing to earn it—but in another sense the payment is a continuation of the bridewealth exchange (which initially created the relationship between the previously unrelated persons concerned) and is one of several payments which serve to maintain the relations created by that exchange.

¹⁰ In one *showmay hentiya* payment which I witnessed the original owner drove a particularly hard bargain and received three pearl shells, \$2 and a pig. The man who had reared the pig (Maenget Korobol) wanted to keep all of it when he killed it the following day during the Aenda pig kill. However, the original owner (Korobol's WZH) did himself a disservice in the long run because, as some men assured me, no one who witnessed the event would be likely to accept a *showmay ma ha* piglet from him in the future or thought highly of his mercenary attitude.

Name	Semg'nk	Debts pl	Showmay hentiya payments to wife			Showmay hentiya payments for ma ha pigs			Payments on various exchange obligations			Total wealth paid out before kill		
			pl	p	\$	pl	p	\$	pl	p	\$	pl	p	\$
Kot	Huwlael	16	3			13			83			115		
Tensgay	Maenget	10	1						16			27		
Waenil	Wenja		3			2	3		41	3	2	46	6	2
Em	Huwlael								71			71		
Kot	Mayka	4	2			3	1	6	18			27	1	6
Saziy	Mayka					6			25			31		
E'row	Puwgael		4						3			7		
Korobol	Maenget	12	3			3	1					18	1	
Piyp	Puwgael		2			1			20			23		
Pes	Mayka	2		4		4		13	16			22		17
Hiyp	Maenget	13	2						8			23		
Sal	Mayka	3	3			2			10			18		
Shorluwk	Huwlael		1						2			3		
Pundiya	Maenget		1			3			17			21		
Muwlib	Mayka	3	1			3	1	12	11			18	1	12
Sortiy	Mayka		1	2			$\frac{1}{2}$					1	$\frac{1}{2}$	2
Naenainj	Huwlael	2	2			7	$\frac{1}{2}$					11	$\frac{1}{2}$	
Kem	Maenget	2										2		
Duwaeb	Mayka	1	1			2		10				4		10
Yogbal	Wenja								17			17		

pl=pearl shells p=pigs \$=Australian dollars

TABLE 5 Payments made by Aenda men before a pig kill

These exchange commitments which men have to meet before killing their pigs mean that the weeks before the event are hectic for them. Some men, particularly those with several commitments, may have problems which lead them to disagree with the others when they come to fix the day for the kill. It is at this time that *ol howma* may try to use their marginal influence to control the plans of other men and arrange the date in their favour, which will be when they are clear of their, usually larger than average, exchange debts. But they are not always successful in their efforts because they base their arguments on facts of benefit to themselves and not the majority. Everyone is keen to kill pigs and when the majority of men see their way clear of exchange debts they usually proceed with the kill and stampede other men, who have not completed their exchanges (often men of renown who have more exchange obligations to meet than average), into making hurried arrangements so they can participate. The following two examples illustrate the kind of wrangling which precedes a pig kill.

Aenda Pig Kill

On 17 November 1973 there was a pig kill at Haelaelinja. Four weeks before the event there was an argument when the men who intended to kill pigs tried to fix a precise date for the event. The majority of participants wanted to kill their pigs within the next month¹¹ but Huwlael Kot, a man of high renown, was against this time and suggested a less specific date further in the future because he was involved in several wealth transactions which he did not think he could pay off within a month.

Details of the payments which each man made prior to the pig kill are listed in table 5, which shows clearly that *ol howma*, whose names are at the top of the list, do have larger commitments than others (an issue taken up in the next chapter). Kot paid out a total of one hundred and fifteen pearl shells. He gave one pearl shell to each of his wives in *showmay hentiya* for caring for his pigs. A further thirteen pearl shells he paid in *showmay hentiya* for four *ma ha* pigs he intended to kill; he gave these to the following people who had previously given him piglets: four pearl shells to his second wife's father, two pearl shells to his second wife's brother, three pearl shells to his third wife's father and four pearl shells to his FBSWF. He repaid sixteen pearl shells for ordinary debts to the following people who had loaned him wealth: twelve pearl shells to his second wife's father, two pearl shells to his third wife's father and two pearl shells to FBSWF. The largest payment he made was eighty-three pearl shells to reimburse seven descendants of men who had made reparation payments on behalf of his father's father who long ago was a *saend tay* in a war.

When the majority decided to kill their pigs within the next month, these commitments forced Kot to announce that he would be unable to participate then and that he planned to kill his pigs sometime after this date. Huwlael Em (Kot's step-father's F $\frac{1}{2}$ BSS) intimated that he might side with Kot and kill later because as an *ol howma* he also had some heavy exchange commitments to meet (he had four mortuary payments to make as follows: thirty pearl shells for the death of his FBS, twenty-one pearl shells for his young son, sixteen pearl shells for his wife's father and four pearl shells for the daughter of Wenja Kal). Kot and Em also suggested that they might be able to persuade the other two members of their *semgenk*, who planned to kill pigs but did not have large

¹¹ The Wola calculate long periods of time by the waxing and waning of the moon (*ez*; lit: moon) and they call these periods of time *ez* (lit: lunar month).

payments to make, to postpone their killing until they were ready.

The situation was regrettable because two smaller pig kills would not be such notable occasions as one large pig kill, but the majority were adamant in their intentions to kill their pigs within a month and Kot was unable to persuade them to alter their plans. He was caught in a cleft stick because he could not kill before meeting his exchange obligations but if he delayed and killed his pigs after everyone else (even though he had more pigs to kill than any other man) his actions would reflect badly on his reputation. There was therefore considerable pressure on Kot to arrange matters so that he could kill his pigs with everyone else and maintain his good reputation. As it turned out, after some frantic effort, which meant entering into debt, he was able to meet his exchange obligations and did kill his pigs with everyone else during the following month.

Ebay Pig Kill

A similar wrangle occurred between the members of Ebay *semonda* in July 1974 when they tried to fix a date for a pig kill which finally took place on 3 August. Some months earlier, Kolomb Hond had tried to initiate plans for a pig kill within Ebay *semonda* but he had failed to muster any enthusiasm and had killed his pigs on his own. The pig kill which occurred in August was forced upon the Ebay men by an inexplicable shortage of sweet potato which meant they were unable to support large pig herds. There were several pig kills in the area at this time because of the food shortage and the situation became confused with several men in different places trying to pay off their exchange obligations at the same time. The result was a constriction in the flow of wealth with men waiting impatiently for their debtors to pay them their wealth so they in turn could clear their debts.

Some Ebay men were caught by the congested flow of wealth and were unable to meet their exchange obligations. For example although Kolomb Omonol had no *showmay hentiya* payments to make, he was obliged to pay ten pearl shells as part of a reparation exchange and he also had to make a mortuary payment for his mother. His situation was made more difficult when his younger sister died four days before the pig kill and he had to arrange the initial mortuary exchange which follows a death. He shared out one of the pigs he slaughtered at the kill as part of this payment. Kolomb Pet was caught by the constricted flow of wealth and experienced difficulties collecting together the twenty-four pearl shells he

required to pay the debts he owed in his deceased sister's mortuary exchange (ironically he was unable to pay until he received some wealth he was owed by his creditors' relatives who also planned to kill pigs at this time). Ind Kayshya was placed in a paradoxical situation because after he made a mortuary payment for his deceased father he had an insufficient number of pigs to participate well in the kill (which was prompted by a need to reduce the size of pig herds) so he purchased a large pig to kill for ten pearl shells and forty-four Australian dollars.

Other Ebay men had few debts and they urged for a quick kill, but those caught by the congested flow of wealth needed to wait a few weeks. As it happened there were several men in this predicament and they managed to restrain their eager relatives—they pointed out that not only would they be unable to kill but that it would also take a few weeks to prepare their *howma* for the occasion.

Large Rituals and Dances

The Wola believe large rituals please their ancestors and reduce the frequency of their malicious, and sometimes fatal, attacks on their living descendants. But in spite of this, *semonda* act as the hosts for large rituals less often than they do for secular pig kills (see table 7 for comparative figures). The complex arrangements which accompany the organisation of a large ritual, which are similar to those for a pig kill only more complicated, are one reason for the infrequency of these events.

When some men initially decide to stage a large ritual they do not fix a precise date for the event, but like a pig kill, they refer to some undecided day in the future. The preparations for different rituals vary, but they all require the building of special ritual houses for the event and the preparation of a *howma* for a pig kill. As in the preparations for a pig kill one man does not supervise the work, which proceeds in a gradual piecemeal fashion as men contribute to the effort.

When the preparations near completion and the time comes to fix a date for the event differences of opinion are likely to lead to arguments. The pig kill which accompanies a large ritual, like a secular pig kill, requires participants to pay off their exchange debts and the dance which plays a part in any large ritual increases the problems men face because they have to organise their decorations, which means that if they do not own such items of

wealth as bird of paradise feathers, large bladed stone axes and body oil, they will have to borrow, hire and purchase them. Again *ol howma* may try to exert some influence over the plans so that they fit in with their timetable of wealth manipulations.

A dance requires careful preparation by the participants. They must obtain some of the glistening thick oil which men extract from trees at Lake Kutubu,¹² and this may involve some men in a trip to the lake to trade for long bamboo tubes of oil which they will sell by the small gourd to their relatives and friends when they return home.¹³ And those who do not own suitable feathers must visit friends and relatives in an attempt to obtain them.¹⁴ Men prefer the light blue King of Saxony plumes (*ngalop*) but if these are in short supply they will settle for the orange Raggiana bird of paradise plumes (*hung*). On the day of the dance men are free to choose their style of decoration but this does not mean that they mark themselves off from one another (the only way this happens is that *ol howma* are more likely to possess and wear a bigger and more valuable pearl shell around their necks). In fact they all look alike because people would laugh at any man who stepped outside the narrow conventions accepted for personal decoration.

The action-set which coalesced to stage a drum dance at Haelaelinja illustrates how people come to join these groups as the idea ripples through the network from those who initiate the event. To my knowledge the first persons to moot the idea of a dance were Wenja Neleb and Maenget Pes who, as the two young men who helped me with my work and who had become my closest friends, asked if my wife and I would like a dance put on to mark the end of our stay at Haelaelinja. When we answered in the affirmative they broadcast their idea to others and several men showed an interest. This was about two months before the dance, and a month later those interested decided to start a series of practice dances

¹² See Williams (1941-2: 133-4) for a brief account of this oil, which the people at Kutubu extract from a tree (*Camposperma brevipetiolata*) and call *tigaso*, and the Wola call *wombok*.

¹³ For example at a dance at Haelaelinja Wenja Kal purchased a tube of oil for \$24 from two men in the Nembi Valley, and he sold it for \$1 or \$2 a gourd depending upon their size.

¹⁴ For example for the same dance Maenget Pes hired a set of *ngalop* plumes for \$4 from Mayka Saziy's sister's husband who lives near Pinjip.

which took place two or three times a week from then on until the day of the full dance.

Practice dances are popular with young men (older men rarely bother to participate, although they are always on hand to give advice to the dancers) and unmarried women because they are occasions for courting, when girls may dance beside the boys they admire, and dancers decorate with *serep yort bay* (lit: second best decorations do) to make themselves attractive. Nobody tries to organise a practice dance, they simply take place when a few men make it known that they intend to practice in one or two days time and others who are interested turn up and join in, so the number of dancers may slowly grow and the practice go on well into the night. The number of people who attend a practice may exceed a hundred, and they come from a wide area. The same people do not attend each practice, although ardent dancers from the host *semonda* and closely neighbouring settlements rarely miss one. Those who do not have relatives or friends at the place of the practice come along with relatives who have a connection there.

The action-sets which crystallise for practices and the action-set which forms on the day of the full dance are random collections of interested persons who come from the network which radiates from those who first moot the idea. They attract those with whom they have a direct relationship (especially members of their *semonda*), and these people may in turn recruit interested relatives to the action-set. But the process of recruitment is not this straightforward because those who take part in an event will probably be related to several people in the action-set, and the suggestion in the hypothetical example given earlier that people join action-sets to which they have only one connection is a gross simplification of reality (for example in figure 4 it is unlikely that only 1 will recruit 17 who will probably have other connections with the action-set which will also pull him in). The network depicted in figure 5, which joins together the action-set that united for the dance at Haelaelinja, shows the kind of close-knit network that will connect together most of the participants in a real life situation. These numerous connections which people have with an action-set all combine to pull them into it, and it is this which encourages men to join action-sets which coalesce at the place where they live. Figure 5 shows that many of the participants in

the dance at Haelaelinja were eligible young men from the host *semonda* Aenda, with a goodly number from a closely neighbouring group who were pulled in by their large number of contacts with the host.

But people from elsewhere who have relations with only a few members of the action-set came to join in and the reasons for their behaviour are easier to determine and illustrate the forces which

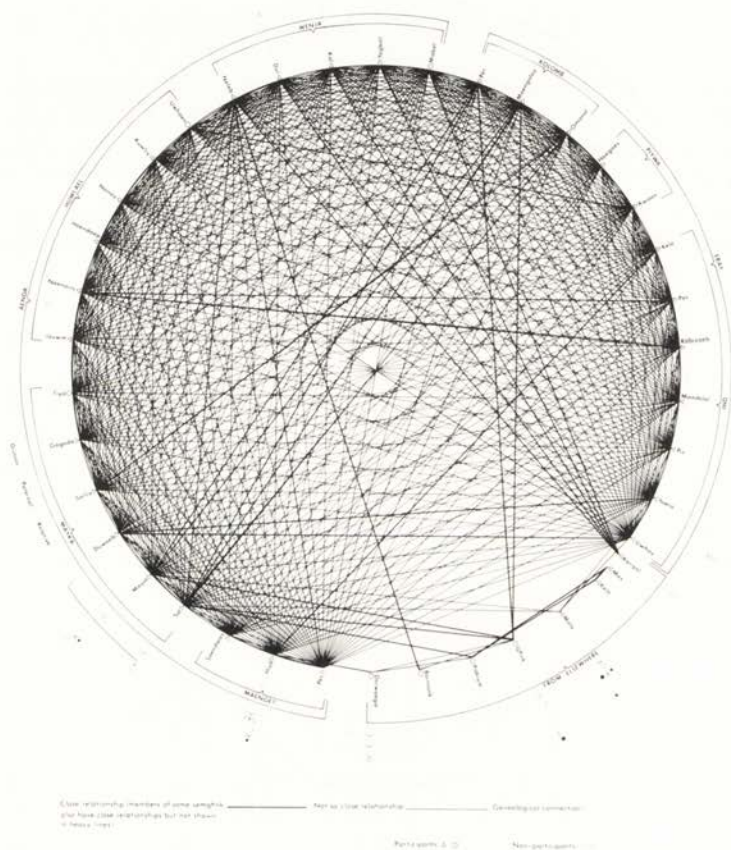


FIG. 5 The network linking together the action-set which united for a dance at Haelaelinja

pull people into an activity. Four unmarried girls came to join in, three of them because they were betrothed to Aenda men (Dorwaegol to Pes, and Bortnonk and Pabiym to Neleb). They all have relations at Haelaelinja, some more distant than others, but these alone would have been unlikely to pull them into the dance. The fourth girl Genk (whose mother's father was a Kolomb man, a relationship not shown on figure 5), has no meaningful relationship with other members of the action-set and she came along to accompany Dorwaegol and Bortnonk, who are from her settlement. This little group of females gave support and confidence to one another in a public display which they found daunting, and without the reassuring presence of one another it is doubtful they would have taken part.

Another person from elsewhere who joined in the dance was Mayka Kuwliy's elder sister's husband Molo, who lives at Pauwa (a settlement towards Lake Kutubu); he was staying at Haelaelinja with Mayka Kot (his WMFBS) at the time of the dance. He is not seen here often and few people know him, but he decided to join in even though his two closest relatives were not taking part (Kuwliy because he was too young and Kot because he thought, like other men of middle age, that the frivolity of a dance was for younger men only). Four other relatives of his wife, however, were members of the action-set. He is a Huli man, but for the dance he donned a bark belt and his Mayka relatives clubbed together to give him Raggiana plumes, a drum, enough hair to make one of the cossack hat-shaped wigs worn by the Wola and the other paraphernalia he needed for the dance.

Two other men who came to the dance are only distant paternal relatives of Huwlael Izuwm (his father was a member of their *semonda*). They live in the neighbouring settlement of Paym, which has been an enemy of Haelaelinja in the last three wars in the area. The glamour and chance to decorate themselves attracted them to the dance in a nearby settlement where they had few ties (Pabiym is also a member of their *semonda*). The other young man who came to join in the dance is related to Wenja *semgenk*, his mother is one of Waebis's daughters. Waebis, with ten wives, is the direct ancestor of nearly all the members of this group.

People join in a dance for various reasons, such as to parade themselves in fine decoration, to help propitiate malevolent

ancestor spirits, to show that they are capable of making the necessary preparations to co-operate and not earn a churlish reputation, and so on. But, as the examples quoted above show, it is not enough to plot out a network of relations and then say that certain principles, such as striving to maintain respect, lead some of the people within it to form into action-sets. There are personal elements in the relationships which tie a network together and it is also necessary to look at the content of these to understand what makes men behave the way they do and what prompts them to join forces with others (see Kapferer 1969 on this point). While the contacts which men have with members of an action-set act to pull them in, each of these is a different relationship. A man will like and respect some members more than others, and each of them will influence him in a slightly different way, so that some will attract him strongly to the group while others do not—it is even possible that a poor relationship with some of the participants will repel a man and cancel the pull of others so that he abstains.

The way in which Wenja Muwiy behaved at the dance arranged for us at Haelaelinja illustrates how the personal element in relationships influences behaviour. He decided not to dance, and to understand why it is necessary to give a little background information about the way his relationship with Neleb and me developed during our stay. When we arrived at Haelaelinja Muwiy forced himself upon us and was very helpful, but after a month had passed I found that he was lying to me. When he tried to extort all kinds of things from me in return for this spurious help I told him that I did not wish him to help me any more because I could not trust him. He realised that he had gone too far and tried to make up to me, but when he realised that I had no intention of changing my mind he left and avoided me for weeks. During the following month Neleb gravitated towards us and proved honest, helpful and more likeable than Muwiy (who is his father's half-brother, although they are about the same age). Neleb and I became close friends and he not only earned kudos locally for his close relationship with a European, but he also received from me many presents. This rankled with Muwiy who, although he came to treat me civilly after a while, never forgot that he might have achieved the same position as Neleb. So when Neleb came up with the idea of a dance to mark our stay at Haelaelinja he decided to boycott

the event, although he never missed a practice and would I think have liked to join in the dance. The reason he gave to me for his non-participation was that he understood the missionaries in Nipa disapprove of any dancing—something which I am sure would not have bothered him if conditions had been different and he had wanted to dance.

The network depicted in figure 5 shows more clearly than words how complicated this technique is when applied to real life situations. It leads, as the examples quoted above show, to the use of the extended case method (see Van Velsen 1967) to elucidate patterns observed, and it not only requires delving into situational factors but also into behavioural matters of a social, psychological and environmental nature to understand why people behave as they do in any situation. These issues are beyond the brief of this study, which simply tries to indicate how the idea of the network applies to Wola society. Also, unlike the recording of jural norms, it is not easy to extrapolate what constitutes the average and normal behaviour of a number of people using this approach, and this brings up another problem the theoretical implications of which this book does not discuss, and that is how to translate individual acts into the observed regularities of social life without becoming bogged down in a welter of detail which obscures the main issues (see Firth 1954; Leach 1954, 1961)—this is not a question of whether the statistically observed realities of life have primacy over norms or vice versa because these two things are interdependent and articulate according to certain constant principles; it is this articulation which is at issue.

The haphazard collection of men on the day of a dance reflects the lack of overall co-ordination in the drawing together of an action set from a network. Dancers rise at dawn to be washed and painted by their wives,¹⁵ to rub on their body oil, fix their feathers and generally prepare for the dance. When they are ready they leave for the dance where they arrive alone or in small groups of three or four to join the formation of dancers already there. There

¹⁵ The Wola associate the washing of men by women before a dance with the dangerous sexual powers of the latter. Unguarded sex can make a man sick, he wastes away and his skin becomes cracked, dry and dusty like the ash of a fire. But when a woman handles this dangerous power properly she can use it to make a man's flesh firm and shiny, which everyone admires.

is no organisation or leadership of the dancers. Men may shout out their opinions about the performance and offer advice on style but each individual dancer performs as he chooses. This freedom does not result in a discordant and shapeless performance because, like the choice allowed men in their decoration, there are narrow conventional limits of dance style which the conservative nature of Wola men leads them to obey for fear of appearing foolish.¹⁶

During that part of a large ritual which concerns the propitiation of the ancestors, on the other hand, men follow the instructions of a specialist called a *namonk ol* (lit: incantation man) who knows the ritual incantations called *namonk* which are necessary to ensure the success of the ritual. There are only a few men within the social universe of any community who know these *namonk*, and, in the case of Haelaelinja, none of them live closer than five miles. So when the members of Aenda *semonda*, or any other group, plan to stage a large ritual for which none of them know the *namonk* they must ask a specialist who lives elsewhere to come and officiate. A *namonk ol* is not necessarily a man of renown. Although a man can purchase the knowledge of a *namonk*, it is more usual for a specialist to have learnt his incantations from an elderly close relative who was previously a *namonk ol*. The specialist receives a payment for his services called *towmow haebuwk bay* (lit: ancestor ? do). The composition of this payment varies but may include bundles of salt, pigs, pearl shells, cowrie shell necklaces, pork, body oil, fine axes, and a woman's bag and grass skirt. The infrequency of large rituals does not make these payments a regular source of wealth for the *namonk ol*.¹⁷ It is their infrequency which prompts men to obey the directions of the specialist because they forget what the ritual requires of them or if they are young men they will never have participated in the ritual before. A large ritual is the only time men obey the directions of a leader but this man is not necessarily of *ol howma* status or a

¹⁶ The Wola also believe that disgruntled ancestors will 'eat' and kill a man who dances out of step and upsets the rhythm of a dance.

¹⁷ This fits in with Wola ideas about the production of wealth items in general. As later chapters go on to show it is not by producing or earning wealth that a man achieves high status but by exchanging and manipulating valuables on specific social occasions.

member of the host *semonda* and his directions concern supernatural, not political, goals.

Name	<i>Semgenk</i>	Total no. rituals in life	Pigs killed <i>shor kem</i> ritual	Contribution to <i>namonk ol</i> payment p o c m	Pigs killed <i>saybel</i> ritual	Contribution to <i>namonk ol</i> payment p o c m	Total wealth expended p o c m
Kot	Huwlael	2	1				1
Tensgay	Maenget	3			8		8
Kot	Mayka	2	3				3
Sazyi	Mayka	2	4	1 1 1	1		5 1 1 1
E'row	Puwgael	2			1		1
Pel	Huwlael	3	2	1	8		10 1
Piyp	Puwgael	2	1	1			2
Unguwdiyp	Wenja	3			3		3
Pundiya	Maenget	2			3		3
Ibnay	Mayka	?	3	1 1		3 1	4 4 1
Aegol	Kolomb	2	2		1		3
Kem	Maenget	3	1		2		3
Non	Ind	2			1½		1½
Haelop	Kolomb	2			4		4

p=pigs o=body oil c=cowries m=pork

TABLE 6 Wealth expended on large rituals

Other than influencing the arrangement of the date for the ritual to suit their own wealth transactions the concern of *ol howma* is to demonstrate in public their ability with wealth by killing more pigs than average, by contributing heavily to the payment of the *namonk ol* and by wearing highly prized feathers and shells in the dance. The data in table 6 anticipates the argument of the next chapter and shows the amounts of wealth expended by different members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* in large rituals. The fact that the members of neither of these *semonda* have staged a large ritual for approximately fifteen years means that these figures do not correspond to the present day status of men. Several younger men of relative renown have contributed no wealth to these rituals and old men whose status has waned with age (for example Huwlael Pel and Mayka Ibnay) have contributed several items of wealth. Although the material in table 6 is out of date, it indicates that in parting with wealth men are as concerned to impress the living as to appease the dead in rituals. The fact they do not offer their pork to the ancestors (with the exception of a pig killed by the *namonk ol*) but share it with their relatives is further evidence of this.

5

The Achievement of Renown

The previous two chapters have pointed out the part which *ol howma* play in action-sets, and have shown that whereas organised groups have some kind of leadership in most societies this is not strictly so for the Wola. This raises the question of how men, whose relationships link them together into a network and who are motivated to act for different reasons, reach decisions and co-ordinate their actions when they form coalitions. This chapter describes how the Wola do this, and goes on to see what makes an *ol howma* and what the significance of their position is if renown gives them no political control over others.

Success and Collective Decisions

The part which the so-called big-man plays in different parts of Melanesia follows a regular pattern throughout the literature.¹ They achieve positions of respect, which give them varying amounts of power to control the actions of others, by excelling in activities which people value. They are good speakers (for example the Kuma, see Reay 1959), or they are outstanding warriors (for example people in the Eastern Highlands, see Berndt 1962), or they are skilled manipulators of wealth in exchanges (for example the Melpa, see Strathern 1971). These men lead groups, which in some societies build up like factions as they attract followers, and in other societies (for example the Mae Enga, see Meggitt 1971) are corporate groups within which they rise to lead. The leadership of big-men is not absolute, they have to pay some attention to their followers, who will otherwise become disgruntled and leave the group or withdraw their support, and so undermine the leader's position.

The justification for the use of the word lead for the actions of

¹ With some possible exceptions, such as the chiefs of the Trobriand Islands (see Powell 1960).

big-men is tortuous, and even circular, because it is difficult to reconcile its use in situations where the leader does not decide what his followers will do, but listens to their opinions and then leads them according to the will of the majority to do something which they can manage without any direction. It is difficult to see what need there is for a leader, but somehow writers manage to cut the Gordian knot to their satisfaction. While big-men are unable to decide group policy, they try hard to persuade their followers to agree with their ideas, and to do this they bring what pressure they can to bear upon them (such as using their skill with wealth to place them in their debt and so gain an element of control over them, or by using their physical strength to intimidate them). Accounts of big-men imply that they behave in this way and wish to manipulate and somehow control their followers for political reasons, and these range from a hunger for power over other men to a desire to strengthen the position and interests of their group, and hence their own as its leader, with regard to others.

This potted account of the part which big-men play in other Melanesian societies does not do justice to the sophistication of the arguments from which it comes (for this see Read 1959, Berndt and Lawrence 1971, and Strathern 1966, 1971), but it suffices to draw attention to a crucial difference between them and the Wola *ol howma*. To some extent big-men elsewhere lead relatively permanent groups, whereas the freedom extended to Wola men results in the formation of only temporary action groups which, as the previous chapters show, preclude *ol howma* assuming the position of leaders. But, as respected men, they may take the lead in the discussions which occur when the members of an action-set try to thresh out their plans.

It is by discussing their projected activity among themselves until the opinion of the majority becomes clear that the members of a coalition reach decisions, as some of the examples quoted earlier illustrate (see also Read 1959).² When the view of the majority crystallises those who disagree with it are free to disassociate themselves from the action-set if they think the plans

² When making decisions the Wola differ from the Gahuku Gama in two ways. They do not emphasise strength, and *ol howma* do not try to sense the opinion of the majority in order that they may take the lead and insinuate the decision was their idea.

negate the gains which they expected participation would bring them. Sometimes there are sufficient men in this disgruntled group to make separate arrangements for another event, sometimes one or two men go it alone, and on other occasions they simply drop their plans altogether. Other men who disagree with the opinion of the majority may remain in the group while voicing their dissatisfaction with the plans which put them in an unfavourable position.

All men have an equal right to voice their opinions in these discussions, even those who do not intend to participate in the event, and they will all try to persuade one another to act in ways which benefit them. But *ol howma* have more influence than others and hence a better chance of modifying plans to their advantage, although the extent to which they can persuade other men to fall in line with their ideas depends upon the advantages which their plans offer to the men they are trying to influence. If a man thinks that the ideas of an *ol howma* are not in his interests he will oppose them and there is little pressure the *ol howma* can bring to bear upon him other than persuasion, reason, and perhaps appeals to friendship and past help which deserve support in return. A man who finds himself in the minority does not damage his reputation by wrangling and arguing with the others in an attempt to bring the gathering round to his point of view, but if he opts out his reputation may suffer (for example if the planned event involves wealth and he is unable to meet specified exchange obligations).

It is difficult to judge the extent of the influence which accrues to the successful and renowned man because it is not overt and it varies from one situation to another, but it is significant that out of seventy-four men asked in an opinion poll whether they paid any particular attention to the views of a successful man, sixty-seven (91 per cent) of them answered in the affirmative. When asked why they listened to the opinions of *ol howma* these men reasoned that their ability in wealth exchanges proves that they are capable, and that this gives value to their advice, but they qualified this with a warning that *ol howma* are out to improve their own position and advise men accordingly. So while the success of *ol howma* gives weight to their advice, the self-interested reasoning behind it may cancel out its value in the eyes of other men.

It is important to realise that while *ol howma* may be more

successful at swaying opinions than other men, they cannot force others to follow their wishes by virtue of their ability. They are not able to impose their will on other people in the face of opposition because their society isolates power beyond their reach and has instituted no offices which give the holder authority to make decisions and issue commands in accordance with rules which people accept as binding upon them and requiring their obedience.³ Men with ability in activities which people value can only achieve respect, which may give them some influence over others so that they stand a better chance of persuading them to accept their opinion on an issue.⁴

It is not easy to see how an acephalous society constituted along these lines could be viable if the numbers of people involved in any group were large or their activities were frequent, and to place this discussion in perspective it is necessary to point out the small number of men who constitute an action-set and the infrequency of their activities. The figures in table 7, although their reliability varies, show that the number of men who join an action-set rarely approaches the total adult male population of a *semonda* (which is a small social group anyway), and that on average a man will participate in only one or two activities a year (although he will observe at more).

³ See Smith (1974) on power and authority. When discussing the groups of Wola society, this study also makes implicit use of some of his ideas on the nature of corporations.

⁴ Salisbury (1964) and Watson (1971) have referred to despotic leadership in some Highland societies, a situation which would be very foreign to the Wola. Strathern (1966, 1971) has pointed out that these claims are probably exaggerated, although he finds it difficult to evaluate them because a 'strongly emotive' word like despot clouds the issue, which is beyond investigation anyway as it concerns a time before any anthropological field work was possible. It is significant that societies in the Eastern Highlands place greater value on physical strength and aggression than societies in the Western and Southern Highlands (which place greater value on manipulation of wealth and success in exchanges) because this undoubtedly influences the type of leader who emerges, but Read (1959) has argued convincingly for an Eastern Highland society that strength alone, ignoring the value placed upon equivalence, does not earn respect and influence. If the value placed upon the equality of the individual is a value held in the Eastern Highlands (as the work of Read (1959) and Langness (1971, 1972) suggests), perhaps it is not too far from the truth to suggest that Kavagi and Matoto were only bullies without any influence (other than that generated from fear) whose outlandish stories people remember and embellish upon because they are so atypical.

	Total no. events in 50 yrs involving members of 2 <i>semonda</i> ^a	No. events in one year involving members of 2 <i>semonda</i>	Average no. events participated in by one man ^b	Av. no. men who participate in event		Average no. people as spectators at event
				Host <i>sem</i>	Visitors	
Disputes	330	22	4.4c	12d	—	24
Wars	15	1 every 3.3 yrs	2.5	?	?	?
Pig kills	20e	1 every 3 yrs	3.6	16f	—	200e
Large rituals and dances	3g	1 every 16.6 yrs	1 in 3 men once in life	28h	10	250e
Bridewealth	196i	8i	5.2	5.8j	1.3	15e
Death { <i>ol gwat</i>	422	4	23	11	5.3k	30e
Death { <i>ol bay</i>	127	15	4.3	2.4	1.6	15e
Reparation payments	88	4	3	4.7	1.5k	20e

TABLE 7 The frequency of and average number of participants in any event

a The *semonda* of Aenda and Ebay.

b The figure in this column represents an average calculated for young and old men together. The average for a man nearing the end of his life would be higher.

c This is as a disputant and not (as figure in next column) as a speaker at a dispute.

d Average from four cases noted in detail.

e Figures are an estimate from incomplete data, events witnessed and photographs.

f Average for two pig kills.

g Large rituals for Aenda *sem* only (not including dances held without ritual).

h Figures from one dance not part of large ritual.

i Only within *semonda*; where men have contributed to bridewealths of dead men or members of other groups figures not included.

j These figures include contributors only; can add approximately 50 per cent to these figures for men present who stand to receive.

k The figure for visitors is low because in data collected the men from elsewhere who received wealth not remembered.

A man has no influence in a group where he does not keep up a large number of social relations, so the influence of an *ol howma* is restricted largely to the *semonda* where he resides and participates in activities, although some men do have a say at two places, where they maintain houses and gardens and between which they migrate every few months. A successful man may be able to exert some influence over his relatives who live elsewhere, but it is unlikely that he will be able to extend it over other members of their group who do not know him well. In any case the plans of people living elsewhere do not particularly interest a man, except on those few occasions when he participates in an event there. Map 4 shows that knowledge of the reputations of the *ol howma* who are members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* does not extend far within the social universe of their settlements. Divided proportional circles show the replies of men living in different areas

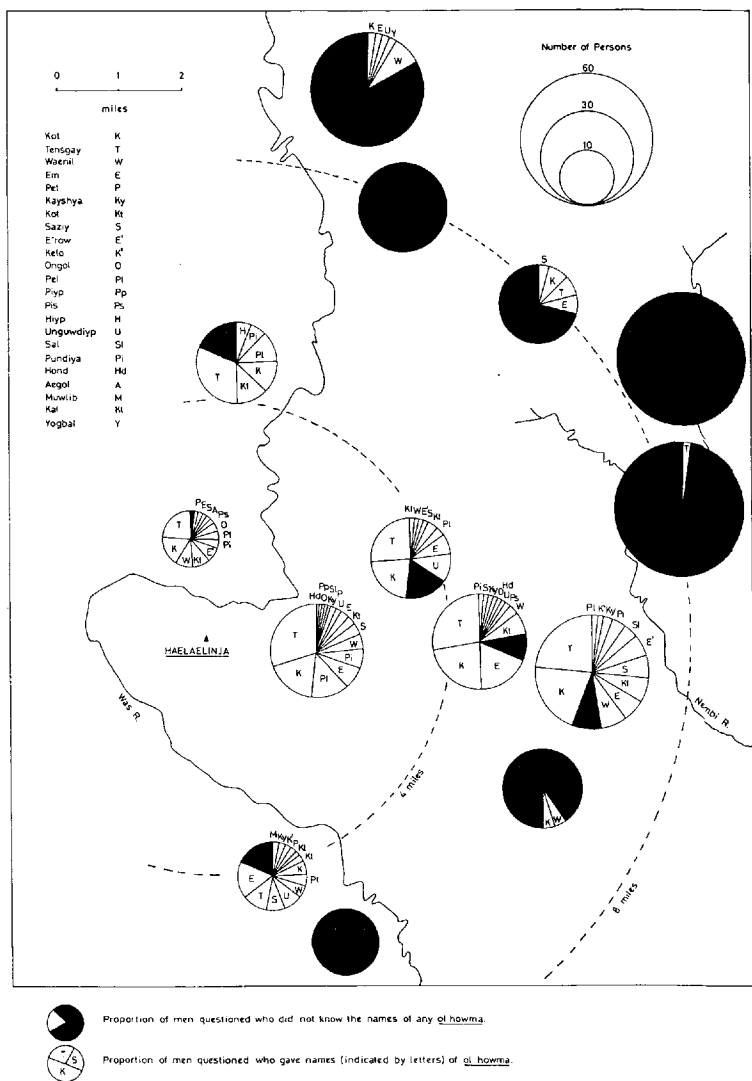
whom I asked to name *ol howma* at Haelaelinja. Men living in neighbouring areas, with whom members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* interact often, know the names of several men, but the renown of men steadily diminishes away from their place of residence (as the increase in the shaded areas of the circles show), and as people become more unsure of men's status they simply name anyone whom they know to live in the Haelaelinja area.

The distinction between state and stateless societies, as made by Fortes and Evans Pritchard (1940), partly explains why *ol howma* act in a self-centred way. As Lawrence (1971) has pointed out, the leaders of states have to make decisions to fit in with continually changing political, economic, and even social conditions, and to do this they have authority to direct the actions of others, and so can look at a situation and make decisions which they think will benefit the group. In the stateless societies of Melanesia on the other hand such policy decisions are unnecessary because life follows a constant pattern with no appreciable change. Here leaders do not have authority over others. When *ol howma* try to influence decisions, for example, they cannot consider the welfare of the group because they have no control over it, and so they are unable to base their actions on anything other than selfish criteria of benefit to themselves. In Wola society discussions about group activities concern dates and venues, and arranging things so that individuals can meet their social obligations to others, and during these debates people do not think it improper for a man of renown to use the little influence which his success earns him in an attempt to maintain the position which gives him the influence.

Exchange, Wealth and Renown

The foregoing account makes it clear that the action-sets of Wola society are *ad hoc* and headless groups over which *ol howma* have no control. The marginal influence which these men have over the initiation, planning and direction of the activities of these groups is only a by-product of their high status, and it remains to explain what renown means if it does not give them some kind of political hold over others.

The basis of renown in Wola society is an ability to handle wealth in exchanges. Table 8 shows that this was the unanimous

MAP 4 The extent of men's renown as *ol howma*

Attributes of <i>ol howma</i> status	Stated by men		Stated by women		Total no. persons stated attribute	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Manages many pearl shells	74	100	88	96	162	98
Manages many pigs	74	100	88	96	162	98
Manages many other items of wealth	66	89	65	71	131	78
Knowledgeable man	67	91	20	17	87	52
Owms many items of everyday property (not wealth)	5	7	26	28	31	19
Has several wives	16	22	6	6	22	13
Generous man	12	16			12	7
Owms many gardens	4	5	6	6	10	6
Works hard	2	3			2	1
Good warrior	1	1.3			1	0.6
Owms many pandanus trees			1	1.1	1	0.6
Has many children			1	1.1	1	0.6
Do not know			1	1.1	1	0.6

TABLE 8 The attributes of *ol howma* status

opinion of the adult members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* (74 men and 92 women) when they were asked what attributes they thought an *ol howma* should have. It shows that an ability to manage many pearl shells and pigs in exchanges is very important, and that the manipulation of other items of wealth (such as salt, body oil and cowrie shells) is also important. It also shows that many men think that the ability *ol howma* have with wealth shows that they are knowledgeable and clear thinking, and as pointed out earlier, this inclines them to listen to their advice. Few women mentioned insight as an attribute of renown, probably because they do not take a significant part in the decision-making discussions in which men have to evaluate the ideas of others in the light of their own interests. Women listen to their fathers or husbands, and they pay scant attention to the opinions of other men on the purely domestic matters which concern them and which are of little interest to others.

The other attributes of *ol howma* status listed in table 8 are insignificant compared with the first four, and in fact some of these are allusions to the importance of wealth for the achievement of renown. The ownership of many items of everyday property and many gardens are indirect references to the importance of exchange couched in terms of production; successful men may have more gardens than average and produce more food which

allows them to support larger pig herds, and their ability with wealth may mean that they can afford to trade for and own more items of everyday property. Similarly the reference to several wives may be an allusion to success put in terms of productive ability because women keep pigs and they also do most of the routine gardening, so the more women a man has in his household the more pigs he can keep and the larger the areas he can cultivate. But the number of wives a man has is also a direct indication of his ability with wealth because a man has to pay bridewealth for each woman he marries, and he has to maintain smooth affinal relations with periodic exchanges of wealth once he is married. Success depends upon the exchange and not the hoarding of wealth, and more people would have mentioned that generosity is a mark of high status if prompted during questioning; as it was they understood references to wealth to imply generosity. It is axiomatic that a miser is a failure, a fool, an *iyb tit* (lit: water hole).⁵

The foremost element in the minds of the Wola when they rank men is clearly the ability which they show at handling wealth, and on the basis of this they classify men into one of three status positions.

They refer to men whom they rank in the lowest position as *ol dimb* (lit: man inferior). These men are mentally deficient and they are unable to participate to any noticeable extent in the exchanges of wealth which determine the social standing of men. Only one *ol dimb* lives in the area occupied by Aenda and Ebay *semonda* (Wenja Tiz, whose name appears at the bottom of the list of names of the members of these two *semonda* which recurs throughout this study), and his exchange record shows that his simple ways virtually preclude his participation in these activities (he has only contributed to one exchange—a cowrie shell necklace towards his half brother's (Wenja Kayshya) bridewealth). *Ol dimb* never marry and their close relatives care for them (in Tiz's case, he remains close to his elderly mother and they both rely upon her eldest son, Wenja Waenil, and his wife for support). They are physically smaller and thinner than average men but they are

⁵ The phrase *iyb tit* means a person has no sense because their chest (where their sense or *konay* resides) is empty like a hole.

capable of hard physical work (Tiz has a garden which his old mother cultivates and he does heavy work to help his elder brother such as collecting firewood and clearing and fencing gardens). People sometimes ridicule and laugh at *ol dimb*⁶ but they realise these inferior men are *konay nae wiy* (lit: sense not have) and require their protection.

The Wola call men of middle status *ol ora* (lit: man ordinary). These men are of average ability and they represent the majority. *Ol ora* are not too stupid to participate in exchanges of wealth and they meet their responsibilities adequately, but they lack the ability to manipulate large amounts of wealth in many exchanges. These men marry and have families, and they participate in subsistence economic activities in exactly the same way as men of renown. The difference between them and successful men is the smaller amount of wealth which they handle in exchanges.

The Wola refer to men of high social status who excel in exchanges as *ol howma* (lit: man grass clearing). This is the term most commonly heard to refer to successful men. There are other terms, for example *ol buwalay* (lit: man guide), which refers to the help received by some men from their ancestors (described in detail in the next chapter), or *ol buriy* (lit: man strong) which refers to a man's ability (strength) to handle wealth, or *ol konay ebay da* (lit: man sense good very) which refers again to a man's ability (knowledge) to handle wealth.⁷ It is these men who particularly concern this study, which now turns to explain why the Wola accord them renown for their ability in exchanges. This explanation relies heavily upon quantitative data collected from the members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*, which it examines in the

⁶ The extent to which people make *ol dimb* the butt for jokes varies from one inferior man to another. People rarely made fun of Tiz (the protection of his elder brother, a respected man in the area, was one reason) but they always ridiculed and laughed at an *ol dimb* called Tagen from the neighbouring settlement at Dayowtinja. Tiz was pathetic and inspired pity whereas Tagen was stupid and attracted ridicule.

⁷ There are other phrases used to refer to men of renown and some of these use symbols which make them the opposite of inferior men. See Strathern (1971: 188-9) for a discussion of terms used by the Melpa which are similar to terms used by the Wola; for example the Wola refer to the skin of an inferior man as like ash (which is one of the symptoms of the illness which follows from unprotected sexual intercourse) while they admire men of renown for their firm and shiny skin.

light of an opinion poll conducted to establish the status of the men concerned. Each table and figure which uses information concerning these men to illustrate arguments about the nature of status in Wola society lists their names according to the order established by the opinion poll, with the men of highest status at the top of the list.⁸

The material presented in figure 6 shows the results of this opinion poll, in which all the adult members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* were asked to give the names of men living in their area whom they thought to be of *ol howma* status. In the poll it was necessary to distinguish accurately between degrees of success because people agreed that some men were more successful than others.⁹ The Wola express the comparative degrees of success of several men by simply using adjectives to qualify the term *ol howma*. They refer to a moderately successful man as *ol genk mon howma sha* (lit: man smallish grass clearing) which may be abbreviated to *ol howma sha*. In this category the Wola place men who are only moderately more successful than average; such as young men who show promise of becoming *ol howma* later in life and old men who were *ol howma* in their prime but whose status has declined with age as their exchange activities have diminished. A man who is clearly above average in the management of wealth is *ol howma* and a man who is outstanding for his ability to manage wealth and excels above other men is *ol howma onda ora* (lit: man grass clearing big very).¹⁰

The opinion poll revealed some interesting facts about *ol howma* status. It showed that while everyone agrees about the high status of unquestionably successful men their opinions differ about the

⁸ The men below and including Maenget Kem received no votes and their names are arranged according to age with the eldest men at the top.

⁹ The figures recorded on the graph of figure 6 do not represent actual votes. The votes for each man were collected according to the three broad categories of *ol howma* status outlined, which gave a more specific representation of opinions, and these are combined into a single figure on the graph to facilitate easy comparison. The figure was computed by giving a value of 1 to every vote a man received as *ol howma* and differentiating between the statuses on either side (*ol howma onda* and *ol howma sha*) by the addition or subtraction of $\frac{1}{2}$ so that every vote a man received as *ol howma onda* gained him $1\frac{1}{2}$ and every vote as *ol howma sha* gained him $\frac{1}{2}$.

¹⁰ By juggling with adjectives in this way the Wola can indicate fine shades of difference between the statuses of several men.

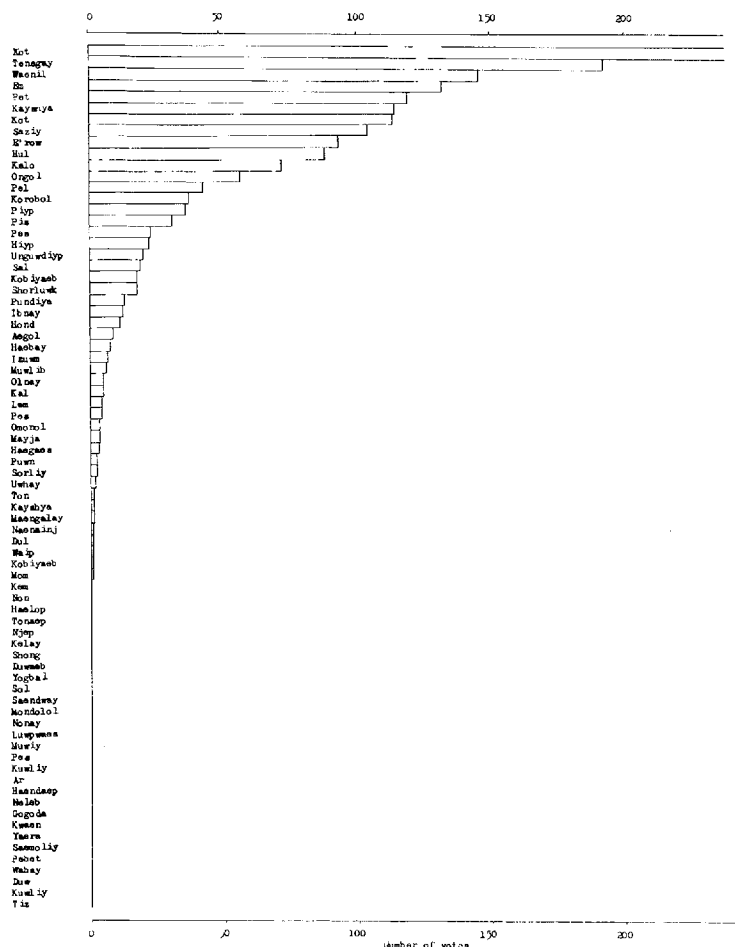


FIG. 6 *Ol howma* opinion poll results

status of marginal men.¹¹ The result is that while some men hold undeniable rights to refer to themselves as *ol howma*, the status of less successful men is ambiguous. The curve of the graph in

¹¹ See Bulmer 1960, who makes the same point for the Kyaka Enga when he discusses their opinions about big-men.

figure 6 reflects this. It shows that there is a continuum of opinion from the men of highest renown to the men of marginal success. There are no sharp changes in the curve between one status and another and it is not possible to draw a line between men of high status and men of middle status. This curve reflects Wola conceptions of status allocation; they do not group men in discrete categories as either *ol howma* or *ol howma sha* but rank them in their minds one above the other in a continuous list.

There may be a tendency, once people have named the men of highest status in accordance with current opinion, for them to mention their relatives as men of moderate success, but the evidence is not clear on this point. It is arguable that the reverse is the case, that because people know the abilities of their relatives well they are less likely to mention them unless they show signs of real success, whereas they may hazard a guess about the status of unrelated men which they might rescind if they knew their exchange abilities better. In fact neither of these arguments applies to many people because the small size of the territorial groups under discussion means that all their members know each other well and that they do not need to guess about each other's status or support relatives without reason.

Map 4 shows that the opinions of men living elsewhere within the social universe of a *semonda* are less well informed than those of residents. They are more aware of the reputations of persons of high standing than they are of men of moderate success, which is understandable. There is also an interesting tendency for their opinions to be out of date. Men living within the social universe of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*, for example, often named dead members of these groups as *ol howma*. They also mentioned Maenget Tensgay and Huwlael Pel, two old men whose status is waning, more often than the current status of these two men within Aenda *semonda* merits (the higher than average incidence of returns in this survey for Wenja Unguwiyp and Maenget Pundiya are difficult to explain unless they are also associated in some way with the age of these men).

Throughout the poll men insisted that it was a waste of time to ask women for their opinions about men of renown because they did not understand the situation with *ol howma*. But the results show that they are not as unaware of the situation as men think.

There is a tendency for women, like men living elsewhere within the social universe of a group, to be out of date and less well informed in their opinions; for example the votes for Maenget Tensgay receive an upward thrust from the less well informed opinions of women. Also, women are less able to decide upon the status of men (such as Maenget Korobol and Mayka Ibnay) who migrate between Haelaelinja and another settlement, living for several months alternately at one place and then the other. Also, although the opinions of women correspond tolerably well with those expressed by men for persons of undisputed high status, their opinions about men of moderate success vary considerably from those of men. In fact men of lesser success receive many of their votes from women. This indicates that the opinions of men are more unanimous on the whole than the opinions of women, who tend to disagree over the status of men of moderate success (in situations where they are not sure of informed opinion there was also an increased tendency for women to mention their relatives).

An important point with regard to the position of *ol howma* is that the activities in which they excel to earn renown play an important part in maintaining the delicate balance between the disparate elements of their society. The account given so far of Wola society, as a free social exchange market which hangs together on the interests of individuals who are related through ramifying networks, regulate their behaviour because it pays them to do so, and co-operate when it suits their interests, presents a very friable social situation which could easily fall apart into Hobbesian chaos. As described so far, this society rests on the edge of an abyss which falls to anarchy and confusion, and it requires some binding force which will serve to hold it together without detracting from the sovereignty of the individual. It is here that Wola society has made its most brilliant piece of social engineering by institutionalising aspects of exchange, that elementary social process which pervades all human societies, to give strength to the social order. It is because exchange plays such a central role in their society, as later chapters show in detail, that the Wola have come to place great value upon it and accord high status to those who excel at it.

