

Port Vila: **transit station or final stop?**

To Susan, of course

Port Vila:

transit station or final stop? Recent developments in Ni-Vanuatu population mobility

Gerald Haberkorn

Series editor Maree Tait

**National Centre for Development Studies
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Abstract

Between 1967 and 1979, urban population growth in Vanuatu has increased at more than twice the annual rate of rural population growth. This book examines the contribution of rural-urban mobility to this process in the context of the local and historical conditions of mobility from Paama and Raga (North Pentecost).

The historical development of ni-Vanuatu population mobility is discussed with reference to the empirical research of Bedford and Bonnemaïson and is examined in the context of a macro-analysis of national population trends based on 1967 and 1979 census data (which serve as the baseline for analysing changes until 1983 when fieldwork was concluded). Rather than viewing mobility developments through time solely as the result of socio-economic change, this book emphasizes the ongoing interplay between mobility and structural transformations in source and destination areas, an interplay which causes a re-creation of new environments within which mobility occurs. It quickly becomes apparent that causes which facilitated and necessitated mobility in the 1950s and 1960s no longer assume the same significance in defining mobility in contemporary rural societies.

Empirical research undertaken in the rural source areas of Paama and Raga, suggests that temporary circulation from each reflects two distinct mobility systems. On Paama, population pressure on limited resources (the result of individualization of land tenure at the turn of this century), the monetization of bridewealth payments and the recent re-introduction of *kampani* work are all factors which suggest that contemporary Paamese mobility is largely a strategy for *survival*. On Raga, however, the persistence of traditional systems of economic and social organization alongside more recent developments in cash-cropping, has meant that mobility here appears to be more a matter of *convenience*.

A rapidly expanding and diversifying domestic urban economy, the nickel boom in neighbouring New Caledonia, and the rural crisis of the early 1970s illustrate how conditions, formerly both necessitating and facilitating temporary rural-based circulation, have given way to a setting more conducive to long-term, or even permanent urban relocations. While Port Vila has become a new home, a new base, for many Paamese and Raga migrants, and long-term rural-urban mobility has emerged as the predominant contemporary form of Paamese and Raga mobility, such developments have not completely replaced temporary rural-based circulation. However, an analysis of life-time mobility histories of Paamese and Raga men and women, resident in both Port Vila, and in the Liro area (Paama) and Hurilao (Raga), unequivocally shows that its significance has declined dramatically throughout the 1970s, which, with the stabilization of rural-urban mobility, casts some doubt on the future significance of temporary circulation from a rural base.

Foreword

For almost two decades there has been a lively debate in the migration literature on the nature of population movement within island countries of the western Pacific. Research by geographers in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in the late 1960s challenged the conventional wisdom that movement of Melanesians between villages and towns was leading to a significant redistribution of population. It was argued that Melanesians rarely left their rural homes 'permanently', and that the patterns of population movement identified by census and other cross-sectional surveys were simply snapshots of a highly dynamic mobility system rooted firmly in the countryside. The commonly-cited 'rural-urban drift' of villagers was not the major form of population movement in the western Pacific.

Twenty years later, in a challenging re-interpretation of ni-Vanuatu mobility, Gerald Haberkorn questions the validity of the new conventional wisdom that circulation remains the prevailing form of population movement in Melanesia. His re-interpretation is timely. In the early 1980s, when Haberkorn was carrying out field research in Vanuatu, it was stated in the country's First National Development Plan (1982) that people from outer-islands migrated to Port Vila or Luganville for visits and short-term employment. After a time, 'these temporary migrants return home and are replaced by others'.

Planning for rural and urban development in Vanuatu during the early 1980s was influenced strongly by the view that few ni-Vanuatu migrants settled permanently in town. The fact that over 80 percent of all ni-Vanuatu were enumerated in rural settlements in the 1979 census reinforced the view that urban population growth had been, and remained, relatively insignificant.

Haberkorn's analysis of the on-going interplay between mobility behaviour and structural transformations in the societies and economies of migrant source and destination areas sheds new light on ni-Vanuatu population movement. With the assistance of his partner, Susan Noble, he was able to incorporate an often ignored gender dimension into the study of Melanesian mobility. His skillful use of life-time mobility analysis shows that circulation between villages and towns in Vanuatu declined in significance during the 1970s. By the early 1980s Port Vila was home for some thousands of ni-Vanuatu, and long-term rural-urban migration was an important component of the mobility system.

In a sense Haberkorn's study brings us full circle in our assessment of Melanesian mobility behaviour. Almost twenty years ago Gerard Ward was arguing that urbanisation of Melanesians was inevitable. In the late 1980s urbanisation has been proceeding apace in post-colonial Melanesia, despite slow growth in wage employment opportunities in many towns. The significance of this for our

understanding of contemporary social change in Melanesia is that it is no longer appropriate to assume that most town-dwellers will return to a village 'home' at some stage in the future. Towns like Port Vila are not necessarily 'transit stations'; they are becoming places of permanent residence for increasing numbers of Melanesians.