When asked why they bother to meet their exchange commit-

ments men's replies are similar to those which they give when asked why they honour their revenge obligations, that they are obliged to and that it is unthinkable not to do so. Their society impresses upon them a high regard for the exchange of wealth, and they live up to the norms which their society institutes, and so ensure a steady flow of wealth, because their reputations depend upon it—to fail to meet exchange obligations is the hallmark of an unrespected man. But men do not simply earn respect because they fulfil their obligations in socially beneficial activities, valued by everyone because they are conditioned to do so by society. Exchange is too crucial an aspect of social order for Wola society to trust its smooth operation to this alone, and it goes further than inculcating in men a high regard for exchange. It does this by elaborating upon its competitive aspect to spur them on to better things, by placing their reputations not only upon their abilities to meet their obligations in this valued activity, but also upon their abilities to do so better than other men.

It is a basic tenet of exchange that participants expect to make some gain and compete to do this, but for the Wola this is not a material gain, it is the gain of respect. While men are keen to secure good payments from others when they transact with them, their objective is not to hoard wealth. The Wola do not measure a man's success by what he owns, but by the quantity and quality of the items which pass through his hands. The object is to encourage exchange, the system would come to an immediate halt if men collected and held on to wealth. The gain which men expect in return for their efforts in exchanges is the receipt of valuables which they can give away again, and they compete in this way because those who handle much wealth in many transactions achieve renown. Wola society rests upon the assumption that men are naturally avaricious, not for material gain but for the esteem of others, and it turns this to its advantage, and induces men to participate in exchanges to the best of their ability, by making it in the interests of their reputations to do so. In this way society ensures the behaviour of individuals serves to hold it together without overtly taking away any of their freedom. In some places (for example in the Hagen area, see Strathern 1971) the competitive aspect of exchange has come to the fore, especially since pacification by the Australian administration, but the large pot-

latch-like exchanges of these areas still serve the fundamental social purpose of bringing men together in a co-operative spirit, even if their giving has developed into large scale battles for prestige.

It is a little absurd that the ambitious men who excel in exchanges and serve society best are the ones who are motivated most highly by self-interest, and that uncontrolled, their self-interested drive would soon wreck society by prompting them to rush selfishly to grab the best for themselves. Quieter and less ambitious men, who are more sociable by nature, do not achieve renown but neither are they the men who would threaten society's existence by their rush for self-advantage. This is yet another manifestation of the fundamental social paradox posed by the conflict of interests between the individual and society, a paradox which is at the root of many social tensions and to which exchange is suited as a mediator by its dual aspects of sociability and competition.

The interest men have in maintaining their esteem is not the only issue which prompts them to meet their exchange obligations, although it is one of the most powerful forces which leads them to do so. Why men bother to reciprocate gifts is a problem which intrigued Mauss (1925), but his explanation, that some mystical force attaches to the gift and prompts repayment, does not apply to the Wola, who only temporarily own valuables as they pass in constant circulation through their hands, and which have no mystical power attached to them. Although individuals are not in a position to realise what an important integrative purpose exchange serves within their society, they are able to appreciate the sociable content of exchange on a personal level, and this prompts them to meet their exchange commitments. This aspect of wealth exchange is inherent to all human social interaction and it concerns effort and reward, but it is the obverse of the competitive situation and concerns not taking, but giving to maintain amicable relations. People withdraw from a relationship if there is nothing in it for them, and so a man who fails to meet his formal exchange obligations will find that the other party retires from the relationship. A man who behaves in this way cuts himself off from the society of others, and no sane person wishes to do this, except

perhaps in the one or two cases where people find each other incompatible.

One of the reasons why men who excel at valued activities achieve positions of influence, which allow them to exercise a marginal degree of control over the actions of others, also relates to this general premise of social exchange, that people expect to at least break even when they interact with others, so that some gain repays the effort which they put into any interaction sequence. The ability which *ol howma* have in the valued activity of formal wealth exchange means that in some social interactions they are in a better transacting position because they have something valuable to give, for which the other party is unable to make adequate repayment. This superior transacting position does not refer simply to the exchange of valuables, but to the added value which ability in this all-important activity gives to the behaviour of successful men in general terms, and which means they sometimes have more valuable behaviour to offer than other people when they interact with them. When this happens the inferior parties are obliged to concede higher status to the superior parties because this is the only way they can repay them and make it worth their while to expend effort in an exchange, and when they grant them esteem they give them some influence over their behaviour because men listen more closely to the advice of those for whom they have respect (see Blau 1964).

It is not possible to predict the influence which any man will have in a given situation because people hold different sets of values by which they judge the actions of others, so that what one man thinks reputable another may not regard very highly. Also people's values are in flux and they change their ideas through life. This makes it difficult to be precise about the effort and gain made by people when they interact, and hence there is no yardstick by which to measure the influence of any man. There is also the problem that a man's influence varies from one situation to another; for example the extent of his influence will depend very much on the number of men in any group who hold different ideas from his. The fact that the members of any society hold a large number of different values between them presents another problem because, while it is conceivable to construct a hierarchy of values with those held by the majority at the top, it is not easy to

rank unambiguously either one single item of behaviour or several pieces of behaviour. In one situation a man may behave according to high values and in another situation he may not, which means that while some men are superior in some respects, other men are superior in other respects. This confounds further any attempt to measure influence, which can only conclude that those men who struggle successfully to live up to the largest number of highest held values will achieve the highest renown because they have the largest amount of valuable behaviour to offer when they interact with others.

The fact that *ol howma* are *primus inter pares* poses a contradiction for Wola society. If the aim of this society is to give individuals as much freedom as possible while maintaining social order and co-operation, and all men have rights to equal amounts of freedom, then men who have influence over others threaten to diminish their freedom. It is a truism to say that men are different and that they excel at different things, but as pointed out one result of this is that those who are good at things valued by the majority will have the most to give and so achieve respect, and this makes them first among their peers and brings them influence. Wola society realises that inequality is inherent in any social situation and it does what it can to prevent a mushrooming effect. It isolates power out of individual reach, the position of *ol howma* is not hereditary, and it encourages men to act out of self-interest, in a way which feeds back and buttresses the social order, and not in an effort to exercise control over a group for political ends.

The Significance of Other Attributes

This discussion of how men achieve high status has so far considered only that criterion for renown which the Wola give: the ability of successful men to manage wealth in exchanges. The remainder of this chapter considers the significance of other qualities which, although the Wola do not consider them important, may play a part in helping men achieve and maintain positions of respect. These are attributes upon which achievement of high status in other Papua New Guinea societies depends, and they include age, descent from an *ol howma*, extent of agnatic attachment to place of residence, marriage to several women, the ability to orate, success as a warrior, ritual knowledge, and intangible

Name	Semgenk	Estimated age in years	Age classification			
			<i>Ol hunjiy</i>	<i>Ol hunjiy sha</i>	<i>Ol</i>	<i>Nais</i>
Kot	Huwlaiel	43			*	
Tensgay	Maenget	56	*			
Waenil	Wenja	35			*	
Em	Huwlaiel	42			*	
Pet	Kolomb	27			*	
Kayshya	Ind	32			*	
Kot	Mayka	39			*	
Saziy	Mayka	34			*	
E'row	Puwgael	50		*		
Hul	Kolomb	34			*	
Kelo	Ind	29			*	
Ongol	Ind	37			*	
Pel	Huwlaiel	58	*			
Korobol	Maenget	42			*	
Piyp	Puwgael	43			*	
Pis	Ind	30			*	
Pes	Mayka	29			*	
Hiyp	Maenget	27			*	
Unguwdiyp	Wenja	57	*			
Sal	Mayka	25			*	
Kobiyaeb	Huwlaiel	24				*
Shorluwk	Huwlaiel	31			*	
Pundiya	Maenget	52		*		
Ibnay	Mayka	57	*			
Hond	Kolomb	45			*	
Aegol	Kolomb	48		*		
Haebay	Kolomb	25			*	
Izuwm	Huwlaiel	23				*
Muwiib	Mayka	26			*	
Olnay	Wenja	29			*	
Kal	Wenja	28			*	
Lem	Huwlaiel	41			*	
Pes	Ind	24				*
Omonol	Kolomb	24				*
Mayja	Mayka	28			*	
Haegaes	Piywa	26				*
Puwn	Wenja	35			*	
Sorliy	Mayka	26			*	
Uwhay	Ind	24				*
Ton	Huwlaiel	26			*	
Kayshya	Wenja	37			*	
Maengalay	Kolomb	22				*
Naenainj	Huwlaiel	25			*	
Dul	Wenja	23				*
Waip	Wenja	39			*	
Kobiyaeb	Ind	23				*
Mom	Ind	25			*	
Kem	Maenget	64	*			
Non	Ind	61	*			
Haelop	Kolomb	60	*			
Tonaep	Kolomb	54	*			
Njep	Ind	54	*			
Kelay	Piywa	40			*	
Shong	Ind	39			*	
Duwaeb	Mayka	30			*	
Yogbal	Wenja	25			*	
Sol	Wenja	25			*	
Saendway	Maenget	23				*
Mondoloi	Ind	22				*
Nonay	Huwlaiel	22				*
Luwpaes	Kolomb	22				*
Muwiy	Wenja	22				*

Name	Semg ^{enk}	Estimated age in years	Age Classification			
			<i>Ol hunjiy</i>	<i>Ol hunjig sha</i>	<i>Ol</i>	<i>Nais</i>
Pes	Maenget	21				*
Kuwliy	Huwlael	20				*
Ar	Ind	19				*
Haendaep	Huwlael	19				*
Neleb	Wenja	19				*
Gogoda	Mayka	18				*
Kwaen	Piywa	17				*
Yaera	Ind	17				*
Saemoliy	Huwlael	17				*
Pebet	Huwlael	17				*
Waebay	Maenget	16				*
Duw	Ind	16				*
Kuwliy	Mayka	15				*
Tiz	Wenja	30(?)				

TABLE 9 The estimated ages and age classification of members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*(*)

* The material presented in table 9 was collected in two stages. The first stage was to ascertain from some older men the birth order of the resident members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*. The second stage was the estimation of men's ages during a census. A limited number of events were used as a rough guide for the estimation of ages; men were asked, for example, whether they could remember the first white men and, if so, who they were like in age at the time, or if they could not remember the first patrols, they were asked who they were like in age when the first planes landed at Nipa. There is a possibility of up to a ± 5 years error on the estimates. There is a question mark after Tiz's name because his physical appearance made reasonable estimation difficult.

psychological attributes such as charisma, diplomacy, ability to plan, industriousness, and intelligence.

Age is significant for the achievement of *ol howma* status, not because the Wola give recognition to age itself as a factor determining the standing of men, but because men have to reach maturity before they achieve the notable degree of success necessary to gain a position of high status. The Wola have no age grade organisation, and associated initiation sequence for young men, as reported for some people on the island of New Guinea.¹² Although they do not use age as a principle in the organisation of their society, the Wola do have categories based upon age, by which they classify people. In the case of men this classification is as follows: boys are *nais*, unmarried and married young men are

¹² For details of age grade organisation in New Guinea see Wirz (1922) on the Marind-anim people of the coastal swamps, Koch (1974) on the Jalé people of the Snow mountains, and Read (1952) and Berndt (1962) on people of the Eastern Highlands.

nais onda (lit: boys big), mature men are *ol*, and old men are *ol hunjiy* (lit: man old). The age of someone can be specified more accurately by the addition of comparative markers to these words, for example *ol hunjiy da* (lit: man old very) is a very old man. This classification system is relative and depends upon the age of the speaker; an old man may refer to a mature man as *nais* while a young man may refer to the same person as an ageing man *ol hunjiy sha* (lit: man oldish).

By comparing the estimated age, and age category, of members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* with their status, table 9 shows how significant age is for the achievement of *ol howma* status. It shows that the majority of men of this status are mature persons over the age of thirty, although there are some exceptions which result from the continual review of a man's status by others, who judge him on his current exchange performances. People placed some younger men (for example Kolomb Pet and to a lesser extent Ind Kelo) higher in the opinion poll than their record in wealth exchanges merits¹³ because of the promise which they show in exchanges which, although not up to a consistently high standard yet, indicates that they will be the established *ol howma* of the next generation. This works in reverse for older men (for example Huwlael Pel and Mayka Ibnay), some of whom people allocate a lower status than their exchange record merits because, although they were successful earlier in their lives, they take part in fewer exchanges as age creeps on and their present day performances are only shadows of their former selves. This present day basis of status shows that it is current exchanges, not past glories, which concern the Wola—it is giving and taking now which constitutes society, what happened yesterday is history. It also shows how Wola society makes the renown of *ol howma* insecure and so reduces the basis for the growth of power. So while age is significant for the achievement of high status, it is middle age, not younger or old age, which produces successful men because the young and old are usually unable to keep up the consistently high

¹³ See figure 44 which shows the total amounts of wealth handled by members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* during their lives (a later chapter discusses in detail the data in this figure)—the reader will find it useful to refer to this figure when this chapter makes other comments about the status of men from this area.

record in wealth transactions which is necessary to maintain a position of renown.

Although the position of *ol howma* is not hereditary, it is possible that descent from an *ol howma* increases a person's chances of achieving this status. The child of an *ol howma* may be in a position to learn from his father some of the tactics which help a man to achieve success (such as how to invest wealth, the ways of achieving an optimum distribution of wealth etc.).¹⁴ But if a boy does not have the inborn ability to achieve success this slight advantage will be of no value to him. The son of a man of renown may wish to emulate his father and have this as an incentive to achieve success, but his father will not methodically instruct him on the handling of wealth nor will he actively help him by giving him many items of wealth gratis to start him off in the exchange network.¹⁵ Any advantage which may accrue to the son of an *ol howma* he must support with an ability which would carry him to high status regardless of his father's position. Descent from an *ol howma* simply gives the talented a push off into the system, but it does not guarantee success and does not give a permanent advantage over other men.

A possible advantage to the sons of *ol howma* is the inheritance (*moi may*; lit: inherit take) of their father's property when he dies. In practice the advantages are negligible. If a former man of renown lives to an old age he will have effectively dropped out competitively from the exchange network and will handle only small amounts of wealth, in which case there will be little of value to inherit. Even if an *ol howma* dies in the prime of his life, his sons will still inherit little tangible wealth because of the nature of the exchange system. It is a *sine qua non* of the argument developed in this book that the sociological significance of exchange means men do not hoard wealth, but give it away, so when a man dies, he is unlikely to leave much ready wealth unless he was accu-

¹⁴ Although the communal nature of life in a men's house means that the sons of other men may also benefit from hearing this advice.

¹⁵ See Strathern (1971: 211) where he states that the transmission of wealth *inter vivos* from a big-man to his sons is important in Melpa society. Strathern's study of big-man status achievement in Melpa society suggests that descent from a big-man is more important in that society than for the Wola—although he stresses that a big-man father does not guarantee success.

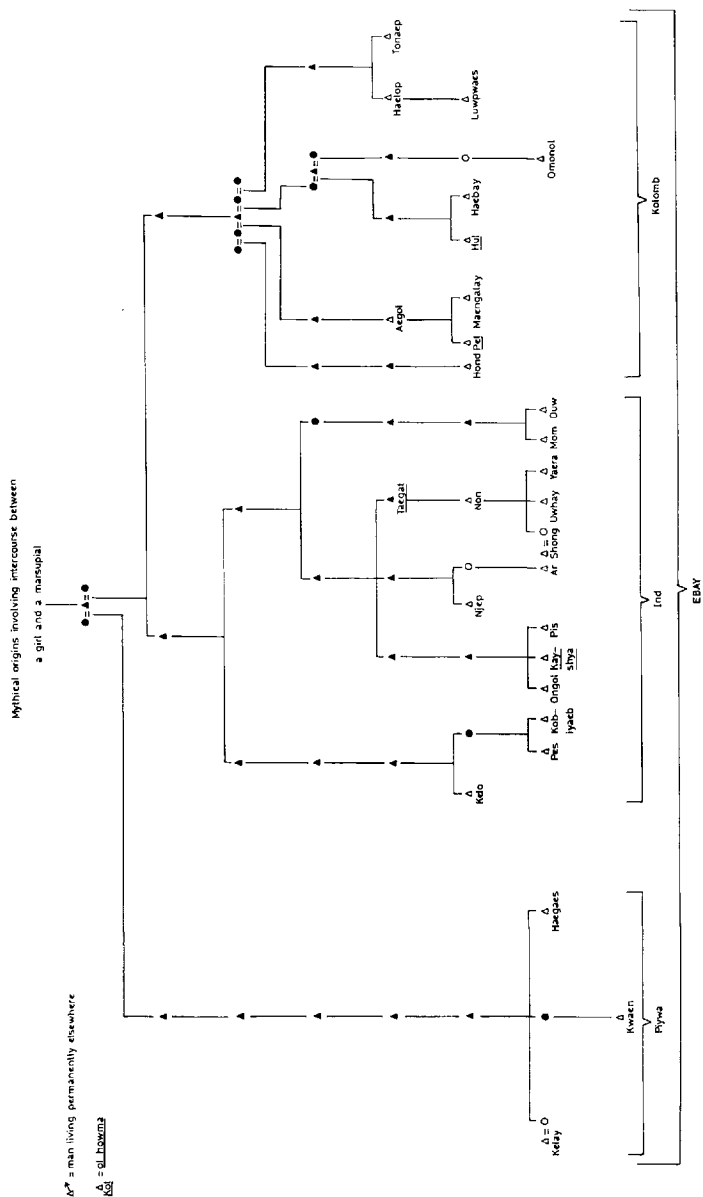


FIG. 7 Skeleton genealogies of Aenda and Ebay semonda*

See note p. 130

mulating it to make an exchange. If this is the case then the deceased's son or other close relatives are obliged to accept responsibility for the transaction and see it through, and they are unlikely to gain any extra wealth in the long run because if their father was a man of renown he will have skilfully balanced the wealth owed to him against the wealth he had to pay out because this is the way to participate to the fullest extent in the exchange system. It is even possible that the sons of an *ol howma* will make a loss on the inherited transactions if they are not as capable managers of wealth as their father was.

If a man is aiming to achieve renown he may find any successful relative, besides his father, an advantage, because he may look to a successful brother, cousin or uncle for inspiration and advice. The genealogical material presented in figure 7 shows there is no consistent pattern of *ol howma* begetting *ol howma* or successful relatives encouraging one another. The pattern is random. The two men of highest renown (Huwlael Kot and Maenget Tensgay) are the sons of average men who died when they were boys and neither man has close relatives of high status who may have been of help to them in their climb to success. An *ol howma* may have a son who achieves renown (for example Boiz, the son of Huwlael Wa'nda, who lives at Aengariya) but for every son who makes the grade he will have several who remain average status (Wa'nda had a total of seven sons of whom only his eldest son, Boiz, achieved renown). The six sons of Wenja Waebis show that it is not necessarily the eldest son of an *ol howma* who achieves success. It is his third surviving son Waenil who has made the grade, and he was only adolescent when Waebis died and too young to benefit directly from his father's advice. Waenil also shows that a close relative who is of particularly low status, for example his younger

* The men shown on these genealogies are the residents of the Haelaelinja area, their dead relatives, and their relatives currently living elsewhere, who are *ol howma* status. The status of dead men, and of relatives living elsewhere, was ascertained by questioning their relatives at Haelaelinja (whose opinions were supported by the increased occurrence of the names of men they thought were *ol howma* status in the case histories of exchange transactions). The status of dead men and men living elsewhere is higher than some of the resident men who are marked as *ol howma* because people only remember exceptionally able men (in the case of resident men an arbitrary line is drawn between Kolomb Hul and Ind Kelo (see figure 6) to delineate *ol howma*).

brother is of the lowest standing in the area, does not reflect badly upon a man's status. There is also no satisfactory evidence that a successful brother augurs well for a man. Mayka Sazi, for example, had an elder half-brother who was a respected *ol howma* until he was struck down by sorcery in the prime of his life, but other than securing one of Wolow's wives for a reduced bridewealth, it is difficult to see how it helped Sazi to have had a successful brother.

The genealogies indicate that relations with *ol howma* make little practical difference in the long run whether a man achieves renown or not. In the community studied in detail four living *ol howma* had close relatives of high status (but in comparison seven *ol howma* had a total of twenty-three average sons) and nine living *ol howma* were without successful close relatives. In fact it is possible that a successful close relative may deter a man from achieving renown because the self-interested drive and ability of a successful man may result in him taking upon himself some of the exchange obligations which fall to his relatives.

In view of the earlier discussion of Wola social organisation it is not surprising that, unlike some Highland people who attach importance to agnatic descent,¹⁶ the Wola say that the strength of a man's agnatic attachment to his place of residence in no way influences his chances of achieving *ol howma* status. This assertion is in line with the practical meaning of descent for the Wola who, although they have a preference for residence at the place of their father, do not discriminate in any way against men who decide to claim land rights through another relative and reside elsewhere.

The skeleton genealogies of figure 7 give an indication of the empirical significance of a man's agnatic attachment to his place of residence for his achievement of renown. There are nineteen men of *ol howma* status shown on the genealogies and of these only eight men have undisputed agnatic connections to their place of residence. The residential qualifications of the remaining eleven men vary from those with *de facto* agnatic connections to those with no agnatic connections to their place of residence. Both Huwlael Em and Wenja Waenil, for example, are members of

¹⁶ Notably the Enga according to Meggitt (1965).

aysha semgēnk (attached to Aenda *semonda* by female links sometime in the past) but as individuals they are *mausha* or *de facto* agnatic residents at their place of residence. Several men have a female link in their pedigree only two generations back (including Boiz who resides at the place of his father's mother), and four of these men (five including Wa'nda who as an individual was *mausha* status at Haelaelinja) have changed their place of residence at least once during their lifetimes. For example Puw-gael Laendis resides at Naenk (the place of his mother) and E'row has recently returned to Haelaelinja from there (where he claimed land through Laendis's mother (his FBW)), and Wenja Ongonol has recently left Haelaelinja to return to Sezinda (the place of his father's father). Wenja Waebis and Huwlael Wa'nda both led migratory lives maintaining houses and gardens in two places at one time (Waebis migrated to Porsera (his father's father's place) and Wa'nda migrated to Aengariya (his mother's place)). The man of highest renown in the Haelaelinja area today has no agnatic connections to his place of residence. When his father (a member of Laerop *semonda*) died, Kot's mother remarried a Huwlael man and brought her son with her to Haelaelinja where he has continued to reside ever since.

The continuity of a man's agnatic connection to the place where he resides may not be a factor influencing his chances of achieving success, but the continuity of his residence there is a significant factor. A man has a wide choice of places where he may reside because he can claim land and residence rights at any place where he can trace male or female connections and has actively maintained social relations. The result is that several men do not reside all their lives in one place. Some men move permanently from one place to another while others maintain two houses and gardens in two places at the same time and migrate alternately from one place to the other every few months. Men who permanently move their place of residence may temporarily reduce their status, not because they have moved but because they have moved to a place where their status is less well known to men outside their circle of relatives. A man who leads a migratory pattern of life, however, unless he is a man of outstanding ability, may permanently reduce his status to a lower position than his ability to handle wealth merits. The reason for this is that these men cannot participate

effectively, at both their places of residence, in all the exchanges which concern them. Although their relatives at both places are aware of their ability and are involved to some extent in the exchanges made by these migrant men (regardless of the place where the transactions occur), other men see only those exchanges which occur at their place of residence and therefore they form their opinions about the man on the basis of only some of his transactions. In effect, a man who leads a migratory life ties one arm behind his back when competing for status against men who devote themselves full-time to this end at one place.

Some of the men who reside, or have connections, at Haelaelinja illustrate the effects which changing residence may have on the reputation of a man. Wenja Ongonol, for example, is a man of renown who has moved permanently away from Haelaelinja and he secured fewer votes in the opinion poll than his ability deserves (9 votes as *ol howma onda*, 18 votes as *ol howma* and 5 votes as *ol howma sha*). Puwgael Laendis is another man who has moved permanently away from Haelaelinja but he has outstanding ability to manage wealth and in spite of his move he gained enough votes in the opinion poll (65 votes as *ol howma onda*, 21 votes as *ol howma* and 2 votes as *ol howma sha*) to put him in the top six. E'row (Laendis's FBS) has recently returned to live permanently at Haelaelinja and his absence is a factor which probably influenced the number of votes he received in the poll. Other men who have changed their place of residence—Wenja Waip (from Obael his father's place), Piywa Kelay (from Ya his father's place) and Wenja Kayshya (who lives at his wife's place Hombila, which is near enough for him to remain permanently within the social orbit of Haelaelinja)¹⁷—are men of average status.

Wenja Waebis and Huwlael Wa'nda were two men who excelled in the exchange of wealth and were able to lead migratory lives between two places without detracting from their reputations. In the case of lesser men the indication is that migration reduces their

¹⁷ There is an indication that men (for example Piywa Kelay, Ind Shong, Wenja Waip and Wenja Kayshya) who reside at their wives' place are invariably men of mediocre status. This is possibly a reflection of the fact that residence at his wife's place is ideologically the least attractive residential alternative for a Wola man. It also always entails a change of residence, which results in at least a temporary loss of status.

status. Mayka Ibnay, for example, has handled a considerable amount of wealth during the course of his life, but he adds to the handicap of old age by leading a migratory life between Haelaelinja and Augiyba (the place of his agnatic ancestors where he spends most of his time) and as a result he has a poor reputation. The status of Maenget Korobol is also lower in the Haelaelinja area than his ability to manage wealth deserves because he migrates between there and Sebiba (the place of his agnatic ancestors). Other men who lead a migratory life—Ind Shong (who migrates to Makowpa, the place of his agnatic ancestors), Wenja Unguwdiyp and Wenja Yogbal (who migrate to Porsera, the place of their agnatic ancestors)—are all men of average status.

This chapter touched earlier upon the dual boost which wives may give to the efforts of their husbands to achieve success, by stimulating both production and exchange. There is a marked tendency for *ol howma* to have more wives than other men; for example the ten men of highest status in the Haelaelinja area have a total of eighteen wives between them (1.8 each), the next forty-eight men have a total of forty-nine wives between them (1.02 each), and the bottom eighteen men are, with the exception of two, unmarried (0.11 each). While extra womenfolk increase the labour at the disposal of a man,¹⁸ and increase the potential number of pigs which he can support, his reputation depends, not upon the production, but upon the exchange of wealth. The fact that a man must first pay bridewealth for a wife indicates the primacy of exchange. And the payment of bridewealth is not the only expense which marriage entails because once married, a man is obliged to maintain amicable relations with his affines and this means periodic exchanges of wealth—so the more wives a man has the more exchanges he has to cope with as a result of his larger network of affinal relations. The productive increase which comes to a man with several wives depends therefore, in the first place, upon his ability to handle wealth; marriage serves to reinforce productively an ability to handle wealth which is already present.¹⁹

¹⁸ This does not mean only wives. Any adult female who lives in a man's household increases his labour force, be she his mother, sister or daughter (for example Wenja Waenil is an *ol howma* with only one wife, but he also had his mother and his wife's mother in the household).

¹⁹ For comments on the part played by women in the *moka* exchanges of Hagen

In some of the acephalous societies of Papua New Guinea people value oratorical ability because it gives some direction to their actions and they specify an ability to orate as a requirement for success.²⁰ But unlike these people, the Wola do not think an ability to make speeches is necessary for a man to achieve the status of *ol howma*. When speaking to several people, men do not adopt a special style of speaking larded with figurative references, to enhance their oration. Exchanges are not occasions when men address large numbers of people. In fact the reverse is the case because men conduct in private the negotiations which accompany an exchange, and once they reach an agreement they distribute the valuables quickly and in relative silence (unless there is a dispute over the distribution). The only exchange where a man tries to make his voice heard above everyone else is during the distribution of pork at a pig kill and this requires large lungs, not oratorical skill, to bellow out the names of relatives to come and take their pork. In a dispute a man may be at a disadvantage if he is unable to put his case vociferously, but to accomplish this he does not need oratorical skill (see chapter 3).

In some Highland societies the people expect successful men to excel in war as fearless warriors,²¹ but the Wola deny that a man requires outstanding ability as a warrior to achieve success. Battles and ambushes in Wola wars are muddled and hectic encounters where men are as concerned to emerge unscathed as they are to kill a member of the enemy side, and such confused military engagements are not conducive to notable acts of martial skill (see chapter 3). The Wola do not expect heroics or ruthless cunning and men do not admire those who risk their necks, but think such behaviour is foolhardy. Men do not lionise those who

society see Strathern 1972: 150-2.

²⁰ For example the Kuma (see Reay 1959) and the Melpa (see Strathern 1971).

²¹ This is so for some societies in the Eastern Highlands (see Berndt 1962; Watson 1971; Langness 1971) and for the Bokondini Dani (see Ploeg 1969). If the explanation of war given in this book applies to these societies also, then the reason why these people value warriorhood and give high status to men of outstanding martial ability is because war is the ultimate defence of the sovereignty of the individual, and absurd as it first appears, these men might develop into so-called despots because, while their behaviour is sometimes bad, they are on balance social assets whose fighting abilities stand for the way society prevents individuals from gaining real power.

Name	No. wars member of <i>saend tay seng'ek</i>	No. wars as <i>moraeret</i> ally	No. wars as <i>saend pack</i> ally	Total no. wars fought in	No. wounds sustained as		No. men killed as	
					<i>Saend tay</i>	<i>Moraeret</i>	<i>Saend tay</i>	<i>Moraeret</i>
Ton		2	1	3		4		1
Kayshya								
Maengalay								
Naenainj								
Dul			1	2				1
Waip		1						
Kobiyaeb			1	1				
Mom			1	4				
Kem		2	1	3				
Non	1	3		3		3		2
Haelop		4	1	5		1		1
Tonaep		2	2	4				
Njep		2		2		5		
Kelay		2		2				
Shong		1	2	3				
Duwaeb		1		1				
Yogbal		1		1				
Sol								
Saendway								
Mondolol								
Nonay								
Luwpwaes								
Muwi								
Pes								
Kuwljy								
Ar								
Haendaep								
Nelch								
Gogoda								
Kwaen								
Yaera								
Saemolij								
Pebet								
Waebay								
Duw								
Kuwljy								
Tiz								

TABLE 10 Men's war records *

See note p. 138

kill—in fact the orderless nature of military encounters often means that it is not clear who is responsible for a death, and the ineffectiveness of weapons increases the problems of attributing deaths to particular warriors because fatalities are not always immediate, but follow a few days later when infection sets into the wound.

Table 10 records the number of wars in which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have fought, the number of wounds they have suffered in these wars, and the number of men they have killed. The table shows no noticeable trend for men of renown to fight in more wars than average. The number of wars in which a man has participated depends largely upon his age. Also, it is the number of wars in which a man has fought as a *saend paek* ally which increases his figure above average, and the number of times a man fights as a *saend paek* ally depends upon how often his relatives living elsewhere are directly involved in a war. The number of wounds a man has suffered may be taken as an indication of the earnestness with which he participated in military encounters because men in the thick of a fray are more likely to suffer wounds. The number of enemies a man has killed, or had a hand in killing, is also an indication of the singlemindedness with which he fought in wars. The table does not reveal any clear trend for *ol howma* either to suffer noticeably more wounds, or to kill more men than average. Any tendency in this direction may be interpreted as an indication of the more active role these men take in any activity and their above average intelligence (to be able to outwit the enemy and kill them).

Although the Wola expect a man to support his relatives in war, this social obligation does not mean that a man has to prove himself on the battlefield as a successful warrior. Perhaps it may be argued that intelligent men are more likely to avoid dangerous situations

* The material presented in table 10 was collected by asking members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* for details of the wars in which they had fought, the number of wounds they had suffered in these wars (the scars of which were invariably counted for my benefit), and the number of men they had killed in various engagements. The figures given in the final three columns relating to men killed do not mean that each man has killed that many men on his own because often several men fire an arrow into an enemy and they all claim that they killed him.

which demand courage—to do so would not reflect poorly upon their reputations.

In some Highland societies the people say that ritual knowledge is required of men who aspire to positions of high status.²² This is not so in Wola society. The majority of offerings and rituals which a man is obliged to perform during his lifetime are within his capabilities to manage entirely on his own. All men know the format for rituals and it is only a few ritual incantations (*namonk*) which some men know to the exclusion of others. Some of these specialised *namonk* are in regular demand (for example to divine the reason for sickness or to incapacitate an ancestral spirit, which has killed someone, in the ritual following death) by different members of a *semonda* and there are one or two men in each group who know them. If these men are not closely related to the persons on whose behalf they perform the ritual, they receive a small payment (usually pork from the offered pig) for saying the *namonk*. Although the men who know these ritual incantations (which they inherit from close relatives) may be men of renown their knowledge does not contribute in any way to their high status. The two men who know these *namonk* in the Haelaelinja area (Maenget Pundiya and Wenja Holay)²³ are not men of *ol howma* status.

Few men know the ritual incantations for the infrequent, large rituals which occur in Wola society (see chapter 4), and the Wola say that, like the men who know the more frequently used *namonk*, they are not necessarily men of renown. It is unlikely that the larger payments received for the services of men who know these *namonk* make it an appealing specialisation for *ol howma* because the rituals occur infrequently and anyway it is for handling wealth in exchanges, not receiving it in payments, that men achieve high reputations. Also, the small number of men who know these ritual incantations precludes their knowledge as a requirement for *ol howma* status because the number of successful men far exceeds the number of men who know these *namonk*.

²² For example the Maring people of the Jimi valley (see Rappaport 1967; Lowman-Vayda 1971).

²³ Holay died five months after we arrived at Haelaelinja and he is not included in the tables which appear in this book because the collection of his personal exchange history was not completed before his death. However, he certainly was not considered a man of *ol howma* status.

The only other *namonk* of which knowledge is limited are those used in sorcery. Any man who desires to take supernatural revenge for the death of a relative may practise sorcery, and ability in this black art is not related to a man's status (the only men in the Haelaelinja area who have to my knowledge practised sorcery are Mayka Kot, Mayka Sazi and Ind Pis). In one variety of sorcery (*wok toiz*; lit: type of tree *toiz*) a man may purchase from another man the *namonk* and knowledge of the procedure for the ritual. Once he has done this, he may in turn sell his knowledge to anyone who asks.²⁴ Only a few Huli men know the other type of sorcery (*hul tort*; lit: Huli *tort*) and they will not sell their knowledge to Wola men, although they will perform the ritual on their behalf for a fee.

There are psychological factors which are undoubtedly important in determining which men achieve the status of *ol howma* in Wola society. No rigorous psychological tests were made to substantiate the subjective observations made here, which I offer tentatively as impressions. The first impression which strikes the outsider is that there are basically two types of men in Wola society. There are those men who try to participate in the exchange system beyond the level of their minimal social obligations, and these men achieve success according to their ability to handle wealth. Other men only fulfil their minimal social obligations to exchange wealth on specific occasions and do not apparently wish to compete for renown.

The men who participate in exchanges beyond their minimal social obligations are potential *ol howma* because they have the ambition to achieve high status. A man's energy and drive are two other important factors which influence his success because as the number of exchanges in which he participates increases his activities become more complex and time consuming. In order to cope with the increased number of transactions which are necessary to achieve *ol howma* status a man also requires intelligence above the average to calculate his investments and assess his best moves in the light of changing situations. In order to do this with

²⁴ Everything associated with sorcery is done in absolute secrecy. There is no open market on *namonk* and it is not easy to buy or to sell them without familiar knowledge of the other party.

success a man needs the ability to see ahead and plan his moves so that his exchanges dovetail one into the other, because if he takes on more exchange obligations than he can manage and defaults in his payments his reputation will suffer. Success in exchanges also requires a man to have tenacity of purpose to attend exchanges where he stands to receive wealth, and to pursue men who owe him wealth and continually badger them to keep their end up. It is an advantage for a man seeking success to have a cunning and shrewd disposition which will help him to persuade other men to act to his advantage in exchanges. Skill at bargaining and a dash of ruthlessness are additional characteristics which make a man's persuasion more effective.

Successful men give a disconcerting general impression because they appear always to have their eye on furthering their position. Their wily ways are not relaxing, and they bargain and haggle over any transaction,²⁵ and apparently enjoy the mental tussle and argument which accompanies their constant attempts to better their chances in any exchange. This avaricious streak shows how self-interest motivates these men, and it is highlighted by the way their society capitalises upon their selfishness and plays upon the competitive aspect of exchange to encourage their wholehearted participation for the ultimate benefit of all. Men who are not so ambitious make more pleasant companions because it is possible to relax in their company without fear of them bringing up some contentious issue to do with wealth and exchanges. The impression given to the outsider is that these easier-going men do not appear to have the need to achieve success in wealth exchanges or to gain respect in this way in the eyes of their contemporaries.

²⁵ As a personal note, I found dealing with these men uncomfortable and the purchase of artifacts from them (for the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology) was always difficult.

6

Wealth

There have been repeated references throughout this book to the importance of wealth in Wola life, and before looking in detail at the exchanges in which people handle these items this chapter describes them. It tells how the Wola judge the value of wealth, and shows that they do not do this according to economic criteria but according to the social value of these items, which through exchange transactions serve as the medium that maintains social relations. A review of the rituals which the Wola believe help a man to achieve success and exchange larger amounts of wealth supports the argument that value is not an economic but a social matter.

The Valuables

The Wola exchange several items of wealth with one another, and table 11 lists them and indicates their relative value. Some men place pearl shells above pigs as the most valued item of wealth and other men place pigs above pearl shells,¹ but all men agree they value pearl shells and pigs above all other items of wealth.

The Wola cut *mowmaek* (lit: pearl shell) to a crescent shape and suspend them by the horns with a woven band of string called a *minyaeb*. Men value pearl shells for their size and thickness. Also very important is the colour of the outside skin (*shongol*; lit: skin) of the shell. The Wola like a red colour and enhance this effect by rubbing the shell with red ochre (*dind hat*; lit: paint red); the pearl surface inside the shell (*kago*; lit: pearl surface) is not important in the evaluation of a shell (for example when men display shells they show only the reddish outside skin). When valuing a shell men also take the symmetry of the crescent into consideration; they prefer a shell which has symmetrical horns (*ombow ebay*; lit: horns good) to a shell of the same size which is not symmetrical across

¹ This preference can be seen in exchanges where men who prefer pearl shells tend to concentrate on the exchange of shells whereas men who prefer pigs exchange more pigs than average.

the horns (*ombow kor*; lit: horns bad). If a shell is good, wormholes do not detract to any serious extent from its value.²

The Wola distinguish as follows between different kinds of pearl shell. Some very fine pearl shells they give names, and they call these *mowmaek hul* (lit: pearl shell bone—that is strong and everlasting shells) but unlike other shells men do not constantly use them in exchanges. The owners of these shells keep them hidden away. In a society where the mark of a successful man is to manage (not store) large amounts of wealth it is ironical that the owners of the most valued shells rarely give them away. A possible explanation is that a man who can afford to own a very valuable shell and not use it is demonstrating his ability to manage wealth³ (nobody ever suggested this to me and any man, not only a successful man, may own a *mowmaek hul*).⁴ If men do hold on to very valuable shells to advertise their ability, then this tendency towards hoarding threatens the continuation of the exchange system. In fact this is not so because the number of shells hoarded is very small, and so long as most valuables remain in circulation and so serve to maintain social cohesion it does not matter if some men hoard a few highly valued objects as symbols of their success.

The Australian administration has introduced some very large

² For comparison see Strathern (1971: 235-40) for an account of the way the Melpa evaluate their shells. The symbolism of a pearl shell, and other valuables, interested me, but no Wola ever ventured an exegesis. It is intriguing to ask, for example, why they cut the muscle mark of the mollusc from the shell and make it crescent-shaped, or why they favour a red colour. It is too easy for an anthropologist to offer an imaginative explanation, and all I know is that colour for the Wola is polysemous (see Bulmer 1968; Gell 1975: 308-20; Strathern and Strathern 1971: 152-70 on this point) and that in different contexts red evokes different meanings (an obvious example is red the colour of blood, the poisonous female emission at menstruation, a context which makes it a frightening colour, compared to red the colour of highly valued pearl shells, a context which makes it a favourable colour).

³ When a Hagen big-man holds on to a very valuable shell he is reminding others of his ability to attract wealth to himself and his central position in the flow of wealth (A. M. Strathern pers. comm.).

⁴ There were four *mowmaek hul* in the possession of men at Haelaelinja. Maenget Tensgay has one called *kutuwbæmuw* which he received some years ago from a man in repayment for a debt. Puwgael E'row has one called *tuwl* which he inherited from his father. Maenget Korobol has one called *mokaib* which he received from his FBD bridewealth. Mayka Sazyi had one called *piliyzyi* which he received from Maenget Kem to open a reparation payment for his FFZSS and which he contributed to his younger brother's bridewealth.

Common English terms	Wola terms	Scientific terms	Frequency used in exchanges	Approximate value in Aust. dollars	Ratio showing frequency used in exchanges
<i>Shells</i> Gold-lip pearl shell	<i>mowmaek</i> or <i>seket</i>	<i>Pinctada margaritifera</i> Lightfoot	Often	\$5 to \$40	100
Cowrie shell	<i>Taenijel</i> or <i>maengertiyel</i>	<i>Cypraea moneta</i> L.	Sometimes but diminishing	50c to \$1	10.607
Bailer or white-gum shell	<i>Pagawel</i>	<i>Cypraea annulus</i> L.	Rare	\$2 to \$5	0
Nassa or basket shell	<i>Tom showeb</i> or <i>takpuw</i> (headband)	<i>Cymbrium melo</i> <i>Nassarius</i> sp.	Rare	\$1	0
<i>Pigs</i>	<i>Showmay</i> or <i>Tazh</i>	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Often	\$4 to \$50	22.2
<i>Cassowary</i> Dwarf cassowary	<i>Shiyort</i> <i>Shiyort maenget</i> or <i>shiyort pebayaem</i> <i>Shiyort maywem</i> <i>Shiyort tinez</i> <i>Shiyort baktok</i>	<i>Casuarius bennetti</i>	Uncommon	\$20 to \$100 (inflated value due to demand created by new pig kill cycle)	0.052
<i>Bird plumes</i> King of Saxony bird of paradise Raggiana bird of paradise Greater bird of paradise Cassowary	<i>Shor-iri</i> <i>Ngalop</i> <i>Hung</i> (orange tail) <i>Wemb</i> (yellow tail) <i>Maywem, tinez, baktok</i> and <i>ketmuwn</i> (depends colour/size) <i>Kuwla kuwla</i>	<i>Pteridophora alberti</i> <i>Paradisaea raggiana</i> <i>Paradisaea apoda</i> Ditto above <i>Epimachus fastuosus</i>	Rare Rare Uncommon Rare	\$4 (pair) \$2 \$1 to \$20	0 0.013 0.21 0
Black sickle-billed B.O.P.					
<i>Marsupials</i> Long beaked echidna Doria's tree kangaroo Spotted cuscus Ground cuscus Mountain cuscus Wallaby Copper ringtail possum	<i>Sab</i> <i>Boray</i> or <i>timil</i> <i>Porzuw</i> or <i>waesaenda</i> <i>Obay</i> <i>Hungnaip</i> or <i>naioip</i> <i>Yaelyp</i> or <i>shep</i> <i>Maepuwn</i> or <i>hayael</i> <i>Tuenay</i>	<i>Zaglossus bruijni</i> <i>Dendrolagus dorianus</i> <i>Phalanger maculatus</i> <i>Phalanger gymnotis</i> <i>Phalanger vestitus</i> <i>Thylagale bruijni</i> <i>Pseudocheirus cupreus</i>	Rare Uncommon Rare Uncommon Uncommon Uncommon Uncommon	\$24 \$20 \$10 \$2 \$2 \$3 to \$7 \$1	0.144 (id)

Common English terms	Wola terms	Scientific terms	Frequency used in exchanges	Approximate value in Aust. dollars	Ratio showing frequency used in exchanges
Axes	<i>Kwiy</i>	Volcanic tuff.	Obsolete—previously uncommon		0.105
Stone work axes	<i>Kwiy shomael</i>		Uncommon	\$5 to \$10	
Ornamental stone axes	<i>Kwiy shong</i>	Metamorphosed basalt	Obsolete—prior to unlimited supply uncommon	\$2 to \$4 (store prices)	0.367
Steel axes	<i>Kwiy kagep</i>	or greywacke			
<i>Body oil</i>	<i>Wombok</i>		Sometimes	\$10 to \$20	1.609
Bamboo tube of oil	<i>Wombok uwuw</i>	Oil from <i>Campno-sperma brevipetiolata</i>	Sometimes	\$2	
Gourd of oil	<i>Wombok pay</i>				
<i>Food</i>	<i>Nay</i>	Sodium chloride content=69.9%	Sometimes (esp. 1st mortuary exchange) but diminishing	\$1 to \$2	4.063
Bundle of salt	<i>Eb kuwmb</i>		Often	10c up to \$20 for large side	26.2 (id)
Pork	<i>Showmay munday</i>		Usually courting exchanges	\$1 (whole bunch)	(id)
Bananas	<i>Diya or ebel</i> (3 varieties)	<i>Musa hort</i> var.	Uncommon	10c (6 dry leaves)	
Tobacco	<i>Miyi</i> (6 varieties)	<i>Nicotina tabacum</i>	Uncommon	\$2 (whole nut)	
Pandanus nuts	<i>Ank</i> (48 varieties)	<i>Pandanus</i> spp.	Uncommon		
<i>Money</i>	<i>Moni</i>	Australian Dollar	Sometimes—increasing in use		4.74
<i>Miscellaneous small items</i>					
Small shell pieces (eg. pearl shell, green snail?)	<i>Mowmaek pogay</i>	<i>Turbo marmortus</i> L.	Obsolete—previously valued and used in exchanges (see Hides 1936:114). Today only worn as decoration.		0
Less valuable feathers (eg. Macgregors gardener, Superb B.O.P.)	<i>Hombay Hegen</i>	<i>Amblyornis macgregoriae</i>	Rare	10c to \$1	0
Kutubu bows	<i>Shondol waeb</i>	<i>Lophorhina superba</i>	Rare	\$2	0.039
Marsupial teeth ornaments	<i>Oliyaen hiyma</i>	<i>Caryota</i> spp. (?)	Rare	50c	0
		Teeth of <i>Dacrylopsila trivirgata</i>			

TABLE 11 Items of wealth and their relative value*

See note p. 146

pearl shells into the Wola area as payment for food and labour. Few of these shells have names but they are distinguished from other shells by the term *mowmaek wesaembow* (lit: pearl shell head—that is the top shells). Ordinary shells, which make up the bulk of the shells exchanged, are called *mowmaek paengay* (lit: pearl shell hear—that is shells heard of in exchanges often (?)). Men repair broken shells by sticking pieces of stick on the rear with tree resin called *maen paenjaj* (lit: *maen* sap)⁵ and they call a repaired shell *mowmaek doborgay* (lit: pearl shell broken), but so long as these shells are not too badly broken they retain their original value. Men no longer exchange small pearl shells or pieces of shell (as they did before the Australians increased the supply—see Hides 1936), but people wear them around the neck as decoration (*mowmaek ma wiy*; lit: pearl shell neck is). The Wola

⁵ The *maen* tree is the hoop-pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii* Sweet).

* For help with the identification of items listed in table 11 I am grateful to the following people: for the identification of marsupials and birds Mr Graeme George, Superintendent of the Wildlife Sanctuary at the Baiyer River, Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea; for the identification of conchological specimens to Dr Martin Bishop of Cambridge University Zoological Museum; for sectioning and identifying the stone used for axes Dr Barrie Rickards of Cambridge University Geology Department; and for help with the identification of botanical material to the Department of Forests at Lae, Papua New Guinea. The sodium chloride content of salt is taken from Meggitt (1958) whose list of constituents for salt comes from an analysis made on behalf of Elkin. I tentatively include green snail shell (*Turbo marmoratus*) because I think there are a few small pieces of this shell in the Wola area (I obtained no specimen) which people wear around their necks but do not distinguish from pieces of pearl shell.

The approximate values given for items in Australian dollars are based upon trade transactions of which I knew, but the actual value of any item can vary considerably in trade and is influenced by situational factors such as: how anxious the buyer is to secure the item or the seller to dispose of it, the relation between both parties to the transaction, the current supply of alternatives, the number of other buyers or sellers etc. The ratio in the frequency column was calculated (from material collected for 1,019 exchange transactions) as follows: the total number of valuables used in the exchanges were added up and the largest number (which was 7,580 pearl shells) was given a value of 100; the totals for the other items of wealth were then converted into ratios of 100. (id) means incomplete data on the exchanges where people normally give these items of wealth. The pork total is calculated according to sides of pork (1 side = 1 valuable, even though the meat may have been distributed in smaller cuts) given in exchanges (especially the first reparation payment), pig kills and funeral payments (*ol hombera*). The pigs killed on the other occasions (for example offerings to ancestors in time of sickness) are not included in this figure because although men distribute the pork from these pigs they are not strictly speaking, exchanges.

show the value they attach to pearl shells by the careful way they pack them away when they are not on display. Firstly they wrap the shell in moss called *kwimb*, and then in the clothlike nest made by a caterpillar called *wemb*. Next they place the shell in an envelope made from the leaves which wrap around the nut of a pandanus and called *mowmaek kaeris* (lit: pearl shell envelope) and finally they bind this package tightly with string.⁶

The Wola value pigs according to their size. They classify them according to the colour of their hair (for example, *showmay dol* is a black pig with a white line down its snout and *showmay hila* is a pig with white and copper hair) and certain physical traits (for example, *showmay koray* is a pig with deformed trotters and *showmay kori* is a pig with a curly tail), but all pigs are the same value regardless of colour and physical differences. Neither does the sex of a pig alter its value. Men agreed that if they had a depleted herd they would prefer a sow (*showmay way*; lit: pig female) so that they could breed and increase the size of their herd. If they thought their herd was adequate in size they expressed a preference for a castrated male (*showmay saendaepow*; lit: pig male—with or without testicles) which will increase in value faster than a sow because it will fatten up and grow quickly.⁷ As a general rule if two pigs are the same size a man will accept either, regardless of sex, colour or physical differences, so long as he thinks they are adequate value in the context of the exchange in which they are offered.

The Wola also value the other animals which they give in exchanges according to their size. Men trap cassowaries in the rainforest or trade them from settlements near Kutubu where the birds are more numerous. Also they sometimes catch and rear young birds by hand. Men keep cassowaries inside rough palisaded cages called *shiyort aend* (lit: cassowary house) and after a short period young birds may become tame and follow their

⁶ The *wemb* is a moth caterpillar (*Opodiphthera joiceyi* larva) about two inches long, with a black body covered with fine white hairs. Large numbers of shells are bound up in palm (*Areca* sp.?) bark bundles called *goiz tong* (lit: palm tie).

⁷ Uncastrated male pigs only grow slowly and men soon castrate them. The result is that there are few young adult boars in an area at any one time and men usually have to borrow a boar to serve their sows; the payment for this service is one piglet from the litter (*showmay tuw shiy*; lit: pig testicles *shiy*).

owner about. It is of interest to note that although cassowaries increase in value as they grow, birds in captivity do not always reach full adulthood before men slaughter them.

The Wola tame and hand rear young marsupials before exchange or slaughter in the same way as cassowaries. Some varieties of marsupial, for example the *kombilol* (lit: New Guinea quoll (*Dasyurus albopunctatus*)) and *moliy* (lit: bandicoot (*Peroryctes raffrayanus*)) are small and men do not value them. Although these small varieties are not valuable and are omitted from table 11 it is possible on rare occasions for them to be included with genuine valuables in an exchange. Other varieties of marsupial, which are included in table 12, grow large when adult and carry a higher value. Some varieties of marsupial, for example the *timil* (lit: long beaked echidna), are rare and their novelty can increase their value.

The Wola value meat according to the size of the cut but equal size portions of different foods are not the same value. The food they value the highest is pork and fat. Next in value are pandanus nuts followed by tobacco and bananas.

To reimburse someone for a small service (often the help of a man with specific ritual knowledge) a man may give him a few loose cowrie shells,⁸ but the number of shells given in an exchange is usually high and they are prepared for presentation in three ways. The most common way to prepare cowrie shells is to secure them onto a loop of vine to make a necklace. There are two kinds of cowrie necklace. One necklace, called a *taenjel enjat* (lit: cowrie ?), uses fewer shells because they are spaced out with their hole facing outwards. The other necklace, called a *taenjel togo* (lit: cowrie body), uses more shells because they are closely packed together with the side edge of each shell facing outwards, (see plate VII where the man with the crescent shaped wig is wearing both types of necklace; the longer one is a *taenjel togo* and the smaller (with a fragment of pearl shell in the centre) is a *taenjel enjat*). The other way of preparing cowrie shells is done by the Kutubu people only and is also called *taenjel togo*; it consists of a plaited rope with shells sewn along one side. The Wola value cowries according to the number of shells in the article offered in

⁸ Some men likened these to ten cent bits.

the exchange; therefore *taenjel togo* carry the highest value because they use more shells in their production.

Men prepare the small nassa shells by sewing them to a strip of bark-cloth (*kirael*; lit: bark-cloth—also the name given to the tree from which the bark comes) and making a band which they wear across their forehead. Men wear the bulbous bailer shell on their chests at dances and they value these shells according to their size.

The Wola value salt according to the amount offered and they judge this by the size of the bundle. They do not value salt according to the quality of the product which they think is standard. Similarly they value decorating oil for the body by the size of the container and not by the quality of the product. The Wola exchange small amounts of oil in gourds and large amounts of oil in long bamboo tubes (men initially trade the oil up from Kutubu in these long tubes). There are no sources of either salt or stone suitable for axes in the Wola area and the people trade in the former commodity from the Kandep region and the latter from quarries situated in the Western Highlands.⁹ Men value stone axes according to the size of the blade. The most valuable blades are the fine, thin ones of ornamental axes, and these are the only axes which men might use in exchanges at the present time.

Although the Wola use a total of thirty-three types of birds' feathers for decoration at dances, they value only a few varieties highly enough to use them as wealth in exchanges. These plumes are not as important to the Wola as they are to some other Highlanders (for example the Chimbu). The most prized plumes are those of the birds of paradise, particularly the azure and delicate King of Saxony plumes (plate VI) which men mount on top of a cylindrical shaped piece of soft pith from the heart of a palm tree decorated with different coloured parrot feathers. The feathers of cassowaries men make up into pompons which along with the skins and feathers of other decorative birds, for example *no'way* (lit: cockatoo (*Kakatoë galerita* spp.)), *aenklet* (lit: Goldie's lorikeet (*Psilteuteles goldiei*) and *kaegat* (lit: yellow

⁹ See Meggitt 1958: 309-13 on salt production in the Enga area, and Vial 1940: 158-63, Chappell 1966: 96-116 and Strathern 1965: 182-91 on axe quarries.

billed lorikeet (*Neopsittacus mysschentroekii*) are less valuable. Yet on occasion, a man may include one or two of these less valuable plumes in an exchange along with other more acceptable items of wealth. Similarly, with other miscellaneous small items, a man may include one or two of these with more valuable items in an exchange.

Value and Inflation

This chapter now turns to the issue of value, because the way the Wola calculate the value of the objects which they exchange affirms the argument of this book that these things play an important social role. Exchange is foremost an economic concept in most parts of the world, but for the Wola it is foremost a social concept, and it is essential to appreciate this difference to understand how they measure the value of wealth. The things which they give to one another in exchanges serve as tokens of sociability, and the foundation of their value is their use in the all-important transactions which society institutes to maintain social order.

The social evaluation of wealth explains why the Wola calculate the value of a transaction by counting (*sa menay*; lit: number carry)¹⁰ the number of objects offered. Before I came to understand the maxim of social value I was puzzled why in hypothetical situations men always chose the alternative with the most valuables regardless of the quality value of individual items. When offered, for example, ten pearl shells valued at \$5 each or three pearl shells valued at \$20 each, they always chose the ten shells; although when the number of higher value objects approached the number of lesser value objects, quality did surpass quantity so that, for example, when offered the ten pearl shells valued at \$5 each or eight pearl shells valued at \$10 each, they chose the eight shells. From an economic viewpoint this is a ridiculous way to think, but according to the philosophy of social exchange it is

¹⁰ The Wola can count up to forty-four, and if someone wishes to count beyond this they will refer to the set of forty-four things counted as one (that is one unit of forty-four) and start to count again. In theory they could count up to 1,936 using this system, and this more than covers their needs. If a piece of arithmetic becomes more than a man can cope with on his fingers he will use small sticks as a mnemonic aid called *ish hul ndobo kay* (lit: wood bone break say—that is small twigs like bones broken into small tallies for counting).

logical because it is the acts of giving and receiving which matter, not what is given. It is not necessary to give large amounts of wealth to someone to maintain social relations, and so the more valuables a man receives in an exchange, the more people he is able to engage in transactions in turn, and the more socially beneficial is his behaviour because it unites a larger network; for example he can only exchange one valuable shell with one person whereas he can give half a dozen less valuable shells to six relatives. From this simple fact evolved the tenets which control a man's climb to success, that it depends upon the amount of wealth which he manages and the number of exchanges in which he participates.

Something else which puzzled me until I understood the maxim of social value is the way in which Wola men lump together into a single figure all the valuables given in an exchange. When asked about the wealth involved in an exchange, for example, men always replied with a single number which told me the total number of valuables given, and they did not give more details of the valuables involved, such as the number of pigs and pearl shells, unless some of them were either of exceptional merit or I questioned them further. This equation of a pearl shell with a pig with any other item of wealth, and the lumping together of the valuables given in an exchange, makes sense from the social viewpoint that it is giving which counts, and not the amount.

While sociologically speaking it is irrelevant what people give to each other so long as they hand over something, because it is the act of giving which pulls them together and has a socially cohesive effect, in real life they will not accept anything, because exchange only makes sense to them if they value the objects used—they will not bother to exchange them if they do not value them. Although it is use in exchange which gives wealth its value, the Wola do not simply value these items because they give them to one another in transactions which the mores of their society teach them to value highly. If this were so, they would place equal value on all the objects which they use in formal exchanges, but they do not, they have a hierarchy of valued objects, so that a big pig is more valuable than a small one, a thick shell more valuable than a thin one, a pearl shell more valuable than a cowrie shell

necklace, and a cowrie shell necklace more valuable than a small bundle of salt.

This raises the question of how the Wola judge the quality value of wealth. In the first place these items have acquired an aesthetic value which it is difficult for an outsider to appreciate. The Wola are connoisseurs of good shells and pigs, these are objects of beauty and they spend a good deal of time showing them off and discussing their merits. During these discussions men not only express their tastes, but also comment upon the recent exchange histories of the valuables and the performance of men who have handled them (this acts as a goad to the competitive aspect of exchange discussed in the previous chapter).¹¹

It is not possible to explain why the aesthetic tastes of the Wola have developed as they have, or even why they have picked on the objects described earlier in this chapter and classified them as valuables suitable for use in their all-important exchanges. Some of these things have a consumer value, for example people like to eat meat, pandanus nuts and bananas, but it is important to realise that these items are not essential for subsistence. They are luxury consumer items and people can survive without them, so explanations which argue that exchange exists to re-distribute resources do not apply to the Wola.¹² When a successful man shares out consumable wealth in an exchange (notably in pig kills) there is an element of re-distribution, but this is a by-product of a few exchanges and not a moving force behind them. The reason why the Wola divorce their subsistence economy, which is essential for their survival as animals, from their exchange system, which is essential for the survival of their society, is because if this were not so, a man who excelled at exchange would find himself controlling other people's subsistence needs and this would be a source of power for him—an unthinkable thing for Wola society.

Other valuables such as sea shells, oil and feathers, have no direct consumer value. Although people use them for decoration,

¹¹ It is astounding to the outsider how men can identify pearl shells which they have handled in exchanges and recount the recent exchange history of the items, and this pre-occupation they have with wealth adds greatly to the reliability of the quantitative data included in this study.

¹² I hope to take up in a later study this and the other issues touched upon here about the relationship of exchange and subsistence economics.

these items have no economic value either as consumables, as items which people can use to make consumables, or as transactable tokens and stores of consumable wealth which men can use in a market sense to purchase consumable items, and this supports the argument that it is their social exchange value which gives exchangeable valuables their worth, because without it these materially useless items would count for very little.

The attitude of the Wola towards the production of valuables also supports the argument about their social exchange value. If the items which men exchange with one another had a value above that which they have as items to be used in social transactions, then it would be reasonable to expect to see them working hard to produce them. But this is not so; men do not systematically breed pigs and operate with optimum herds, they do not spend large amounts of time hunting to obtain valuable feathers and marsupials, they do not travel long distances to other regions to secure the raw materials necessary to produce valuables, and so on. The production of valuables is only desultory. What men do produce is useful and enters into circulation, but it only keeps pace with the destruction of wealth in use (for example men break shells, they kill and eat pigs, and they consume other items or make them shoddy and valueless with use). It is not the production of valuables which engages men, but the time consuming activities of arranging, discussing, viewing, giving and receiving items in exchanges. This is consonant with their social exchange value; people would consider a man who spent much of his time making valuables as an eccentric and would not regard him highly because it is transacting with these items in the socially important exchanges that gives them worth and earns a man renown.

An aspect of the Wola attitude towards the production of wealth concerns scarcity. This is something which has contributed to the value of wealth because an item must be scarce to qualify as a valuable; if everyone had unlimited access to it, it would no longer be of value as wealth, and the fact that men do not try to overcome this scarcity by producing more is a reflection of this.

But since the arrival of the Australian administration there has been an inflation in the supply of pearl shells,¹³ as the patrol

¹³ Before the arrival of Australians as direct suppliers of pearl shells men were not

officers found that these were the most sought after reward and ensured the greatest co-operation from the people. This increase has been dramatic, for example before contact men used to exchange fragments of shell where as today they wear as personal decoration whole shells which are too poor for use in exchanges. This increase in the supply of pearl shells has had two effects which bear out the argument that the Wola value the items which they classify as wealth because they are the medium which they use in social activities which are of the utmost importance for their society. Firstly, as figure 8 shows for various exchanges,¹⁴ this increase in supply has lead to a growth in the average size of payments. Secondly, as figure 9 shows for all exchanges taken together,¹⁵ this increase in the size of payments consists of pearl

sure from which direction their small supply came because the continual giving of the same items of wealth in different exchanges blurred any geographical movement. Today men point to Kutubu because this is the way to the sea where they have been told shells come from. There is a story about pearl shells originating like bracket fungus on a tree long ago, but men do not place any empirical value on this account (see appendix I for an account of this myth; see also Williams (1941-2: 146-7) for a myth he collected at Kutubu which explains why pearl shells are found on the coast).

¹⁴ Some care is necessary when referring to figure 8 because there is considerable variation in the reliability of the data (this is largely the result of small samples for reparation exchanges, for example in the payments made from 1959 to 1964 to repay help given in reparation payments (*haypuw*) the graph is high because of one exceptionally large payment in a small sample).

The division into five year time periods is not accurate. During surveys, informants were asked whom they were like (in age) when they had participated in an exchange, and from this the number of years ago the transaction took place was calculated. Estimated dates were also obtained for the events which prompted exchanges, and these were used for cross-checking. It is probable that some material was assigned to the wrong time period but the trends shown are reliable.

The averages are for whole exchange payments (which sometimes involve several men), with the exception of the averages for *ol gwat* payments which are based upon individual contributions and not whole exchanges. The one example of a recent *ol komb* exchange is only part of a payment which I witnessed following the accidental death of a boy, hence the question mark.

For comparative data on inflation elsewhere see Meggitt (1965: 120-3) on the Mae Enga who by 1957 had not experienced a marked inflation since the coming of Europeans.

¹⁵ This graph covers all exchanges except for *ol gwat*, which are omitted because the data cover individual contributions and not whole exchanges. Dotted lines are added to the histogram in an attempt to indicate the estimated number of valuables (other than pearl shells and pigs) which would be shown if the *gwat* material was included.

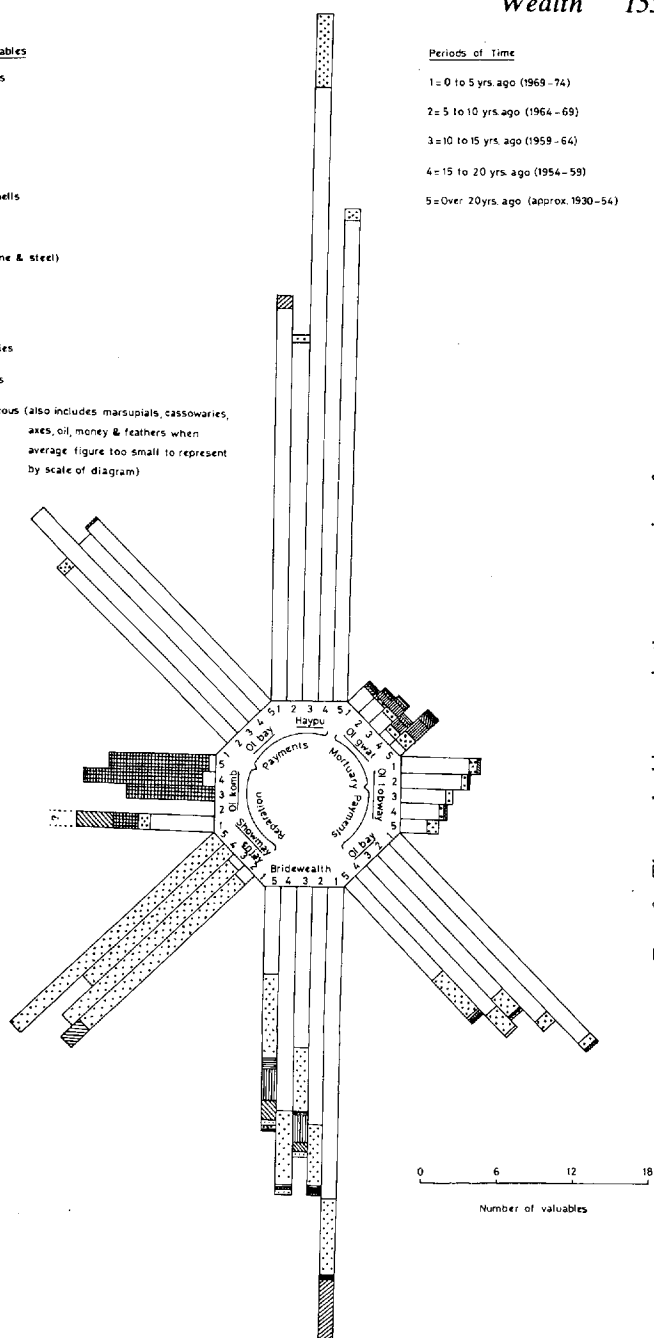


FIG. 8 The gradual increase in the average size of payments

shells, and it has resulted in a gradual reduction in the number of other valuables given in exchanges. This is the opposite effect to that expected if the Wola calculated value according to economic criteria of scarcity, which postulate that an apparently never-ending increase in the supply of a valuable will soon swamp demand for it and its value will fall until it becomes valueless. But instead of this happening, the number of pearl shells which men give in exchanges has increased, which does no damage to the social purpose of exchange which simply requires them to keep giving.

But the thing which clinches the argument in favour of that presented here is that when the increase in the supply of pearl shells became too large for men to cope with in inflated payments, it was not pearl shells which fell out of use but other less valued objects. The reason why this increase in the supply of pearl shells has not resulted in a drop in their value, but in the value of other less valuable items, is because along with pigs they have an aesthetic value for the Wola far above other valuables (the frequency figures in table 11 show clearly that they prefer them). Before contact the small and limited supply of any one valuable meant that the Wola required a variety of items which they could classify as wealth and give in exchanges, and it also led them to judge an exchange by the number of valuables offered. When the supply of valuables far outstripped the requirements for exchange men started to give more wealth in approximately the same number of exchanges because they could only maintain a finite network of relations, and so the rationale behind the evaluation of a transaction by the number of valuables came under strain. As a first step to prevent a collapse of their value system the Wola reduced the number of items which are acceptable currency to those that carry the highest aesthetic value. Previously it was such items as Kutubu bows, small marsupials and less valuable feathers which held a marginal value and were sometimes included in payments along with more valuable items, but today several previously valuable items such as cowrie shells, salt and decorating oil have slipped into this category, and like the previous smaller items of wealth they may pass entirely out of use in exchanges and, if the current trend continues, money replace them.

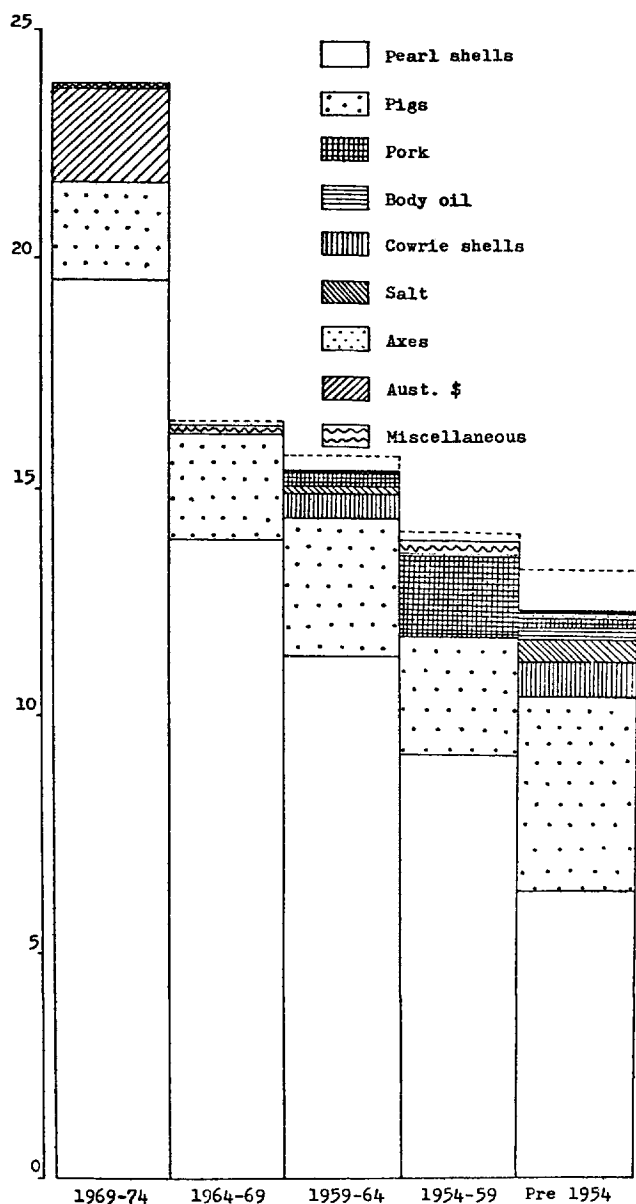


FIG. 9 Average payments for all exchanges showing the inflation in pearl shells at the expense of other valuables

So far the Wola have only accepted money into their lives as a valuable because it is so important to the all-powerful Europeans, but when they come to use it as a store of wealth with which they can purchase consumable items and as something which facilitates the precise expression and division of economic value, this will bring about some profound changes in their value system because it will directly link up consumption with wealth. But this will be only one part of the change which will come to Wola society; money is the life blood of the capitalist society which will destroy the delicate balance of their social life by introducing concepts which are inimical to it such as authority, economic profit and exploitation of others.

The increase in the supply of pearl shells has also given a keener edge to the competitive aspects of exchange because men now have to handle larger amounts of wealth.¹⁶ In fact Wola society has always taken advantage of the variations in the quality value of different wealth objects to give spice to the competitive side of exchange, which it plays upon, as discussed in the previous chapter, to coax individuals to take part in exchanges to the best of their ability. It does this in a number of ways: by giving more success to the man who skilfully handles better quality items (for example bigger pigs or larger shells) than the man who handles an equal number of poorer quality valuables; by specifying the quality of the wealth which men should give in exchanges where they receive investments from others which they must match later and repay with interest; and by restricting the use of some items to specific exchanges. Figure 8 shows which exchanges tend to demand specific valuables, for example the first reparation payment should consist of sides of pork and the second of live pigs, the first mortuary payment and bridewealths are more likely to contain salt, and it is in one of the exchanges which follow a marriage that marsupials are most likely to occur. These conventions restricting the use of some valuables to certain exchanges are not unbreakable rules and a man may offer any item of wealth

¹⁶ This sharpening of the competitive side of exchange occasionally leads to friction when men cannot cope, but this is not often and, as argued in detail in the following chapter, the overall effect of inflation has been socially beneficial because the more valuables men have the more people they can engage in exchange.

in any exchange, but when possible he will abide by them. Figure 8 also shows that these conventions have tended to remain intact through the period of inflation.

These restrictions on the use of valuables make exchange even more of a test for a man aspiring to renown because he has to consider both the number and the quality of the valuables which he handles, but they can also lead to liquidity problems when men find themselves faced with an exchange obligation and no suitable wealth on hand to give. When this happens it forces men either to trade for the required wealth or to enter debt. The Wola make a clear distinction between these transactions and exchange proper, but they still calculate value in terms of the social exchange value of the items concerned. In these transactions the recipient has to compensate the owner with valuables which will have the same value as the item received when used later in a social exchange, and in terms of number a man loses out if he has to trade several items of wealth for one item of higher quality value. The market for wealth is restricted, and the use of valuables in these economic-like transactions is rare, so a man does not think of accepting certain valuables with an eye to trading them at a profit. In transactions where the men are relative strangers an element of economic calculation may enter and the owner use his stronger bargaining position to try for a margin of profit, but this does not mean that he calculates value in economic terms. Even when an impending exchange commitment forces men to trade for wealth which has a consumer value, they do not think to value the things as consumables. They do not even do this on those few occasions when someone enters a transaction for an economic reason, such as a desire for food, the valuables concerned continue to carry their potential social exchange value which men forgo when they decide to take them out of circulation and consume them—their cost is their loss as valuables for use in a future exchange. It is to encourage men to consume edible wealth sometimes that society arranges for them to distribute portions to many people, so that it keeps its social exchange value right up to the end.

The social impetus behind exchanges also affects the distribution of natural resources from the areas where they occur to somewhere else. This distribution takes place largely within the context of exchange, and diplomacy and the maintenance of good

relations are not the result of economic considerations to ensure a safe supply (see Sahlins 1974)—they are the primary reason for these transactions, which aim to promote sociability and only serve to diffuse scarce products from their point of origin as a fortuitous consequence of this (see Hughes 1973). Although there is some trading for economic reasons, and travelling to other places for this purpose, items make the larger part of their journey as they pass from hand to hand in exchanges.

Rituals which bring Success

The rituals which Wola men believe help them to manage larger amounts of wealth illustrate their ideas about the way to handle valuables, and support the sociological explanation of exchange put forward in this book. There are three rituals in which men may participate to increase their chances of success in handling wealth.

One ritual, in which mature men, young married and unmarried men may participate, is called *porot beray* (lit: *porot* sit) or *tazh waeret beray* (lit: pig forbidden sit).¹⁷ A man may either perform this ritual alone, with only the co-operation of his wife, or he may perform it in the company of several men without the help of his wife. If a man's wife participates in the ritual she must remain secluded in her house for the five days for which the ritual lasts. She cannot see sunlight during this time and to prevent this she keeps the door closed and blocks off any holes in the house. While she spends this time in darkness another woman cares for her pigs.¹⁸

Throughout the ritual the participants may eat only bananas along with any pig, bird or marsupial meat which they obtain (often they eat the bananas and meat mashed up into a paste). The Wola say that the reason they eat bananas is because this fruit grows in bunches, and these bunches of fruit symbolise the future wealth of the participants, who will not receive the occasional item of

¹⁷ *Waeret bay* (lit: forbidden do) also refers to the taboos which forbid menstruating women touching anything (particularly food) belonging to men, and men eating the pork of pigs which they have given in *haypuw* reparation payments or bridewealth (by requiring men to give one another pork from different animals this prohibition stimulates further exchange).

¹⁸ I was never able to satisfy myself why the Wola thought it necessary to shut women off in this way during the ritual, but I think that the explanation is linked in some way with the polluting and debilitating influence of women on men.

wealth, but several valuables at a time, like the numerous bananas in a bunch. During the five days or so for which the ritual lasts, men roam around and collect bananas from their relatives and friends. They also trap marsupials and birds in the rainforest. Men enter into debt with their friends and relatives as they receive bananas and pork from them (participants do not kill their own pigs until the meal which marks the end of the ritual). Also they accept items of wealth from their relatives and friends as *saen* (lit: debts) to be repaid with interest later (they use some of this wealth to purchase bananas and pork). The Wola say that the amount of valuable food and wealth a man collects from other men portends his success in the future, and an observer can see that men not participating in the ritual indicate their faith in the ability of the candidates to repay their debts adequately by the amount of help they are willing to give, and that this prophecy is therefore often accurate because only men of promise, or established *ol howma*, will receive considerable help.

When the five days of the ritual are up, the participants cook in an earth oven a variety of vegetables, and the marsupials they have caught (and possibly some pigs as well). While the food is cooking the participants break their five day fast on drinking water. One man suggested that the reason why participants in the *porot* abstain from drinking water is because water encourages the body to excrete. The participants wish the bananas to remain in their stomachs for as long as possible because this symbolises their wealth which they will not waste, but hold and use wisely. To break the fast the participants drink water which another man, who recites a *namonk* (lit: ritual incantation),¹⁹ pours down a chute made out of a pandanus leaf propped up by a forked stick. This chute is called *iyb sond waeray* (lit: waterfall do).

The following are two *namonk* used in *porot* rituals:

<i>Ba biy seket diy.</i>	<i>Ba biy seket diy.</i>	<i>Ndigerniy</i>
Dawn do pearl and.	Dawn do pearl and.	Ripe (refers to
shell	shell	bananas)

¹⁹ The man who recites the *namonk* receives a payment of a few valuables. Any man who has previously taken part in the ritual and remembers the *namonk* may recite it and receive payment.

seket diy. Na buwakay diy. Na omuwakay
 pearl shell and. My influence over and. My influence over
 others to give others to give
 me good wealth me good wealth.
diy. Kolow twem, kolow twem. Ba biy
 and. Untranslatable whisper, untranslatable whisper. Dawn do
seket diy. Ndigerniy seket diy. Na buwakay
 pearl and. Ripe (refers pearl and. My influence over others to
 shell to bananas) shell give me good wealth
diy. Na omuwakay diy. Kolow twem.
 and. My influence over others to and. Untranslatable whisper.
 give me good wealth
Ba biy seket diy. Ndigerniy seket diy. Na buwa-
 Dawn do pearl and. Ripe pearl and. My influence over
 shell shell others
kay diy. Na omuwakay diy. Kolow twemay.
 to give and. My influence over and. Untranslatable whisper.
 me good others to give
 wealth me good
 wealth

In this ritual incantation the speaker likens the ochred pearl shells which will come into the hands of the participants to the dawn, when the sky is red like a good shell. He also likens the pearl shells to ripe bananas which are symmetrical, large and numerous. He mentions the whispers and quiet dealings which take place between men before an exchange and the participants' ability, after performing the *porot*, to persuade and influence the thoughts of others so they will always give plenty of good wealth to them.

The second ritual incantation used in *porot* rituals is as follows:

Nonk nais kab. Goiz luwbon tokem tokem. Maen
 Girl boy two. Palm tall middle middle Tree (*Arau-*
 (*Areca* of tree of tree *caria* sp.)
 sp.?) trunk trunk.
teshopon tokem tokem. Goiz luwbon tokem
 untranslatable middle of middle of Palm tall middle of
 tree trunk tree trunk. tree trunk

<i>tokem.</i>	<i>Maen</i>	<i>teshopon</i>	<i>tokem</i>	<i>tokem</i>	<i>Ya</i>	<i>ya</i>
middle	Tree	untranslatable	middle	middle	We	we
of tree			of tree	of tree	(2)	(2)
trunk.			trunk	trunk.		
<i>shongow</i>	<i>kab.</i>	<i>Na beribsel</i>	<i>beriyebiy</i>	<i>kor.</i>	<i>Na haebisel</i>	
number	two.	Not comfort-	sit	why.	Not comfort-	
marker (for		ably			ably	
some words)						
<i>haebay</i>	<i>kor.</i>	<i>Kunduw</i>	<i>debdeb</i>	<i>kor.</i>	<i>Ogalay</i>	
stand	why.	Bark	scratch	why.	Sweat	
<i>debdeb</i>	<i>kor.</i>	<i>Kemberliy</i>	<i>nda</i>	<i>huw</i>		
scratch	why.	Place name (near Maela)	that	bird (parrot?)		
<i>biybiy</i>	<i>kaem</i>	<i>ibiyl.</i>	<i>Kemberliy</i>	<i>nda</i>	<i>kiraliy</i>	
cry	say	come.	Place	that	insect (cricket?)	
<i>biy biy kaem</i>	<i>ibiyl.</i>	<i>Aeluwake'rol</i>	<i>hondo</i>	<i>bilor.</i>	<i>Aeluwake'rol</i>	
cry	say	come.	Influence over	look	do.	Influence over
			others to give			others to give
			good wealth			good wealth.
<i>hondo bilor.</i>	<i>Haeri</i>	<i>kabeniy</i>	<i>kiliykaem</i>	<i>ibiyl.</i>	<i>Haeri kabeniy</i>	
look	do.	Cane	dry	scoop	come.	Cane
		<i>(Bambusa</i>				
		<i>sp.)</i>				
<i>kiyakaem</i>	<i>ibiyl.</i>	<i>Kemberliy</i>	<i>nda</i>	<i>huw</i>	<i>biybiy</i>	<i>kaem</i>
scoop	come.	Place	that	bird	cry	say
<i>Kemberliy</i>	<i>nda</i>	<i>kiraliy</i>	<i>biybiy</i>	<i>kaem</i>	<i>ibiyl.</i>	
		Place	that	insect	cry	say
						come.

In this *namonk* the speaker likens the participants before they performed the *porot* to the middle part of a tree trunk, which has no branches, like the participants have no wealth. In fact they are so poor he likens them to a tree with smooth bark which does not even have the protuberances of rough bark, so they do not even possess small items of wealth. The participants cannot sit or stand comfortably because they fret about their lack of wealth which makes them sweat with worry. This reference to discomfort also refers to the discomfort which the participants have endured eating bananas and drinking no water in an effort to relieve their anxiety over wealth. In the second half of the ritual incantation the speaker refers to the future success of the participants. Many men

will come to them to discuss wealth and exchanges, and their chatter will be like the chirping of birds and the trill of insects. The participants' ability to persuade men to give them plenty of wealth will improve so much that they will have to use a piece of bent cane to rake in all they receive.

A less popular ritual which men perform to promote their success in the exchange of wealth is called *em humbuguwl bor* (lit: garden *humbuguwl* cultivate). For this ritual a man clears and fences a small garden near to his house. After preparing the soil his wife collects cuttings from the best varieties of taro, greens, sugar cane and edible pit pit to plant in the garden.²⁰ When the woman arrives at the garden carrying the bag of cuttings on her head, her husband stands and pats the bag with both hands while reciting a *namonk*. Then they plant the garden. If the crops flourish and grow well this a good omen that the man will achieve success in the exchange of wealth. During this ritual, as with the *porot*, he also collects as much wealth as possible from friends and relatives to invest and use in exchanges, and the amount which he collects is an indication of his success in the future. There are no special conditions covering the consumption of food from the garden and when the crops reach maturity the couple and their family eat them.

The following is a ritual incantation used in the *em humbuguwl* ritual:

<i>Hul</i>	<i>haeruwkma.</i>	<i>Oziy</i>	<i>shobaenk</i>
Variety of taro (<i>Colocasia</i> sp.)	(we all will) cook.	Type of tree (fm= Pandaceae)	leaf (Panda- naceae family only)
<i>kab.</i>	<i>Kokba</i>	<i>haebuwp</i>	<i>kab.</i>
two. Variety of taro	variety of taro	two.	<i>Showmay mowmaek</i>
<i>Kab.</i>	<i>Ten ol kab.</i>		Pig
two. Woman	man	two.	pearl shell

The reference by the speaker to taro likens his investments of wealth to the parent tuber from which several small tubers grow,

²⁰ The Wola call their best variety of sugar *ar* (*Saccharum officinarum* L.), their best variety of edible pit pit *tabiy* (*Setaria palmifolia* Stapf.) and their best variety of greens *komb*.

it will multiply like the small taro tubers from a parent tuber and he will be repaid with generous interest. The *ozyi* tree is a member of the Pandanaceae family which grows several crowns, and not only one or two crowns like other pandanus trees, and the speaker likens his plentiful wealth to these numerous crowns. He also refers to pearl shells and pigs, and he mentions the fact that men make exchanges on prescribed occasions in their lives.

The third way a man can help himself by supernatural means to achieve success is called *ol buwalay* (lit: man show)²¹ or *obal iyba kay* (lit: dream blood (?) say). The first intimation a man has that supernatural forces are offering to help him is in a dream (*oba bay* lit: dream do) in which his life force (*wezow*) leaves his body and converses with one of his ancestors (*towmow*). The *towmow* informs the *wezow* that in the near future the man will find some unusual object which will be of supernatural significance in helping him achieve success. Sometime during the few days following the dream, the man will stumble across an unusual object and conclude that it is the thing of which the *towmow* informed him in his dream. Men who have such a dream usually find a curiously shaped stone. The finder takes the stone home and installs it along with the other ritual stones (*hungnaip haen*; lit: *hungnaip* stone) in which the members of his *Semgenk* believe their ancestors sometimes reside.²² Other unusual objects which men have found following a *buwalay* dream include pig ropes (*showmay hend*), women's grass skirts (*hurinj*), the woven bands from which men suspend pearl shells (*minyaeb*), and in one case two marsupials caught side by side in the same trap. Men explained that finding a pig rope prophesies that the finder will have many pigs, whereas finding the pearl shell band prophesies that the finder will have many shells. The grass skirt indicates that the finder will marry several wives, which is a sign of much wealth,²³ and the finding of a *hungnaip* stone portends success with all items of wealth. After he has found the object, the ancestor offering to help the man

²¹ The word *buwalay* can mean guide, show, demonstrate or teach.

²² Sometimes the finder builds a separate little house for his new *hungnaip* stone. The stone belongs to him and during his lifetime it is his responsibility, but when he dies it becomes the ritual property of his *semgenk*.

²³ It is interesting that the only man (Wenja Waebis) in the Haelaelinja area to find a grass skirt when he was a young man subsequently married ten wives.

Name	No. times performed <i>porot</i>	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times cultivated <i>humbugwi</i> garden	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times found <i>ol buwalay</i> object	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times taken part in rituals	Totals Wealth expended on rituals
Kot	1	† pig			1	1 pig	2	1½ pigs
Tensgay	2	† pig			1	1 pig	2	† pig
Wacni		† pig					1	1 pig
Em								
Pet								
Kayshya								
Kot					1	1 pig	1	1 pig
Saziy	1	† pig					1	† pig
E'row					2	2 pigs	2	2 pigs
Hul	1	—					1	—
Kelo								
Ongol								
Pel								
Korobol					1	1 pig	1	1 pig
Plyp								
Pis					1	1 pig	1	1 pig
Pes								
Hiyp								
Unguwdiyp								
Sal								
Kobiyaeb								
Shorluwk								
Pundiya	2	—					2	—
Ibnay	1	marsupials					1	marsupials
Hond								
Aegol	3	marsupials			1	1 pig	4	marsupials & 1 pig
Haebay	2	marsupials					2	marsupials
Izuwm								
Muwlilb								
Olnay								
Kal								
Lem								
Pes	2	marsupials					2	marsupials
Omonol					1	—	1	—
Mayja								
Haegaes								
Puwn								
Sorliy								
Uwhay								

Name	No. times performed <i>porot</i>	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times cultivated <i>humbagaw</i> garden	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times found of <i>buwaly</i> object	Wealth expended on ritual	No. times taken part in rituals	Totals Wealth expended on rituals
Ton					1	1 pig	1	1 pig
Kayshya								
Maengalay								
Naenainj								
Dul								
Waip								
Kohiyacab								
Mom								
Kem								
Non	1	1 pearl sh.					1	1 pearl sh.
Haelop								
Tonaep	1	—					1	—
Njep	3	marcupials					3	marcupials
Kelay								
Shong					1	1 pig	1	1 pig
Duwaeb		—					1	—
Yogbal	1							
Sol								
Saendway								
Mondolol								
Nonay								
Luwpwaaes								
Muwi								
Pes								
Kuwi								
Ar								
Haendaep								
Nelieb								
Gogoda								
Kwaen								
Yaera								
Saemoliy								
Pebet								
Waebay								
Duw								
Kuwi								
Tiz								

TABLE 12 The number of times men have participated in different types of success ritual and the wealth they have expended.

will request him in another dream to make an offering at a specific ritual place where his ancestors are believed to reside some of the time. If he fails to meet the request it is unlikely that the *towmow* offering assistance will continue to help the man.

The Wola explain that in the *ol buwalay* the ancestor which speaks to a man in a dream is offering to help him in exchanges and to ensure his success. The *towmow* will help the man by entering the chests of men he deals with in exchanges, and influencing their thoughts (*konay*; lit: thoughts (which reside in men's chests)) so they give many valuables to him. The theme of ensuring adequate returns of wealth recurs throughout the rituals designed to help men achieve success. Men do not need supernatural help in distributing wealth in exchanges, but they do require help to ensure that they receive adequate amounts of wealth when they participate in exchanges. By performing these rituals men try to gain some control over the uncontrollable aspect of an exchange, and ensure that other men deal fairly, or even better, generously, with them.

Table 12 shows the number of times members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have participated in different types of success ritual, and the wealth they have expended on these rituals. The table indicates that men of varying social status participate in the rituals and that there is no marked tendency for men of success to participate more than other men. It may be argued that the participation of several successful men is necessary to maintain the efficacy of these rituals in the eyes of the Wola, but table 12 indicates that it is ambitious men, not necessarily successful men who have achieved success, who participate in success rituals.

The significant point of success rituals is not that the Wola think they help a man to achieve success, but how they think they achieve this. In all these rituals men try to increase their returns in exchanges. They make metaphorical allusions to this when they say, for example, that their wealth will multiply in investments, in the same way as small taro grow from a parent tuber, and that the chatter of the men who will gather at their homes to discuss wealth will be like the chirping of birds, and the wealth they will receive will require a rake to gather it up. The Wola even have several verbs which refer to the ability of men to persuade and influence others to give generously to them in exchanges. There

is no idea of producing or trading for valuables. The emphasis is upon the acquisition of wealth in exchanges.

So while the Wola say that these rituals concern the acquisition of wealth and renown, the way they go about this reflects the importance of exchange as something which promotes sociability.

The Exchange of Wealth

This study now turns to look in detail at the exchange of wealth in Wola society, and carries through the argument developed in previous chapters that this is the principal force which gives order to an otherwise precariously organised society. Exchange is an aspect of all social interaction, and this society builds upon its sociable and competitive elements to give stability to its otherwise fissile organisation. To give and to receive are sociable acts which require order and co-operation—no social exchange means no interaction, which means no social relationships and hence no society. By developing the exchange of valuable objects between people into a social institution, which obliges men to participate by founding norms to this effect and further encourages them to do so by playing upon competitive aspects of this behaviour, Wola society ensures that on specific social occasions men come together, and so encourages them to behave in a co-operative spirit. The arteries of the social body are relationships, those lines which join up the individual dots of people who make up a social network, and by formalising the exchange of wealth the Wola reinforce these lines and stimulate amicable interaction, which constitutes the flow of society's life blood along these lines between related people.

This chapter supports this explanation of Wola life by giving ethnographic descriptions of the various exchanges which occur in their society, and by analysing information on transactions participated in by members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*. It describes and analyses the following exchanges: marriage exchanges, mortuary exchanges, war reparation payments, other exchanges and debts, and pork distribution at pig kills. The analysis of the quantitative material on exchanges in the Healaelinja area proceeds along two fronts;¹ it shows how these serve

¹ I conducted a number of surveys with the members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*

to maintain social relations in a society which cherishes individual freedom, and it shows that their social importance results in the status elevation of men who excel at them.

Marriage Exchanges

A man calls his marriage and the exchanges which accompany it *ten tol bay* (lit: woman share do),² and when a woman marries she says she is going to a man, *ol puw* (lit: man go).

Young men are aware of the eligible girls who live close to their place of residence,³ but chance encounters with unknown girls who live some way off, in areas where they and their relatives have few social contacts, do not often result in marriages. Whilst going about their daily activities (working in gardens, collecting firewood and water) marriageable boys and girls meet one another. They may exchange a few words but even if the couple are betrothed they will not enter into an intimate conversation. On the whole young men and women are embarrassed by each other, and the infrequency of their courting underlines the awkwardness they feel for one another.⁴ In fact there are few occasions when young people may court one another. A girl may openly declare her admiration for a boy by pushing into a line of dancers and dancing beside him, and a young man may show that a girl attracts him by going to her house in the evening to sit beside her and sing courting songs; these courting sessions are *turmaen* (Pidgin: *tanim het*). The

to collect the exchange histories and other quantitative material presented in this work. All the resident members of these two *semonda* co-operated in every survey and I am most grateful to them for their patience. I collected a considerable amount of the material from their memories (it covers all the exchanges in which they can remember participating), and although there are inevitably gaps, the trends indicated are reliable; the interest they have in wealth and exchanges make their memories on these topics good (as cross-checking of information proved) and this adds to the reliability of this data.

² Marriage is also called *ten sayay* (lit: woman pay). This account of marriage deals with the exchanges only and does not go into the social (for example choice of partner, relations between affines) or ritual aspects of marriage.

³ There are conventional prohibitions against men marrying girls related to them (for example members of their father's or father's mother's or mother's or mother's mother's *semonda*—ideally these prohibitions should extend back as far as the boy can remember).

⁴ Even when married a couple continue to act in the same diffident manner towards one another. To some extent this is probably the result of the fear men have for the sexual danger of women.

furtive activities which young people sometimes indulge in to attract the attentions of a member of the opposite sex typify their uncomfortable feelings about making advances; for example a boy or girl may stealthily hit the person who attracts them with a piece of cane in the end of which they conceal some scented reeds called *leb*, which they believe will make them irresistible in the eyes of the person they hit.

Once a couple have overcome their shyness of one another, and before any serious approaches for marriage, they may embark upon a series of exchanges, giving each other small items of value. These gifts herald the larger payments of marriage itself. The series of exchanges which seal a marriage are complex and the substance of the following description is summarised in figure 10 which shows the direction of various transactions, the wealth involved and the timing of the payments.

If a boy attracts a girl she may bring him gifts of valuable food, such as pork, bananas or pandanus nuts, which are called *ol nda mariy* (lit: man in question carry). If the boy intends to marry her he will accept the gifts as a token of his intentions. If he does not intend to marry her he may refuse the gifts or else he may accept them but give her something in payment. Sometimes a boy accepts these gifts but marries another girl, and this can result in an argument and the boy repaying his jilted suitor for the food.

A boy who accepts food gifts from a girl will reciprocate with small return gifts called *nay ozizor koray* (lit: food things strip off(?))⁵ which are a firm indication of his intentions to marry. The payment usually consists of one item of wealth (for example a pearl shell or pig) which he will give to the girl. She in turn will give this wealth to a close relative (usually her father or brother). The couple may repeat this sequence of payments several times. Sometimes a girl marries another man and angers the boy with whom she has exchanged small gifts but, unlike a girl, a young man does not make a fuss unless he thinks he has made payments which the girl has not reciprocated. The boy rationalises that the wealth he has given to the girl was payment for gifts received from her and so long as there is no debt she owes him nothing.

A few months before the large exchange which will seal a

⁵ *Koray* refers to stripping off bark from a tree for the bark belt worn by men.

marriage a young man may make a preliminary payment called *kal hae* (lit: give (to 3rd pers.) stand) to the girl's relatives. This payment usually consists of five or six items of wealth (a typical payment today is one or two pigs and the balance in pearl shells) which the boy gives to the girl. She in turn gives the wealth to her

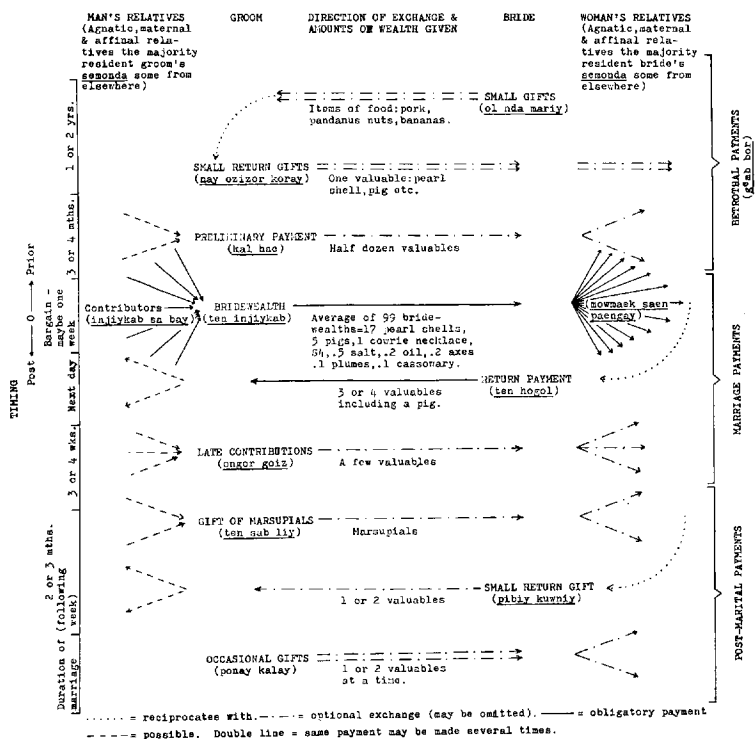


FIG. 10 The series of marriage exchanges*

* The average bridewealth given in this figure does not take inflation into consideration (refer to figure 8 for inflation in the size of bridewealth since contact). The arrows showing the contributors to the bridewealth represent an average calculated from 81 bridewealths (the range in the sample was from 1 contributor to 22 contributors). The arrows showing the recipients of the valuables given in the bridewealth represent an average calculated from 30 bridewealths (the range in the sample was from 3 recipients to 26 recipients).

close relatives to share out. When he makes this payment a young man informs the girl's relatives of his intentions to marry her. A young man is too embarrassed to make the declaration himself and a close friend or relative will go on his behalf to inform her relatives; to act as a messenger is *ten kormuwk puw* (lit: woman fetch go). When a father receives *nay ozizor koray* from his daughter he knows that she has a suitor, and she will probably inform him of the young man's identity, so the open declaration of the boy's intentions to marry his daughter does not come as a surprise.⁶ When a man informs a girl's relatives of his intention to marry her he is not really seeking their permission but is informing them that he has made arrangements for the large exchange which will effect the marriage.

The giving of betrothal payments is not always smooth, and either party may decide to marry someone else. If a girl marries someone else after a boy has made the larger pledge payment to her relatives he, and the relatives who helped him make the payment, will demand the repayment of their wealth. When a girl marries another man it is usually below the dignity of the jilted suitor to worry about the loss of his bride but he does worry about the possible loss of wealth. A jilted girl on the other hand is not usually so concerned about unreciprocated betrothal gifts, but she may give vent to her upset feelings by turning up at the bridewealth exchange and creating a scene with the bride. To fight over a man

⁶ It is difficult to assess accurately how men and women choose a spouse because this is a personal matter where the temperament and character of the people concerned influences the outcome. Men said they look for a strong and industrious girl of manageable temperament (looks they assured me were of little consequence). The canons used by girls are not so clear, but personal attraction to a man who they think will be a good husband is important (see Strathern 1972 for a discussion of the woman's view in a Highland society). Men said that a girl's relatives will encourage any marriage so long as the bridewealth is adequate, but few fathers try to force their daughters into a marriage to which they object because of the untold trouble they will have if she behaves badly and ruins it so that they have to refund the bridewealth. A girl can force her relatives to accept a lower bridewealth than they wish by indulging in pre-marital sex, but this is dangerous for the ritually unprotected man. The question of the status of the men involved in the marriage does not influence the decisions of men; for example men said it made little difference if the potential father-in-law or groom was an *ol howma* or not. In fact for less able men a successful close affinal relative could be embarrassing when the time comes for them to meet their exchange obligations (although men can always look to their relatives for support).

is *ol aeret bay* (lit: man dispute do) and requires considerable courage and rage on the part of the jilted girl. Sometimes two boys compete to marry the same girl and this is called *ten peray peray bay* (lit: woman snatch snatch do). They try to outdo one another by giving better betrothal payments and offering the largest bridewealth—the final outcome can result in a dispute over the return of valuables to the unsuccessful man.

When a couple start to make betrothal payments they refer to each other as their fiancé or singing partner in courting sessions (*turmaen kay*; lit: courting session say). Betrothal exchanges, however, are not an essential prelude to a marriage and some couples omit them entirely. If the suitor is an adult married man marrying another wife he is unlikely to bother with betrothal payments. Unlike his shy, inexperienced and young counterpart he will approach the girl's relatives personally when he has mustered sufficient wealth for her bridewealth, and inform them of his intentions to marry her. Although the exchange of betrothal payments is optional they can serve a useful social purpose by helping a couple in their initial and tentative probings of one another before they establish a permanent relationship. These payments offer an institutionalised way for couples to overcome the embarrassment (which is an inevitable result of male/female relations in Wola society) which they feel when fraternising with one another. The other important point about betrothal payments is that they pave the way for the establishment of relations between a man and his wife-to-be's close relatives. The girl does not keep the valuables given to her but she passes them on to her male relatives, and this sequence foretells the pattern of all the exchanges which take place between a man and his wife's relatives.

The next payment in the marriage series is essential and may not be omitted (although in some cases it may be reduced, for example when a couple elope or a widow remarries a relative of her deceased husband). This exchange is the giving of bridewealth by the groom and his relatives to the bride's relatives, and this payment is called *ten injiykab* (lit: woman bridewealth). In a bridewealth exchange there are three sociologically relevant stages to the transaction: the contribution of valuables to the bridewealth by the groom's relatives, the giving of the bridewealth

by the groom's relatives to the bride's relatives, and the distribution of the wealth among the bride's relatives.

The weeks before a bridewealth exchange are hectic for the bridegroom because of the arrangements he has to make. He has to ensure that all the wealth he can muster personally (from loans, from wealth invested in exchanges etc.) is available to him. Also, he has to secure the pledge of contributions from his relatives and friends; to contribute to the bridewealth of another man is *injiyakab sa bay* (lit: bridewealth count(?) do).⁷ Men who pledge to support a young man may show him their contribution to his bridewealth but they do not give it to him to store until the time of the exchange. They do not actually give their contributions to the groom at any time, but display their wealth on his behalf as part of his bridewealth and give it in exchange for his wife. A groom does not make a direct repayment to his relatives and friends for their contributions to his bridewealth. He may in turn help them if they marry in the future, and if he has a daughter he should give them a share of her bridewealth. The absence of any specific repayment reflects the logic which Wola society uses when it encourages men to contribute to the bridewealths of relatives and friends. It encourages them to do this without expecting to make a profit because their contributions to one another's bridewealths serve an important social purpose—they cement them together as giver and receiver in an exchange.

The Wola do not say that certain relatives ought to contribute to a bridewealth, but empirical evidence shows that certain relatives are more likely to do so than others. Figure 11 shows how often different categories of relatives contributed to eighty-one bridewealths and the relative size of their average contributions.⁸

⁷ The Wola also call a contribution *sayak bay* (lit: pay for do).

⁸ This figure records relationships from the viewpoint of the contributor's relation to the groom and the recipient's relation to the bride. It groups them together according to the relation of ego to the first person listed in the relationship equation (for example, FM₁BSS is a distant paternal relative), and where there is more than one relation between the persons concerned it uses the closest. The material collected shows that the Wola do not discriminate against cognatic relatives in favour of agnates (if they reside at the same place) in bridewealth contributions and receipts, and in this respect the relationships between contributors and recipients show in microcosm the empirically cognatic nature of Wola social groups (a point touched upon in chapter 2 in the discussion of descent

Contributions from the groom's close relatives and residential members of his *semgenk* predominate. The contributions of people who reside on the territory of a different *semonda* from that of the groom are insignificant in comparison. The pattern of contributions depends largely upon the kin composition of the groom's *semgenk*; for example in a small, closely related group (see Maenget and Puwgael on figure 7) contributions from close relatives predominate, whereas in a larger group where members are more distantly related (see Ind and Kolomb on figure 7) there is an increase in the number of contributions from more distant relatives. The pattern of contributions indicates that relatives and friends living in close proximity to one another reaffirm their relations by contributing valuables to each other's bridewealths.

If helping a relative to marry serves to strengthen the relations between individuals it follows that the larger the number of men who contribute to a bridewealth the wider this cohesive effect is spread. Table 13 shows there has been a steady increase in the number of men contributing to bridewealths since the time of contact. This increase in contributors is largely due to the inflation in the number of valuables in the area.⁹ The increased supply of wealth has not only increased the size of payments (as discussed in the previous chapter) but it has also made it possible for more men to contribute to an exchange. This increase in the supply of valuables ought therefore to have a cohesive and beneficial effect on Wola social relations. Up to a point this is true, but the small number of relations (largely within a *semgenk*) which any individual wishes to reaffirm in this way means that the dramatic increase in the supply of wealth has been superfluous to their needs and has contributed to the devaluation of less valued items.

The desire of men to reaffirm a limited number of relations helps to explain the pattern shown in figure 12 which records the number of bridewealth contributions and the total amount of wealth given by the living members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* in each other's

ideology—see also Glasse (1968:54-9) for a discussion of a similar situation among the neighbouring Huli people).

⁹ This increase in the number of contributors may also be due to an increase in the size of the present generation over the previous one and (less likely) the poorer memories of older men to remember all the details of their bridewealths.

bridewealths.¹⁰ Contributing to the bridewealths of other men is not simply an altruistic act in the eyes of the Wola. It is also an occasion when a man can increase his renown by demonstrating his ability to handle wealth by the size and frequency of his contributions. Figure 12 shows that there is a tendency for *ol howma*, and in particular outstanding men of this status, to contribute more wealth than other men to bridewealth exchanges. But they do not contribute to a larger number of bridewealths proportional to the increased amounts of wealth which they handle. These men only make a few contributions to more bridewealths than average men, and use the larger amounts of wealth which they handle to make large contributions in a few marriages. It appears at first sight that the value the Wola place upon the ability of men to handle large amounts of wealth causes a short circuit in the socially cohesive effects of bridewealth contributions because men of renown do not act to increase social cohesion by spreading their extra wealth around in a larger number of exchanges than average, but threaten to reduce the number of contributors in any exchange to which they contribute because of their large contributions. The behaviour of successful men does

¹⁰ Other than a few exchanges witnessed in the field I collected the bulk of the data presented in this figure by asking men if they remembered the details of their bridewealths (owing to an oversight on my part I omitted to collect the details of Huwlael Pel's and Shorluwk's bridewealths). The graph in figure 12 does not show therefore all the bridewealth contributions made by each man in the course of his life but only their contributions to the bridewealths of living members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*. This material undoubtedly covers most of the contributions to bridewealths made by each man, but the figures for older men are depressed because their contributions to the bridewealths of deceased relatives are not recorded (but to a certain extent this may compensate for the age differences between the men questioned in the survey). Also, contributions to the bridewealths of persons living elsewhere were not collected and this will result in a depressed figure for migrants and men who have lived for any period of time outside the Haelaelinja area.

The graph records only the number of valuables contributed by men without any systematic account of their quality value (although, as a rough rule, pearl shells and pigs are more valuable than other items). The distortions which this treatment can lead to are illustrated in Huwlael Kuwliy's bridewealth, where the sale of one item increased his contribution to his own bridewealth by 32 items. Allowing for these deficiencies in the material the tendencies shown are reliable and support the argument developed in this chapter (for comparative quantitative data on bridewealth exchanges see Strathern (1972: 335-8) on the Hageners, Glasse (1968: 56-8) on the Huli, Meggitt (1965: 125) on the Mae Enga, and Ryan (1961: 107ff.) on the people living in the Mendi valley).

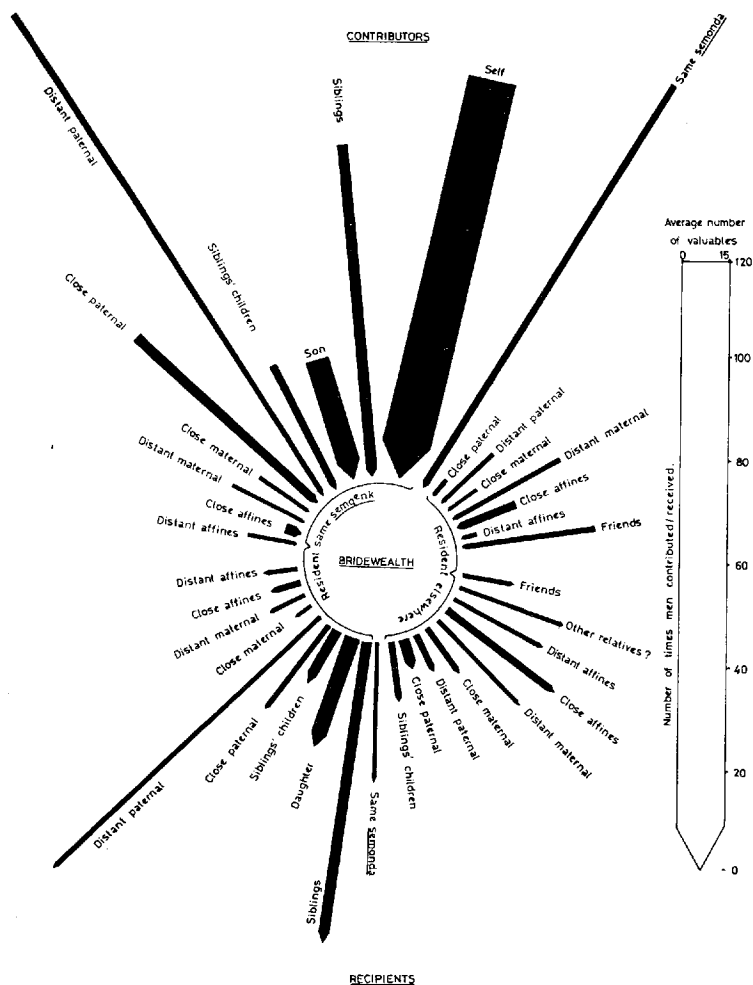


FIG. 11 The number of times and the average amounts of wealth different relatives contributed to and received from 103 bridewealths

not in fact have any such detrimental effects. As already pointed out, men of renown can, and wish, to maintain only a limited number of relationships by contributing to the bridewealths of other men. Also, the object of a bridewealth exchange is to create

	0-5 yrs ago	5-10 yrs ago	10-15 yrs ago	15-20 yrs ago	Over 20 yrs ago
Number of bridewealths in sample	25	16	16	7	17
Average number of contributors	11.5	7.7	5.7	4.6	3.1
Standard deviation	4.6	5.1	4.5	4.1	1.5

TABLE 13 The steady increase in the number of men contributing to bridewealths*

* For comparative material on inflation in the size of bridewealths see Meggitt (1965: 121-2) on Mae Enga marriages.

and validate a new relationship with the bride's relatives, and the principal exchange party responsible for the creation of this new relationship is the groom, who should, say the Wola, contribute a large part of the wealth (see figure 11 for empirical verification of this fact). In accordance with this dictum a considerable amount of the wealth which successful men handle they use to finance their own polygynous marriages, and it is only in the case of inefficient young relatives, who are unable to muster the bulk of their own bridewealths, that men of renown act as a substitute and give what ought to be the groom's share. When their young relatives are capable of mustering the bulk of their own bridewealths *ol howma* do not give large amounts of wealth and make it unnecessary for other relatives to contribute. The situation with the bridewealth contributions of men of differing abilities therefore tends to be equal with them all reaffirming about the same number of relations.

When the bridegroom has made the necessary arrangements with his kin and friends to ensure that he has adequate wealth to offer in the bridewealth, he invites the girl to come and stay with his mother for two or three days before the bridewealth exchange. This short period of residence with the groom's family is called *ten ol aenda hae* (lit: woman man house stand). An unmarried female relative of the bride accompanies her to the groom's place and will continue to reside there with her for approximately one month after the bridewealth exchange. To accompany a young bride is *pebway hae* (lit: smooth (?) stand) and the Wola say the purpose of this is to help the new wife settle into her new home.¹¹

¹¹ The Wola consider the first month or so of a marriage as the most delicate period and if it survives this period they think that it will probably be a success. The

When the young bride arrives at her prospective husband's home he gives her three or four pearl shells which she places into her bag and carries around on her daily chores. The shells remain in her possession until her husband-to-be's relatives arrange to display the bridewealth, when she returns them to him to place with the other wealth. The temporary possession of these shells by the bride is called *mowmaek maeruw hae* (lit: pearl shell carry stand), and it symbolises the importance of the coming exchange of wealth for the establishment of the marriage.

The display of the bridewealth usually takes place at the men's house where the groom resides. The display is called *mowmaek tuwshiy ten tol bay tomb* (lit: pearl shells display marry when). Men display the wealth in the same way as they do at other exchanges. They stake out the pigs in a line according to their size, with the largest pig first (*showmay tiri*; lit: pig first), the next largest pig second (*showmay tirol*; lit: pig second) and so on down to the smallest pig which is the last in the line. They display the other items of wealth either on a bed of fern fronds called *aeguwp aeguwp* (lit: tree ferns, *Cyathea* sp.?) or on a bed of casuarina sprigs called *naep* (lit: casuarina tree, *Gymnostoma oligodon* Johnson).

The relatives of the girl come to view the displayed wealth and their deliberations mark a crucial stage in the negotiation of a marriage. It is at this time, more than any other, that the marriage is likely to fail, not because the couple are unsuited but because the wealth offered for the girl is insufficient in the opinion of her relatives. At the display of the bridewealth the bride's relatives and the groom's relatives negotiate and bargain in an attempt to achieve what both parties consider an equitable exchange. The wrangling and argument over the bridewealth between her relatives and his relatives is called *injiykab tainz kay* (lit: bridewealth argue (?) say).¹² The groom leaves the handling of his marriage to older relatives and he has nothing to do with the negotiations. He sits quietly to one side and gives the impression that of all the people present he is the least interested. A possible explanation

Wola hedge this first fragile month of a marriage with sexual taboos and rituals designed to protect the young husband from the danger of sexual intercourse.

¹² The Wola also refer to the demands for more wealth in this and other exchanges as *piyp kay* (lit: increase say).

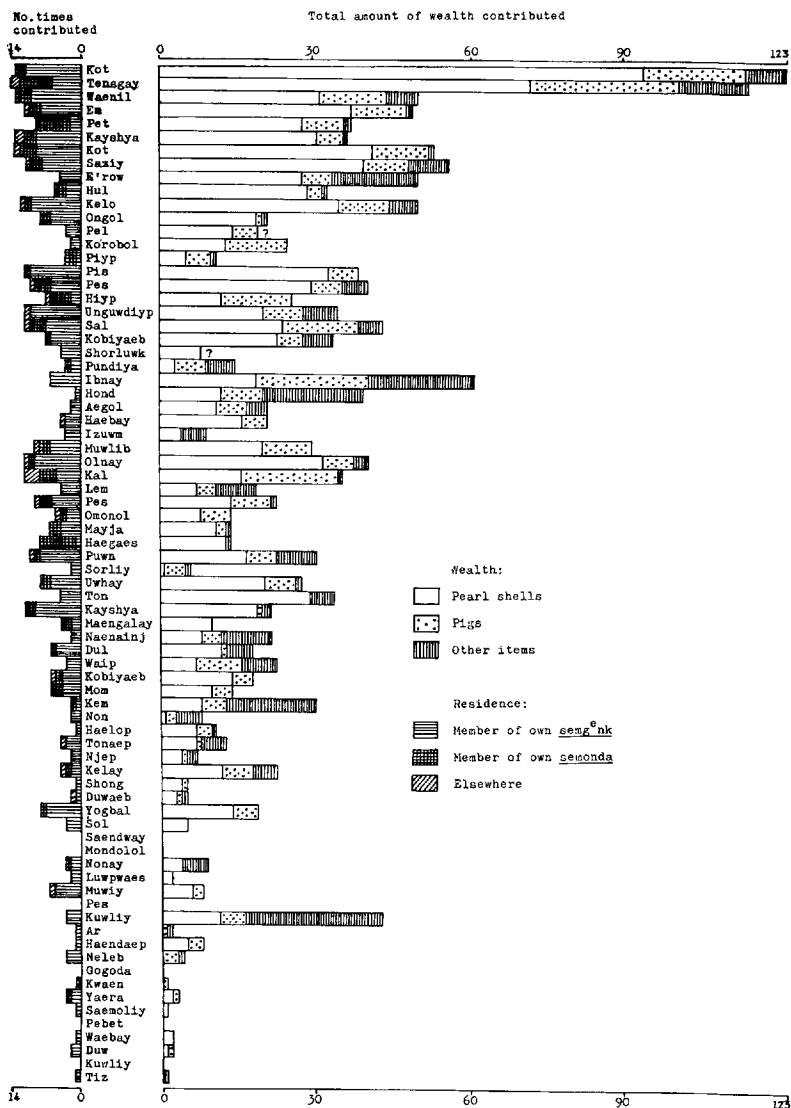


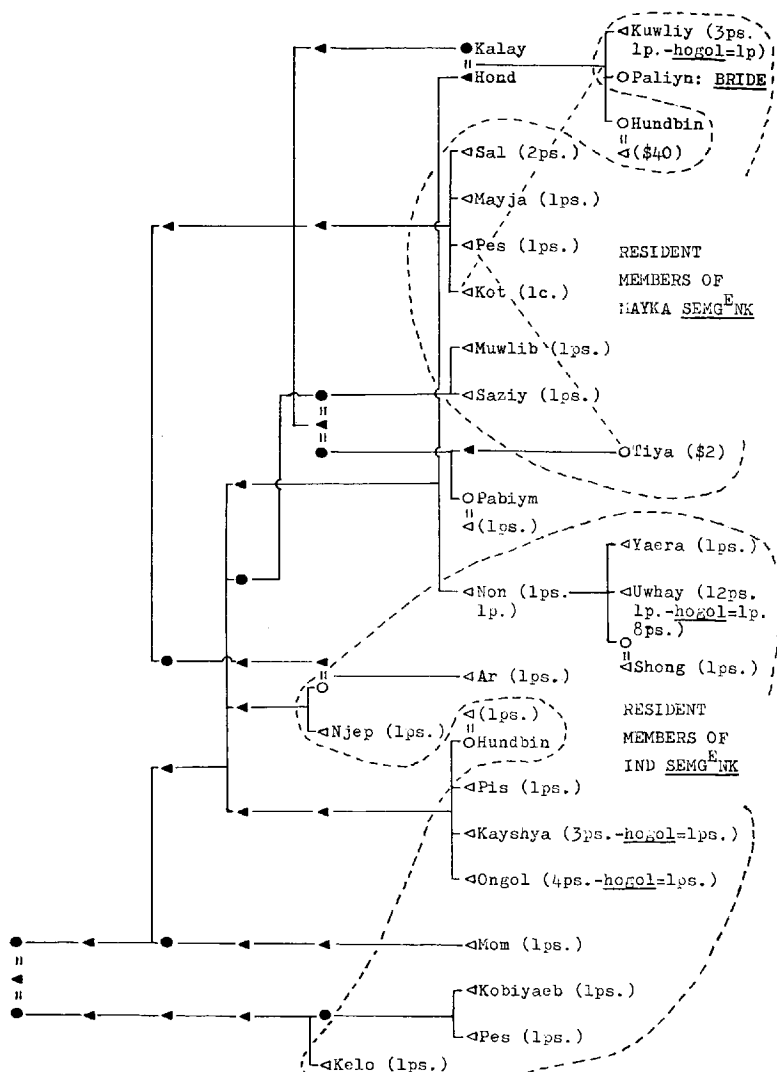
FIG. 12 The number of times and amounts of wealth men have contributed to bridewealths

of the groom's behaviour is that the social objective of the exchange, which is the creation of a new relationship, is opposed to the unsociable nature of the haggling over the wealth offered for the girl, and that it would be antithetical to the purpose of the transaction, from his point of view as the principal party in the new relationship, to participate in the heated negotiations for his bride.

The negotiations over the bridewealth are not simply the result of greed on the part of the bride's relatives to secure the maximum payment possible for her. They result from the problems which they experience as they try to achieve a fair share-out of the wealth among themselves. The bride's relatives are conditioned by their society to think that a fair distribution of the bridewealth is important because it has similar socially cohesive effects as contributions to the payment have on the relations between the groom's relatives. The close male relatives of the bride (usually father and brothers) participate more actively than other men in the negotiations because the allocation of valuables from the bridewealth to various relatives of the bride is their responsibility. If one of the bride's relatives does not think her father offers him sufficient wealth he will protest and if his objections are reasonable the father will try to satisfy his demands for a more just share. The bride's father offers valuables to all his eligible relatives who know from conventional standards how much wealth they deserve to receive. The major factors which determine a man's share are his relation to the bride and the interest he has shown in her welfare as a child. Invariably the bride's relatives reach a compromise solution between their desires, the amount of wealth offered and the number of people on their side with fair claims to a share of the bridewealth.

The following case history of a bridewealth distribution observed at Aendwariy (a place near Haelaelinja occupied by members of Ind *semgenk*) shows the kind of yardstick which the bride's relatives use to achieve a fair share-out of a bridewealth in the face of conflicting claims:

Paliyn's mother and father died while she was a small girl, and with her elder sister and baby brother she went to live with her MFBS (Mayka Kot) at Haelaelinja. When her elder sister Hundbin married, the Mayka men (her mother's relatives) took the lion's share of the bridewealth and supplied the



(Also 2ps. to two other men (one a friend of Hond, the other a kalay to Paliyn)).

ps.=pearl shell p.=pig c.=cassowary

FIG. 13 The distribution of Paliyn's bridewealth

valuables for the return payment (*hogol*). When a boy proposed to marry Paliyn and invited her relatives to inspect the wealth he offered for her marriage, her relatives deliberated and argued for nine days before they reached an agreement about the distribution, and consented to the exchange.¹³ Paliyn's father's relatives (members of Ind *semgenk*) insisted that it was their turn to supervise the distribution of wealth and supply the valuables for the return payment to the groom's relatives (see figure 13 for details). The Mayka men consented to this proposal and Ind Uwhay (Paliyn's FBS) proceeded to act *in lieu* of the bride's deceased father. He put up the major part of the wealth in the return *hogol* payment and claimed the only cassowary as his fair share of the bridewealth. Kot disputed his right to the bird and argued that he deserved the most prized item because he had fended for Paliyn and was equivalent to her father.¹⁴ Remembering how they had missed out in Hundbin's bridewealth distribution the Ind men disagreed and pointed out that they were acting in the exchange as the bride's closest relatives. Kot dug his heels in and declared that he either received the cassowary or he would accept nothing. The other Mayka men supported Kot in his claims by saying they also would accept nothing if his request was refused. Eventually the Ind men backed down and Uwhay relinquished his claim to the cassowary and settled for twelve pearl shells and a pig. There were also other protests from some Mayka men who considered the proposed division of the wealth unfair. Mayka Sal pointed out that Paliyn had areas in his gardens and he deserved a big pig, and Mayka Pes and Mayka Muwlib were both disgruntled about the poor quality of pearl shells offered to them; especially when they saw the superior shells given to distantly related Ind men who had done nothing for the welfare of Paliyn. After backing down on the cassowary, however, the Ind men refused to concede to the claims of these Mayka men. Sal nearly came to blows with Uwhay, and Pes and Muwlib stormed off and refused to accept the valuables offered to them (Kot took these shells and both men accepted them a few days later when their tempers had cooled down).

The self-interested bargaining of some of the Mayka men in this example is typical of the behaviour seen at many exchanges, as

¹³ They did not discuss and argue about the bridewealth on all nine days.

¹⁴ Cassowaries have increased in value with the arrival in the Wola area of a new pig kill sequence from the east in which men kill as many cassowaries as they can obtain.

men try to secure the best deal for themselves, and it shows clearly the two-sidedness of exchange as it pits individuals competitively against one another and at the same time mollifies the unsocial attitudes which this engenders by promoting social interaction. The threat of some Mayka men to accept nothing if their claims were not met was a direct assault upon the social purpose of the exchange and although, in the light of Pes's and Muwlib's later acceptance of their share, it is difficult to judge how serious these threats were, they reflect badly upon the ability of the men responsible for making the distribution and, if these disgruntled men had stuck to their guns, it would have been tantamount to a refusal to recognise the marriage. The argument used by Kot to justify his claim shows the importance of residence and practical support in everyday life in deciding the exchange matters of Wola life. When the marriage was completed the behaviour of Paliyn and her husband, when they visited the Haelaelinja area, underlined this point because, in spite of the Ind men's supervision of the exchange, they stayed with Kot's family. The example of Paliyn's bridewealth is atypical for two reasons: firstly the death of both her parents resulted in the close participation of two groups of kinsmen in the distribution of the wealth, and secondly, even by today's inflated standards, the bridewealth offered for her marriage was large. In fact during the arguments between the Ind and Mayka men the exasperated groom's relatives threatened to call off the marriage if Paliyn's relatives did not reach a satisfactory decision quickly because the bridewealth was large and they could soon find another girl whose relatives would be only too pleased to consent to a marriage. It is more usual for the bride's relatives to make this kind of threat because of the inadequate bridewealth offered for the girl.

The marriage of Huwlael Kuwliy observed at Haelaelinja illustrates the usual situation at a bridewealth exchange, with threats and refusals from the bride's relatives because they thought the bridewealth was inadequate, and manipulations by the groom to meet their demands:

Kuwliy tried on several occasions over a period of three months to marry Ponpin, a girl from Ya. In an early bridewealth he collected (see figure 14 for details of contri-

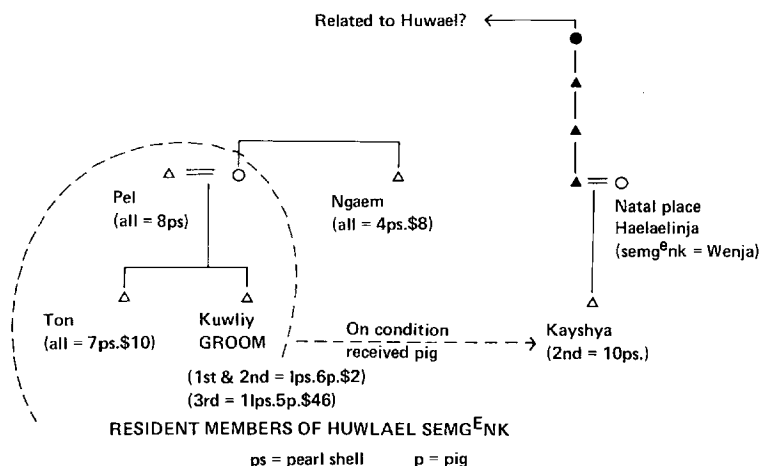


FIG. 14 The contributions to Huwlael Kuwliy's bridewealths

butions) Kuwliy offered twenty pearl shells, six pigs and twenty dollars to Ponpin's relatives. They discussed the offer but her father was unable to satisfy the expectations of his relatives with the wealth offered and refused to proceed with the marriage. He told Kuwliy's relatives that for two pigs and four pearl shells more he could satisfy his relative's demands—but at that price he would refuse to send a pig in the return *hogol* payment. Kuwliy's efforts to marry coincided with the Ebay pig kill (see chapter 4) and Ind Kayshya (a distant relative of Kuwliy) was eager to obtain a pig to kill. He agreed to contribute ten pearl shells towards Kuwliy's bridewealth on the condition that he received the pig in the return payment from the bride's relatives. Ponpin's relatives were satisfied with the increased bridewealth (of thirty pearl shells, six pigs and twenty dollars) and the exchange took place. But the pig returned in the *hogol* payment by Ponpin's relatives was too small in the opinion of Kayshya and he demanded the return of his pearl shells and so annulled the marriage. As the day for the pig kill approached Kayshya became desperate in his search for a pig and finally he came to an agreement with Kuwliy that for ten pearl shells and forty four dollars he could have one of the large pigs from the bridewealth. With another combination of wealth to offer (thirty pearl shells, five pigs and sixty four dollars) Kuwliy invited Ponpin's relatives to Haelaelinja yet again. This time

the bride's father was able to satisfy the expectations of his relatives and the marriage proceeded.

Kuwliy's repeated attempts to marry Ponpin illustrate some further points about Wola attitudes towards bridewealth exchanges, and his manipulations of various combinations of wealth show how social considerations dictate to people's actions because judging by the criteria of market economics the third bridewealth was the same value as the first.¹⁵ The important point was the increase in the number (not the value) of valuables which facilitated an equitable distribution to the bride's relatives. The negotiations which accompany any bridewealth exchange, as this example shows, are the result of social considerations, with the bride's relatives trying to share out the wealth fairly between themselves. The bride's father should not omit anyone with a just claim to a share and if the bridewealth is too small to give an adequate share to everyone according to their desserts her relatives request some extra items. Sometimes the groom's relatives hold back a few valuables to cover these extra demands but if, when they reach the limit of the wealth they have available, the bride's relatives are still unable to achieve a satisfactory share-out they will call off the marriage. Sometimes one or two distant relatives of the bride are disgruntled with their share of the bridewealth (for example Sal, Pes and Muwlib at Paliyn's marriage) but if the majority are satisfied these discontented men will be unable to stop the marriage, and the important thing is for them to accept something and so acknowledge the new relationship of which they are a distant part. Figure 15 shows that there is a considerable variation in the size of bridewealths (regardless of the inflation in the supply of wealth) and this is largely the result of the working out of this social process where the person supervising the distribution has to see eligible relatives receive their share.

The number of relatives on the bride's side who deserve a share of her bridewealth is not the only factor which influences its size. Although a secondary consideration, the strength of the attraction

¹⁵ The transaction with Kayshya was economic because it was carried out on the open market for wealth (in that Kayshya was free to trade for a pig from anyone he could find who had one large enough and was willing to trade it for the pearl shells and money).

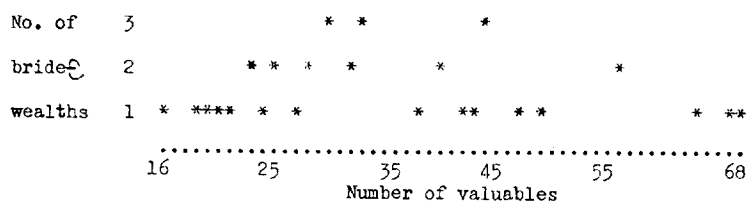


FIG. 15 The variation in the size of bridewealths over the last five years

between the couple can influence the size of the bridewealth; for example if his daughter is genuinely fond of a boy, a father does not want to drive her to do something foolish such as elope with him or indulge in premarital sex, because this will considerably reduce any later bridewealth. Circumstances such as this which surround exchanges can vary considerably and influence the working out of the distribution process in different ways; for instance relatives also accept a reduced bridewealth when a widow remarries (especially if she remarries within her deceased husband's *semgEnk*).

When the bride's relatives agree about the distribution of the wealth they consent to the marriage and the exchange takes place. Sometimes the bride's relatives quickly reach an agreement and the marriage proceeds on the same day as the groom first displays the wealth, but it is usual for the bargaining to take longer and the exchange to take place the day following their agreement.

The bride, unlike the groom, has a part to play in the exchange of her bridewealth. On the day of the exchange she decorates her body with oil and ought to wear a new grass skirt and carry a new bag. Under her bag she wears another bag turned inside out on her head and this is called her *timak tenj* (lit: *timak* hat). Besides her personal decorations, such as a cowrie shell necklace or a small pearl shell pendant, the bride wears a woven bracelet on each bicep in which she tucks two small bamboo knives called *korshiybal*.¹⁶

¹⁶ These bamboo knives, along with various leaves and oddments which the bride carries in her bag, are used in the sexual protection rituals which start when she smears her body with a mixture of charcoal and oil the day following the bridewealth exchange.

At the exchange the bride's kinsmen ought to behave in an orderly fashion and accept the distribution of wealth, but one or two men who think they are hard done by invariably raise their voices in final protest. The formal distribution of a bridewealth is called *muw kal kal bay* (lit: take give give do) because the valuables change hands three times before they reach the recipient. A close relative of the bride, who has led the negotiation of the marriage, supervises the distribution of the wealth, according to the agreements reached with his relatives, by giving each valuable to a close male relative of the groom and telling him the name of the man who is to receive the item. The groom's representative then hands the item of wealth to the bride, telling her who contributed the item to her bridewealth and who is to receive it.¹⁷ The bride then passes the valuable to the recipient. The order of the exchange symbolises the central position of the bride in the new relationship created, and in many of the exchanges which occur between affines after a marriage the Wola similarly acknowledge the linking position of the woman by passing wealth to each other through her hands.

When a man shares out his daughter's bridewealth there are some people he ought to include besides his close relatives. There are those men who contributed to his wife's bridewealth and there are the one or two who are *nay kalay* (lit: food give) to the girl. This latter relation reflects the principle that men receive from a girl's bridewealth according to the interest they have taken in her welfare because *nay kalay* are those men who have treated the girl with special regard, and on occasions have given her delicacies such as pork, pandanus nuts and bananas. Figure 11 shows how often different relatives of the bride received valuables from thirty bridewealths and the average size of their shares. Although direct comparison with contributions is not possible (because of the smaller sample), the pattern shows that more people receive items from a bridewealth than contribute (compare also tables 13 and

¹⁷ A bride is told the names of all the men who contribute to her bridewealth because she is forbidden to utter their names. This name avoidance is called *imbiy waeret bay* (lit: name taboo do). A girl gives a nickname to all the men who contribute to her bridewealth and uses these when she refers to them (she does not have to avoid using her husband's name). There is also a name avoidance taboo on the men who receive wealth from a bridewealth, they ought not to use the names of the men who contributed to the bridewealth.

14). Nobody on the bride's side receives a share comparable to the contribution of the groom and this partly explains the wider spread of the distribution. The relatives of the bride who are resident members of her *semgenk* receive the largest share of the bridewealth but the proportion given to relatives elsewhere is larger than the amount these people contribute to bridewealths. The increase in the frequency and size of the shares received by affinal relatives living elsewhere is of particular significance for the argument that giving wealth on prescribed occasions serves a sociable purpose, because many of the recipients in this category are men who have only recently established a relation with the bride's relatives themselves by handing over wealth to marry one of her kinswomen (for example Paliyn's elder sister's husband, who had only married Hundbin two or three years previously and received \$40 from her bridewealth—see figure 13).

If the distribution of the wealth received for the marriage of a girl has a cohesive effect upon the social relations of the recipients, the inflation in the size of bridewealths since contact means there ought to be an improvement in relations because, as table 14 shows, more people can be included in the share-out.

	0-5 yrs ago	5-10 yrs ago	10-15 yrs ago	15-20 yrs ago	Over 20 yrs ago
Number of bridewealths in sample	15	8	3	2	2
Average number of recipients	15.9	11.9	7.3	11	7
Standard deviation	5.4	6.2	0.6	0	5.7

TABLE 14 The steady increase in the number of men receiving from bridewealths.

The less complete data on receipts from bridewealth makes comments upon the position of *ol howma* difficult. The wider spread of the wealth distribution means that (with few exceptions) one man receives only a few valuables from any one exchange and the indications are that *ol howma* contribute more wealth to bridewealths than they receive. It is significant that successful men contribute to bridewealths without short-term calculations of repayment, because this supports the contention that men help for reasons of self-interest to improve their status. Their contributions do not result in material rewards nor do they create patronage and give influence.

When her relatives have completed the distribution of the wealth the bride returns with her parents to their home. She sleeps there for one night only and returns to her husband the following day with the return payment from her relatives called *ten hogol* (lit: woman *hogol*). This payment is in the region of three or four items of wealth and customarily includes a pig. During the discussion about the sharing of the bridewealth the bride's relatives make an allowance for the man, or men, who agree to supply the wealth for the *hogol* payment (for example one of the bride's brothers may stand to receive two valuables from the bridewealth, but if he agrees to contribute to the *hogol* payment this may increase to five valuables). The extra wealth allowed to the men who pay the *hogol* is called *mowmaek saen paengay* (lit: pearl shell debt hear). The groom's relatives make similar calculations when they decide who should receive the return payment. Sometimes they agree that one man, who contributed a considerable number of valuables to the bridewealth, should take the *hogol*. On other occasions, when no one contributes significantly more wealth, the principal contributors share the return payment between themselves. The *hogol* payment is important because it is an indication of faith on the part of the girl's close relatives to play a full part in the new relationship created by the marriage. Failure to make the return payment can terminate the marriage (for example when Kayshya took back his contribution to Kuwliy's bridewealth because the *hogol* was insufficient).¹⁸

Along with the *hogol* payment the bride's relatives may include some other valuables called *nuwl ma meray* (lit: *nuwl* cause carry). These are an investment with their new relatives, and the men on the groom's side who receive them have to repay twofold at a later date. Also, if the bride's relatives are particularly pleased with the bridewealth they may give one or two items of wealth for which they expect no return (called *ponay*; lit: for nothing).

¹⁸ The possibility of a new marriage failing prompts men to hold onto the valuables which they receive from a bridewealth for a few months so that in the event of a dissolution they can return them and avoid the disputes which may occur over equivalent values if they tried to return different items. In fact men do not tie up the shells they receive from a bridewealth until a few days after the exchange. It is during this time that her relatives are most likely to call off the marriage, and leaving shells untied symbolises this.

A month or so after the bridewealth exchange the husband makes a payment called *ongor goiz* (lit: foot fill up) to his wife's relatives. This payment consists of the late contributions to the bridewealth from relatives and friends of the groom who either live in a distant place and did not hear of the marriage, or who, at the time of the exchange, had no ready wealth but pledged themselves to contribute later when they were solvent. The size of this payment varies according to the number of late contributions to the bridewealth and it may be omitted. Sometimes a marriage goes ahead when there is insufficient wealth in the bridewealth because the two sides reach an agreement that the groom will give a certain amount of wealth in the *ongor goiz* payment to make up the deficit. If he fails to match these promises his new wife's relatives are likely to call off the marriage.

When the rituals designed to protect the husband from the dangers of sexual intercourse are nearing completion he may make a payment called *ten sab liy* (lit: woman marsupial kill) to his wife's relatives. This payment consists of several marsupials trapped by the husband and his relatives and friends. The girl's relatives cook and eat the marsupials and reply with a payment called *pibiy kuwniy* (lit: dew wipe) which normally amounts to one or two valuables. If one man traps most of the marsupials given in the payment he receives the wealth in this return exchange. If several men trap the animals for the payment they share the wealth.

When they have successfully concluded the exchanges which establish a marriage, affinal relatives give each other items of wealth on different occasions throughout the marriage to encourage congenial relations. Sometimes they give each other valuables when they receive an exchange and distribute the wealth. On other occasions their gifts are not prompted by an exchange (for example the *showmay hentiya* payment a man makes to his wife before a pig kill). In some contexts the Wola say they give these items for nothing (*ponay kalay*; lit: nothing give) because they do not expect a specific return, but the recipients do reciprocate these gifts in the long run and this reflects the binding effect these transactions have on the new relationship. Affines do not make these exchanges direct but, as in the distribution of the bridewealth, pass the items on via the woman who joins them

together; when a wife passes wealth to her relatives from her husband (or vice versa) it is called *sort miy* (lit: *sort take*).

Mortuary Exchanges

The generic term for all the exchanges which follow someone's death is *ol umbuguw* (lit: man mortuary payment). A man giving wealth says he is standing the *umbuguw* payment (*ol umbuguw hae*; lit: man mortuary payment stand) and the receiver says he is taking the *umbuguw* (*ol umbuguw miy*; lit: man mortuary payment take).

When someone dies his close relatives lash the corpse to a pole (*ol tongay*; lit: man tie) which they place horizontally between two forked sticks in a house yard. This place of mourning is called the *hombera*. The corpse remains tied to the pole for four or five days and during this time friends and relatives of the deceased come to wail over the corpse. As people keen (*day kay*; lit: cry say) over the corpse they cry out and recite in a sad monotone their relationship to the deceased; for example *na ab* (lit: my father) or *na haemay* (lit: my brother) or *na waenay* (lit: my daughter). It is the women who cluster around the corpse and wail for the duration of the mourning period. Men wail and cry when they first arrive but it is not seemly for them to continue their show of grief, and they form a group some way off (usually at the nearest men's house) and discuss the preparations for the first mortuary exchange. The close female relatives of the deceased wear mourning dress (*dind shay*; Lit: paint *shay*) as another sign of their sorrow. They smear their faces and bodies with white clay (*tongom*) and they wear long grass shirts which reach to their ankles, and hang around their necks numerous strings of *haluw* beads (lit: Job's tears, *Coix lachryma-jobi* L.). As a sign of extreme grief both male and female relatives of the deceased may chop off a digit (*jy pelay*; lit: finger chop), or men may cut off their beards (*shong iriy pundiyay*; lit: chin hair cut), or women may cut off an ear lobe (*hael payay*; lit: ear cut). When the wailing period nears completion two distant relatives or friends of the deceased prepare a grave. The Wola dispose of corpses in a variety of ways which

include burial in the ground, exposure on a rock ledge or interment in a coffin built above the ground.¹⁹

When the people come to mourn over the corpse they bring valuables to contribute to the first mortuary payment which follows a death. The first mortuary payment, called *ol gwat* (lit: man *gwat*),²⁰ appears at the top of figure 16 which summarises the complicated cycle of mortuary exchanges and shows the direction and timing of the various transactions.

The wealth for an *ol gwat* exchange accumulates from the contributions made by the deceased's close relatives from their own holdings, and from the valuables these men receive as gifts from their relatives and friends. The Wola say that close relatives of the deceased give wealth to show the sorrow they feel at their loss, and other people give valuables to these men because they are sorry for the grief they experience. People do not decide to whom to give wealth on the basis of grief only (because if they did the closest living relatives of the deceased would receive all the *ol gwat* contributions direct), but base their decisions on their relations with the various bereaved relatives. A man gives wealth to those relatives of the deceased person with whom he has the closest relationship, and if a man maintains a close relationship with more than one of the deceased's relatives he may split up his contribution and give valuables to each man. This pattern of contributions serves to cement individuals together because people give wealth to those men with whom they maintain the closest relations, and not directly to the deceased's closest relatives. For example, if a man's daughter's husband's father's brother's son dies he is unlikely to maintain close relations with, and consequently give wealth to, the deceased's brother but he is likely to have close relations with his daughter's husband and will give his *ol gwat* contribution to this man.

When a man receives *ol gwat* contributions from his relatives

¹⁹ Unlike the Melpa (see Strathern 1971: 191-5) the Wola do not mark the death of an *ol howma* with a different style of mourning or a special type of grave; the only restriction to which they subscribe is that exposed coffins are suitable for men only. This brief account of death omits many details; for example if men do not know the reason for a death they perform an autopsy on the corpse and if their verdict is that an ancestor is responsible they will bury the corpse and arrange a series of purgative rituals.

²⁰ Another name for this exchange is *ol hul* (lit: man bone).

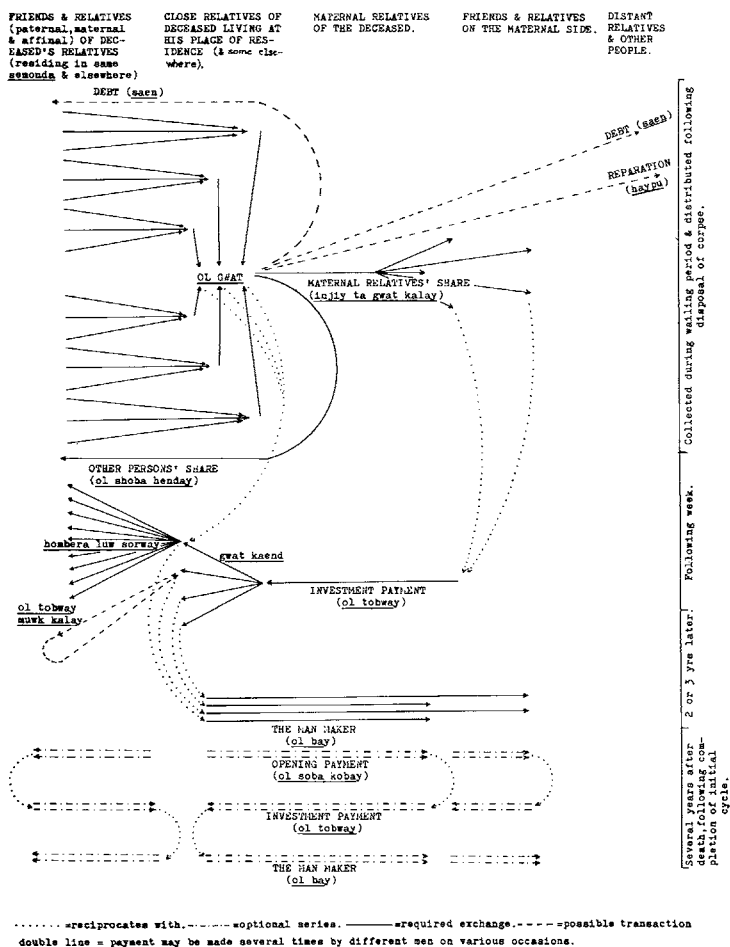


FIG. 16 The ideal sequence for the mortuary series of exchanges

he takes the wealth, along with his own contributions to the exchange, and gives it to the one or two closest relatives of the deceased who are supervising the accumulation of all the wealth for the ensuing exchange. The closest and most bereaved relatives of the deceased thus receive indirectly, via the hands of their

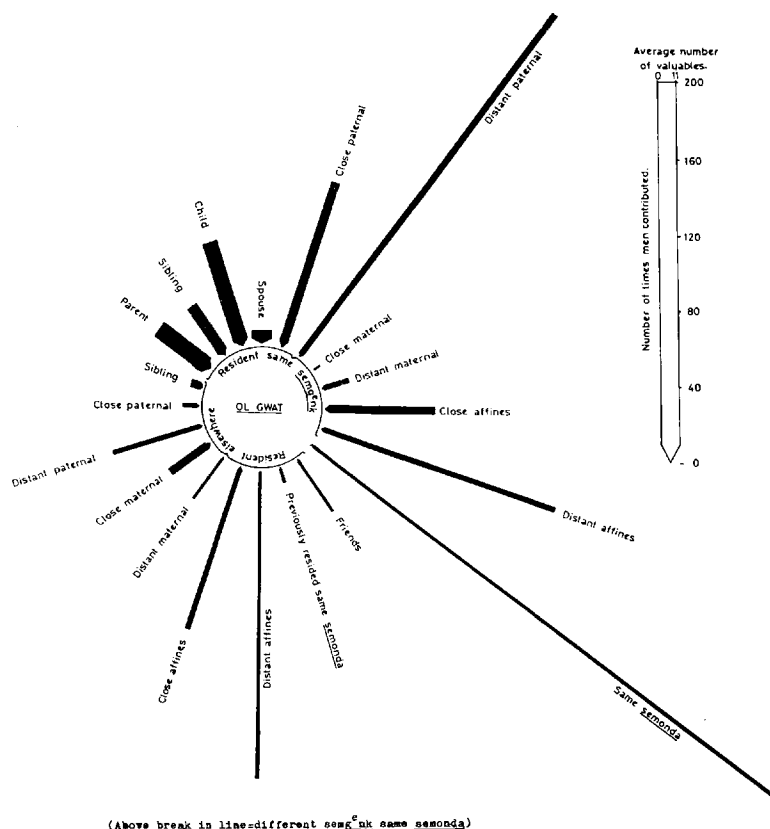


FIG. 17 The number of times and average amounts of wealth men have contributed to *ol gwat* exchanges

relatives, all the contributions to the exchange, and the sight of the accumulating wealth is said to help assuage their grief. The collection point for the wealth is usually the men's house nearest to the place of mourning. During the period of wailing therefore there flows along numerous channels a steady stream of wealth which the deceased's relatives collect together to make the first mortuary exchange.

The Wola do not specify by convention which relatives ought to contribute to the *ol gwat* exchange and the range of persons who

may contribute is wide. Figure 17 shows the average number of valuables given by different categories of relative and the frequency of their contributions.²¹ The closest relatives of the deceased give more wealth than other people. The slightly larger size of the contributions made by people living in the same area as the deceased, in comparison with the contributions made by people living elsewhere, correlates with the more frequent contributions they also make. The figure shows that while contributions are not restricted to a narrow category of relative or to a specific geographical area, relatives resident at the deceased's place of residence contribute more regularly than relatives residing elsewhere. This is a reflection of the importance of locality in Wola social relations. Men maintain more relations with people who live in the same area as themselves than they do with people who live elsewhere. The material collected shows the wide range of relatives (living at the same place and elsewhere) who may contribute to this exchange, and this reflects the empirically cognatic nature of Wola society, whereas the grouping of relatives into categories in figure 17 gives emphasis to paternal relatives because the majority of men in any sample will reside at the same place as their father. This case material indicates that contributions to the first mortuary exchange help the Wola to reaffirm a wide range of relations with people living nearby and to a slightly lesser extent with relatives living elsewhere.

Although there are no conventions which place men under an obligation to contribute to the *ol gwat* payments which follow the deaths of specific relatives, there are occasions when men expect others to contribute to an exchange. When someone dies with whom a man has maintained an active relationship (and to a lesser extent with whom one of his relatives has maintained a close relationship) others expect him to contribute to the first mortuary exchange. Also, men ought to reciprocate contributions they have

²¹ The quantitative material on *ol gwat* exchanges, and the relationships between the people participating in these exchanges, comes from information on 1,369 individual contributions made by members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* to a total of 382 *ol gwat* exchanges (187 exchanges for deceased members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* and 195 exchanges for relatives living elsewhere). The relationships are recorded according to the deceased's relation to the contributor—although the actual recipient of the wealth was a close relative of the deceased.

received on behalf of a deceased relative by in turn giving wealth when a relative of the contributor dies. If a man fails to meet the expectations of others his reputation suffers because such behaviour is the hallmark of a less respected man. If a man finds himself without ready wealth he may enter into debt and borrow valuables or, at *ol gwat* exchanges only, he may persuade someone to give him wealth on the understanding that when the creditor needs wealth to contribute to a future mortuary exchange he will help him.

In keeping with the assertions of the Wola, figure 18 shows (allowing for variations resulting from differences in age and other factors mentioned previously) that there is a trend for men of higher status to contribute more wealth to a larger number of *ol gwat* exchanges than other men. This figure suggests that men of renown actively maintain a larger network of relations than other men by contributing to more exchanges. It is difficult to comment upon the significance of the pattern of the contributions made by successful men, other than to point out the way in which their increased contributions promote social cohesion. The fact that they make more contributions to affinal relatives, of whom they have more than other men because they have two or more wives, accounts for this in part. This corroborates the argument of a previous chapter that plural marriage is not simply a case of scraping together sufficient wealth to pay another bridewealth, but that it also involves a man in a larger network of relations which he must maintain through exchange. Also, the more wives a man has, the more children he is likely to have die, and the more *ol gwat* payments he will be obliged to make.

If wealth transactions help maintain a stable social milieu then the evidence from *ol gwat* exchanges indicates that *ol howma* do more than average to maintain stability. They contribute more often than other men when members of their own *semondadie* and this earns them the respect of others as well as promoting social co-operation within their territory. Beyond this group they also maintain a larger network of relations, particularly affinal relations, which they create and maintain by their ability to handle wealth.

When they have disposed of the corpse, the men supervising the *ol gwat* exchange display the wealth which they have collected,

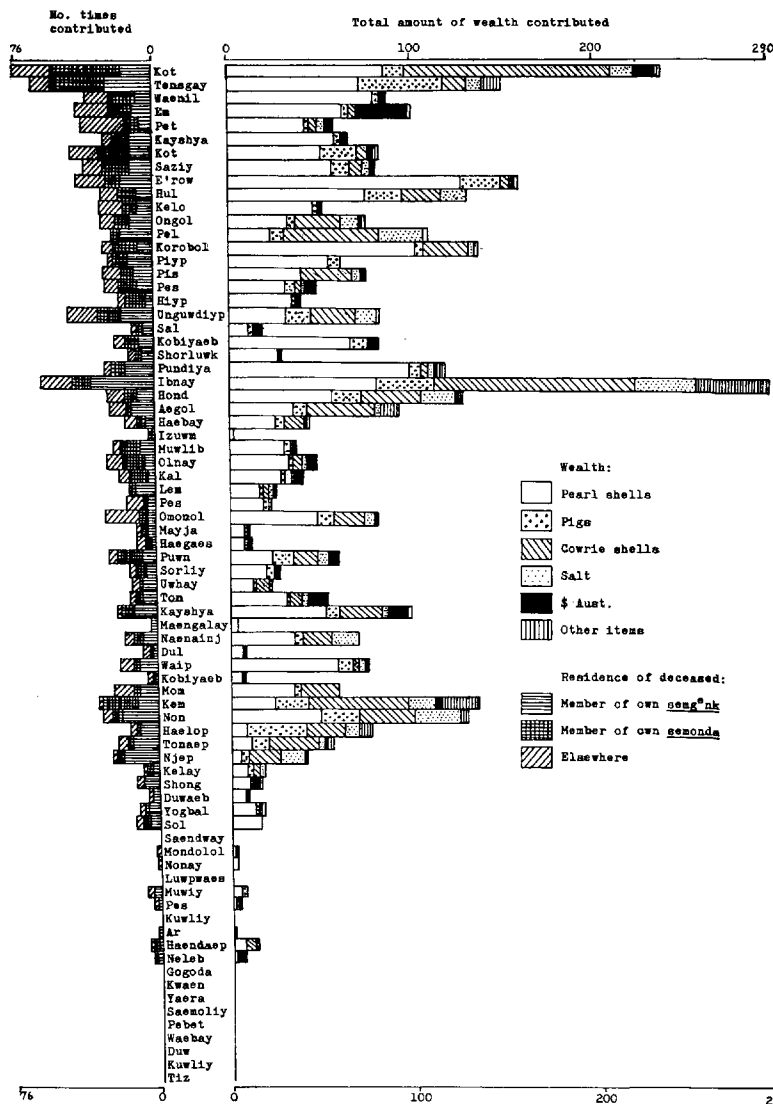


FIG. 18 The number of times and amounts of wealth men have contributed to *ol gwat* mortuary exchanges

before distributing it. The pattern of the contributions to the *ol gwat* exchange gives a clue to the logic behind the distribution. It shows, as do the patterns of contributions to other exchanges, that people residing at the same place as the principal party to the transaction contribute more often than those living elsewhere, and this suggests that relations are stronger between people residing at the same place. The conventions covering the distribution of an *ol gwat* set out to offset this tendency. In this context it is significant that the marriage rules of the Wola (which require men to marry into *semonda* where they have no direct paternal or maternal relations) force men to create new relations in areas where they do not live. In a society where the majority of men reside at the same place all their lives the result is that only some of a man's relatives benefit from the effects of residence near him. If a man follows the ideological preference of Wola society and lives at the place of his father then he is in danger of neglecting to some extent his mother's relatives and his wife's relatives. Some men try to compromise and adopt a migratory life between two places but this is not a popular solution. It is by exchanging wealth on certain occasions that men give some durability to these other relations. This is the reason why men give a large part of the wealth which they collect in the *ol gwat* to the deceased's mother's relatives to share among themselves in a payment called *injiy ta gwat kalay* (lit: mother small family²² *gwat* give)²³ because if a man has followed the residential preferences of his society and resided patrilocally then by the time he dies, relations with his mother's relatives will have reached an all time low. By requiring the deceased's relatives to exchange with his maternal relatives the Wola avert an immediate termination of relations.

Men also make other payments at the distribution of the *ol gwat* wealth. According to convention the two men who prepare the grave and dispose of the corpse receive a pearl shell each. The men responsible for the distribution may also give a few valuables to one or two of their relatives and friends and these payments are

²² *Ta* is another term for *semgenk*. *Ta* is also a term for the branch of a tree and is another figurative reference likening genealogical descent to the branches of a tree.

²³ If the deceased's maternal relatives receive contributions to the *gwat* they do not pass the wealth on to the pool but keep it for themselves.

called *ol shoba henday* (lit: man *shoba* see). When they assume responsibility for any of the deceased's outstanding exchange obligations, his close relatives may use some of the *gwat* wealth to pay off some of these debts. Sometimes this leads to arguments because the deceased's relatives deny knowledge of a transaction for which a man demands repayment. If the deceased was closely related to someone who caused a war in which other men took the responsibility of indemnifying the relatives of men killed, some of the *ol gwat* wealth may be used to make *haypuw* payments to reimburse these men. The Wola believe that the ancestral spirits of men who do not receive reimbursement for reparation payments may become angry and attack the men responsible for making the reimbursement or *haypuw* payment, and if the relatives of the deceased think that this is the reason for his death a *haypuw* payment is probable.

In reality the contributions to an *ol gwat* exchange and the subsequent distribution of wealth constitute a complicated series of transactions which it is difficult to follow. In an attempt to convey the essence of these exchanges and to illustrate their underlying principles I outline three transactions to which I contributed.²⁴ The circumstances surrounding each exchange were different and the way in which these influenced the pattern of each transaction brings to light the fundamental concepts behind these payments.

In all of the cases, the deceaseds' relatives buried the corpses at the place where they had lived, and they also conducted the *ol gwat* exchange there. This accords with the importance of residence as a factor which serves to strengthen the relations between people, regardless of their kinship affiliations to the place where they live. The place where they bury the corpse is important to the Wola because it indicates which relatives are responsible for the collection of the *ol gwat* wealth. The relatives who had the

²⁴ These examples of *ol gwat* exchanges are given as collected in the field with no attempt to make the debit and credit sides of the transactions balance. I was unable to follow precisely any exchange because of the large volume of wealth which changed hands in numerous transactions at the same time. The interest men have in their own transactions, to the exclusion of others, meant that I was unable to obtain all the information on one exchange from one or two informants only, and without searching out and questioning every participant it was not possible to document exactly an entire exchange.

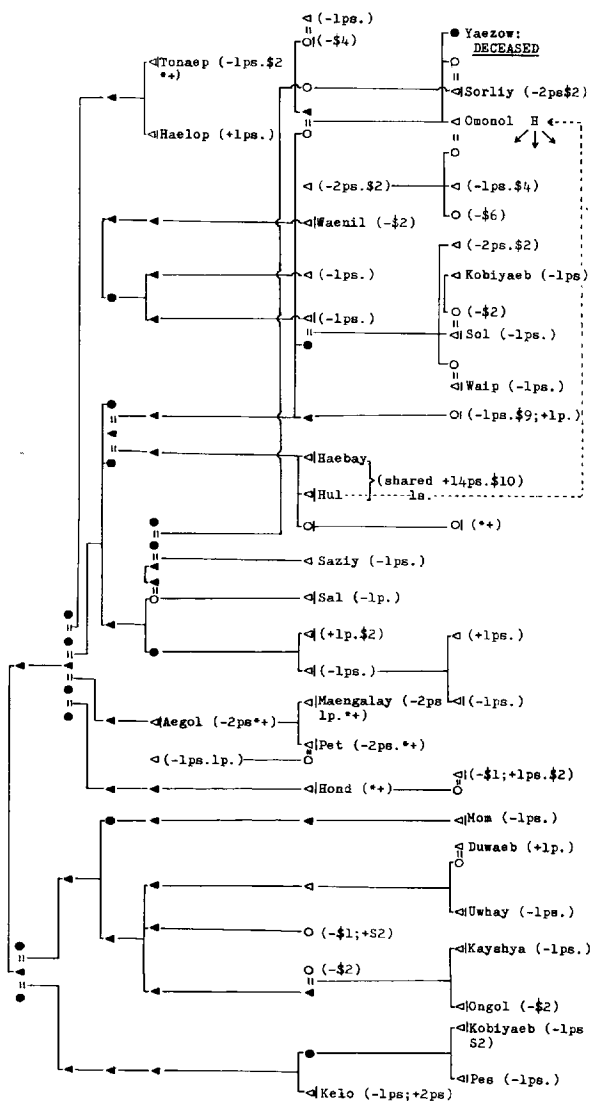


FIG. 19 The ol gwat and hombera exchanges which followed Kolomb Yaezow's death

closest relations with the deceased and lived with him should reaffirm their relations with relatives of the deceased who live elsewhere by presenting them with some of the accumulated *ol gwat* wealth. Sometimes it is not clear where the deceased should be buried. A young man, for example, who lived at his mother's place at Dayowtinja, died suddenly from what his relatives thought was poisoning. He had only lived at Dayowtinja for a couple of years and his father's relatives arrived and announced their intention of carrying the corpse back to their place for burial. There was an argument and many men expressed confusion over which relatives ought to give the *gwat*, and which relatives ought to receive it. The principle of residence (which the mother's relatives argued, saying 'Hayaeb (the deceased) lived here so we must organise the first mortuary payment') won the argument and the deceased's relatives reversed the ideological rules so that his father's relatives received from the *ol gwat* accumulated by his mother's relatives.

Sometimes the relations between the deceased and their relatives living elsewhere require men to manipulate further the ideological rules of the first mortuary exchange.

Kolomb Yaezow's *ol gwat* exchange.

When Kolomb Yaezow died (see the genealogy of figure 19), her relatives altered the ground rules in the exchange which they organised. Yaezow was approximately 18 years old when she died and she had resided all her life at her mother's natal place. Her maternal relatives should therefore have reversed the rules and arranged the *gwat* exchange and given wealth to her paternal relatives. They did not do this because since Yaezow's father's death several years earlier there had been little contact with his relatives, who lived about 10 miles away at a place called Pol. Instead of giving wealth to Yaezow's father's relatives, with whom relations were marginal, her mother's relatives arranged the exchange between themselves. The pattern of contributions and receipts, with some men both giving and receiving wealth, reflects the sociological nature of these transactions. While some wealth flowed into Ebay *semonda* from relatives living elsewhere, the overall result of the exchange was a circulation of wealth within the *semonda* directed by Yaezow's elder brother Omonol, who men congratulated for handling the exchange single handed without the support of his paternal relatives. The result of this

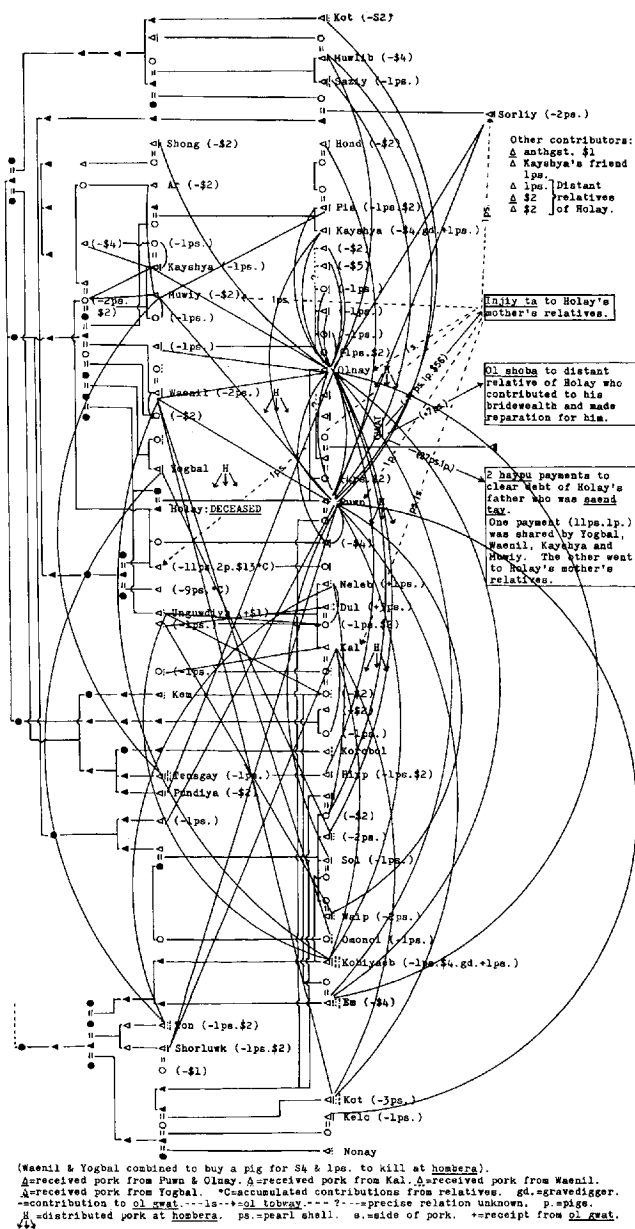


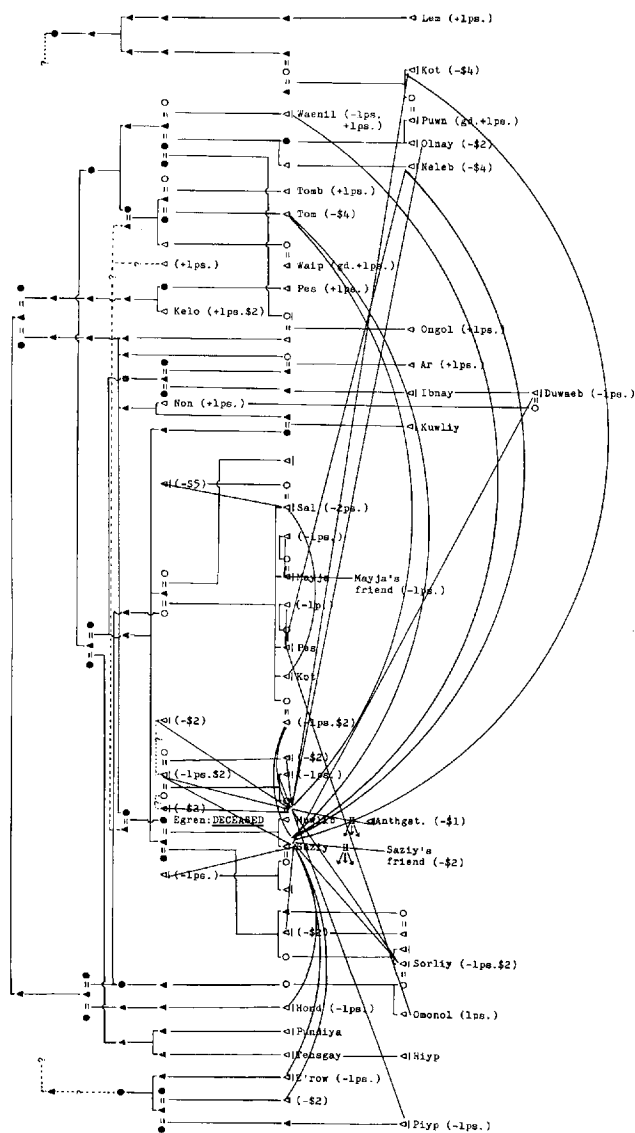
FIG. 20 The *ol gwat* and *hombera* exchanges which followed Wenja Holay's death

exchange was to demonstrate the virtual termination of active relations with Yaezow's father's relatives and to reaffirm relations within Kolomb *semgenk*, particularly *vis á vis* Omonol who, although he has lived at Tomb (the place of Kolomb) all his life, is not living at the place of his father.

Wenja Holay's *ol gwat* exchange.

When he was a young man Wenja Holay fled from his father's place at Paliym after killing a man who had raped one of his relatives. He came to live at Haelaelinja, the place of his wife, and remained here for the rest of his life. The result of his change in residence was that when he died his wife's relatives organized the first mortuary exchange (see the genealogy of figure 20). It was while observing the bewildering number of transactions at this exchange that I started to think of social explanations for the behaviour of participants in these events. At first I was puzzled by the behaviour of some men. Mayka Kot, for example, as a member of the deceased's *semonda* of residence, contributed towards the *ol gwat* and then later he received wealth from the *gwat* via his wife who was born at Holay's mother's place. The result was that in the same exchange Kot reaffirmed two sets of relations. Similarly Holay's two brothers, who had fled to live at their mothers' natal place after the murder, brought contributions to the *gwat* from their relatives at their place of residence. Later these men, who were relatives of Holay's mother, received a share of the collected wealth in the *injiy ta* payment. In another transaction four Wenja men, who played a prominent part in organising and contributing to the exchange, received wealth in a *haypuw* payment to reimburse them for help given by their father to Holay's father who was a *saend tay* in a war. This passing of wealth to and fro between different relatives shows that men may reaffirm several different relations in a single exchange.

During this exchange there was also an argument over the payment of *ol shoba* to a distant relative of Holay who had moved to live some way from Paliym and Haelaelinja. He claimed a share of the *gwat* because he had helped Holay to marry and had not received any wealth when Holay's daughters had married, also he claimed that he had contributed to a reparation payment made on behalf of Holay's father. Holay's eldest son Pwn argued that as he did not know the man he did not agree with him receiving wealth. Olnay (Holay's younger son) and other men present thought the claim was fair and eventually the man received seven pearl shells. This argument over the payment of *ol shoba* illustrates



(Also 2 friends received 1ps. each. Sazy & Muwlb bought 2 sides of pork for \$40 for hombera distribution).
 -contribution to ol gwat. ps.=pearl shells. p.=pigs. gd.=gravediggers.
 +receipt from ol gwat. ----?---=precise relation unknown. H=adistributed pork at hombera
 A Q=received pork at hombera distribution.

FIG. 21 The ol gwat and hombera exchanges which followed Mayka Egten's death

how an exchange can pull together relatives who drift apart—albeit in this case to square up old debts before the relationship finally fades from memory.

Mayka Egten's *ol gwat* exchange.

When Mayka Egten died (see the genealogy of figure 21) she was an old woman living at the place of her husband. In this case her husband's relatives collected the contributions to the *ol gwat* and they distributed the wealth to her father's relatives and to her mother's relatives (sometimes a woman's husband's relatives give the *gwat* to her father's relatives and her father's relatives collect a separate *ol gwat* to give to her mother's relatives). Even in this straightforward exchange there was some criss-crossing of transactions; for example, Tom maintains a house and gardens near Haelaelinja and because of this he decided to contribute to the *ol gwat*, but his half brother Tomb, who lives elsewhere, received wealth from the *gwat* via their relation with Egten's father's relatives.

The rule that the maternal relatives of the deceased should receive the *ol gwat* is irreducible and easy to grasp but the empirical permutations possible on this basic rule are numerous. Factors which influence the pattern of an exchange include the sex and age of the deceased,²⁵ and their place of residence when they die. Other significant factors are the condition of the deceased's relations with relatives living elsewhere, and which of their relatives are living to make the exchange. If a girl dies unmarried, for example, her father will give the *gwat* he collects to his wife's relatives, but if a female lives until she is an old woman, then her sons (if she has any) will hand the wealth which they collect to their mother's mother's relatives and mother's father's relatives. The distribution of the wealth from *ol gwat* exchanges therefore filtrates through a wide network of relatives and serves to bring together geographically dispersed persons, but the direction of the

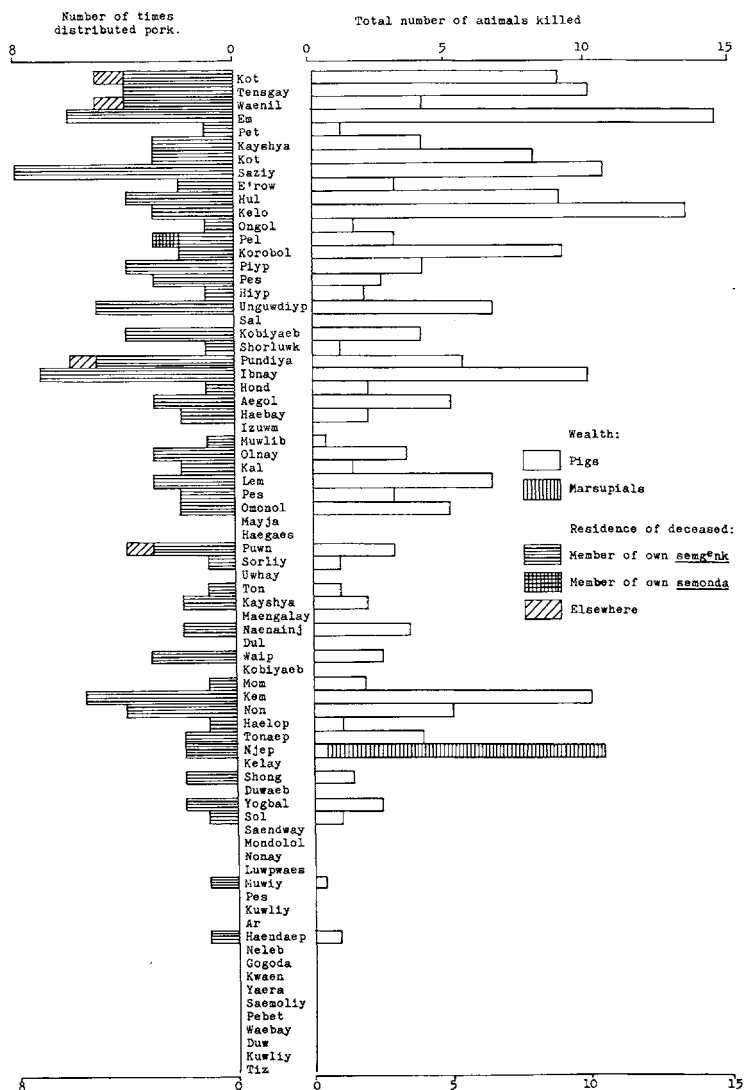
²⁵ The following table lists, according to sex and age, the number of deceased members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* for whom *ol gwat* payments were made within living memory. This table indicates to what extent the sex and age of the deceased influences the proportion of first mortuary payments which pass between different categories or relative.

	Child	Married	Old
Male	65	30	41
Female	84	32	34

flow in any payment is not predictable because it depends upon factors which vary from one situation to another.

The recipients of the *injiy ta gwat* ought to reciprocate with a payment called *ol tobway* (lit: man *tobway*). When they share out the *gwat* wealth, men give consideration to those who agree to make the return payment and give them more valuables than they would otherwise receive, to reimburse them for their outlay. In the initial sequence of mortuary exchanges following a death it is proper that only the recipients of the *gwat* (which ideally means the maternal relatives of the deceased) make the return *ol tobway* payment. The close relatives of the deceased who supervised the collection of the *gwat* accept the *ol tobway* and depending upon the size of the payment either keep it all or share it with their relatives. The *ol tobway* may consist of any valuables, but customarily it includes some pigs and sides of pork which are called *gwat kaend*. The recipients of the sides of pork cook them before distributing the meat to their relatives, and men who receive live pigs may also kill and cook them along with pigs from their own herds (*showmay aenda hae*; lit: pig home stands). It is customary for men who have taken an active part in the *gwat* exchange, and who have received several contributions of wealth from their relatives, to give away pork at this distribution of meat which follows the *ol gwat* exchange. If a man has no pigs to kill and thinks he is obliged to distribute pork, he will trade for an animal (this was the case with Saziy and Muwlib following the death of Egten, and with Waenil and Yogbal following the death of Holay because both deaths occurred soon after a large pig kill which had depleted men's herds). The slaughter and cooking of pigs takes place a week or so after the disposal of the corpse, and is called *hombera luw sorway* (lit: mourning place kill cook in earth oven). The owners of the pork distribute it to their relatives, and in particular to those who gave them contributions for the *ol gwat* exchange. The genealogies in figures 19, 20 and 21 show which men received the *ol tobway* payments following three deaths, which relatives of the deceased distributed pork at the *hombera* and which relatives received a share of this pork.

The graph in figure 22 indicates that men of renown kill more pigs for *hombera* distributions than other men, and this pattern supports the comments made about the higher contributions of

FIG. 22 The number of pigs men have killed for *hombera* exchanges

these men to *ol gwat* exchanges, and the socially beneficial effects of their activities. There are two probable reasons why the number of pigs killed by successful men is not considerably higher and they are, firstly, men only distribute pork when a close relative dies, and secondly, the number of contributions received by one man for an *ol gwat* rarely require him to kill more than two pigs to supply sufficient pork for the return payment (although in extreme grief, men sometimes kill many pigs as a sign of their sorrow and not simply to repay contributors to the *gwat*).

The *ol tobway* payment is actually an investment because two or three years after receiving the wealth, a man is obliged to repay the giver three valuables for every one he received. The Wola call the first valuable which covers the original investment *saen may* (lit: debt take), the second valuable and first item of interest they call *paengay may* (lit: *paengay* take) and the third valuable and second item of interest they call *hemay may* (lit: *hemay* take). The repayment exchange is called *ol bay* (lit: man make).

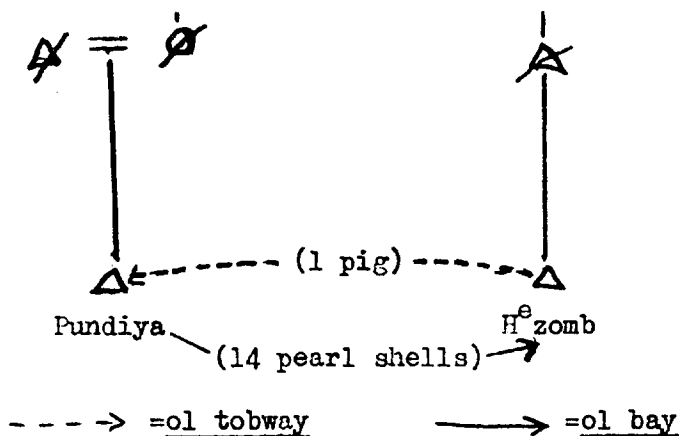


FIG. 23 The *ol tobway/ol bay* sequence of exchanges for Maenget Pundiya's mother

The number of men who give *ol tobway*, and the amounts of wealth they give, varies considerably from one exchange to another. Sometimes the exchange involves only two men; for example see figure 23 which shows the exchange sequence parti-

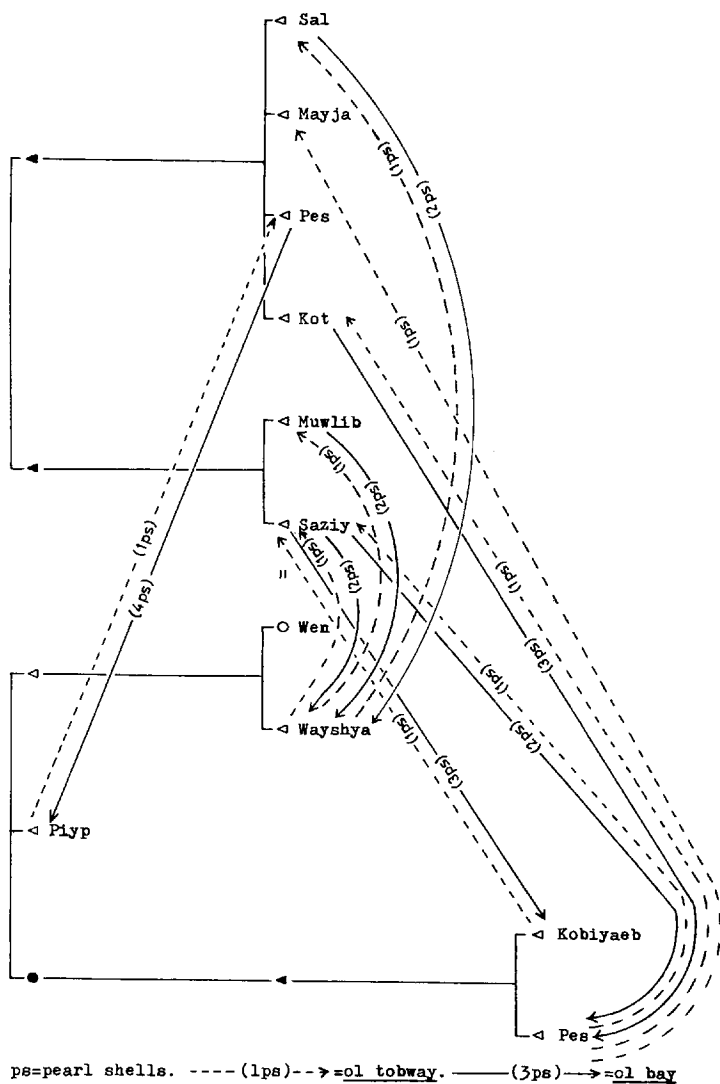


FIG. 24 The *ol tobway/ol bay* sequence of exchanges which followed the death of Mayka Sazi'y's daughter

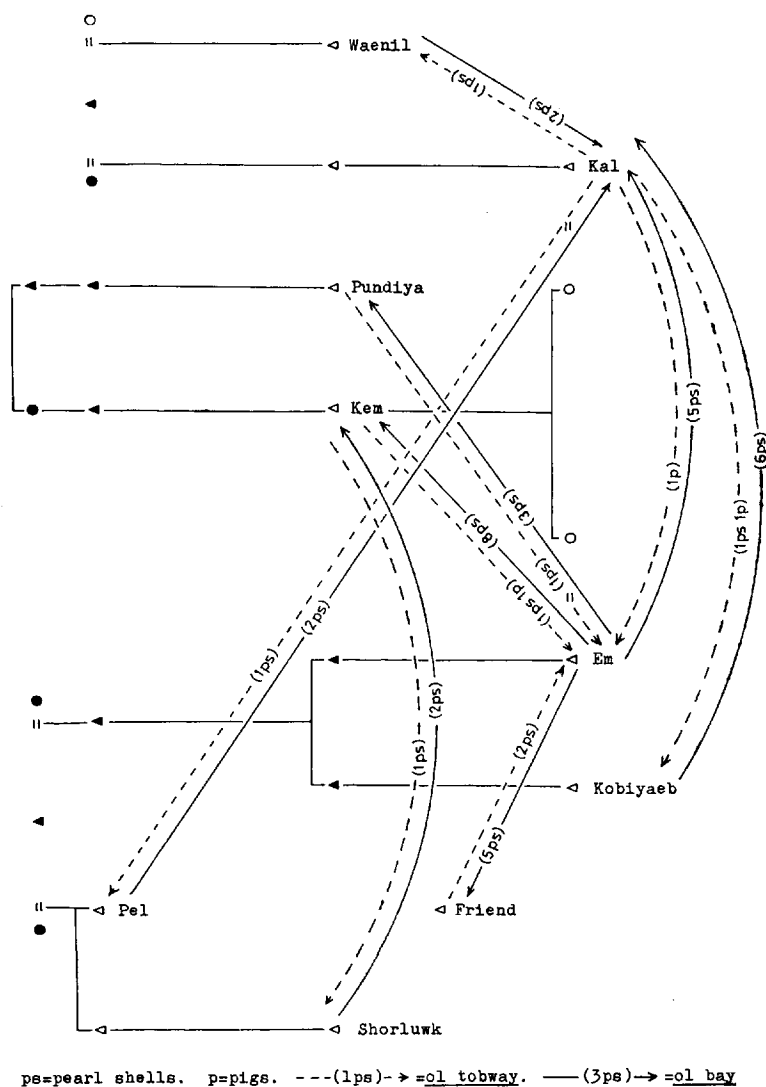


FIG. 25 The *ol tobway/ol bay* sequence of exchanges which followed the death of Huwlael Em's son

cipated in by Maenget Pundiya when he received a pig in the name of his deceased mother.

In other cases the exchange concerns several men; for example the exchange sequences shown in figures 24 and 25 for Mayka Saziya's daughter and Huwlael Em's son.²⁶ If the close relative or relatives of the deceased, who organised the *ol gwat* distribution, receive several items of wealth in *ol tobway* it is usual for them to spread the load and share the wealth with other relatives. This share-out follows a discussion in which men agree to accept the responsibility for repaying the investor later in *ol bay*. The onus for repaying an investment payment falls upon the individual who receives the wealth, and as the two exchanges detailed in figures 24 and 25 show, a man who invests several items of wealth will probably receive repayment from more than one man. In this way one exchange may spin several strands between a number of men and so serve to strengthen further the web of their social relations.

The sharing of the responsibility to repay investment payments between several relatives is another way in which exchange encourages men to co-operate. If this is so, then the more wealth men invest in an exchange the larger the number of potential recipients and the wider this co-operative effect is spread. This means that the inflation in the supply of wealth, as pointed out earlier in the discussion of bridewealth payments, has probably had a beneficial effect on Wola social relations. Table 15, which shows that the average number of participants in the *ol tobway/ol bay* exchange sequence has risen steadily up to the present day, supports this line of argument (unfortunately I do not have comparable material on *ol gwat* exchanges).

The only participants in the first sequence of investment/'man maker' exchanges which follow a death should be the men who accumulated and then distributed the *ol gwat*, and the men who received the *injiy ta* share of the distribution. Ideally this means that the paternal relatives of the deceased, who reside at the place where he lived when alive, should receive investment payments from the deceased's maternal relatives living elsewhere, and out of a total of 366 exchange transactions 63 per cent followed this pattern. As already pointed out, however, giving to the maternal

²⁶ I observed all of the *ol bay* exchanges discussed in this chapter.

relatives of the deceased can involve the participants in dealing with a wide variety of relatives. In fact it is possible for almost any two relatives to engage upon this series of exchanges, particularly as the rules, following the first series of exchanges, place no restrictions upon the people who may participate. Figure 26 shows that men usually receive *ol tobway* investments in the name of close deceased relatives who lived at the same place as themselves, and that in the majority of cases they engage upon these exchanges with relatives living elsewhere.

	0-5 yrs ago	5-10 yrs ago	10-15 yrs ago	15-20 yrs ago	Over 20 yrs ago
Number of exchanges in sample	28	30	32	7	35
Average number of men giving <i>ol tobway</i>	3.4	2.1	1.6	1	1.9
Standard deviation	2.5	1.3	0.8	0	1.1
Average number of men repaying with <i>ol bay</i>	2.8	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.7
Standard deviation	2.1	1.2	1.1	0.8	1

TABLE 15 The increase in the number of men participating in the *ol tobway/ol bay* exchange sequence

The pattern of figure 26 supports the argument developed to explain the rationale behind the distribution of the *ol gwat* wealth.²⁷ If, as the material on contributions to various exchanges indicates (see figures 11 and 17), a man's relations with his relatives who live elsewhere are not as strong as his relations with relatives who live at the same place as himself, then at his death these relations become even more distant for the living. Eventually relations with distant relatives who live elsewhere fade away and men forget them (unless something happens to reactivate them, such as a marriage or change of residence), but the obligation to engage upon the investment/'man maker' series of exchanges ensures that relatives do not drift apart immediately after a death. The number of exchanges with affinal relatives is high in figure 26

²⁷ The quantitative material on the *ol tobway* and *ol bay* series of exchanges, and the relationships of the people participating in these payments, comes from data collected on 366 exchange transactions.

The bulk of this material on mortuary exchanges I collected from the memories of participants and this subjects it to the same provisos about accuracy as those recorded for the other exchanges discussed in this book.

For comparative quantitative data on mortuary exchanges see Meggitt (1965: 197-9, 209-10) on the Mae Enga and Ryan (1961: 167ff.) on the people living in the Mendi valley.

because of the large number of children who die and oblige their fathers' to exchange with their wives' relatives. These exchanges are apposite for the argument put forward here because they serve to reaffirm relationships the continued existence of which the loss of blood ties threatens, because the relations created by a marriage which produces no live children quickly fade with the death of one of the spouses.

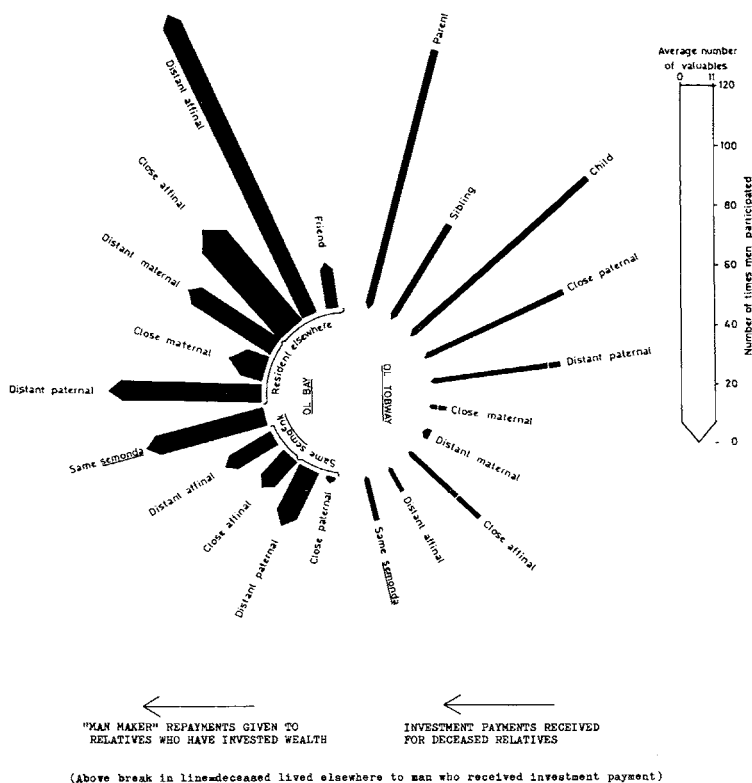


FIG. 26 The number of times and average amounts of wealth men received in *ol toway* investments and repaid in *ol bay* exchanges

Figure 27 shows that men of renown handle more wealth in a larger number of investment/'man maker' exchanges than others, and like the evidence from other exchanges this supports the

assertions of the Wola and the argument of this book. The *ol tobway/ol bay* exchange sequence is not rigid and there are several points of flexibility which allow the system to accommodate both the successful man who loses few close relatives, and the less able man who suffers several bereavements and is unable to cope with the ensuing exchange obligations. The indications are that some of the increased wealth distributed by *ol howma* to more distant relatives is the result of them taking the pressure off less able, but closer, relatives of the deceased. The behaviour of *ol howma* in this way is important because it facilitates the maintenance of social relations which would otherwise suffer by the defaulting of less able men.

The sharing out to several relatives of the wealth received in *ol tobway* helps to ease the burden on less able men. The omission of the entire exchange sequence is a less popular way of taking the pressure out of the system (although men omitted the *ol tobway/ol bay* exchange sequence following 42 per cent of the 227 deaths remembered by members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*, whereas they only omitted the *gwat* exchange following 0.9 per cent of these deaths) because it jeopardises the continuation of active relations and so usually only occurs when relations have virtually ceased anyway. Another way men can reduce their exchange load is to pass on the wealth they receive in *ol tobway* investments to other men in a transaction called *ol tobway muwk kalay* (lit: 'investment payment' receive give). This places the onus for raising the interest on another man who, before the *ol bay* exchange, must give the original receiver of the investment sufficient wealth to repay the investor.

In addition to helping out less able relatives there are two other ways successful men can increase their exchange commitments over and above those required of them by the death of close relatives. It is possible for them to initiate an exchange in the name of an old relative who is still alive, and there are no restrictions upon the men who can participate in such a transaction (with the exception of the old person, in whose name men make the payment, who may not participate in his own 'mortuary' exchange).²⁸ The other way in which a man who suffers no current

²⁸ When the old person does die his relatives may repeat the *ol tobway/ol bay*

bereavements can participate in a series of mortuary exchanges is for him to repeat the exchanges for someone who died long ago. A man who wishes to dig up a previous mortuary exchange initiates the sequence by giving his partner a payment called *ol soba kobay* (lit: man *soba* dig up) which in lieu of the *ol gwat* (which men make only once after a death) obliges the recipient to reciprocate with an investment payment.

During the months before an *ol bay* exchange the men making the payment calculate the wealth which others owe them (for example from their own *ol tobway* investments, loans to others or a share from the bridewealth of an expected marriage) and try to collect it in preparation for the exchange. As a man accumulates the wealth which he plans to give in an exchange he arranges to display it for viewing by the men who will receive it. These displays are called *mowmaek tuwshiy* (lit: pearl shell show) and the discussions and arguments which accompany them, and sometimes accompany the exchange itself, result from the self-interested struggles of individuals trying to secure the best deal for themselves in transactions which paradoxically transcend the value placed upon the sovereignty of the individual and turn it to social advantage. The fact that the investor can only make demands upon the man who received his wealth (for example although a man may demand the wealth offered by his partner to someone else in the exchange, he cannot demand the wealth offered to a relative by one of the other participants) is a further reflection of the central position of the individual in Wola society even in the context of a group activity. The ultimate sanction which ensures men repay with an adequate interest on the investment is, as in all other exchanges, loss of status, and figure 27 indicates that *ol howma*, considering the larger volume of wealth they handle, keep up a consistently good rate of return on wealth invested with them (a complicating factor which alters the rate of repayment is the quality value of the items invested; for example the pig Pundiya received (see figure 23) was very large and required several pearl shells in repayment, whereas the pearl shell

sequence again. It is not permissible to initiate an exchange in the name of a young or middle aged person; the subject must, so to speak, have one foot in the grave.

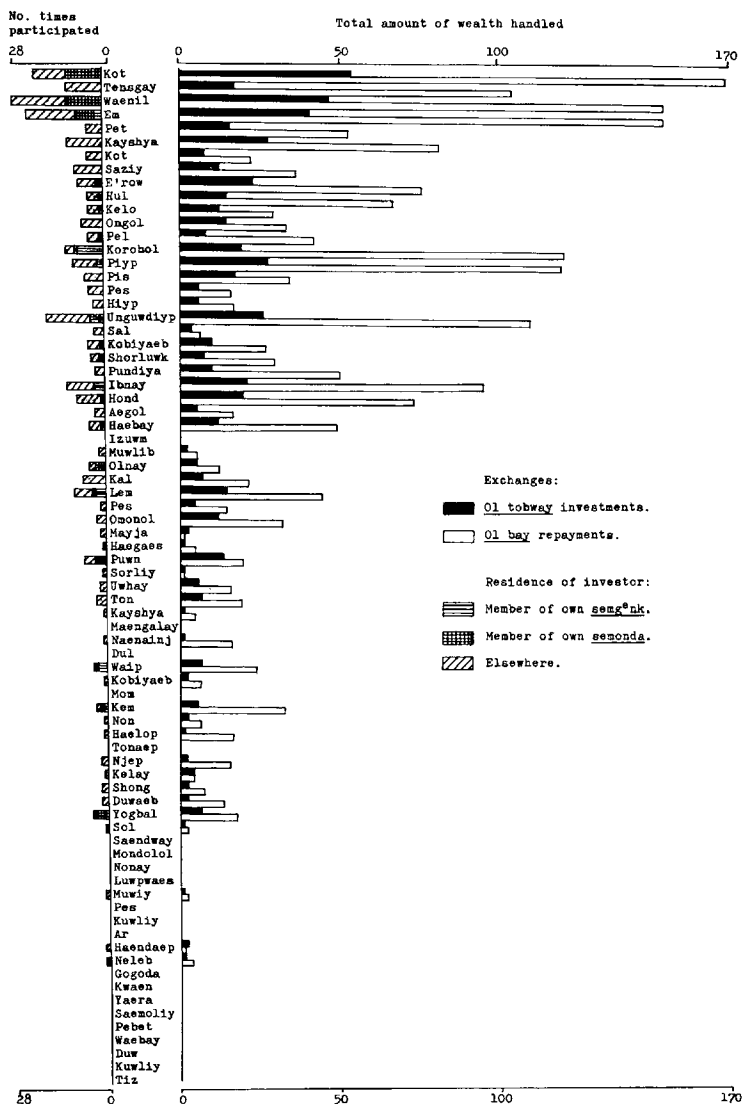


FIG. 27 The number of times men have participated in the later mortuary exchanges, showing the wealth invested with them in *ol tobway* and that repaid in *ol bay*

invested by Kal with Waenil (see figure 25) was small and required only a small repayment).

If an exchange concerns several men they will try to fix upon a day when they will all be ready to make their repayments and can display their wealth together. Sometimes the participants experience difficulty arranging the day for an exchange so that it suits them all, but they endeavour to act in unison because the more wealth displayed in an exchange in which a man takes part, the more he benefits from the reflected glory and prestige of such an occasion. Men stake out in a line the pigs they intend to give and they decorate their backs with stripes of white clay. They arrange the pearl shells and other valuables on a bed of fern or casuarina leaves either outside or inside a men's house. An exchange in which several men participate is usually accompanied by a dance. The men giving wealth, any men who helped them accumulate the wealth²⁹ and the men receiving the wealth wear their finest decorations, and other men not directly involved in the exchange wear their second best decorations. The men perform a stomping dance called *tomp* in which they hold a large bladed ornamental stone axe in one hand and clasp a bow and arrows in the other hand. Sometimes men giving wealth are carried away by the excitement of the occasion and they fill a bag with the pearl shells they are to give and dance with this on their backs.

Reparation and Reimbursement Exchanges

When someone suffers a violent death the Wola say that there ought to be an exchange of wealth between the party responsible for the death and the relatives of the deceased. If a man dies while fighting in a war then the people responsible for starting the fight (on whose behalf the deceased man was fighting as an ally) ought to give wealth in a series of exchanges to the deceased's relatives. It is for this reason that it is crucial in the eyes of the Wola, when a dispute leads to a fight in which a fatality occurs, to establish who was responsible for causing the fight. The Wola call the man who provokes a war the base of the fight (*saend tay*; lit: war base).³⁰

²⁹ These men include those who receive *tobway muwk kalay* and those who give help as *ol haeriy* (see under other exchanges and debts).

³⁰ The word *tay* may refer to the base of several objects; for example *ish tay* refers to the base of a tree trunk.



VII The bewigged men that met Hides in the Was valley



◀ VIII Clubbing a pig

▶ IX Butchering a pig

▼ X A man fills a piece of bamboo with pork titbits and greens



As pointed out in the discussion of war in chapter 4 the locus of responsibility shifts according to the relation of the speaker to the principal disputant, but ultimately it is the man whose dispute initiated the war who is responsible for paying reparation to the relatives of men who die fighting as allies on his behalf. In the short run, however, there are more reparation payments than this one man and his close relatives can pay off alone, and other men share the responsibility for making the initial exchanges that follow a war. The subsequent reimbursement of these men, by the *saend tay* and his closest relatives, means that several exchanges may follow one death.

The placing of responsibility for a war is not always straightforward and the confusion which sometimes arises over the ascription of liability complicates even further the exchanges which follow some wars. In the war described below, for example, it is not clear where the responsibility lies.

Several years ago a man called Mauway came to live with Maenget Korobol (his mother's sister's son) at Haelaelinja. After taking up residence at Haelaelinja Mauway attended a dance at a place nearby where a man started an argument with him about a compensation payment which he thought was due to him from Mauway's father's relatives who lived at a place called Gainz. The man based his claims on a previous war (caused by one of Mauway's father's relatives) in which he had fought as an ally and suffered serious wounds which had required a number of offerings to his ancestors before he regained his health. On several previous occasions he had demanded, without success, compensation for his wounds (called *mbet biyuw*; lit: palm wood tipped arrow shoot) and the sight of Mauway revived his grievances. After an argument the temper of the wounded man flared up and he snatched Mauway's axe and the pearl shell he wore around his neck. This started a fight in which a Haelaelinja man (Mayka Hezon) was killed. In the ensuing war men living at Haelaelinja called upon their relatives and friends to come and fight, but only two of Mauway's relatives (his father and brother) came to fight. His other relatives, who had fought in the previous war which was at the root of the new conflict, did not come to fight. In fact they denied any responsibility for the war and as a result Maenget men (in particular Maenget Tensgay) had to foot the larger part of the reparation payments to their allies. At the end of the war Mauway promptly

scuttled back to his father's place. Today the Maenget men are demanding reimbursement from Mauway and his relatives for the reparation payments they made on their behalf. But the majority of Mauway's relatives claim the war was not their responsibility and refuse to recognise they have any obligation to repay.

The only time enemies exchange wealth is when a man accidentally kills a relative who was fighting on the opposite side. As described in chapter 4 the way in which the Wola recruit allies through individual networks means that relatives may find themselves on opposite sides. They are careful to avoid each other in military encounters but occasionally they make tragic mistakes of identity and kill one another. For example while fighting as an ally in a war a Haelaelinja man (Wenja Ongol) killed his mother's brother's son in an ambush and he was so grieved that he went to mourn the corpse (his behaviour illustrates the way individual relations continue to link together members of opposite sides in war, because while he avoided enemy warriors, his life was in no danger from his mother's relatives). A man may also pay wergild to his wife's relatives if, in a fit of anger, he kills her for committing adultery. A payment of wergild, from a killer to the deceased's relatives, is called *ol sond bay* (lit: man *sond* do) and these payments follow the same pattern as reparation exchanges.

The Wola carry the concept of responsibility for violent death beyond war casualties to accidental deaths where someone else is involved in some way.³¹ A person may assume responsibility for an accidental death under various circumstances. In the following four cases the person held responsible for the accidental death paid wealth to the deceased's relatives. A man asked a friend to accompany him on a journey and crossing a vine bridge his friend fell into the Was river and drowned; the man was held responsible for the death. Two men went hunting together and one of them fell to his death out of a tree while ferreting out a marsupial; the other man was held responsible for the death. Two children were playing and one of them fell and impaled himself on a fence post; the surviving child was held responsible and his father paid wealth to

³¹ See Ryan (1961: Ch. VI) for a description of the allocation of responsibility for death in the Mendi valley.

the dead child's relatives. A young woman committed suicide by jumping in the Was river because of a dispute over a pig; the other party to the argument was held responsible for the death. The Wola explain that the other party is responsible in such cases because they should have been more concerned for the welfare of the deceased person (and anyway who is to know there was not deliberate murder?). The Wola call the exchange of wealth following an accidental death *ol umbuguw tinjiy* (lit: man mortuary payment cover up) and these payments follow the same pattern as war reparation exchanges.

The relatives of someone killed violently keen over the corpse as they do in other deaths. If they cannot recover the corpse (for example when someone falls in the river and is swept away) relatives mourn over some personal possessions of the deceased which they tie to a stake. The mourning of personal possessions, like the keening over a corpse, indicates which relatives of the deceased will act as the focal point for the exchanges which follow death. The extension of the practice of mourning a corpse to mourning over personal possessions of the deceased supports the argument that the act of mourning is important to the Wola because, taking place at the residence place of the deceased, it establishes the direction of the exchanges which follow death. Affirmation of the pattern of exchanges to come is important because reparation payments go to the relatives of the deceased who live at the same place as he did and with whom he had the largest number of actively maintained relations; these people subsequently share out the wealth among themselves and include other relatives of the deceased living elsewhere.

The first exchange which follows a violent death is the *ol gwat*. This exchange follows the same pattern as the first mortuary exchange at other deaths except that in wartime men curtail the negotiations which normally characterise this exchange, with the result that it is smaller. The Wola do not think the *ol gwat* constitutes part of the reparation series of exchanges and they do not expect the party responsible for the death to contribute more wealth than other people.

The reparation series of payments does not start until a war is over. It is usual for a few months to pass before men make the first payment and during this time those people who intend to contri-

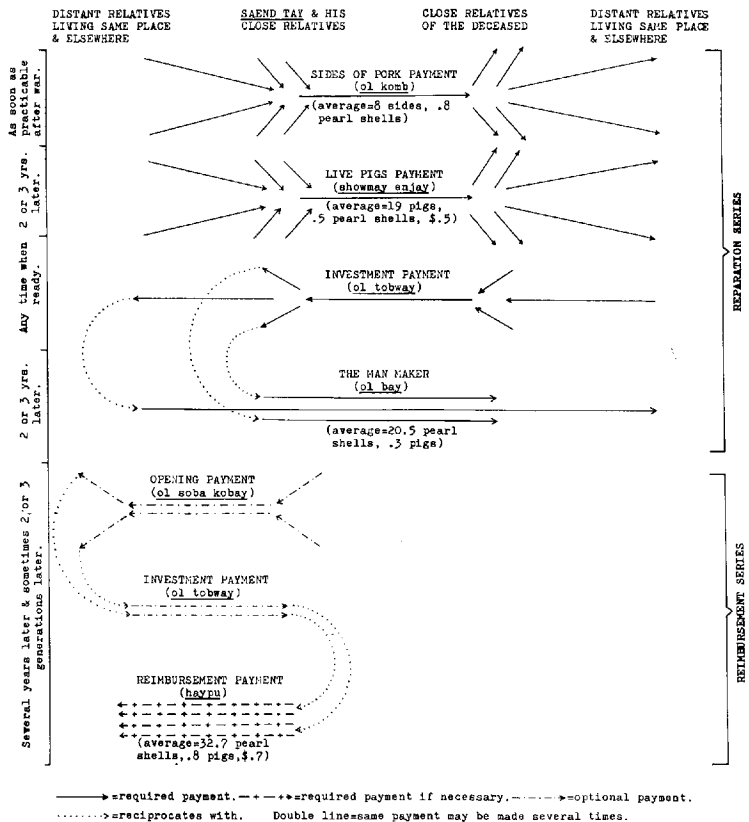


FIG. 28 The series of exchanges which follow a violent death

bute to the exchange collect together pigs. An ideal series of reparation payments consists of three separate exchanges (see figure 28 which shows the cycle of exchanges that follows a violent death). Sometimes men omit one, or even two, payments and in some cases they combine all three payments into one large exchange. It is unusual for men to make no payments because this leads to strained relations with the relatives of the deceased who, in their anger, might start another war.

The first reparation payment consists of several sides of pork and is called *ol komb* (lit: man open). Men contributing to the

exchange kill and butcher their pigs at home and display the sides of pork by laying them across a small horizontal pole outside their houses. The pork remains here until all the contributors are ready to proceed with the exchange. When they kill and butcher the pigs for an *ol komb* payment men shout out a long 'Ooooo' cry called *hor kobay* (lit; *hor* dig up) to inform the relatives of the deceased that they have killed a pig for the payment. The Wola say that hearing this shout pleases and excites the people who are to receive the payment.

When they are all ready to proceed with the exchange men carry the sides of pork across their shoulders (*showmay kaegabay tor*; lit: pig sides carry), and wearing their second best decorations, converge from all directions upon the deceased's place of residence. As they carry the pork along the paths towards the deceased's place men shout out *horkobay* to inform people of their approach. When they arrive at the deceased's place the men carrying pork on their backs run round in a large circle and hoot loudly (*ish workay*; lit: wood *wor* say). Members of the deceased's *semonda* of residence and relatives from elsewhere, who stand to receive some of the pork, join in the dance. But close relatives of the deceased do not dance because of their sorrow.³² After the dance men place the sides of pork in a line, along with any other items of wealth included in the payment. It is up to the deceased's relatives to share out the sides of pork and wealth among themselves, and when they have completed the distribution the recipients of the pork carry it home to cook and eat.

The second payment in a reparation series consists mainly of live pigs and is called *showmay enjay* (lit: pig alive). This payment usually occurs two or three years after the first reparation exchange. Each time the men who intend to contribute to the exchange obtain a pig for the payment (for example when they receive a pig from another exchange or purchase an animal) they shout out *hor kobay* to inform the people who are to receive the exchange. On the day of the exchange men stake out the pigs in a line (*indiyay*; lit: stake out) and decorate their backs with three

³² For the first week or so following any death nobody in the neighbourhood would consider dancing or singing because to act in this way is disrespectful and indicates joy at the death; the deceased's relatives might interpret such behaviour as evidence of a celebration of successful sorcery.

stripes of white clay (*showmay dind sugay*; lit: pig paint wipe). They also display any other wealth included in the payment. The men giving the wealth and the men who are to receive the pigs (with the exception of the deceased's close relatives) dance in a circle and hoot *ish wor kay*. As with the first reparation exchange the recipients of the payment are responsible for sharing out the pigs among themselves.

The third and final exchange made in a reparation series consists of an *ol tobway/ol bay* (investment/'man maker') exchange sequence. This exchange sequence follows the same pattern as the second mortuary exchange sequence which follows other deaths except that with reparation payments the deceased's relatives invest wealth with the relatives, or representatives, of the man responsible for the death and not with the deceased's mother's relatives. The recipients of the invested wealth reply later with an *ol bay* payment.

After a war there are more outstanding reparation payments to be made than the man responsible for the war and his close relatives can pay. The system, however, does not break down because other men may take on the initial responsibility to pay some of the reparation exchanges and this prevents the overloading of a few men with more payments than they can cope with. But in the long run the man who provoked the war is responsible for all the reparation payments and he and his close relatives ought to reimburse people who make reparation exchanges on their behalf. The Wola call these reimbursement payments *haypuw*. A man may indicate his willingness to make a reimbursement payment by giving an item of wealth in *ol soba kobay* (lit: man *soba* dig up) to the people he owes a *haypuw* payment. The recipients reply by investing wealth with him in *ol tobway* and later he reciprocates with a reimbursement payment. Ideally a man should receive reimbursement for every reparation payment he makes on behalf of the *saend tay*. It is also proper for a reimbursement payment to exceed the wealth given in the reparation exchange (some men thought 50 per cent on top of the original payment was a fair rate of repayment).³³ If a man fails to pay off all his

³³ Quantitative material on reimbursement payments indicates that the interest rate fluctuates considerably. In some cases the man who made the original reparation

reimbursement debts during his lifetime then the responsibility passes to his descendants. The result is that payments may stretch over generations and sometimes men make *haypuw* to repay people for payments the details of which they cannot remember. It is not possible to state with accuracy what percentage of their reparation debts men responsible for a war, and their descendants, ultimately pay off—especially as debts stretch over generations and men forget the size of the original reparation payments. There are two ways that men can protest that reimbursement payments are due to them. Firstly, as mentioned earlier men can threaten that their disgruntled ancestors will attack (by eating away their insides) the men who owe them reimbursement.³⁴ Secondly, men may register a protest by transvestite behaviour at a dance and inflict shame on the people who owe them a reimbursement payment.³⁵

The key to an understanding of the logic behind reparation payments is the reasoning which leads men to fight as allies in the first place. When a war breaks out men do not come to fight because of any obligations to a corporate group (see chapter 4 on this point), they come to help a relative and friend. In a society where individuals are free to choose their own course of action in any situation, and where men base their decisions on criteria of self-interest and the strength of their relations with others, then when a man dies fighting on behalf of someone else this is the largest sacrifice he can make as evidence of the sincerity of his

payment dies before reimbursement is received, and men forget the amount of wealth he paid. Also the present day inflation of wealth means that these long-term repayments tend to be considerably higher than the original payment.

³⁴ When the ancestors of other men attack and kill in this way the relatives of the victim cannot incapacitate the attacking ancestor in the ritual following death, as they can when one of their own ancestors causes a death. If they do not make the required reimbursement payment the offended ancestors may attack again and again.

³⁵ Some men thought that by dressing as women they depicted the unsatisfied widows of men killed in war whose reparation payments are incomplete, but they were not certain of this interpretation and pointed out that unmarried girls may dress as men. However, anything associated with women is polluting for men and to dress as a woman is shameful in itself. This contrasts with the people who live around Hagen where men dress up as women in their second best decorations when others accuse them of not meeting exchange commitments promptly—here a man is saying, 'So you think we are defaulters, but we will show you!' (A.M. Strathern pers. comm.).

REPARATION FOR IND TIMBOL.

<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Ol komb.</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Tensgay	6 sides of pork		1 side of pork	Tonduwael
	4 pearl shells		1 side of pork	Buwlaes
			1 side of pork	Toliyn
			1 side of pork	Njep
			1 side of pork	Tinol
Kongob	6 sides of pork		1 side of pork	Non
	1 pig		1 side of pork	Hond
			1 side of pork	Mungel
			1 side of pork	Piywa <u>semg^{enk}</u>
			1 side of pork	Hoboga <u>semonda</u>
			Remainder	?

<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Showmay enjay.</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Tensgay	12 pigs		1 pig	Hwal
			1 pig	Tonduwael
Kongob	12 pigs		1 pig	Waeliy
			1 pig	Buwlaes
Kem	1 pig		1 pig	Toliyn
			1 pig	Ongol
Lol	1 pig		1 pig	Njep
			1 pig	Non
Haya	4 pigs		1 pig	Hond
Tindiyp	4 pigs		1 pig	Piywa <u>semg^{enk}</u>
			1 pig	Kolomb <u>semg^{enk}</u>
			Remainder	Hoboga <u>semonda</u>
				?

<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Ol tobway/ol bay.</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Tensgay	24 pearl shells	----- 4 pearl shells -----		Buwlaes
Kem	3 pearl shells	----- 1 pearl shell -----		Non

REPARATION FOR MAENGET KONGOB.

<u>TRANSACTION FOR KALABADI KOMBOL</u>				
<u>Ol komb.</u>				
Korobol	2 sides of pork		3 sides of pork	Tensgay
Taegat	2 sides of pork		1 side of pork	Wenja <u>semg^{enk}</u>
(No other payments but Tensgay paid <u>ol bay</u> to 2 maternal relatives).				

REPARATION FOR MAENGET HAEGAES.

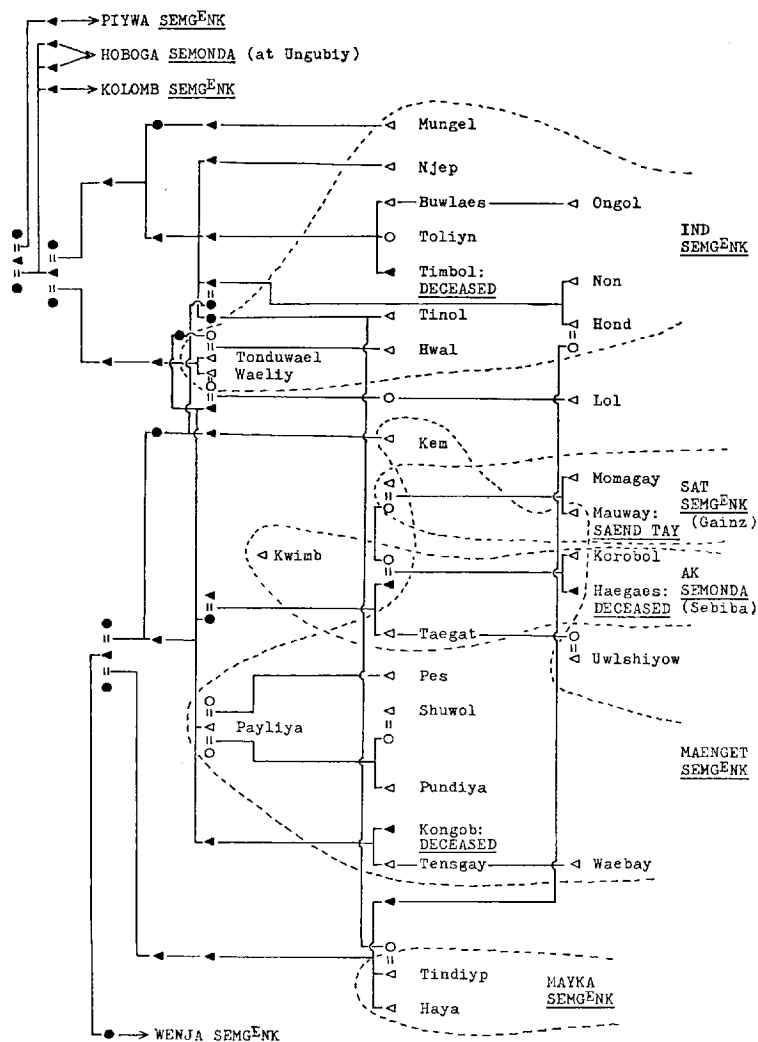
<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Ol komb.</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Members of Sat <u>semg^{enk}</u>	6 sides of pork		3 sides of pork	Korobol
			3 sides of pork	Taegat
<u>Showmay enjay.</u>				
Members of Sat <u>semg^{enk}</u>	16 pigs		8 pigs	Korobol
			8 pigs	Taegat
(No <u>ol tobway/ol bay</u> exchange sequence).				

REIMBURSEMENT PAYMENT

<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Korobol	9 pearl shells	2 pearl shells	Pundiya
	6 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	Pes
	4 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	Shuwol
	5 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	Waebay
	15 pearl shells	3 pearl shells	Tensgay
Ulshiyow	8 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	
Kwimb	8 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	
	3 pearl shells	1 pearl shell	Kem

=contribution to or receipt from payment. ----- = ol tobway ----- = ol bay or haypu

FIG. 29 The wealth given and received in three reparation exchange series and a reimbursement payment



(Man enclosed by two dotted lines=migrant resident at both places).

FIG. 30 Genealogy showing the people involved in the reparation and reimbursement payments detailed in fig. 29 (man circled by two dotted lines = migrant resident at both places)

relationship with the people he came to help. The loyalty shown by the deceased man requires a reciprocal show of devotion to their relationship from the people on whose behalf the man came to fight. In this case the payment of reparation is not simply a compensation to the close relatives of the deceased to indemnify them for their loss, it is a reaffirmation of the relations between the living. This is necessary because the death of a party to a relationship seriously interferes with its stability and in Wola society men can only rectify the situation by exchanging wealth as a show of good faith and as an affirmation of the value which they place upon the disrupted relationship.

The rationale behind payments for war deaths also accounts for the exchange of wealth that follows an accidental death for which people hold someone responsible. Relatives and friends should care for one another's welfare and if someone suffers a violent death while in the company of another person this indicates a lack of consideration in the eyes of the Wola. An exchange of wealth reaffirms the culpable person's relations with the other relatives of the deceased.

In wartime some men come to fight because they are directly related to the man who provoked the conflict, but many other men come to fight because they maintain relations with people who are in turn related to the man responsible for the war. This diffused recruitment of allies, through the social networks maintained by several men, explains why men other than the *saend tay* and his close relatives are willing to pay off some of the reparation exchanges following a war. When someone comes to fight because his relatives are related to the man who provoked the war, and he is killed, the relations which suffer are those between the deceased's kin and the relatives through whom he was recruited to the conflict. It is for this reason that the relatives through whom the deceased was recruited to the war, not the man who provoked the war (who is only distantly related to the deceased), make the first series of reparation payments. By exchanging wealth these men reaffirm their social relations with the other kin of their deceased relative. Later they look for reimbursement to their relative who caused the war and his close relatives. In this way the men who constitute the link in the network reaffirm both their sets of relations following a death.

The reparation exchanges recorded in figures 29 and 30, which resulted from the war provoked by Mauway, show the operation of the principle that reparation payments reaffirm relations between people following the death of someone who was a party to the relationship.³⁶ The payments also show the operation of the focus principle of responsibility, which prompts people not responsible for the war to pay the initial series of reparation exchanges following the death of their relatives and friends who fought on their behalf.

The enemy ambushed and killed Ind Timbol on a path. He was not directly related to Mauway who provoked the war but he was a resident member of a neighbouring *semonda* to the one where the *saend tay* was living when the war started. Several members of his *semgenk* have ties with members of this neighbouring *semonda* and for this reason he fought as an ally. When the enemy killed Timbol it was members of the neighbouring *semonda* who contributed to the reparation payments received by his relatives. The contributions of one successful man—a member of the *semgenk* to which the *saend tay* claimed allegiance—were particularly large (there were five other reparation exchange series similar to this one for Timbol and Tensgay figured prominently in them all). Later, when a sorcerer struck down and killed the brother (Maenget Kongob) of this successful man, who had paid a large proportion of the reparation payments for other men, he received reparation from the two members of his *semgenk* who were most closely related to the man responsible for the war. When the enemy in turn ambushed and killed the brother (Maenget Haegaes) of one of these men, while he was fetching water from a stream below his house, responsibility for the reparation payments focused down to the man who provoked the war and his close relatives. The reimbursement payment detailed in figure 29 shows how the focus principle continues to operate and with each exchange brings the responsibility for payments closer to the *saend tay*. Maenget Korobol, helped by two relatives, reimbursed members of the *semgenk*

³⁶ In some cases the birth order of persons on the genealogies has been altered to facilitate connections by marriage without unduly crossing over too many descent lines. Also, the payments are recorded as taken down in the field with no attempt to balance debits against receipts. Some of these exchanges took place many years ago and the majority of participants are now dead—in these cases I had to rely on one or two old informants whose memories were not good on the payments and receipts of others.

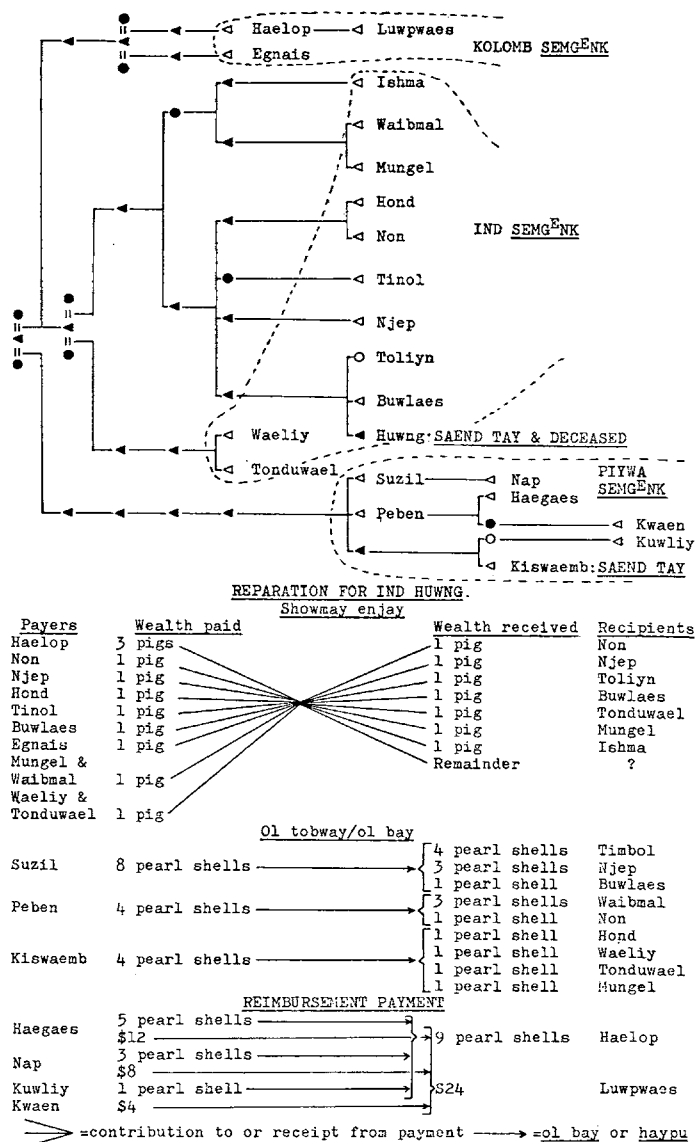
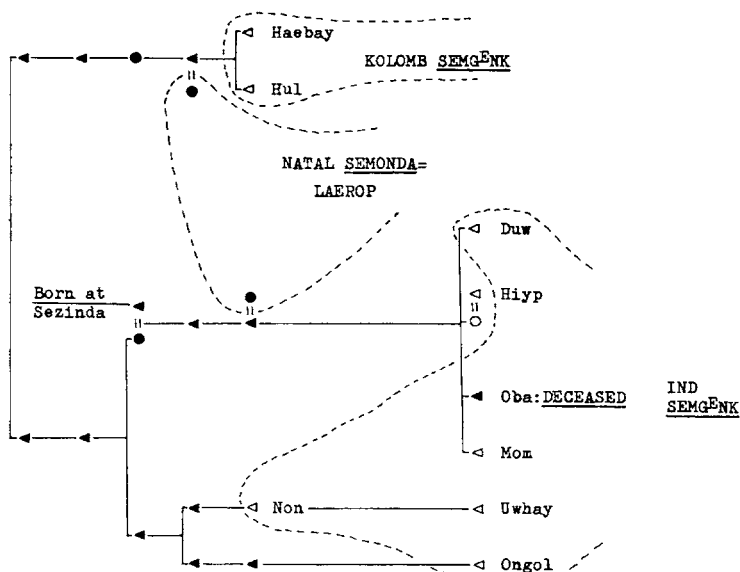


FIG. 31 The reparation and reimbursement payments which followed the death of a man in a war which he started

where he resides for paying many of the reparation payments resulting from the war provoked by his mother's sister's son who was living with him at the time (this is one of two reimbursement payments made by Korobol). The fact that Korobol in turn expects reimbursements from Mauway and his descendants (Mauway's brother Momagay has made one reimbursement payment to the Maenget men and there is another one in the pipeline) underlines how the exchanges which follow a death in war can ramify throughout, and help maintain, a wide network of relations.

The reparation exchanges recorded in figure 31 show the payments which followed the death of a man who started a war. The pattern of these payments points to the validity of a sociological explanation of reparation and reimbursement exchanges:

Ind Huwng and Piywa Kiswaemb stole a pandanus nut which belonged to a man from a neighbouring settlement called Paym. With the help of some relatives the man who owned the tree tracked down the thieves and found a pile of broken shells outside their house. The ensuing argument led to a fight in which Kiswaemb received an arrow wound in the neck which his relatives thought would prove fatal (in fact it did not kill him). In anger Kiswaemb's relatives set off for Paym to take revenge and en route they found a man from Sezinda (who was related to the men from Paym and had helped them in the fight in which Kiswaemb received his arrow wound) sitting in a men's house and they killed him. During the war which followed Huwng suffered a fatal wound in a battle. If the Wola were to think that the purpose of reparation payments is simply to compensate the relatives of the deceased for their loss, then their predicted attitude, when the enemy kill the man who provoked the war, would be that there is no one to compensate because the deceased was responsible for his own death. The reparation payments which followed Huwng's death show that there is more to reparation payments than this. In the first payment members of the deceased's *semgenk* exchanged pigs among themselves and in the second exchange Kiswaemb and his close relatives gave wealth to Huwng's relatives. Although the death of the man responsible for a war will attenuate the spread of the transactions which normally follow a death, the exchanges may still extend beyond his immediate relatives; as shown by the reimbursement paid by Kiswaemb's relatives to a member of their *semonda*, for his contribution to the first exchange.



REPARATION FOR IND OBA.

(Some payments following war were paid by Laerop to Sezinda men).

Showmay enjay.

<u>Payers</u>	<u>Wealth paid</u>	<u>Wealth received</u>	<u>Recipients</u>
Members of Laerop <u>semonda</u>	5 pigs 3 pearl shells \$20	1 pearl shell	Mom
		\$20	
		1 pig	Duw
		1 pig	Hiyp
		1 pig	Non
		1 pearl shell	Uwhay
		1 pearl shell	Ongol
		1 pig	Hul
		1 pig	Ind <u>semg^{enk}</u>
Mom	6 pearl shells 6 pigs	01 tobway/01 bay	
		2 pearl shells 2 pigs	Members of Laerop <u>semonda</u>
Mom	24 pearl shells	2 pearl shells	Hul
		1 pearl shell	Haebay
		1 pig	Ongol
		1 side of pork	Kelo
		1 side of pork	Lawn
		1 pearl shell	Waelil

=contribution to or
 receipt from payment.

----- =01 tobway ————— =01 bay

FIG. 32 The reparation payments which followed the death of a man in a war in which he fought on the opposite side to his close relatives

By and large enemies are not related (as pointed out in chapter 3 this is a significant fact which contributes to the likelihood of a dispute between them erupting into a war) and for this reason they do not exchange compensation for the men they kill. However, the recruitment of allies through a network which consists of people related to one another in many different ways does result in some relatives fighting on opposite sides. If a man inadvertently kills a relative then the purpose of the *ol sond* exchange is explicit—it re-establishes damaged relations between the killer (and the relatives fighting on his side) and the deceased's relatives on the other side (for example the paternal relatives of Wenja Ongol, particularly members of Wenja *semgenk*, helped him to make a series of three payments to his mother's relatives, who had fought against them in the war in which Ongol accidentally killed his mother's brother's son). The reparation exchanges recorded in figure 32 show the payments which followed the death of a man who fought on the opposite side to some of his relatives but who did not suffer death at their hands. When this happens the exchange of wealth between opposite parties effects a more subtle readjustment of relations than is the case with an *ol sond* exchange:

Ind Oba fought as an ally for his mother's relatives while his brother and other paternal relatives fought on the opposite side. He was killed in a battle. Immediately after the war Oba's mother's relatives paid reparation to some men from Sezinda who had fought as allies on their side and who were Oba's father's father's father's relatives. Several years after this first series of reparation exchanges, when relatives on opposite sides were slowly re-establishing their relations, Oba's mother's relatives made a reparation payment to some relatives who resided at his father's place, and his brother Mom later reciprocated with two reparation payments (notice how Kolomb Hul uses two relations, one through his father and the other through his mother, to appear on different sides in two payments). This example shows that when a man has relatives on both sides and he is killed it is not clear who is responsible for the death because while the deceased fought for one side, and under normal circumstances they would be responsible, he was actually killed by the people his other relatives helped as allies. In Oba's case both parties accepted

some of the responsibility to restore social relations and they took it in turns to pay and receive reparation.

The permutations possible in these exchanges are as numerous as the relations which they serve to re-affirm. It is even possible for men to pay reparation on behalf of the enemy. In the war started by Kiswaemb and Huwng, for example, a Paym ally from Ungubiy was killed but the reparation paid for him was inadequate. The man from Paym who lost the pandanus nut, and was a *saend tay* to the war, was a member of Kolomb Hul's and Haebay's mother's natal *semgenk*, and recently these two men have made a reparation payment of sixty pearl shells to the dead Ungubiy man's relatives. This means that they have paid reparation on behalf of the enemy of their father's relatives, to whose *semonda* they have allegiance (although today they have some gardens on their mother's father's land).

Reparation exchanges are not always confined to payments from the party responsible for the death to the deceased's relatives. At some exchanges relatives residing at the deceased's place of residence (for example ideologically his father's relatives) take all the wealth given in reparation by the party responsible for the death and share it among themselves. These men then make a separate payment to the deceased's other relatives (for example his mother's relatives) who live elsewhere. Similarly if a married woman is killed her husband's relatives may share between themselves all the reparation payment which they receive from the party responsible for the death and then make a separate exchange to her parents' relatives. When men make a second exchange, instead of sharing the first one with relatives elsewhere, they increase the number of people involved in the transactions following a death and this is socially beneficial. When Kongob died for example (see figure 29) Tensgay accepted *ol komb* from two relatives of the *saend tay*; later he received six pearl shells and one pig in an investment payment from his mother's relatives and he repaid them twenty-four pearl shells and sixteen pigs in an *ol bay*. As this, and other examples show, it is not paradoxical to the Wola for someone to give and receive wealth for the same death. Seen in terms of the sociology of exchange such behaviour is logical. In fact it was when I saw a man take a double role in an *ol komb*

- XI The distribution of pork
- ▼ XII A view along the steaming oven trench as men fill it with pork
- ◄ XIII The distribution of wealth at an *ol bay* exchange





◀ XIV A close female relative of the deceased in mourning dress

▼ XV Women keen over a corpse



exchange that I started to think in terms of a sociological explanation of reparation payments, instead of a simple explanation in terms of compensation alone. Before the *ol komb* exchange in question Mayka Pes lamented to me over his inability to contribute wealth to the payment, which was for his wife's brother's son, whom someone killed by felling a tree on him. But two of Pes's brothers gave him a pearl shell each and he passed these on to his brother-in-law. A few days later it surprised me to see Pes receive a side of pork from the *ol komb* payment to which he had passed on wealth, but Pes explained to me as he cooked the pork that there was nothing unusual about him contributing to and receiving from the same exchange.

When reimbursement payments stretch over generations they may lead to interaction between geographically and socially remote relatives. This results in the partial maintenance of social relations which were truly extant during a previous generation. In this way some reimbursement payments fossilise a few relations which under the flow of normal life would become extinct as each generation marries, begets children and creates new social relations. Huwlael Kot's father's father, for example, was responsible for a war and Kot has made a series of reimbursement payments to the descendants of men who made reparation payments on his ancestor's behalf. The men who received these reimbursement payments resided both at the place of Kot's father's father and in a neighbouring *semonda*, but they all live in different places from Kot and were on the enemy side in the last three wars which have involved the men at the place where Kot lives. Wenja Pwn's and Olnay's father's father also provoked a war long ago and they have made two reimbursement payments (one of which is mentioned in the account of the *ol gwat* exchange for their father) to the descendants of the former allies of their paternal relatives. In these two examples the paying of reimbursement has led these men to maintain relations with the former allies of their paternal relatives, although they no longer reside at their father's place.

Two reimbursement exchanges participated in by some Wenja men, on behalf of their father's father's father's relatives at Porsera, illustrate this point further because these payments have helped maintain relations at this distant place, and were prompted to some extent by the fact that two of the participants (Unguwdiyp

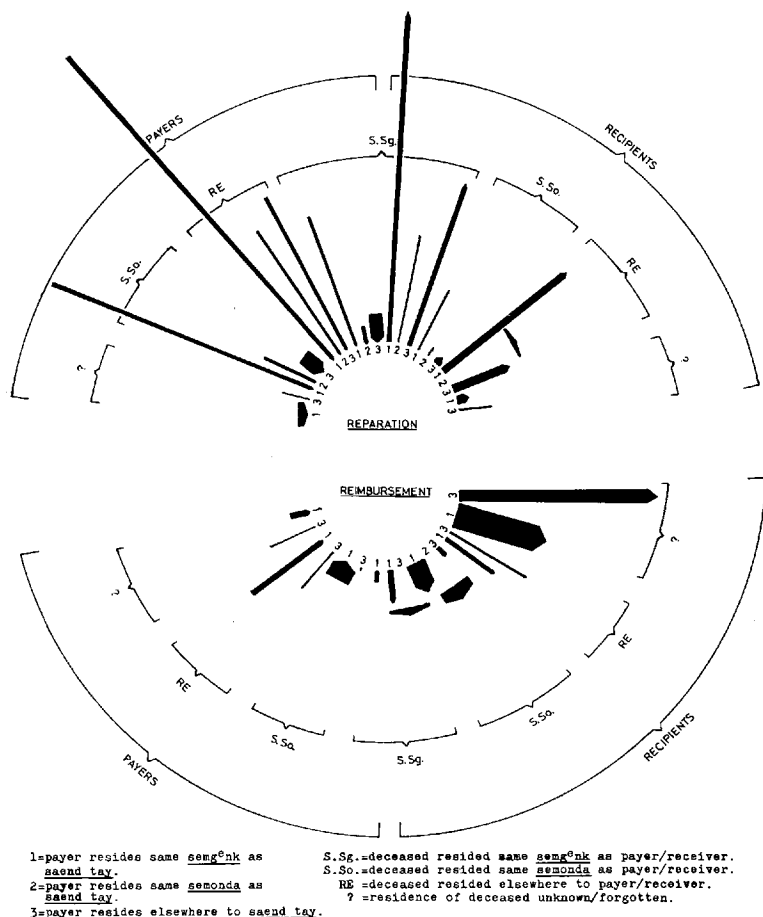


FIG. 33 The place of residence of the *saend tay* and the deceased in relation to that of the men making and receiving reparation and reimbursement payments

and Yogbal) maintain a house and gardens at this distant place and migrate between there and Haelaelinja.

The payments associated with violent death serve to maintain a wider network of relations than simply those between the people who make the exchange and the people who receive it. By contributing wealth to a payment men strengthen the relations between themselves, and in particular their support reaffirms their

relations with the man responsible for the war and his close relatives. Similarly, the people who distribute the wealth among themselves reaffirm, by the act of sharing, their relations through the deceased. Figure 33 shows the relation between the men who made payments and the men who provoked wars in a sample of exchanges involving members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*.³⁷ The figure shows that resident members of the *semgenk* of the man responsible for the war contribute to payments more often than other people but the focus principle results in a number of men from elsewhere also contributing to payments. There is almost a balance between the contributions men make to payments for deceased relatives who live in their area and their contributions to payments for relatives who live elsewhere. In the case of receipts, however, men are more likely to receive from the distribution of wealth from a deceased relative if they reside as members of his *semgenk*. This is not so with reimbursement payments where recipients are more likely to reside in a different place from the deceased person for whom they originally paid reparation. The overall pattern of figure 33 is that the net of payments following a violent death catches in its mesh a wide variety of relatives as contributors and recipients.

If contributing to a payment is beneficial for the maintenance of social relations it is significant, as shown by the detailed case histories, that the people who provoke a war, contra the ideology of ultimate responsibility, actually pay few of the reparation or reimbursement payments for which they are responsible. Although their behaviour is ideologically improper, it stimulates the maintenance of relations between a larger number of people than would be the case if they attained the ideal because others meet their obligations. Table 16 shows the average number of people who contributed to and received from the various

³⁷ The bulk of the data presented in this and the next two figures, which cover a total of 175 exchanges, I collected from the memories of informants (I witnessed several *haypuw* exchanges, two *ol komb* exchanges and one *showmay enjay* exchange (two of the latter were not at Haelaelinja)). This quantitative material is the least reliable in this book, because of the deaths of some of the men who participated in some of the exchanges and the difficulty living men sometimes had in remembering the exact amounts of wealth handled by the deceased men. For comparative quantitative data on reparation payments see Glasse (1968: 118-26) on the Huli and Meggitt (1965: 178) on the Mae Enga.

	Reparation			Reimbursement		
	<i>Ol komb</i>	<i>Showmay enjay</i>	<i>Ol tobway</i>	<i>Ol bay</i>	<i>Ol tobway</i>	<i>Haypuw</i>
Number of exchanges in sample	11	16	17	16	7	33
Average number of contributors	3	5.9	3.2	2.3	3.3	3.5
Standard deviation	1.6	4.2	1.7	1.5	1.7	3
Number of exchanges in sample	9	16	12	14	12	9
Average number of recipients	4.8	8.4	2.8	3.3	2.3	5.4
Standard deviation	4	4.4	1.7	1.9	.8	4.6

TABLE 16 The average number of men who contributed to and received from payments occasioned by violent deaths

exchanges which followed violent deaths that concerned men living in the Haelaelinja area. Unfortunately the material on reparation and reimbursement exchanges is insufficient to allow an analysis, and comparison with other exchanges, of the effects of inflation on these payments (see figure 8 on inflation). It is probable that the size of payments has increased since contact but the concomitant pacification of the area means that these exchanges have diminished in frequency (with the exception of reimbursement payments, which currently flourish as men pay off old debts, but which will, with enforced peace, also dwindle eventually).

Figure 34 shows the category of relatives to which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have paid reparation and reimbursement, and the category of relatives from whom they have received such payments. The figure shows that in exchanges following violent death the larger part of the interaction is between distant relatives who live somewhere else. This follows from the fact that the number of men who fight in a war far exceeds the number of men who live at the same place as the man responsible for the conflict. Figure 34 also shows the bilateral pattern of interaction encouraged between relatives by reparation and reimbursement payments and this continues the trend shown by the other exchanges discussed in this chapter, and parallels the empirically bilateral nature of Wola society. The larger amount of interaction between paternal relatives compared to maternal relatives (a pattern reflected to a varying extent in all the exchanges discussed in this chapter so far) is probably the result of the ideological

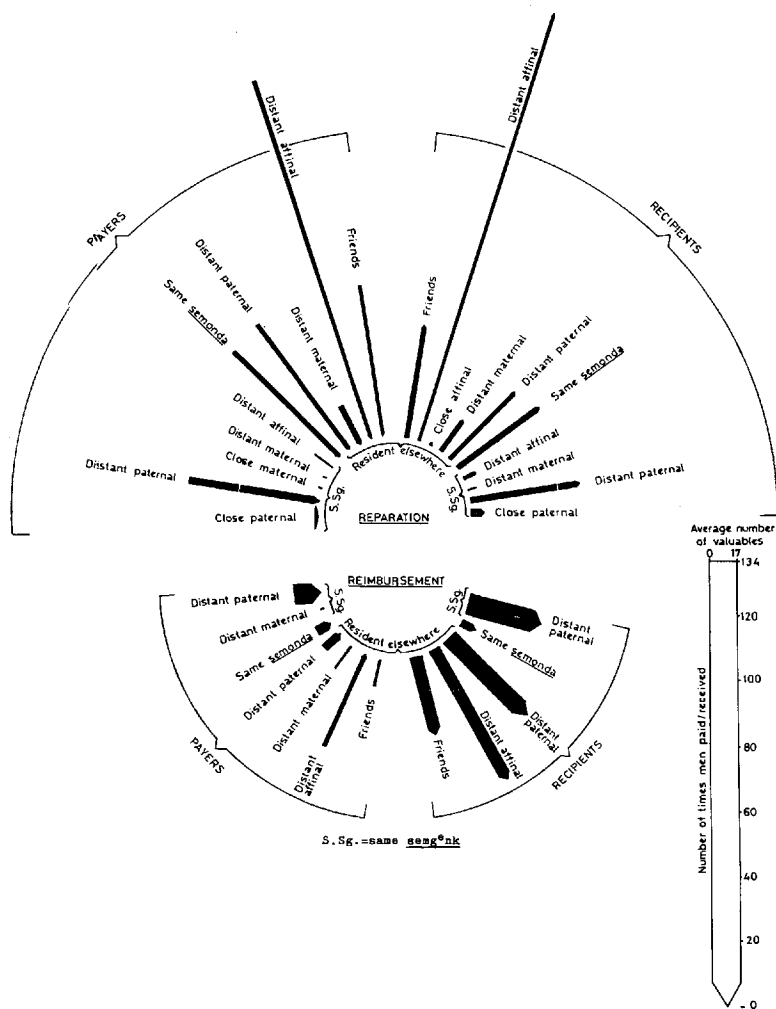
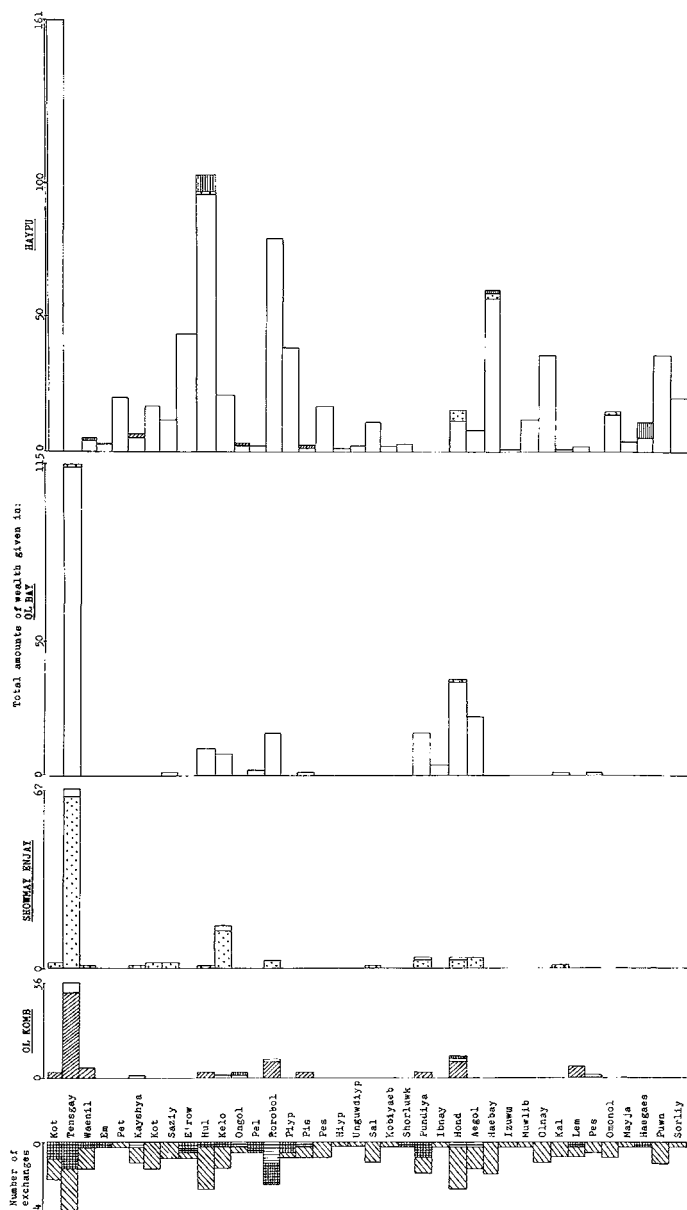


FIG. 34 The number of times and average amounts of wealth men have paid to and received from relatives in reparation and reimbursement payments

preference the Wola have for their fathers' relatives, but the large amount of interaction between affinal relatives puts the figure back into bilateral perspective. The figure shows this vigorous inte-



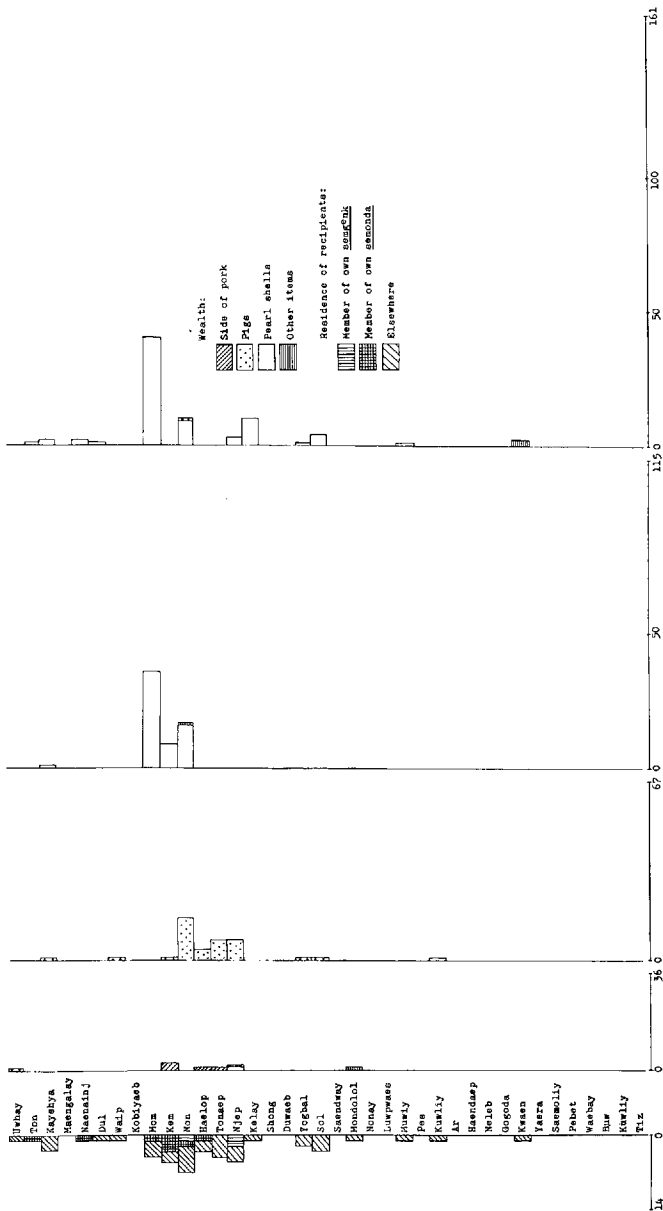


FIG. 35 The number of times and amounts of wealth men have paid out in reparation and reimbursement exchanges

raction between affinal relatives because affine is a wide category (for example it includes people such as FBSWB or MZHBS), whereas the categories of paternal or maternal relatives are restricted to consanguinal links only.

While not as conclusive as the material on other exchanges figure 35 indicates that *ol howma*, particularly the two outstanding men in the Haelaelinja area, give more wealth than other men in reparation and reimbursement exchanges. (Although more fragmentary than the material on contributions the data available on receipts indicates that these men also receive more wealth in these transactions.) Some men of high status, however, have a poor record and have handled little wealth in these exchanges. This may be explained in part by the fact that a man cannot participate to any extent in reparation and reimbursement payments if he is not responsible in some way for a death. This means he must either be related to someone who provokes a war or, on the focus principle, have a relative die who comes to fight because of his relation with him. None of the *ol howma* shown on figure 35 with poor records have relatives who fulfil these criteria. The reason for the high number of payments made by the two men of highest renown has already been touched upon. Maenget Tensgay was dragged into a war by a distant relative who was residing with him and on the focus principle he was responsible for many of the initial reparation payments to his relatives and friends who fought as allies. And Huwlael Kot, although he is not related to anyone who has provoked a war in his lifetime (with the result that his contributions to reparation payments are low), does have an ancestor who was responsible for a war and he has made some impressively large reimbursement payments to the descendants of people who paid reparation on behalf of his father's father. There is no evidence that men who handle more wealth than others discriminate in favour of particular relatives and this means that these exchanges afford a man the chance to reaffirm a large number of any variety of relationships. But the indications are that the competitive aspect of giving much wealth to achieve a position of high status means, in the present inflationary situation, that *ol howma* may give large amounts of wealth to a correspondingly small number of people. While this works against the basic tenets of exchange it is the result of inflation, and is not a flaw in the

system, which still requires a man to maintain the same number of relations only with more wealth, and in the case of reparation and reimbursement payments, in a dwindling number of exchanges.

Other Exchanges and Debts

The exchanges described so far in this chapter constitute the primary framework of transactions which encourage social co-operation between individuals in Wola society. There are a few other exchanges which occur less frequently and follow upon these principal exchanges, and which, in some cases, may be combined with them.

When two men have entered upon a mortuary exchange sequence in the way described, with one investing wealth with the other in *ol tobway*, the investor may at a later date give some other item to his exchange partner and this extra payment is called *ol chayaend wiy* (lit: man *chayaend* is). This extra item may be a valuable, a functional item of property or, as is often the case, some valued food such as bananas, tobacco, pork or pandanus nuts. The man who is to make the *ol bay* repayment may solicit the extra item if he sees in the possession of his exchange partner an object, such as a bow or an axe or some desirable food, which he wishes to possess. The man who receives these secondary investments or gifts repays the giver at the time of the *ol bay* exchange with some item of wealth and this repayment is called *ol chayaend kobay* (lit: man *chayaend* dig up). The rate of repayment is not exact and depends upon the size and value of the *chayaend* gift. It is not always necessary for the giver of *ol chayaend* to have given *ol tobway* beforehand. A man may give *ol chayaend* to someone who has entered upon an *ol tobway/ol bay* exchange sequence with another man, and in this way muscle in on the exchange because the recipient will be obliged to repay him in the *ol bay* exchange as if he had been the payer of an original *ol tobway* investment. The *chayaend* gives flexibility to the investment/'man maker' exchange sequence and this increases the efficiency of those exchanges in maintaining smooth social relations because it allows men to join in an exchange in which they were unable to invest wealth at the beginning and so facilitates

interaction between men in a transactional context during the years in which investments mature before repayment.

Sometimes the behaviour of men in an exchange makes explicit the value of wealth as an agent of sociability. This is so when a man responsible for making an exchange has a close relationship with one of the recipients and wishes to show his close feelings towards the man by giving him wealth over and above that which he offers to the other men who stand to receive from the payment. A man who finds himself in this situation will hand over the extra wealth in private. Another occasion when men make secret payments is at an exchange in which they are obliged to omit publicly some of the relatives of the recipients because they have not previously invested wealth with them. They may slip one or two valuables to these men, as the Wola say, 'to stop them feeling angry'. The Wola call these secret transactions of bonus wealth *ol maemb liy* (lit: man conceal hit). A man either hands over the extra wealth before the exchange or mentions his intentions to his friend and on the day of the exchange holds back an item of wealth to give him in secret later. If a man showed his favour publicly, either by giving a relative an extra item of wealth, or by giving wealth to people who had not previously invested with him, then the other participants in the exchange would consider themselves unfairly treated. A concealed exchange solves the problem because it allows a man to give wealth to a favoured relative and friend without offending the other participants. The existence of concealed exchanges points to the primacy of the social role of exchange, as an agent for the maintenance of relations, because these secret transactions show men putting to one side their individual ambitions to achieve renown, by publicly demonstrating their ability to handle wealth, in order to demonstrate a close relationship with someone without disturbing their relations with other men.

Sometimes a man responsible for making an exchange is unable to muster sufficient wealth for the payment and a relative comes to his aid by contributing some wealth. When a man comes to the assistance of someone else the Wola call his contribution *ol haeriy bay* (lit: man bamboo knife do). If a man receives assistance in this way he is obliged to reimburse his helper with a payment called *henk ish shor kalay* (lit: fern tree leaf (on which men display

valuables) give). The smaller size of these reimbursement payments is one of the features which distinguishes them from the *haypuw* reimbursement payments which follow help with reparation payments. These payments are smaller because they only repay men for making a contribution to an exchange for which the liable party remained responsible and paid the most wealth, whereas *haypuw* reimbursement payments repay men for taking on the entire responsibility to pay reparation following a death. In spite of these differences the comments made about the sociological significance of *haypuw* reimbursement payments apply equally well to *henk ish shor* reimbursement payments. A man can look to his relatives, particularly his close relatives, for a certain amount of help *gratis*, and for this reason it is usual for a man only to pay *henk ish shor* reimbursement following help in several exchanges. Sometimes a man who stands to receive wealth in *henk ish shor* gives an *ol tobway* to open the exchange but this is not essential and repayment may be made without it. A *henk ish shor* reimbursement payment may also occur a generation after a man gave help to someone and in this case the payment will go to his descendants (see figure 36 which gives details of such a *henk ish shor* reimbursement payment).

There are a few other miscellaneous exchanges which sometimes occur in Wola society.³⁸ Some of these are associated with exchanges already discussed. When a relative of a betrothed girl dies, for example, her intended husband, who has made some betrothal exchanges with her, may give her an item of wealth to contribute to the *ol gwat* exchange. Such a payment constitutes part of the betrothal sequence of exchanges. In the reverse situation, if one of the boy's relatives dies, his fiancée may ask a close relative for an item of wealth to give him as a contribution to the *ol gwat* exchange. This is called *ol nda mowmaek maeriy ebay* (lit: man that pearl shell carry come). The boy later repays the girl, who in turn gives the repayment to the relative who originally gave her wealth to contribute. Other miscellaneous exchanges are transactions of marginal significance which occur

³⁸ See Ryan (1961: ch. VI, pt2) who describes some miscellaneous exchanges, which he calls personal gifts, found in the Mendi valley (not all of the payments he describes occur in the Was valley).

independently of the exchanges already discussed. When a man loses a tooth, for example, a relative may claim it. The man who secures the tooth binds it up with string and wears it on a necklace round the back of his neck (*hiyma mael wiy*; lit: tooth neck is). The Wola say this expresses the wearer's concern for the man who loses the tooth in what may be a very painful operation involving the cutting away of gum with a slither of flint. Several months later the original owner of the tooth makes a small payment called *haebuw gwat* (lit: tooth *gwat*) to the man wearing his tooth for showing concern over his welfare. This frivolous payment embodies the sociological *raison d'être* behind all exchanges.

A man who finds himself without sufficient wealth readily available to make an exchange is forced to enter into debt to meet his obligations if he does not receive help as described above. The Wola call a debt *saen*. In a society where the object is not to hold wealth but to give it away the existence of a mechanism which improves the flow of valuables is important. Problems of liquidity are inevitable in an exchange system where the amount of wealth invested in exchanges far exceeds the total amount of actual wealth which is available, and the debt system allows the Wola to maintain a more rapid flow of wealth than would otherwise be possible in this situation. By allowing men an alternative to defaulting in their exchange obligations, when they find themselves in a corner because of the restricted flow of wealth, the debt system also increases the efficiency of wealth exchange to fulfil its social purpose. The Wola buttress this by threatening men with loss of prestige if they resort to the socially detrimental behaviour of defaulting in exchanges when they have liquidity problems and are unable to muster sufficient wealth for a payment.

There are problems with debts which are inherent in any credit situation. In the first place the lender forgoes the right to use the wealth himself, but what he loses here he regains when he in turn finds himself short of wealth and borrows from someone. In the second place, and this is the problem the Wola worry about, there is the question of the reliability of the borrower. In an exchange system where some men excel over others in the manipulation of wealth there are inevitably men who fail to meet their exchange obligations adequately. Sometimes less able men default on their exchange commitments, but the indications are that it is more

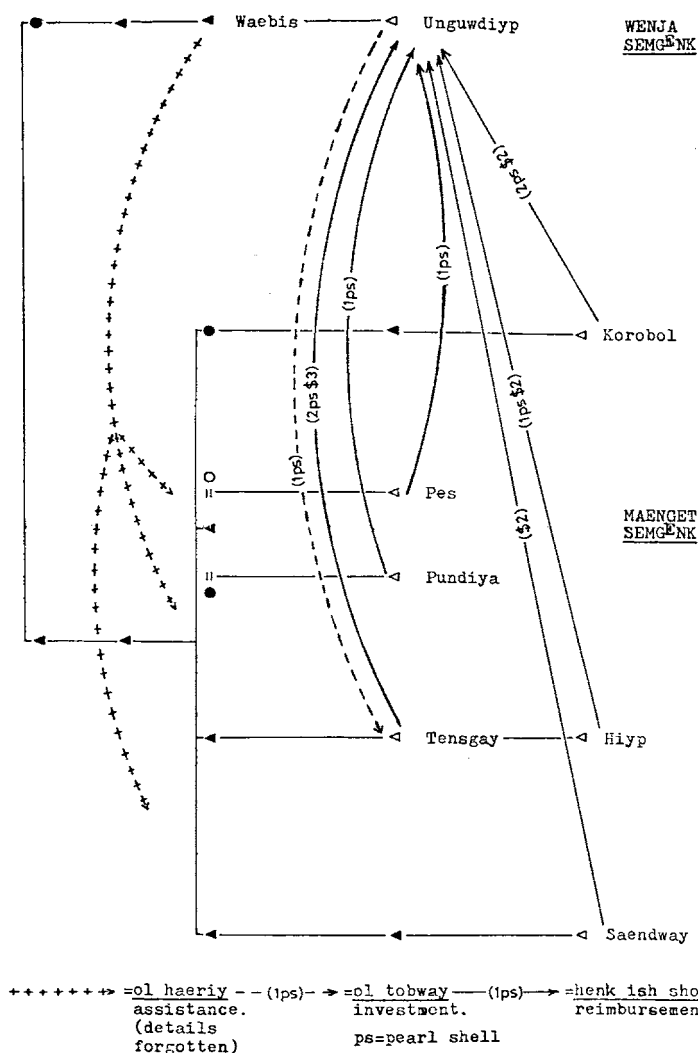


FIG. 36 A *henk ish shor* reimbursement payment

usual for them to try to compensate for their less efficient handling of wealth by contracting debts which they forget and overlook repaying. For example, in a survey of the current debts which

members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* had contracted with one another (as both the borrowing and the lending party) there were 443 transactions but in only 41.3 per cent of the cases did both parties remember the debt.³⁹ When men forget debts it means they pass the buck of inefficiency from exchanges to debts. However, debts are so constituted that defaulting is socially less damaging than failure to meet other exchange obligations.

The Wola say they hit a debt when they repay it (*saen liy*; lit: debt hit). It is tempting for a man to forget to hit back his debts because there is no specific time within which he ought to repay. But relations between the lender and himself may become strained when the period is excessive or if the lender requires repayment for an exchange he has to make but the borrower is reluctant, or unable, to repay. Also, men negotiate debt transactions in private which means they feel the obligation to repay less strongly because their ability to handle wealth is not publicly on show. The frequency of arguments over debts as opposed to the less frequent occurrence of arguments over exchanges is symptomatic of this situation, where men try to compensate for their inability to handle wealth by forgetting to repay their debts. Although it is less damaging to a man's reputation to default on debts, he cannot compensate for his inefficiency in this manner *ad infinitum* because he will find himself embroiled in many arguments with his creditors and this will as quickly diminish his respect in the eyes of other men as failure to meet his exchange obligations publicly.

The Wola realise that debts absorb some of the wasted efficiency of their exchange system and to encourage men to risk their wealth in unreliable credit transactions, which are of long-term benefit to all because they help maintain liquidity, they apply an interest rate of 100 per cent on a loan, regardless of how long it lasts. Therefore when someone who is reliable approaches a man for a loan to finance an imminent payment the transaction is an investment for him, but just as often the men who make approaches are unreliable. It is as a foil against these approaches by unreliable persons that men are secretive about the wealth which they actually have

³⁹ Sometimes it was the man borrowing, and not the creditor, who remembered the debt.

in their possession.⁴⁰ It is only before an exchange, for which they have started to display the wealth they intend to give, that men are not secretive about the wealth they have in their possession because once they have made this public declaration that it is earmarked for receipt by particular men they are bound to refuse requests for loans rather than break faith with the recipients of the exchange.

The Wola say they whisper (*twem*) for loans and this serves the same sociological purpose as the secrecy which surrounds concealed exchanges. For instance, a man is more inclined to loan wealth to relatives with whom he has a close relationship, but if such demonstrations of favouritism were known they could have detrimental effects on his relations with other men to whom he refuses loans. The curtain of secrecy behind which a man hides the number of valuables in his possession helps here. If he were to refuse a loan to a relative on the grounds that he thought he was an unreliable investment, and the refused party knew he had ready wealth in his possession, then a man would find himself in an invidious position because to refuse would damage his relations and work against the basic purpose of exchange itself. The secrecy with which men surround the arrangement of debts and the way they conceal the wealth which they have in their possession helps to prevent the occurrence of such disagreeable situations.

There are two opposed forces at play with debts. There is the ethos of generosity and sociability which inclines men to give a sympathetic ear to the requests of relatives, and there is the fear of default which inclines men to be cagey when approached by people they consider unreliable. It is an ability to resolve these problems which give men of renown an evasive and shifty disposition over matters concerning wealth. The ability of *howma* have with wealth is in fact a double edged weapon. It means they can enter into debt more easily than other men because they are reliable investments, but it also means they attract more men who wish to borrow wealth. Figure 37 shows the amounts of wealth which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* had borrowed from

⁴⁰ For example, in a survey of the wealth in the possession of members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* I had to resort to signs between informants and myself to ascertain the number of valuables in their possession without other men present finding out.

and loaned out to others in the months of January and February 1974, and the number of transactions into which they entered to contract these debts.⁴¹ Although there is a discernible decrease from the top of the graph to the bottom in the amounts of wealth involved in debt transactions, there is no clear indication that successful men either have more wealth tied up in debts than other men or that they loan out more wealth than they borrow. The graph shows that men of renown are as likely to be in debt as other men and this corresponds with the fact that, in contrast to some other Highland societies, successful men in Wola society do not place others in their debt and use this as a way of exerting influence over their actions.

Figure 37 only shows the credit situation in the two *semonda* at one instance in time and this makes generalisations about any long-term pattern difficult. Men use debts to bridge their needs as circumstances require and so at another time the situation regarding a man's credit standing and his status would be different from that shown by the figure. But the fact that figure 37 deals with current transactions only (whereas other graphs cover men's entire exchange histories) does show, so far as a man's current credit standing is a guide, the extent to which the participation of old men in wealth transactions declines with age (compare with table 9). Also, there is no indication from figure 37 that some men try to arrange debts with relatives living in particular places.

While there is an inherent danger that the abuse of debts by less able men, as they try to use them to absorb their inefficient management of wealth, will lead to arguments and strained relations, the indications are that overall these transactions have the same beneficial social effects as other exchanges. The attitude of men to their debts reflects the social purpose of these transactions. Time and again during the survey of the debts held by members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* I noticed how men had loaned to each

⁴¹ This material on debts was collected in a survey conducted in January and February 1974, in which all the adult members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* were asked for the names of people who were either currently in their debt or to whom they were currently in debt, and the amounts of wealth involved.

This book takes the money equivalent of one valuable as two Australian dollars. This is how the Wola equate money with other items of wealth; they refer to a \$2 bill as one leaf (*shor bombort*; lit: leaf one). Fractions recorded on figure 37 are fractions of one money valuable or Australian \$2.

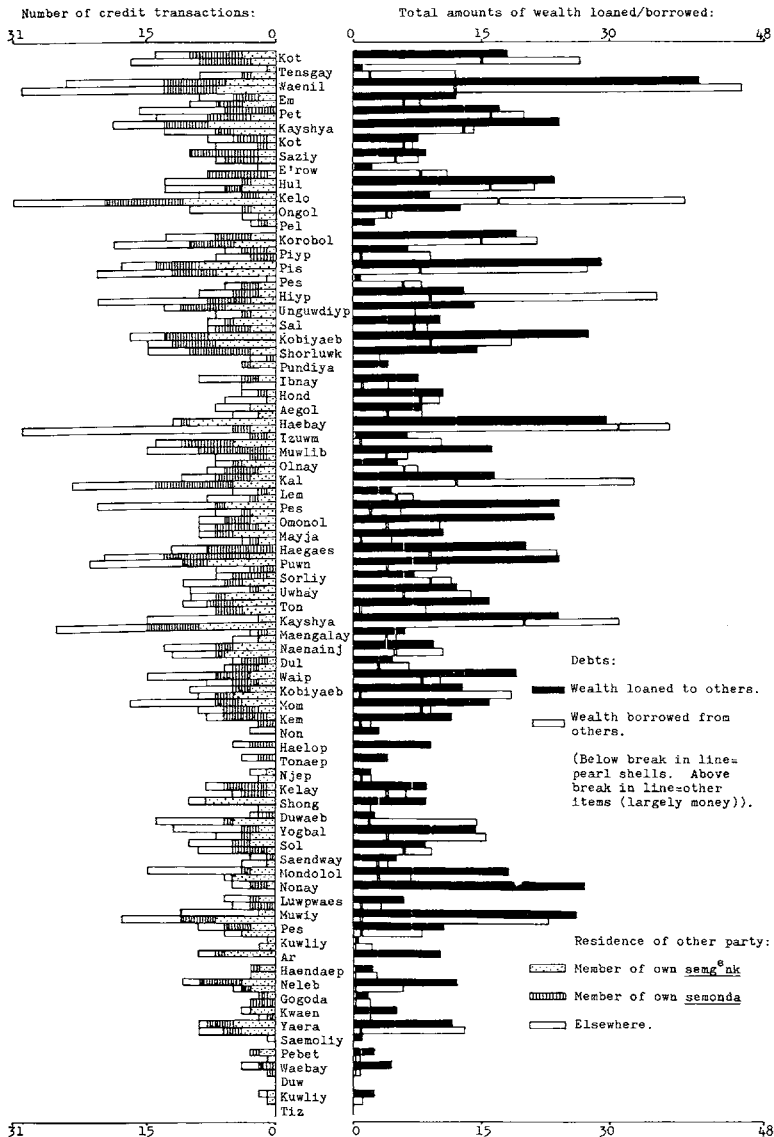
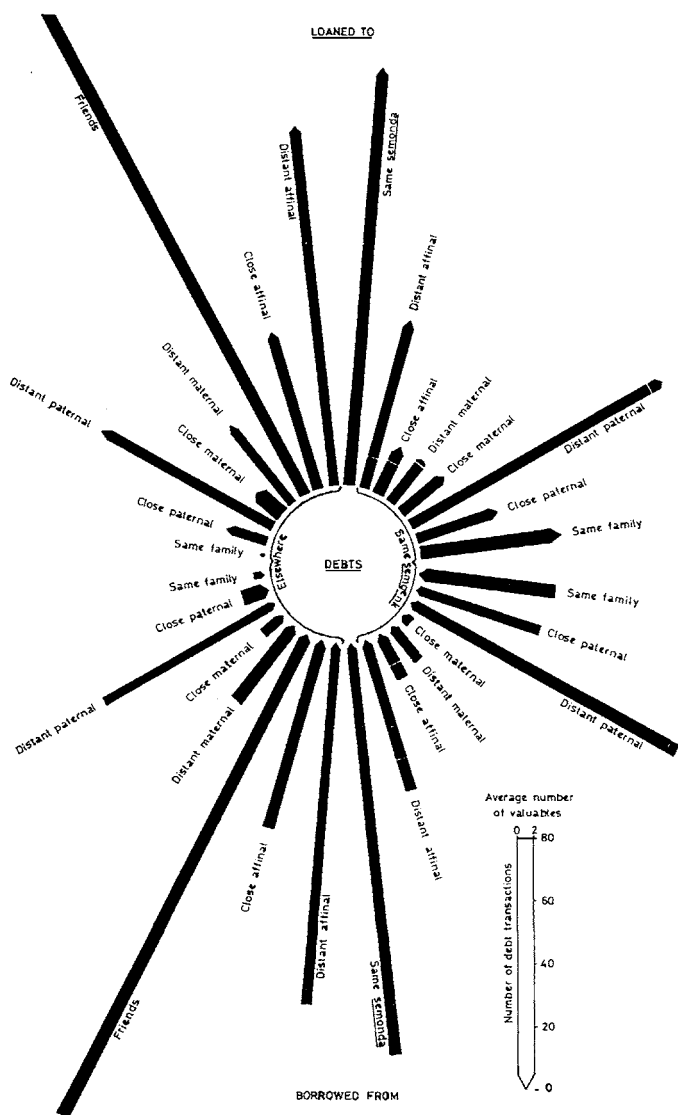


FIG. 37 The debts contracted by men



(Above break in line=different segment name segment.)

FIG. 38 The number of times and average amounts of wealth men loaned to and borrowed from various categories of relative

other on separate occasions the same amounts of wealth (which was unequivocally clear with money debts of the same value). When I suggested to them that in this situation there was no longer any debt they disagreed with me. This points to the social importance of the transaction itself. It is the act of repaying which encourages interaction and co-operation, and to suggest that two men, who owe debts of equal value to one another, are no longer in debt is to nullify the purpose of the transaction.

Figure 38 shows the number of times men borrowed from or loaned to various categories of relative and the average amounts of wealth involved. The figure has a bilateral pattern similar to the pattern of interaction found in other exchanges. However, the fact that men are not constrained to co-operate with specific persons in debt transactions (as they are in many other exchanges) means that the figure shows the behaviour which results in a situation of free choice. When men are free to choose who to borrow wealth from they will go to persons with whom they have good relations. This does not necessarily mean close relatives of any specific category. A man may have good relations with a distant relative or unrelated friend and approach these people for a loan. Figure 38 shows that the relations which men choose to cultivate and consider harmonious enough to allow loans of wealth are not restricted to any particular category and that their cognatic network may extend over a wide area.

In contrast to debts men sometimes give wealth away for nothing and expect no return. To give something away is called *ponay kalay* (lit: for nothing give). Relatives and friends who are on particularly amicable terms may on occasions make gifts to one another, but lacking the obligation to repay, which is the cornerstone of the exchange system, these do not ensure reciprocal interaction and are not popular. If a man gave away considerable amounts of wealth for nothing others would think him irresponsible. One occasion which prompts men to make gifts to others is when they receive a handsome payment in an exchange and, as the Wola say, in their delight make gifts to other men. The Wola call these gifts following an exchange *chay kondisha* (lit: thigh or hind quarter of pig, lumbar region of back).

Pig Kills

The Wola call a pig kill *showmay tok lorokmay* (lit: pig horizontal pole (on which men display sides of pork) (we) kill). These infrequent events, which members of a *semonda* arrange at approximately five year intervals, are important occasions for the Wola when men can demonstrate their ability to manage wealth by the number of pigs they kill and the amount of pork which they distribute.

It is because pigs are important items of wealth that the Wola make their slaughter large events. Pigs are unique items of wealth because unlike other valuables they reproduce and increase in number.⁴² Other valuables which are consumable (for example salt and decorating oil) people use in small quantities when they require them, but they cannot consume a pig in this piecemeal fashion and for this reason the Wola have elaborated their consumption into a time when men can show off their ability to handle wealth and can use the pork for the last time in a way which serves to validate the use of wealth in exchanges as an agent promoting social co-operation. Other items of wealth, on the other hand, are durable and men exchange them until they are too damaged to hold any value. At this stage men may discard them or use them as mundane items of property; for example, men used stone axe heads until they were very small, people wear damaged shells round their necks for decoration, and men use dirty, spoilt feathers as second best decoration.

It is not possible to trace a causal connection between pig kills, rituals and the environment as Rappaport (1967)⁴³ does for the

⁴² Marsupials and cassowaries are wild and their natural increase does not pose the same problems as the increase in pigs.

⁴³ Rappaport's explanation of pig kills as part of a complex homeostatic mechanism maintaining stable ecological relations between the Maring people and their environment leads away from the theme of this book and lack of space prevents further investigation of his ideas. See McArthur (1974) for a critique of the accuracy of Rappaport's study (particularly the nutritional aspects of his work) and a comment upon the validity of some of his conclusions. The comments made here on the relationship between pig kills and the environment are based on my impressions, whereas an adequate appraisal of Rappaport's ideas about the interaction between Highlanders and their environment will require the accurate collection of information on the ecological factors involved—a task on which McArthur thinks Rappaport failed and which she doubts is within the capabilities of any one individual working alone.

Maring people. As on other occasions when men exchange wealth, a pig kill among the Wola is a secular event. Even when men kill their pigs at a kill following one of the infrequent, large rituals, the slaughter of pigs, and attendant distribution of pork, is a secular event except for the few pigs set aside for use in the ritual. The Wola say that they arrange a pig kill when a number of men own several large pigs each in excess of their exchange commitments, and before the kill they require them to demonstrate that this is so by paying off all the outstanding exchanges for which they are responsible. It may be supposed that these extra pigs pose a threat to the balance of natural forces within the environment and that their slaughter ensures the maintenance of stable ecological conditions. On rare occasions the timing of a pig kill may be directly influenced by ecological conditions, for example towards the end of my stay there was an inexplicable shortage of food and in some areas men were forced to kill pigs. In the majority of cases, however, it is difficult to see how ecological factors impinge upon the arrangement of a pig kill. If men allowed the pig population to increase unchecked there would undoubtedly be environmental problems, but this remains a hypothetical possibility only because social considerations lead the Wola to kill their pigs long before there is any pressure on their environment. Before a pig kill there is no increase in the deprecation of gardens by pigs, and although women sometimes complain about the extra work required to keep several pigs they are not seriously overburdened.

The weeks before a pig kill are busy for the men who intend to slaughter pigs because not only do they have to make the practical preparations for the event but also they have to pay off their outstanding exchange commitments (see chapter 4 for a discussion of this preparation for a pig kill). This period of hyper-exchange activities, the bustle and excitement as increased numbers of people visit the area to collect wealth, emphasises the social interaction which exchange encourages. In addition to the various exchanges described so far in this chapter, men also pay at this time the *showmay hentiya* (lit: pig rope) payments which spring directly from the pig kill, and which create considerable interest in their own right and attract several people. The wealth men pass through their wives in *showmay hentiya* payments goes to a narrowly circumscribed group of relatives, whereas the payments

men make for *ma ha* pigs, which they receive when piglets as investments from others, go to a variety of relatives and friends. The former help to maintain smooth relations between affines whereas the beneficial social effects of the latter are spread, as figure 39 indicates, throughout the social network (see table 5 for an indication of the size of the payments which precede a pig kill).

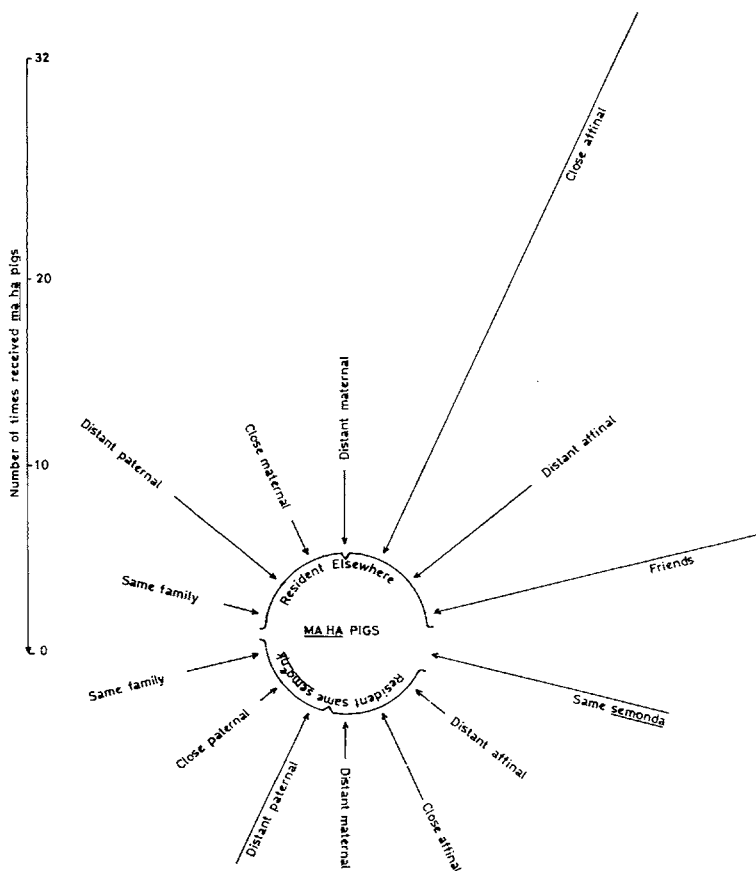


FIG. 39 The number of *ma ha* pigs in men's herds and the relatives who gave them. (Above break in line = giver of pig is member of different *semgenk* in the same *semonda*.)

Word of a pig kill circulates widely and soon reaches the ears

of relatives and friends living elsewhere. Those who live some way off may come on the day before the kill and stay for the night with relatives and friends who are resident members of the host *semonda*. The night is one of excitement as people discuss with eager expectation the events of the following day; this is a time when several unrelated young people find themselves collected together and *turmaen* courting sessions are likely.

The next day at dawn the kill starts in a flurry of activity which does not cease until men have distributed the pork in the early afternoon. Women lead up their pigs for slaughter by men. The Wola club pigs to death. If a pig is not too heavy a man lifts it off the ground and presents the snout to another man armed with a club, but if the animal is large and heavy men tie it to a stake before clubbing it. Sometimes a large, stunned pig breaks free and yelling men pursue it with bows and arrows to finish off the job. The slaughter is a free for all and the owners of pigs do not necessarily kill their own animals; in fact it is the young men who own the least number of pigs who do most of the clubbing.

It is not long before the area is strewn with the corpses of pigs, and this prompts men to light fires to start singeing off the animals' hair (*showmay iriy haeray*; lit: pig hair burn). Men remove the coarse hair and first layer of skin from pigs by singeing them over a fire and scraping them with a sharp piece of wood. Carefully keeping the pigs of each man together, men line up the singed corpses on a bed of banana leaves ready for butchering to begin. Butchering (*showmay say bay*; lit: pig cut do) follows a standard pattern.⁴⁴ It is usual for a man to butcher his largest pig himself,

⁴⁴ Men butcher pigs as follows: firstly they remove the strip of fat from the belly. Next they peel the two sides of flesh away from the rib cage so that the legs and both sides of pork lie flat on the ground, they break the joint where the back legs articulate with the pelvis with a rough flint hammer. They then abrade the exposed ribs, about half way between the spine and the sternum, with a rough flint knife and break them by applying pressure with the palm of the hand on the sternum. They remove the sternum, with fragments of rib attached, to expose the organs inside the rib cage. The butcher removes the internal organs, but before pulling the oesophagus through he knots it to prevent chyme leaking out. As a man removes the internal organs he mutters the name of the pig several times but the significance of this is not clear (some men did not bother to say the pig's name and those who did were unable to say why they said it). Next, one man lifts up the head of the pig while the butcher cuts away the two sides of pork where they are still attached to the spine. Finally the butcher severs the head

but no one can butcher more than one pig before the pork is put in the oven to cook and relatives and friends of men with several pigs help to butcher them. Although men shout advice to one another throughout the pig kill, nobody directs the actions of others and people not killing pigs lend a hand where they think it is needed. While men attend to the butchering women take the offal away to a stream and wash it out (*showmay iy delay*; lit: pig excreta rinse).

Men drape all the sides of pork from the butchered pigs over the horizontal *showmay tok* pole which runs the length of the oven trench. Although men leave the pork on the pole for only a short time before proceeding to cook it, this is a proud moment for them because it displays to all present how many pigs they have killed. This display of flesh wealth, like the display of wealth at any exchange, acknowledges the important social role which valuables play in the life of the Wola. It is during this display that men may shout out insults to former enemies and challenge them to come and see the abundant wealth of the people they had the affrontery to fight, and to take the meat if they are so self-important that they can afford to upset social relations. These challenges carry the same meaning as the challenges men shout at a *shombaynol* contest, and show how the Wola associate wealth and exchange with amicable social relations. In the display of wealth before an exchange men are making a statement about their ability to maintain harmonious relations, which a dispute or a war negate, and by telling their enemies to come and take or steal that to which they have no right, men are urging them to do something which is the antithesis of the social purpose of exchange, and through these cynical challenges, which are inversions of expected behaviour, they hold them up to ridicule and point the guilty finger at them for upsetting relations.

When they have removed the sides of pork from the *showmay tok* pole men light the fire to heat the stones for the oven (*showmay haen day*; lit: pig stone cook). After approximately eighty minutes the fire dies down and the stones are hot enough, and men pick them and charred pieces of wood out of the oven trench with

from the spine and either leaves it lying on the ground or places it on a spiked pole.

wooden tongs called *kopa* to make way for the pork. The Wola cook their pork by placing it in the long trench on a bed of banana and fern leaves and covering it with leaves, hot stones and earth (*showmay soway*; lit: pig cook (in pit with hot stones)). The pork remains in the oven for approximately two hours.⁴⁵ While the pork cooks there is a lull in the proceedings, before the confusion of the distribution, when men sit and talk. They also join women and children in roasting small titbits of pork over fires and cooking small pieces of meat and greens in bamboo tubes called *pay kuwla* (lit: container *kuwla*). Men also take the opportunity to roam off to other parks to see the progress made by their relatives and friends.⁴⁶

When men judge that the pork is cooked they quickly scrape the earth off the oven and remove the top layers of banana leaves and stones. They make mats on the ground from the banana leaves and lift the pork and ferns onto these. The pork belonging to each man is placed in demarcated piles and the owner supervises the cutting up of the meat into chunks for distribution (*showmay karay*; lit: pig cut up). It is solely the responsibility of the man who owns the pork to decide how to cut it up, and he decides this according to the number of people to whom he intends to give pork. It is a difficult time for them because they have to remember all their relatives and friends who stand to receive pork, and judge the carve up so that they are neither left short of their needs nor with a surplus of pork.⁴⁷

When a man is satisfied with the way he has cut up his pork he starts the distribution which is called *showmay karuw tol bay* (lit: pig cut share do). A man starts by giving away the largest cuts of pork to his close relatives and works his way down to the smaller cuts for more distant relatives and friends. Only the owners of the pigs distribute the pork and they stand in the centre of their park and lift cuts of meat above their heads shouting the names of people who are to receive the meat. Some cuts traditionally belong

⁴⁵ If rain threatens in the early afternoon men reduce the time in the oven so that they can complete the distribution before it arrives.

⁴⁶ Men do not kill and cook their pigs on one *howma* (unless they are a small *semonda*), but the members of one or two *semgenk* occupy a park each.

⁴⁷ I can personally testify to the problems men experience. When I killed a pig I had to resort to pen and paper to arrange the distribution I had in mind!

to the woman who cared for the pig and these are called *tenon kaga sha tol bay* (lit: woman's *kaga* share do).⁴⁸ Other than nibbling at the pork and eating some fat soaked ferns people do not eat their pork together and make a feast after the owners have distributed all their pork. People do not linger and soon after the distribution is over the area is almost deserted as they make their way home to consume their pork.

It is the receipt not the consumption of pork which is important. This fact is underlined when men who kill pigs at the same time exchange pork with one another, and when men who receive pork do not put it aside for their own consumption but give it to someone else. This re-distribution of pork may take place several times after a pig kill and sometimes it continues for two or three days after the event. This handing on of pork shows how the social networks of individuals spread out and interweave with one another, and it is this show of social connectedness, which is one of the appeals of a pig kill, that prompts men to combine and make them large events when numbers of people collect together. It is during the distribution of pork that the crowds at a pig kill reach their maximum. The behaviour of visitors to a pig kill demonstrates spatially the way in which exchange serves as a mechanism of sociability. Only relatives and friends of pig owners gather near when they cut the pork up for distribution and for any one else to crowd in would be extremely bad behaviour. These other visitors to a pig kill form a crowd of spectators a little way off, and from this pattern an observer can see on the ground the social network of each man, with him at the centre with the pork, and progressively more distant relatives and friends in concentric circles spreading away from him. Many visitors do not stand to receive pork directly from men who have killed pigs but receive it second, or third-hand, and so the pork from one pig kill serves to maintain

⁴⁸ The cuts which belong to the woman who cared for the pig are the jaw, the tongue, the brains, the ribs, the kidney, the small intestine, cuts from the base of the tail and the neck, the thin strips of fat cut from the edge of the belly, and the knuckle and lower part of each leg. A woman rarely receives all these cuts because her husband will distribute some of them to relatives and friends. A woman may give some of the pork she receives to relatives and friends but most of it she shares with her husband and children. When men kill a sick pig a woman receives no meat at all because if she consumed meat from a sick pig she would contaminate the other pigs in her care.

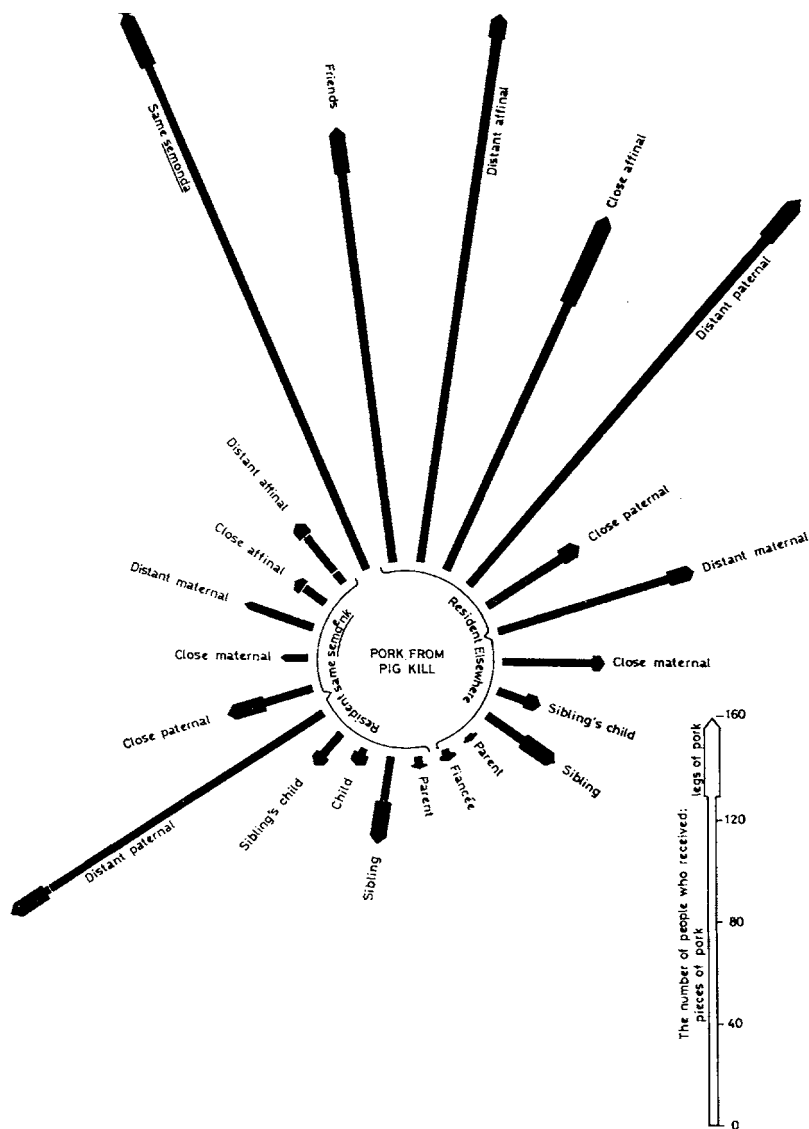


FIG. 40 The number of times men gave pork to different categories of relative at pig kills. (Above break in line = member of different *semg^{enk}* in the same *semonda*.)

many relations as it passes from hand to hand over a wide geographical area. The Wola call people who come to watch a pig kill, but who do not stand to receive pork directly, *showmay siya pay* (lit: pig *siya* go).

The distribution of pork at a pig kill demonstrates to some measure at a single event the extent of a man's social network because all the people with whom he maintains relations stand to receive pork and turn up. Figure 40 gives some idea of the constitution and extent of social networks as demonstrated by the distribution of pork by Aenda and Ebay men at their two pig kills. The figure, with its bilateral perspective and wide geographical spread, brings together and summarises the patterns of other exchanges. It indicates how at a pig kill the distribution patterns of several men will criss-cross and pull together a large number of inter-related persons. A pig kill thus epitomises in one day and demonstrates the effectiveness of the social purpose of exchange in Wola society.

In keeping with other exchanges there is a correlation between a man's status and the number of pigs he has killed, as shown by the trend of figure 41, which indicates that men of renown in the Haelaelinja area have killed more pigs than other men. The number of pig kills in which men have participated, however, is the result of age. But it is figure 42 which is of interest for the argument developed in this book. It shows the number of pigs which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* slaughtered at their respective pig kills in 1973 and 1974, and the number of people to whom they distributed their pork.⁴⁹ Although men who killed more pigs tend to distribute pork to a larger number of people, the

⁴⁹ This material on the distribution of pork I collected while in attendance at the two pig kills staged by the members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda*. The events were too confused and hurried to allow the accurate noting of the entire distribution, and I checked and supplemented the information which I had collected by questioning the men concerned during the week following the kills.

The results shown for some men require a note of qualification. Approximately twelve months before the Aenda pig kill there was pig sickness in the pig herds of some Maenget men which resulted in the slaughter of twelve of Tensgay's pigs, three of Hiyp's pigs and one of Pes's pigs. The number of pigs slaughtered by Huwlael Em is also low, and this is because a short time before the pig kill he slaughtered six pigs at the *hombera* exchange which followed the death of his son. The distribution of pork by Kolomb Omonol is atypical because it includes the distribution of *hombera* pork following the death of his sister Yaezow.

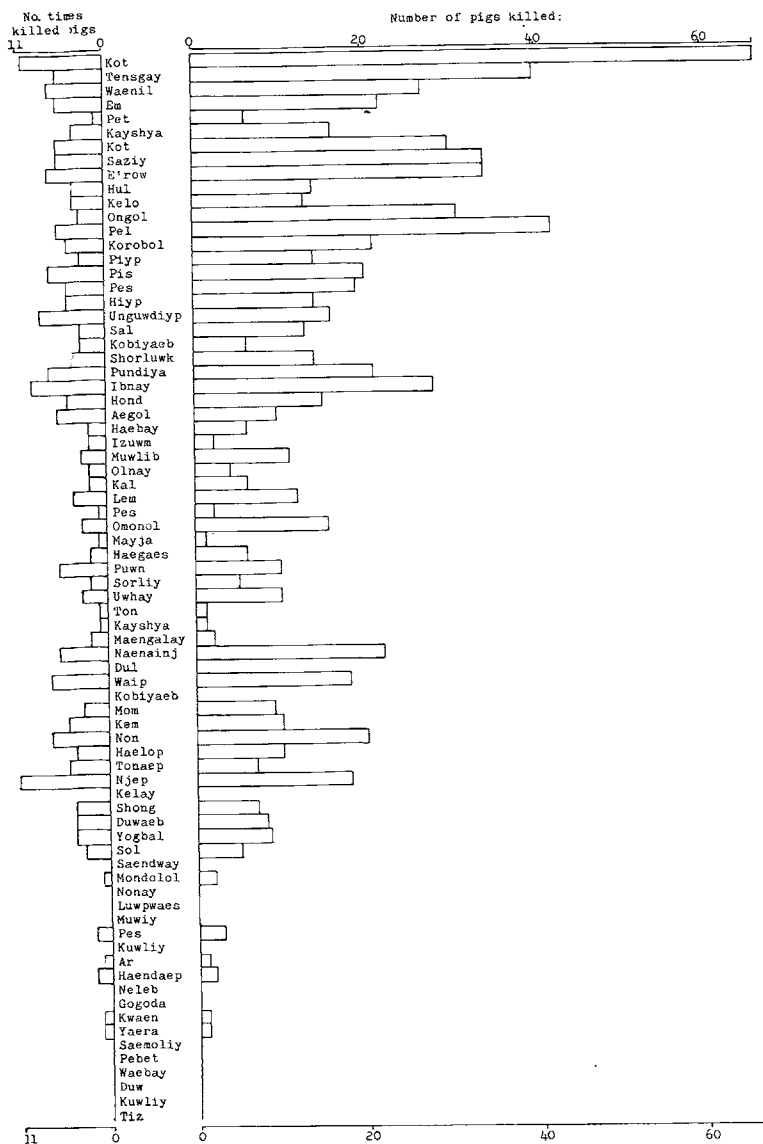


FIG. 41 The number of pig kills in which men have participated and the pigs they killed

increase is not proportional to the number of extra pigs they killed. Some men who killed fewer pigs distributed pork to almost as many people. This points to the finite character of the social network which even the most industrious and able man can maintain. It is the size of the pieces of pork which men give away that tends to equalise the difference between the number of pigs they kill, and results in them distributing pork to approximately the same number of people. Figure 42 indicates that men who kill more pigs give away larger cuts of pork, as shown by the more hind and fore quarters distributed by them. Men give their largest cuts to the people with whom they have close relations; this does not mean biologically close relatives only, although as figure 40 indicates, men tend to give proportionally more of the larger cuts to these relatives. While the size of the cut of pork which a man receives indicates the state of his relations with the giver, he judges this not in terms of the size of the cuts distributed by other men but by the size of the cuts given to other people by the man who gives him pork. If a man only kills one or two pigs his relatives do not expect large cuts and he does not damage his relations by giving away small pieces of pork. But it is a snub to give a meagre portion to someone who deserves more, and sometimes at a pig kill men complain about the unfair size of the piece of pork they receive; in contrast to this a man can shame someone by giving them more pork than they deserve.⁵⁰

If, as this study argues and the material on pig kills indicates, it is the act of giving which is socially significant then the size of the gift is only of secondary importance. The increased numbers of pigs which successful men kill, like the increased amounts of wealth they handle in other exchanges (especially since the Australians have inflated the supply of valuables), means that these men surpass the social requirements of exchange. But while men who kill few pigs and distribute small pieces of pork do not

⁵⁰ This is a further example of the principle of shaming with wealth (discussed for the *shombaynol* and *mogol liy*) where a man humiliates a person who damages their relationship by giving them more wealth, the socialising medium, than they deserve. For example at the Aenda pig kill Maenget Korobol (see footnote 10, chapter 4) shamed the man who drove a hard bargain over the *ma ha* pig by giving him a head and neck joint (this was doubly embarrassing because it is customary for a man to keep for his family the heads and guts of the pigs he kills and cook them the day following the pig kill).

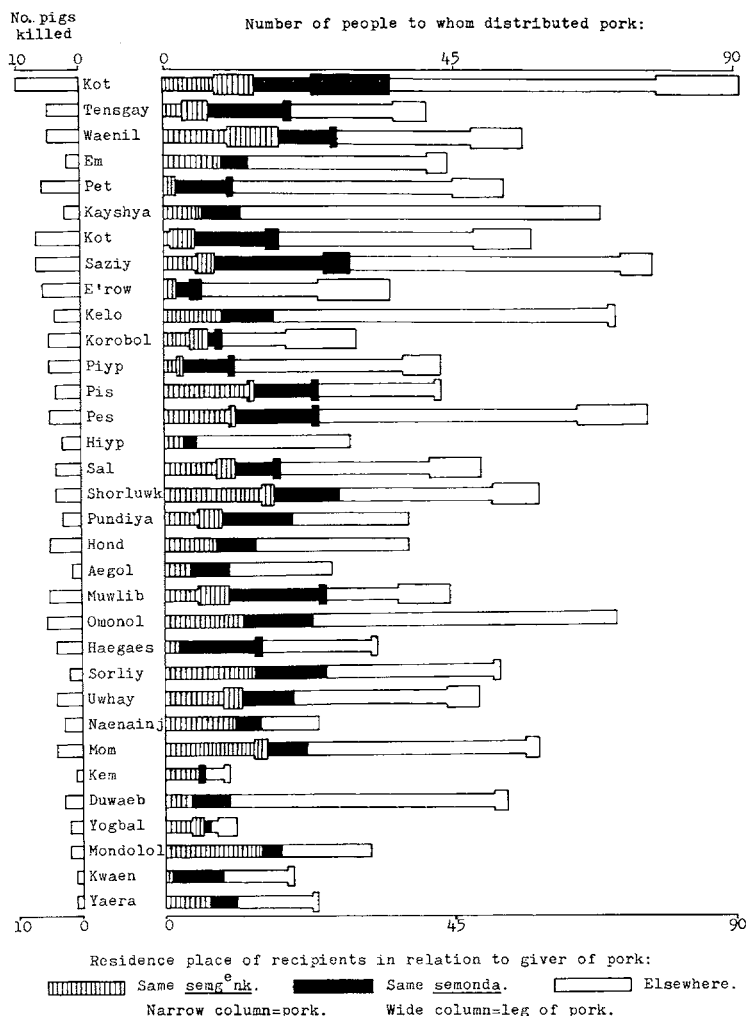


FIG. 42 The number of pigs men slaughtered in one pig kill and the people to whom they distributed pork

damage their social relations, they do diminish their social status. By according successful men high status, even though this means they surpass what the system requires of them, the Wola not only reaffirm the value of exchange in their society, but they also

Name	Spouse	Child	Parent	Sibling	Other close relative re-siding same place ^a	Total number of deceased close relatives
Kot		6	2	3	4	15
Tensgay		8	2	1	10	21
Waenil			1	6	9	16
Em	1	2	1	1	7	12
Pet				2	3	5
Kayshya			1	1	4	6
Kot			1	3	4	8
Saziy		4	2	1	11	18
E'row		1	2	1	6	10
Hul		1	2	1	3	7
Kelo		1	2	3	3	9
Ongoi			1	1	3	5
Pel		3	2	12	19	36
Koroboi		2	2	1	5	10
Piyp		2	2	3	1	8
Pis		1	1	1	3	6
Pes			1	3	4	8
Hiyp				8	1	9
Unguwdiyp		4	2	6	2	14
Sal			1	3	4	8
Kobiyaeb			1	2	6	9
Shorluwk				4	20	24
Pundiya		4	2	3	8	17
Ibnay	3	6	2	5	5	21
Hond		3	2			5
Aegol		2	2	1	16	21
Haebay			2	1	4	7
Izuwm			2		6	8
Muwlib			2	1	15	18
Olnay	1		2	1	7	11
Kal		1		4	3	8
Lem			1		4	5
Pes			2	1	4	7
Omonol			1	1	6	8
Mayja			1	3	4	8
Haegaes			2	1	6	9
Puwn		2	2	1	5	10
Sorliy			1	1	8	10
Uwhay				2	3	5
Ton		1		3	20	24
Kayshya		1	1	6	5	13
Maengalay				2	3	5
Naenainj			1	1	22	24
Dul				4	4	8
Waip				4		4
Kobiyaeb			2	1	4	7
Mom			1	1	1	3
Kem	1	4	2	1	8	16
Non		2	2	6	9	19
Haelop	1	1	2		16	20
Tonaep	1		2		17	20
Njep			2		14	16
Kelay		1				1
Shong						
Duwaeb		2	1	6	5	14
Yogbal			2	6	9	17
Sol			1	1	4	6
Saendway	1		1			2
Mondolol				1	7	8
Nonay			2	1	2	5

Name	Spouse	Child	Parent	Sibling	Other close relative re-siding same place ^a	Total number of deceased close relatives
Luwpwaaes				1		1
Muwi			1	6	9	16
Pes			1	3	12	16
Kuwli				3	21	24
Ar			1	1	6	8
Haendaep			1	1	22	24
Neleb				4	4	8
Gogoda			1	1	8	10
Kwaen			2	1	1	4
Yaera				2	3	5
Saemoli				3	21	24
Pebet				4	20	24
Waebay				8	1	9
Duw			1	1	1	3
Kuwli			2			2
Tiz			1	6	9	16

a Includes parents' siblings; siblings' child; parents' siblings' child; children's children; (plus permutations on † siblings; ‡ siblings included with full siblings).

TABLE 17 The number of close relatives of Aenda and Ebay men who have died

encourage men of renown to act as catalysts and stimulate the action of exchange. Successful men may not directly use the extra wealth they handle to maintain a proportionately larger social network, but their ability acts as a fillip to their relatives. After receiving pork at a pig kill, for example, people re-distribute it to their relatives, and the larger the cut of pork they receive the larger the number of people who will benefit from his share out. In this way successful men indirectly help their relatives to maintain their relations.

A pig kill is not the only occasion on which men kill their pigs, although for the Wola it is the most exciting occasion. Men also kill pigs in times of sickness. If a pig falls ill the owner kills it for fear of the spread of sickness.⁵¹ More importantly, if a human being falls seriously ill the Wola believe that recovery requires them to offer a pig to the ancestor who is divined as responsible for 'eating' the sick person. The Wola believe that this exchange between the living and the dead pleases the attacking ancestors

⁵¹ The Wola think most illnesses among pigs are contagious and to prevent any spread of sickness they kill sick animals. Sometimes the owners distribute the pork to relatives and friends but on other occasions they sell the pork. There are indications that the sale of pork has increased since the introduction of money which facilitates the evaluation of different sized cuts and makes selling easier.

and persuades them to stop the 'eating'. The offering of a pig is a logical extension of Wola ideas from the living to the dead. They think that the exchange of wealth, which ensures co-operation among the living, will also smooth out relations with the dead.⁵²

In a recent paper Hayano (1974) argues that among the Tauna Awa people of the Eastern Highland an ability to 'control' supernatural forces and prevent sickness (in particular sickness and death associated with childbirth) influences the status of men. In Wola society men who lose few close relatives, and who consequently give the appearance of controlling supernatural forces, are not necessarily, as table 17 shows, men of high status.⁵³ The Wola think that attacks by ancestors are malicious and that no one man is more capable of relieving these attacks than anyone else. While they try to exert some control over the behaviour of their ancestors and attempt to establish amicable relations with them, the Wola think results come from luck and men who are unlucky and lose several relatives do not suffer a fall in status.

While an apparent ability to control sickness does not directly affect a man's status, the more relatives he has fall seriously ill the more pigs he will be required to offer to his ancestors. Figure 43 shows the total number of pigs which members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* have killed in times of sickness. The trend is for men of high status to have killed more pigs, but there are discrepancies in the curve of the graph. These discrepancies may be accounted for in the same way as those which occurred in the curve of the graph for reparation and reimbursement payments. As figure 43 shows a man will only kill several pigs if a close relative falls ill, and men who are fortunate and have few relatives fall ill kill fewer pigs. When several relatives of a man fall seriously ill there is a

⁵² A discussion of Wola religious ideas is beyond the scope of this book but I think considerable insight will result from considering these offerings as exchanges between the living and the dead, and setting off these ideas, which fit into the Wola conception of life, with such anthropological concepts as sacrifice.

⁵³ Some of the relatives shown on table 19 died when the man concerned was too young to be responsible for giving help, and in some cases even before they were born. The number of deceased relatives listed is simply the result of the size of the man's immediate family. Successful men have more wives on average than other men and as a result they have more children, which increases the chances that, from Hayano's point of view, they will lose close relatives and lose status. But in Wola society the larger families of these men are a reflection of their higher status which results from their ability to handle wealth and afford several wives.

drain upon his resources, but the offering of pigs falls within an exchange context and the killing of many pigs serves to improve a man's social standing, like success in any other exchange. The killing of a pig when someone is sick serves three exchange purposes: there is the exchange between the living and the dead to help the sick person regain health, there is the demonstration of concern for the sick person by the man who kills a pig,⁵⁴ and there is the distribution of pork to relatives and friends following the offering.⁵⁵

The adoption of a new and elaborate style of pig kill, which is slowly drifting into the Wola area from the Lai and Mendi river valleys,⁵⁶ mirrors the interest these people have in exchange. This new pig kill sequence is called *sa aend wiya* (lit: *sa* house is) after the long house which men build as part of the proceedings.

Men initiate the sequence by first building a long house, the *sa aenda*. They usually build two parallel houses facing one another across a cleared area of grass. The technical construction of these long houses is no different from other houses except they are considerably longer.⁵⁷ Normally the members of a *semonda* combine to build a house, with each of them accepting responsibility for the building of a short section. They do not actually build the rooms themselves. They contract others to do it for a payment and so the construction of a house becomes an occasion for an exchange of wealth. People from elsewhere collect together the materials, and when they have enough they join together to build the house. When they have finished the hosts, many of them wearing their second best decorations, arrange wealth between the two houses for an exchange called *sa suw liy* (lit: *sa* ground hit).⁵⁸

⁵⁴ A sick person does not repay men for the pigs they kill out of sorrow on his behalf—except that he may reciprocate if they in turn fall sick.

⁵⁵ Sometimes women are forbidden to eat some of the pork from a pig offered to the ancestors.

⁵⁶ See Ryan (1961: 207-24) for an account of this pig kill in the Mendi valley where it is called *mok ink* (lit: pig *ink*). In broad outline the pig kill has remained the same, although the Wola have introduced some modifications. By 1974 people living in the Nembi valley had initiated the *sa* sequence but it did not reach the area where I lived on the Was river until 1975.

⁵⁷ The length varies according to the number of men who accept responsibility to have a section built.

⁵⁸ Other names for the exchange are *aend senz liy* (lit: house thatch hit) and *aend sok haeray* (lit: house payment burn).

The builders share this among themselves. The purpose of the house is ambiguous. In some places the men responsible for building the house sleep there with their families for a couple of months when it is new. Sometimes visitors to a dance or pig kill, which constitute part of the *sa aend* cycle, sleep in the house.⁵⁹ Other long houses are never occupied.

Some time after they have built the *sa aenda* the men sponsoring the *sa* sequence construct another building called a *pok aenda* (lit: *pok* house). They usually build the *pok aenda* near the long house, but if the members of two neighbouring *semonda* unite to perform the *sa* cycle together they may build the two houses on separate sites, one on the territory of one group and the other on the territory of the other group. The *pok aenda* consists of four large tree trunks which men bury vertically in the ground to form the four corners of the building. On top of these logs they construct a rough roof of bark shingles or grass thatch. They leave the two ends open and close the two sides with a rough wall of bamboo cane.

A year or more after they have built the long house the men sponsoring the *sa* sequence arrange a dance called *senj pukuw henday* (lit: kunai grass (*Imperata conferta*) thatch eaves trim see).⁶⁰ At the dance members of the host group which built the *sa aenda* wear their second best decorations only whereas other men, who are resident members of *semonda* where the *sa* cycle has progressed beyond this first dance (and men who are closely related to one of these groups although not resident), come elaborately decorated with their finest feathers. The men form up into squads five or six rows deep and perform a dance called *tomp* in which they march round in a large circle stamping their feet and chanting.

A couple of weeks before this and other dances in the *sa* cycle, men from the host group go round to announce its coming to their neighbours. They call this broadcast *ol ishor tay* (lit: man tree leaf

⁵⁹ This only happens early on in the *sa* sequence because long before the end of the cycle the house rots away.

⁶⁰ This is a figurative reference to the completion of the house, which the dance marks, and at the dance men do not actually trim the thatch from the eaves of the long house.

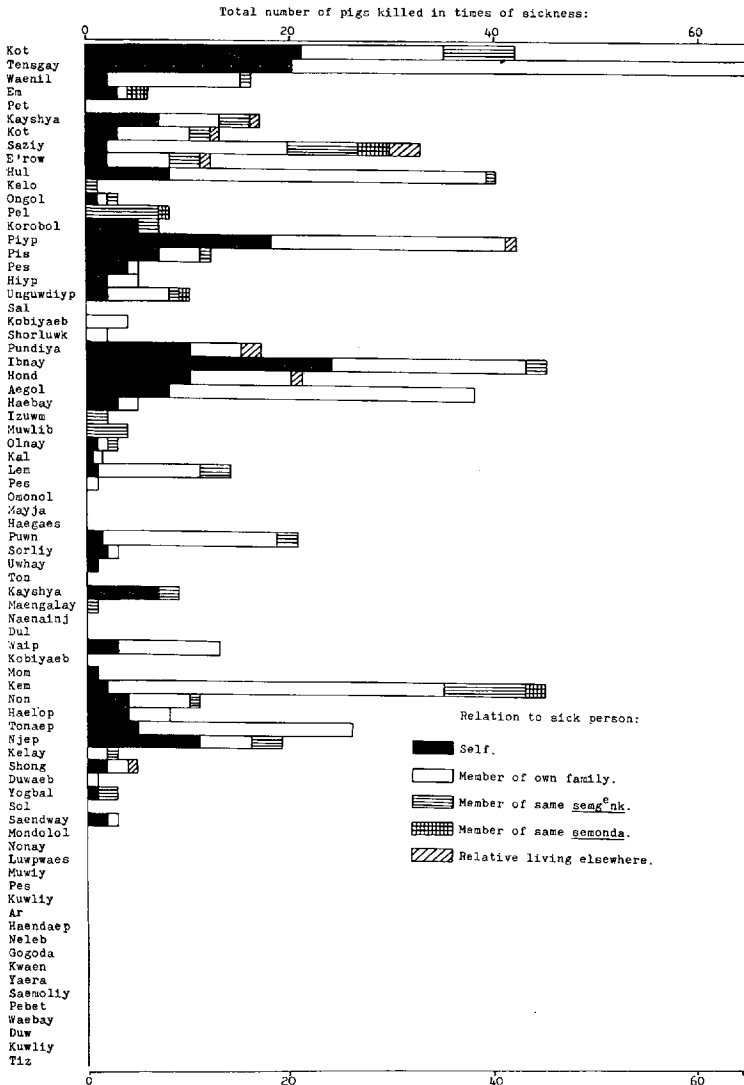


FIG. 43 The number of pigs which men have killed in times of sickness

carry). At each place visited and on paths they announce their arrival by shouting out *tuw kay* (lit: *tuw say*, from their cry of *tuw-uw-uw!*). When they visit, men say whether or not they intend to attend their dance fully decorated. This is important because when several men go somewhere fully decorated to take part in a dance, the hosts are obliged to repay them by in turn coming fully decorated to their *sa* dances.

Three or more years later the men responsible for the *sa* sequence arrange a pig kill called *hiyl kombayay* (lit: transversely butcher).⁶¹ Besides cooking some pigs whole and butchering them transversely, it is also the fashion at these events for men to kill as many cassowaries as they can collect. Before one of these kills men try to obtain by trade as many of these birds as possible.⁶² When they obtain a cassowary and carry it home in a rough cage slung on a pole men stop at intervals along the path and yodel out news of their acquisition.

This kill is usually a two day affair. On the first day men wring the necks of their cassowaries, which they have caged in a long pen stretching across a *howma* clearing. They then carry the birds across their shoulders, called *shiyort pesol tay* (lit: cassowary on shoulder carry), and form one or two lines flanking a group of fully decorated visitors dancing the *tomp*. Sometimes these yodelling dancers file through the *pok aenda* with the cassowaries across their shoulders. On the second day men butcher and cook their pigs and cassowaries, and in the early afternoon distribute the meat to their relatives and friends.

A few years pass before the sponsors hold a big dance called *sa bombay* (lit: *sa* knock and fill up)⁶³ or *sa aend liy* (lit: *sa* house fight). The members of the host group wear their finest decorations and so do men who are resident members, or close relatives of resident members, of groups where the *sa* cycle is also in progress.

⁶¹ When men cook pigs in this way they cut them open before putting them in the oven and remove the stomach and intestines. They then sew up the pig and cook it whole. Men only cook a few pigs like this, and then chop the carcass transversely into three or four pieces.

⁶² This new demand for cassowaries has inflated their value, and men trade for them with people living towards Lake Kutubu where they are more plentiful in the dense rainforest.

⁶³ *Bombay* is the action of knocking food into a bamboo cooking tube by banging it on the ground.

Dancers form up into ranks and dance the *tomp*. The fact that the *sa* cycle is a time for men to demonstrate their ability to handle wealth is given vocal assent during the dance as men shout out their own praises (*koyay*; lit: praise). They praise their own ability with such phrases as: *ninor sa aend onda ora* (lit: my *sa* house big very) which is an allusion to the handling of much wealth (by the time of the dance the long house has rotted away); some men come straight to the point and boast about the wealth they have with such phrases as *na showmay onduwp ora hayor* (lit: my pigs plenty very stand); other men belittle the ability of others with such taunting comments as *onyiy nay pung biy* (lit: you (all) food smell rotten do) which means they are useless like rotten food.

When the Wola call the dance the *sa* house fight they describe the activities of visitors to the dance, who roam around the area of the host group and destroy their property. They pull up crops, push down fences, fell pandanus and casuarina trees, and sometimes even burn down houses. Members of the host group make no effort to prevent the destruction, and a disgruntled man offered the most reasonable explanation when he commented that such destruction proved the ability of members of the host group because only successful men could withstand such destruction of their property.⁶⁴

The *sa* sequence ends several years later with a pig kill called *sa liy* (lit: *sa* hit). At this pig kill men slaughter pigs only, but some novel exchanges, unique to the *sa* cycle, precede the kill. A month or so before the pig kill men stake out in a long line for inspection by others all the animals they intend to slaughter; they call this *showmay piriyndiyay* (lit: pig stake out for inspection). At this inspection men arrange to exchange sides of pork at the kill. Sometimes they arrange to make a straight exchange of pork, for example two small sides of pork for one large one. In other transactions men pay for the pork with other valuables, which the receiver may keep or use in an exchange with another man for pork. This exchange of pork, which occurs prior to the *sa liy* pig kill only, is called *showmay tor bay* (lit: pig bridge do).

⁶⁴ Prudent men remove all their movable property to the houses of relatives and friends living elsewhere because the marauders may take items which catch their eye (except for pigs which they must not molest).

As in other pig kills men pay off all their exchange debts before the event takes place and this is called *sa aenda mowmaek tol bay* (lit: *sa* house pearl shells share do). There are two exchanges at this time which are unique to the end of the *sa* sequence. In one exchange, called *showmay mesol wiya* (lit: pig back is), men repay with interest the wealth invested with them by their relatives and friends for the duration of the *sa* sequence. In the other exchange, called *nonk nais senj bay* (lit: girl boy kunai grass do), the sponsors of the *sa* sequence give items of wealth to their wives' relatives. They do this by hanging valuables around the necks of their children with instructions to carry the wealth to their mothers' relatives who sit nearby.

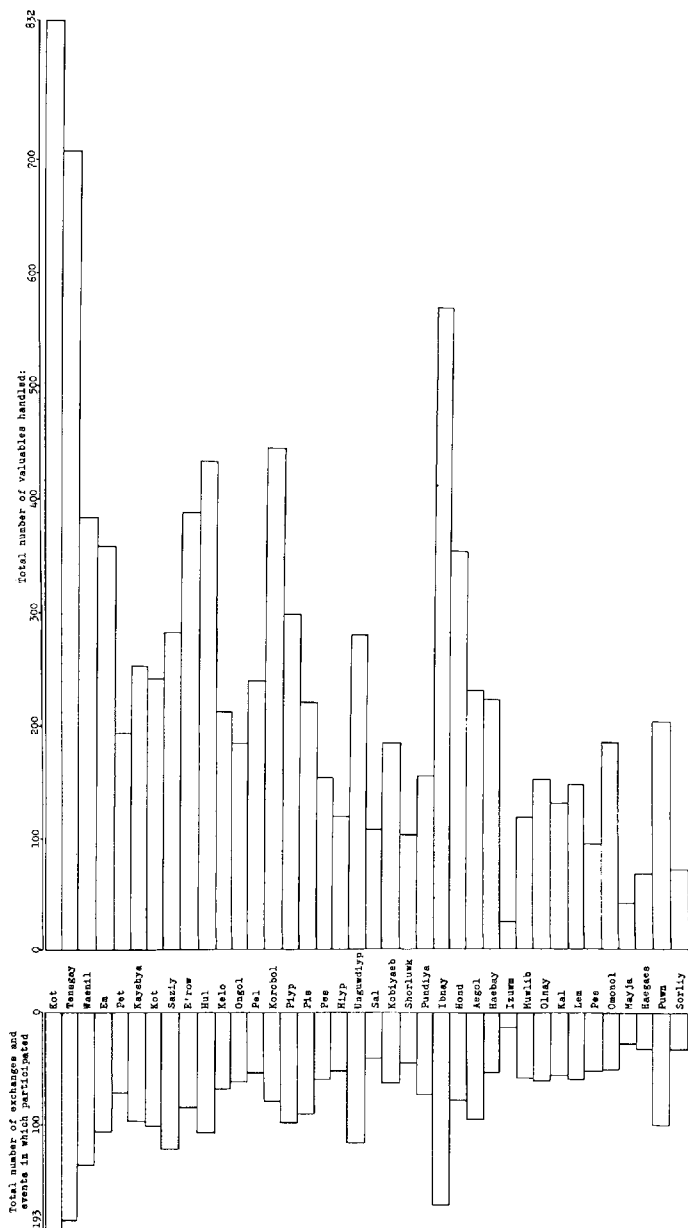
Exchange, the Central Principle

The aim of this book is to show the important part which exchange plays in the social life of the Wola. It starts by assessing the significance for their society of ideas relating to corporate political groups, which anthropologists have taken, either directly or by implication, to be a fundamental aspect of the organisation of other societies in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, and it finds that they do not apply. The permanent groups of Wola society result from the settlement of people on territories where they may claim, in a variety of ways, rights to garden land, but the related members of these territorial groups do not unite to pursue group actions. Although it is usual for some of them to form the nucleus of any temporary action-set which coalesces for collective action, they do not recognise any obligations to support the corporate group.¹

The idea that leaders to some extent direct the actions of others follows on from the idea that people are organised into corporate political groups. But neither the members of the permanent local groups nor the temporary action groups of Wola society recognise leaders who fit in with the currently held view of Melanesian big-men, which Burridge (1975) epitomises, in the latest overview of the question, with the title of his paper: 'The Melanesian Manager'.² The members of action-sets reach decisions which

¹ Lawrence (1971) formulated the concept of the 'security circle' to explain Garia political organisation in an attempt to avoid some of the constrictions which ideas about corporate groups entail. He examines Garia political action within the framework of the kinship polity (see Fortes 1970: 101-21) where it is the cognatic and affinal network which is important. While the descent rationale and constitution of the territorial groups which form the cores of group activities in Wola society are different from those of the Garia, there is a similarity in the significance of an individual's dispersed network of relations in the calculations which he makes in social situations.

² In this paper Burridge only touches briefly upon big-men as leaders, and he refers to them as managers more in the sense that they show an ability to handle and transcend the conflicting values of their societies, something which *ol howma*



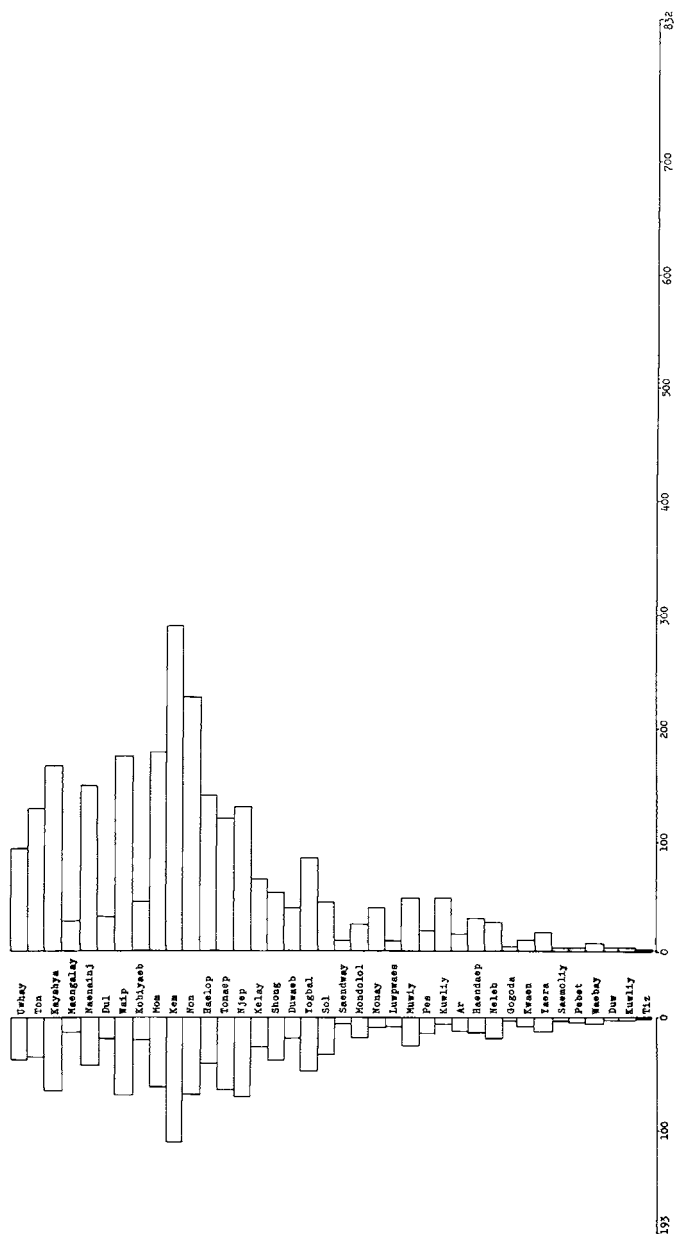


FIG. 44 The number of exchanges and amounts of wealth men have handled in their lives

influence them by discussing issues until they reach a majority agreement with which the minority may continue to disagree and, if they think participation on the terms agreed upon is not in their interests, can result in them abstaining from the event. Yet there are men in Wola society who achieve status positions above other men, and in some situations they may try to use their standing to their personal advantage and exert a marginal degree of influence over the decisions of a group of men united to pursue a collective act. The Wola say that these men, the *ol howma* of their society, achieve positions of respect because of their ability to handle larger amounts of wealth in more exchanges than other men, and the testing of this claim against quantitative data throughout this book has found that the facts match the ideal.

Figure 44 shows the total number of valuables which the members of the two *semonda* under intensive study in this book have handled in various exchanges and events. When compared with figure 6, which shows the status of these men as judged by their peers, this graph supports the assertions of the Wola that men of renown are those who handle more wealth than average. But the pattern requires some qualifying remarks. In the first place figure 44 lumps together all the valuables given in various exchanges as if they are of equal value, but this is not so. However, if it is assumed that all men handle proportionately the same number of differently valued wealth items then this permits the indiscriminate lumping together of wealth in the graph. The increase in the supply of wealth, which has occurred since the arrival of the Australian administration, also interferes with the accuracy of the graph because it means that younger men today handle disproportionately more wealth than older men did when they were young. The variation in the ages of the men included in the survey skews the figure further because older men, by virtue of their age, have had the chance to participate in more exchanges. The difference in the ages of men distorts the figure even more because it influences the judgment of others when they ascribe status to them. People expect well of some young men of promise, for example, and ascribe higher status to them than their actual

do not achieve themselves but to which they contribute more than others because of their ability at exchange.

achievements merit, whereas they see the participation of old men decline with age and ascribe them a lower status than their previous achievements merit. Other variable factors, for example the personality of men or their leading a migratory life between two places, account for the other anomalies in the curve of figure 44 which, when these qualifications are taken into consideration, shows a trend for *ol howma*, and in particular the two outstanding men in the Haelaelinja area, to handle more wealth than other men in more exchanges.

When asked why men strive to earn *ol howma* status, the Wola reply that the achievement of renown, and the prestige which accrues to it, is an end in itself. The ultimate accolade to which the ambitious, intelligent and capable man can aspire is the respect of his peers, and high status and renown for his ability in the exchange, investment and manipulation of wealth. This is as far as the Wola go when asked this question, and in an attempt to find an explanation which embraces more of their social life this study looks on a more abstract plane and takes as its starting point the importance of exchange for the achievement of high status. A crucial point in this explanation is the value which Wola society places upon the individual.

In any society a confusion of interests inevitably arises between individual liberty and state control, and the mediation of this dilemma has engaged thinkers since the time of the early civilisations, and probably before then. It is a problem of perennial interest because to make social life possible individuals must always relinquish to the group some control over their behaviour. Faced by this unavoidable quandary, Wola society has resolved to leave the individual free to manage as much of his own behaviour as is possible without threatening the continuance of the social order. This accounts for the labile and temporary state of action groups and it places in perspective the discrete territorial groups of Wola society. It also explains why renown does not give a man control over the actions of others, but only marginal influence which he may try to use to buttress his position by persuading others to act in ways which are of personal benefit to him.

The recurrence of the prefix self throughout this and other studies of Highland societies, in such words as self-regulation,

self-help and self-interest, indicates the importance of the individual, and this prefix *mbib* (lit: self) is frequently heard in Wola conversations.³ In everyday life the Wola also show the attitudes which they entertain about the freedom of people to decide their own actions by replying, when asked what somebody is going to do, '*ubun konem*' (lit: his thoughts) which means 'Oh, it's his business'.⁴ The way in which they profess ignorance about the activities and whereabouts of each other if asked is a further reflection of their attitudes towards the autonomy of the individual.

Absolute individual autonomy would preclude the existence of society because it would threaten social relations by making behaviour unpredictable, and Wola society maintains the fiction that people can always go their own way, but controls the directions and lengths to which they can go by instituting a number of normative safeguards which direct individual behaviour towards certain socially beneficial goals. Exchange is the focal concept which it uses to achieve this control and maintain the appearance of giving individuals complete freedom.

Exchange is an important social principle which taken at its most general level is an aspect of social interaction in all societies (see Homans 1961). It occurs in numerous cultural guises throughout the world and employs a variety of media, which range from women (Lévi Strauss 1949) to huge stones (Furness 1910), and it is an issue which anthropologists have discussed for many years. Accounts abound for Oceania, and Malinowski's (1922) account of the Trobriand *kula* played an important part in drawing our attention to the importance of exchange as a social principle. But to bring the point home, in England for example, where individual rights (related to the maintenance, and lately to the equality, of the social order) fall under state control, exchange still figures prominently at the level of interpersonal relations, and the reciprocation of presents, greetings cards, dinner dates, card playing

³ For example *ninau mbib bukwa* (lit: mine self will do): 'I'll do it myself'. The fact that the prefix *mbib* is always preceded by the possessive personal pronoun emphasises the individual and singular aspect of self in actions.

⁴ In Pidgin this translates into the catchy little phrase *laik bilong en*, which is frequently heard throughout Papua New Guinea and is one of many indications that an emphasis upon the individual is found throughout the region.

evenings, weekend visits, drinks in a pub, and so on, play a significant part in maintaining social relations in this large scale society where kin relationships only count for a small number of a person's social contacts. The Wola have seized upon the potential social power of this universal principle and they have exploited it as the articulating force in their *laissez faire* society.

Exchange requires people to co-operate and act in a sociable way towards one another, and Sahlins (1974: 186) puts the premise of this study in a nutshell with his riddle 'If friends make gifts, gifts make friends'. Any relationship in Wola society demands some co-operation in exchange activities, if not the direct exchange of wealth, at times during its existence, and these serve an important socialising purpose and promote interaction between people in this fractious society where the value placed upon the individual threatens the existence of an ordered social life.⁵ A bridewealth exchange, for example, brings affines together, and the exchange of wealth not only symbolises the creation of new affinal relationships but it is also the first in a series of transactions between the new relatives which will serve to pull them together. The ramifying mortuary exchanges which follow deaths focus attention on the relations between people which are weakened by the death of a party to the relationship, and the transactions serve to reinforce these damaged relations. Similarly, reparation payments following a violent death are not simply compensation for the deceased's kin, they are a statement by the party responsible for the death that it was unintentional and that they do not wish it to terminate their social relations. The other exchanges, both small and large, of Wola society serve similar sociological purposes.

It is the passage of wealth from one relative to another through the social network which serves to hold Wola society together. Figure 45 shows the combined social network within which took place the exchanges between the members of the two neighbouring *semonda* under intensive study in this book, and it shows the frequency with which transactions occurred between different

⁵ The Bokondini Dani even say that 'When you stop giving each other things, you soon drift apart' (Ploeg 1969: 24). These people are similar to the Wola in the emphasis which they place upon the autonomy of the individual (see 1969: 69), but they are different in the governmental role which some men play in their political organisation.

support to their ideological bias for their paternal relatives, but this point demands some qualification. While the diagram shows that fewer transactions occur between maternal relatives than occur between paternal relatives living at the same place, a pattern directly attributable to the preference voiced by the Wola for residing and associating with their fathers' relatives, it shows that the difference between the number of transactions which men enter into with paternal and maternal relatives living elsewhere is considerably smaller (the larger number of transactions with the affinal relatives of paternal relatives, as opposed to the affinal relatives of maternal relatives, is probably attributable to the fact that men tend to enter into exchanges with men who are related to persons with whom they reside, who are, more often than not, paternal relatives). But the combined number of exchanges with maternal relatives living at the same place and elsewhere is considerably lower than the combined figure for exchanges with paternal relatives living at the same place and elsewhere, and this supports the argument put forward in the previous chapter because figure 45 does not include that aspect of mortuary exchange where men hand over wealth *en bloc* to the recipients to share out among themselves. Ideologically most of these exchanges pass to maternal relatives who reside elsewhere (or if in reality the maternal relatives reside at the same place as the deceased, then they reverse the rules and give the wealth to the paternal relatives) and this supports the argument that these transactions are designed to maintain less strong relations (as shown by the fewer exchanges which occur between them) with people living elsewhere.

Bridewealth, another exchange which men hand over *en bloc*, is not included in the figure either and allowance for this increases the already large number of exchanges which pass between affinal relatives. Affinal relations are a potential weak spot in a man's chain of relations for two reasons. Firstly, residence at his wife's place is the least popular choice for a man (as reflected by the small number of transactions which occur between affinal relatives living at the same place), and it is residence which imparts strength to a relationship. Secondly, affinal relations lack the strength which blood gives to a relationship. So the large number of exchanges passing between affinal relatives are an attempt to

Name	1973							1974							Total											
	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	B	G	F	M	R	H	P	O			
Naenainj	lg				lp*	2h lg lf	lg						lg lb	lp		1							1			
Dul	lg lb				lp	lg lf	lb	lb					lm lg lb	lp		1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1			
Waip	lg				lm lp			lb					lm lg lb	lp		3	2	1	1	2	2	2	2			
Kobiyaeb	lg				lp			lb					lp	lp*		2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Mom					lm lp*	lf lb	lg	lb					lp	lp		1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2			
Kem	lg				lp			lb	lh	lg			lp	lp		1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2			
Non					lp			lb					lp	lp		1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3			
Haelop					lp	lg lf	lr	lb					lp	lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Tonaep					lp			lb					lp	lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Njep					lp			lb					lg lb	lp		1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2			
Kelay					lp			lb					lg	lp		1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Shong					lm									lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Duwaeb					2m lp*	lh lf lg	lg lf							lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Yogbal					lm lp	lg lf		lb						lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Sol	lg lb			lo	lp	lb	lr							lp*		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Saendway	lg															3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Mondolol					lm lp	lf lb				lb				lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Nonay					lp					lh						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Luwpwaes					lm lp	lh lg				lb				lp		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Muwiy					lp											1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Pes					lp											2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2			
Kuwliy					lp					lb				lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Ar					lp	lg							lb			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Haendaep					lp		lg	lb					lb			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Niebo					lp	lg lf	lg lf						lb			1	2	2	1	3	3	3	3			
Gogoda					lm lp	lf										1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Kwaen					lp					lh				lp*		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Yaara					lp			lb						lp*		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Saemoliy					lp									lp*		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Pebet					lp									lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Waebay					lp									lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Duw					lp		lf							lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Kuwliy					lp									lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			
Tiz					lp									lp		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			

KEY

Bridewealth = b
 1st mortuary (gwar) = g
 Funeral pork distribution = f
 2nd mortuary (ol bay) = m
 Other = o
 Reparation = r
 Reimbursement (haypuw) = h
 Pig kill = p
 Killed pigs & made
 hentiya payments = *

TABLE 18 The number of exchanges in which men participated during the period of fieldwork.

strengthen these potentially weak relations, and as such they testify to the importance of wealth as a medium for the encouragement of social co-operation.

The importance of exchange as the force which keeps their atomistic society intact has resulted in it assuming overriding importance for the Wola, and excellence has become the way to high status and respect. The indications are that unlike average men, who only meet their most immediate exchange obligations, successful men look out more tenuous connections for opportunities to exchange wealth. In this way they stimulate the socialising effect of exchange. But *ol howma* can only maintain a limited social network, and the larger amounts of wealth which they handle indirectly stimulate the exchange activities, and increase social co-operation, between their relatives and friends because they channel larger amounts of wealth to them than they would otherwise receive, to pass on to their relatives.

The time men spend on exchange activities varies according to their status, their age and other situational factors which vary from one month to another. A survey of the activities of fourteen men over a two week period established that men only spend on average 5 per cent of their day engaged upon exchange activities, although the time they spend discussing and planning wealth transactions is considerably more. Table 18 documents the exchange activities of the members of Aenda and Ebay *semonda* (as far as I was able to follow them) during the period of fieldwork.⁶ This table gives some idea of the frequency with which exchanges occur, the fluctuation in activities from one time to another (the florescence of activity in November 1973 and July/August 1974 was the result of the two pig kills staged in the Haelaelinja area at these times), and the amount of activity which is necessary to fulfil the socialising purposes of exchange as discussed in this book.

⁶ This table includes the majority of exchanges which occurred in the Haelaelinja area during my stay (there were undoubtedly one or two transactions which escaped my notice), but only a fraction of the exchanges in which Aenda and Ebay men participated elsewhere. The table covers 11 bridewealth exchanges, 2 reparation (*komb*) payments, 6 *ol gwat* exchanges, 8 pig kills, 1 *ol haeriy*, 3 funeral pork distributions (*hombera*), 5 reimbursement payments and 13 *ol bay* exchanges.

Exchange works not only to integrate Wola society but also to maintain the autonomy of the individual, because it is in the interests of men to excel in handling wealth and so achieve renown, and it is in the interests of their society that they do this and so stimulate social co-operation. But the playing off against one another of the antithetical elements of sociability and competition which make up exchange can result in tension. At exchanges, for example, men calculate the value of the items offered to them, and bargain in an attempt to receive what they think, in the light of their future exchange commitments, are the best. This wrangling occurs because individuals are out to do well for themselves and achieve high reputations by obtaining good returns in transactions so that they in turn can make good payments to others. Poor payments which thwart them can foster tension and result in arguments. Also, when people exchange they are making statements about their relations and expressing their opinions of each other, and they may on occasion deliberately send aggressive messages by delaying payments, making small ones or, worst of all, failing altogether. If a man fails to meet his exchange obligations in a relationship then either it lapses because it is in effect repudiated or else, if the relation is a close one, the man's reputation suffers, both in the eyes of the men he disappoints and in those of others who hear of his failure. Failure also brings similar results to breaking the conventions of self-regulation, men become reluctant to co-operate in serious matters with the miscreant because they regard him as unreliable. The offers, the refusals, the haggling, and sometimes the arguments which accompany an exchange, make the claim that giving wealth on prescribed occasions maintains social relations appear paradoxical, but the important point is that by participating competitively in exchanges, even if they occasionally result in arguments and bad feeling, men must come together and act sociably towards one another, and that overall their actions reaffirm their relations.

The scheme of figure 46 summarises the argument developed in this book. It shows the central position of exchange, and consequently of *ol howma* status, welding into a practical social system the disparate elements of Wola society, by resolving the tensions between the conflicting values of self-willedness and self-restraint.

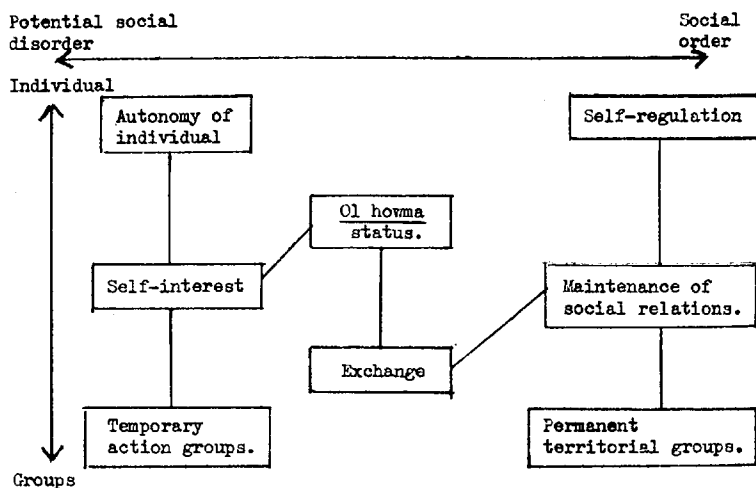


FIG. 46 The central position of exchange and *ol howma* status in maintaining a balanced society

The interpretation of exchange made in this study is at variance with that made in accounts of other Highland societies, and this demands some comments if the Wola are not to be dismissed as atypical. The crux of the difference concerns the emphasis placed upon the position of groups in the constitution of societies in this region, and directly related to this, the significance of descent as an organising principle.

The following scheme is a shorthand summary of Wola ideas:

Present	—————	past
individual	—————	territorial group
exchange	—————	descent

The Wola live in the present and place emphasis upon the individual who has a personal network of relations. The continuous flow of valuables from one person to another serves to hold their networks together, and men base their relations with one another on exchange, not descent.

This way of looking at society stands in contrast to other studies which argue that people organise themselves according to corporate groups. But the extent of the difference is not clear. In other Highland societies groups have a distinctly *ad hoc* appearance,

and it is not always plain to what extent big-men lead them. In fact the differences appear to be a matter of credal emphasis, and not fundamental differences in the way societies are organised. For example when a few members of a group combine to do something in some Highland societies, the people say that they represent the group as a political body and that they act in its interests. But individuals can choose to some extent whether or not to support the group, and this runs contrary to the premise of corporate group theory, that members are obliged in some situations by the principle of jural equality to support the group and act in its interests. Some writers try to slip round this by arguing that men support corporate groups when it coincides with their interests as individuals, and that big-manship concerns the manipulation of these two sets of interests so that they coincide and lead people to act in a way which benefits the group and hence its leader. But the choice afforded to the individual still makes a mockery of the assumptions of corporate group theory, and it has led writers into a confused debate about the relevance of descent concepts, which they have tried to stretch and distort to fit these societies. Several writers note the flexibility, mobility, open recruitment and fluctuating loyalties which characterise New Guinea societies but their preoccupation with the idea of corporate groups, at the expense of the significance of the individual, has I think hindered them.⁷

It appears that the difference between the Wola and other Highland societies is not on the level of people's behaviour in everyday life, but in the way they explain what goes on. This raises a large problem concerning methodology because it is not clear to what extent ideas about corporate groups come from the people themselves and to what extent anthropologists impute them to explain what they see. It is probable that the corporate group orientation of current anthropological theory has to some extent blinkered writers so that they have ignored the individual and concentrated upon the group. But it would be uncharitable and

⁷ The only anthropologists who have tried to take account of the prominence given to the rights of individuals by people in New Guinea are Barnes (1962), Ploeg (1969) and Langness (1972), and although other writers have pointed to it, for example as shown by such book titles as *Freedom and Conformity* and *Excess and Restraint*, they leave it hanging in the air and do not follow through its implications.

scurrilous, not to say stupid and short-sighted, to dismiss their work for this, and it does seem that some people place more ideological emphasis upon groups than the Wola, although perhaps not as much as some writers suggest. Yet these writers cut away some of the foundations of their argument by ignoring the part played by the individual in the organisation of these societies because they fail to explain how corporate groups can exist and still leave men free to choose their own course of actions. This is a problem which demands thorough investigation.

It is not possible to explain why some societies have developed corporate political groups which compete with one another, but the indications are that this political development, which harnesses men by moral obligation to support groups and allows for the growth of leaders and power politics, is only a recent veneer over an older, more anarchistic core which continues to cherish individual values. If this is so, then the exchanges which occur in these societies not only operate on the group level but also on an individual plane, and so serve to hold in check and transcend individual values, as they do in Wola society, and thus prevent them breaking loose with the consequent destruction of the corporate political groups and their leaders. There is some evidence in the literature that exchanges not only symbolise group relations but also play such a part in individual relations, but concern with the group perspective of social organisation has resulted in writers overlooking this.

Exchange is undoubtedly important in all Highland societies, and the most damning criticism of the group oriented approach is that it fails to recognise it as a key principle in their organisation. The literature on exchange implies, and sometimes states, that transactions take place between corporate political groups competing under the tenuous direction of recognised leaders. But as Barnes (1962: 7) pointed out for Highland societies some years ago 'Although exchanges and prestations may be spoken of as arranged by the clan or sub-clan and may even be timed on a regional basis, the great majority of these ceremonial transactions are undisguisedly transactions between individuals'. In Wola society several men may unite to conduct an exchange, but they do not think that the transaction is between groups. Exchanges among them create and validate relations between individuals, not

groups. According to some accounts of Highland societies, for example, people say that a marriage unites two groups in some way, usually as allies. But when the Wola marry, the exchange of bridewealth does not forge any relationship between groups, it simply creates a relationship between the principal people to the exchange.

Writers wedded to the group oriented approach interpret exchange as something which functions to maintain the integrity of groups. One argument is that in societies organised according to agnatic descent the direction of exchanges defines groups by marking off patrilineal kin from matrilineal kin (see Glasse 1968: 137-8). A way in which some people use exchange as a boundary marker to distinguish clearly between relatives is following a death, when members of the deceased's agnatic descent group pay off his maternal kin for their loss of interest in him (for example see Meggitt 1965: 181ff. who argues this for the Enga).

Ryan (1961) takes this argument further for the people in the Mendi valley. Although he makes a passing reference to the way in which exchange reaffirms personal relationships, he argues that its most important purpose is to define ally relationships between clan groups⁸ in a way which the weakly held agnatic descent ideas of the people cannot.⁹ He thinks that agnatic descent lurks somewhere in the social organisation of the befuddled Mendi people, as shown by the fact that men fare worse in exchanges if a rout prevents them residing with their agnatic descent group,¹⁰ but it is exchange which saves them from extermination in the never-ending wars which rack their region, because it ensures them a place of refuge when routed.

Some writers also argue that where descent fails to promote the mystical force of group unity the obligation on the members of a group to combine to make exchanges serves this end. They think

⁸ Ryan's clan is similar in size to the group which the Wola call a *semonda*, but the characteristics which he attributes to this group mark it off as very different from a *semonda*.

⁹ More recently Schwimmer (1973) has argued that exchange rather than descent is the principle upon which Orakaiva society rests, although his book deals with the matter more from an ideological than an empirical viewpoint.

¹⁰ I think that the probable reason for this is that any man who changes his residence is put at a short-term disadvantage because he has to build up a new network at the place to which he moves.

that co-operating to make a payment promotes group solidarity, and that exchanging marks a competitive and hostile relationship. Groups compete politically in exchanges, and in some places people mark their closeness as members of the same descent group not by exchanging with one another, which marks tension, but by co-operating to give to others.

The most sophisticated study along these lines is Strathern's (1971) work on the Melpa *moka*. His argument is that exchange not only serves in place of war to maintain solidarity within groups and mark the distance between old enemies, but that it also facilitates political competition between them. In this society the competitive exchange of wealth between groups runs parallel with the use of exchange by individuals for their self-advancement because a big-man achieves his leading position for his ability with wealth, which he uses with the other members of his group in political contests with rival groups. The Melpa think that the giver in an exchange is in a superior position to the receiver, and big men backed up by their groups compete to give each other as much wealth as they can and so 'flatten' each other with large prestations which are reminiscent of the Kwakiutl potlatch.¹¹ By engaging upon these competitive exchanges groups cement relations between themselves, and the superior party advances its political influence and gains prestige.¹²

The most serious criticism of these interpretations of exchange is that they emphasise its competitive aspects, and ignore its other, equally important although antithetical, sociable aspects. Exchange is not only competitive and people do not only use it to express hostility, it also brings them together and obliges them to co-operate, and to overlook this results in a one-sided view. It leads writers to ignore what the act of exchange actually does and

¹¹ A comparison made by Strathern (1971: 13) who cites Drucker and Heizer (1967).

¹² The situation in any *moka* exchange is complex, and Strathern (1971: 222) calls it 'alternating disequilibrium' because while the last partner to give is in a superior position, he will later become the inferior partner when he in turn receives wealth. The argument is difficult to follow, but it seems that the side giving most generously achieves a superior position and 'wins' (albeit temporarily) over the old enemy, and that the potential hostility created by this competition is hidden behind a cloak of diplomacy. But this diplomacy is the generosity which is the heart of the competition that creates the potentially hostile situation!

to concentrate on the dogmas which surround it in an attempt to bolster up their flagging interpretations based upon corporate political groups organised by descent. It has proved disconcerting that Highlanders seem to have some ideas about descent but are unable to grasp its meaning and to use it properly to order their groups. But to look to exchange as the prop which people use to hold their societies up because they fail to understand descent is to evade, and not solve, the problem. The indications are that current anthropological ideas about descent, and with it the assumptions of corporate group theory, are alien to Highlanders and that they require considerable rethinking to accommodate the existence of permanent action groups in societies which give so much freedom to the individual.

Another problem concerning the comparative study of exchange in New Guinea is why people in different regions place varying importance upon it as a principle for organising their societies. It is pointless to speculate when in their development Melanesians first saw the potential of the exchange aspect of social interaction and developed it into an institution for the strengthening of society. At some time it is probable that hunting bands found exchange commitments were an effective way to maintain social contact in their wandering search for food, and that as people settled down to cultivate crops they developed on this theme. It is interesting in the context of this development sequence that there is some evidence that the elaboration of exchange is linked in some way with population density. Where population densities are low and there are only small numbers of people living in any area it is likely that society will hold up without need of elaborate exchanges to bind the small networks together. But where population densities are higher this places a strain on the social constitution and the development of wealth exchange relieves this because it encourages the social integration of large numbers of people. Although there is no material available with which to test this idea rigorously, there is ethnographic evidence that sparse populations place less emphasis on exchange (for example see Barth 1975; Gell 1975) than more dense populations (for example see works on the people of the central Highlands around Wabag, Hagen and in the Wahgi valley). It explains why the densely populated Enga and Melpa people have developed

elaborate, large scale, chain exchanges which stretch over large distances and involve many people and so pull together extensive networks (see Strathern's 1971 detailed account of the Melpa *moka*, and the descriptions in several short papers of the Enga *ti* (Bus 1951; Elkin 1952; Meggitt 1974)).

In a paper where he argues for a recognition of the place of exchange in Melanesian society, Forge (1972) makes an allegorical play on the classical element in the title of Malinowski's (1922) book, and likens him to Jason of the Argonauts, and his writings based on the Trobriand Islanders as the securing for anthropology of a golden fleece. In comparison, Forge wonders what kind of fleece subsequent anthropologists working in Melanesia are in search of, or whether they even know for what they are looking. He doubts the perspicacity of their ideas and concludes that instead of returning with a fleece of any description they have secured a leopard's skin. To extend this metaphorical play further, this study argues for a change in some of the spots on this skin, and not for a change of the theoretical coat. The argument is reactionary but it builds upon established anthropological ideas and does not seek to introduce revolutionary concepts, indeed in places it is functionalist in the true Malinowskian sense; although it looks for the logical articulation of certain social principles rather than the smooth functioning of ill-defined elements in a harmonious social system.¹³

The pragmatic reader may think that the argument developed in this book is yet another piece of anthropological speculation, and ask what evidence there is that current relations in Wola society require the passage of wealth to keep them healthy. While this study shows that men of high status handle more wealth than other men and outlines the social networks within which wealth flows, this is not proof that exchanges act as an agent of sociability in Wola society. To forestall such criticisms this book closes with

¹³ While this study deals with traditional Wola society as static, the model is potentially dynamic and can account for social change (for example see Barth 1966). Understanding the social purpose of exchange, for example, we can appreciate how the alien capitalist ideas of economic exchange confuse Melanesians, and lead to such bizarre behaviour as cargo cults and misconceived *bisnis* ventures which show no profit, as people try to resolve these conflicting ideologies.

some empirical examples which show how failure to exchange wealth can result in the repudiation and termination of active relations.

As the exchange of bridewealth marks the establishment of affinal relations, so when a marriage fails the return of bridewealth marks the rescinding of these relations.

Both Mayka Sal and Puwgael E'row were unable to tolerate their first wives, who they claimed were lazy and disobedient. They both divorced them before they conceived any children and received from their relatives a full refund of the bridewealth handed over. They then used the wealth to marry other girls.

In other circumstances the termination of a marriage is not so straightforward. If a child is born then blood relations are established between the two sets of relatives and any wealth given to the man does not mark the revocation of relations, but is a contribution from the woman's relatives to help their estranged relative establish a new marriage and new relations.

When Kolomb Nonk's husband died she was carrying her first child and there was some disagreement over the return of some of the bridewealth. One or two of the deceased husband's relatives thought that Nonk's relatives ought to refund some of the bridewealth which they had received of 28 pearl shells, 5 pigs and \$54. After an argument the boy's relatives dropped their claim because not only was a child (subsequently a son) on the way but Nonk's relatives had, during the course of the relationship, shown their good intentions to maintain amicable relations by paying 5 pearl shells and 1 pig in the *hogol* return payment following the bridewealth exchange, 10 pearl shells and \$8 in the first mortuary payment (*gwat*) for the dead boy, and they had given a total of 1 pearl shell, 1 pig and \$20 to their new affines on various occasions for nothing. Also, the husband was dead and there was no question of mustering a bridewealth for him to re-marry, on the contrary Nonk was to re-marry, and when she did his relatives would receive a share from the bridewealth paid by her second husband.

To exclude deliberately someone from an exchange in which they are entitled to participate is to repudiate relations.

Piywa Kelay is a quiet, mild-mannered man who is of below average ability in handling wealth. He was born and grew up at Ya, which is the place of his father's relatives, but when he was a young man his relatives failed to include him in the share out of wealth from bridewealths and mortuary payments which they received—probably because he was so quiet and ineffective. After a time Kelay tired of this treatment and moved, about 12 years ago, to live at his wife's place where he has lived and gardened since, and feels less isolated and rebuked, although he is still on the periphery of social life.

Another example where exclusion from an exchange led to strained relations concerns two brothers Kolomb Haelop and Tonaep.

When Haelop received the reimbursement payment detailed in figure 31 he refused to share the wealth with his younger brother Tonaep, and this led to an argument and a fist fight between the two men. This ended with Haelop leaving the house he shared with his brother and moving in with his daughter's husband who lived half a mile away at Dayowtinja. Six months later Haelop, an old man, died before the breach in his relations with his brother was repaired.

While a man who excludes someone from a share-out of wealth damages his relations with them, it is possible to achieve the same result by refusing to take part in an exchange in which one is obliged to participate.

Ibnaewaem, one of Maenget Tensgay's daughters, wished to marry a boy who was a resident member of her mother's *semonda* (although not a direct relative of her mother). Tensgay was angry and refused to consider the marriage, but Ibnaewaem is headstrong and indulged in pre-marital sex and so forced the arm of her relatives, who reluctantly agreed to accept a bridewealth of 20 pearl shells, 1 pig and 1 cassowary. Her relatives shared the wealth among themselves, but Tensgay was furious at the couple's behaviour and refused to accept anything from the bridewealth, and in this way he signified that he would have nothing to do with the marriage. Today, Tensgay treats his daughter and her husband as if they do not exist, and neither of them comes to Haelaelinja for fear of his contempt and wrath.

Failure to make an obligatory exchange is probably more serious than a refusal to accept an offered payment, and it can result in heated arguments, lost tempers, and even fights.

When Kolomb Kwinja's baby died her husband failed to collect together and give the first mortuary payment to her relatives. In anger she left him and returned home to her natal place. Later Hul, her brother, invested 15 pearl shells with her husband to open the second mortuary exchange (this was a very high investment and served to shame Kwinja's husband—see p. 266 n. 50).

To date, Kwinja's husband has not repaid Hul with a 'man maker' payment and the exact state of relations is not clear. After some time, if he fails to make a move, the separation will become a *de facto* divorce and Kwinja may remarry—although her husband may dispute her right to do so (Hul said that he thought the high investment payment he had made would invalidate any protests from him because it was equivalent to a handsome refund of the bridewealth).

Probably the most serious exchange default is failure to pay reparation to the relatives of a man killed in war. The case of Mauway described in chapter 7 illustrates how such failures can precipitate further violence and another war. In fact out of thirty wars, details of which were collected from the Was river area, five (17 per cent) were started because reparation from a previous war was not forthcoming.

The seriousness of failure to meet reparation obligations is illustrated by the action of Piywa Kiswaemb and his two brothers following the war which started when he stole a pandanus nut (see chapter 7). The three men realised that they would be unable to meet the large number of reparation payments arising from the war and in fear they stalked off one night and walked to a distant settlement in the Lai valley where their mother had some relatives. They have since spent their lives away from their father's relatives and have never returned to the Haelaelinja area.

In contrast to exchange failures leading to ruptured relations, men who wish to confirm a relationship may take on an exchange for which they are not entirely responsible.

Mayka Kot and his brothers garden land which belongs to their mother's relatives and is away from their place of residence. During my stay they paid a reimbursement payment on behalf of their maternal relatives for a war the details of which nobody can remember. By doing this Kot said they validated their claim to the garden land, because assisting in a payment for which, as non-residents, they were not strictly liable, they demonstrated their interest in maintaining full relations with their mother's relatives.

A most poignant and forceful event, which shows the importance of exchange for the maintenance of social relations, occurred just before I left Haelaelinja and concerned Maenget Saendway's wife Paenuw, who committed suicide by jumping in the Was river when her stepfather rebuffed her husband's relatives in an exchange.

The trouble started long ago when Paenuw was a little girl and her mother died, because when her father remarried he lost interest in her and sent her to live with her MB. His behaviour took an execrable turn following her marriage to Saendway in August 1973 and centred upon one of his pigs for which Paenuw continued to care. A shortage of food in mid-1974 forced him to kill the pig, along with others, in a pig kill, but before the kill he intimated that he would give a side of pork to reimburse her for her services and to repay Saendway for a debt of 2 pearl shells. Paenuw arrived at the pig kill and in expectation had filled her bag with ferns to cook with the pork, but at the pork distribution her step-siblings received pork but she and Saendway received nothing. She was distraught and to mollify her as they walked home Saendway said they would kill one of their own pigs to eat, and to show the seriousness of his intentions he ran to the nearby garden of a relative to collect some greens to cook with the pork. It was the last time he saw his wife. Upset at her rejection and ashamed of the morally repugnant behaviour of her stepfather she threw herself in the river.

Perhaps the reader will not frown if I finish on a personal note. I found that participation in mortuary exchanges, contributing to bridewealths, taking part in pig kills, and bartering for food with salt and other items, improved my relations with the people of Haelaelinja. By taking an interest in exchanges I showed that my intentions were honourable and the people responded to my

advances in a positive way. I lived with them, I gardened their land, but above all, I tried to participate to a limited extent in exchanges, and this meant that I was Aenda Pol to men from elsewhere. This subjective statement of the Wola viewpoint by an Englishman may be an inverted ethnocentric conclusion but it summarises the argument of this book.

Appendix

The origin of pearl shells

The following myth describes how pearl shells first came to the Wola area:

Long ago there was a fine young man who decided one moonlit night to go hunting for marsupials in the forest. After walking for some time he came to a tree in which sat many fine birds, for example *ol jomb*, *keliykel* and *kilab*,¹ and he stopped to fire some arrows at them. The boy stopped firing arrows when he realised that although it was night time the birds were feeding and singing. 'When it is dark', he thought 'birds do not sing but sleep'. His curiosity aroused, the boy climbed the tree to take a closer look. But as he climbed the tree he was hit, and looking up he saw an unmarried girl sitting in the tree beating the trunk with her digging stick to loosen the bark for string.² 'Ouch, I've been hit' shouted the boy and he ran off in fear. The following day he returned to find the girl but found instead many pearl shells growing like bracket fungus out of the tree trunk where she had been hitting it.³ This is how our ancestors came to own pearl shells.

¹ *Ol jomb* = fairy lory (*Charmosyna papou stellae*); *keliykel* = black-mantled goshawk (*Accipiter melanochlamys*); *kilab* = little red losy (*Charmosyna pulchella*)?

² Women prepare string from split and dried bark fibre which they rub together between palm and thigh to make twine.

³ It is interesting that in this myth a female is responsible for producing the first pearl shells because in everyday life women play only a peripheral part in the exchange of wealth. This points to the existence in the minds of Wola men, on some unconscious plane, of paradoxical feelings towards their womenfolk as unequal beings in a society which cherishes the equality of the individual. Also, by attributing the production of pearl shells to women, men underline the fact that it is exchanging wealth, not making it, which is important.

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Dr Paul Sillitoe is Leverhulme Overseas Research Fellow and British Museum Fellow at the University of Papua New Guinea. He has spent over two years living with his wife in the remote Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea collecting the ethnographic material recorded in this book. During his field work he learnt the language of the Wola people and came to know intimately and share in the life of the people.

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