Gerald Haberkorn's research monograph on population movement in Vanuatu continues a long tradition of substantial contributions to the literature on mobility in Melanesia by scholars from the Australian National University. The National Centre for Development Studies is to be commended for publishing this study.

Richard Bedford
University of Waikato
September 1989

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Glossary

Bislama terms:

<i>kava</i>	A shrub of the pepper family (<i>Piper methysticum</i>); in the present context referred to as a fermented beverage made from the roots of the kava plant
<i>mangki system</i>	A particular form of political organization found in ni-Vanuatu societies where status and power are not inherited but acquired through individual achievement
<i>manples</i>	Inhabitant of a particular place, a local; recognized by others as such.
<i>nakamal</i>	The traditional men's meeting house found in the village
<i>ni-Vanuatu</i>	The legal citizens of Vanuatu
<i>Raga</i>	Throughout this book the name refers to the northern part of Pentecost Island
<i>stamba</i>	Roots (of plants and people). In the present context it refers to a person's area of origin, where he or she enjoys residence rights
<i>vara</i>	This is a Raga expression for matriline
<i>vatu</i>	The national currency of Vanuatu. During my fieldwork in 1982-83, VT 100 equalled approximately A\$1
<i>wantok</i>	This is a Papua New Guinea <i>pidgin</i> expression describing people from the same language and culture area
<i>wokbaot</i>	To go for a walk, to undertake a trip or journey somewhere. <i>Wokbaot</i> includes everything from a short walk to the neighbouring village or a brief visit to town, to a more extended absence from one's place of usual residence

Anthropological/kinship terms:

affine, affinal	A relative by marriage
agnate	A person related by patrilineal descent
Matrimoiety	Matrilineal descent
patri-virilocal	Residence of a married couple with the husband's father
virī-avunculocal	Residence of a married couple with the husband's maternal uncle

Abbreviations used in tables:

n.a.	Is not applicable
..	Not available
-	Zero

CHAPTER 1

Vanuatu Population Mobility and Urbanization in a Historical Perspective

Urban development in Vanuatu, as elsewhere in Melanesia, has been clearly associated with European colonial expansion during the 19th century. Though the first recorded settlements of what today constitute Noumea, Port Vila, Suva and Port Moresby date back to the latter part of last century—with Honiara only established as an administrative centre during the last years of World War II the emergence of urban areas of some significance has occurred only during the past thirty years. During that period, Melanesia's urban population tripled from constituting a mere 6.7 per cent of the area's total population in 1955 to 20 per cent by 1985 (United Nations 1987), with only Eastern Africa among all other developing regions throughout the world experiencing urban developments of a comparable magnitude. The recency and magnitude of Melanesian urbanization, and the absence of any established forms of urban living in the region's pre-colonial history virtually rules out fertility and mortality as significant contributors to this process of rapid urbanization, and suggests massive internal population mobility as the most likely cause.

Unlike urban developments, however, population mobility throughout Melanesia is by no means a recent phenomenon. It dates back well before the advent of European colonialism, where it was entrenched in various social, economic and political features of pre-colonial societies. Marriage migration, for instance, resulting from the exogamous nature of many culture groups, required relocations of a more permanent nature, and depending on whether it involved patrilineal or matrilineal descent groups, affected both men and women. Movements of this nature also applied to village relocations after natural disasters and warfare, or involving the search for new garden land (Bedford 1971: 73). Mobility associated with the acquisition of pigs for rank-taking ceremonies in 'graded societies' (Allen 1968; Bonnemaïson 1985), in contrast, was primarily the domain of men, and also had a more specific seasonal, short-term and circular character. Another category of pre-contact movements along similar lines was associated with trade and customary exchange which not only existed between coastal and inland people involving trade or exchange in yams for taro, arms in hardwood for fish and salt for example (Bonnemaïson 1980: 4), but extended to inter-island trade involving clays, bark, mats and pigs (Bedford 1973: 18). Despite visible differences regarding the causes or reasons for such moves as well as their timing, all these movements were subject to rigid social control, affecting not only the actual movements of people but routes and exchange circuits as well

(Bonnemaison 1976, 1984).¹ Overall, and with the possible exception of marriage migration, mobility was highly seasonal, and of a short-term and circular nature—a picture that according to a vast body of literature predominates in contemporary Melanesian societies.

The most obvious question arising from this introduction is how to reconcile the rapid rate of Melanesian urbanization in recent years which cannot be explained primarily in terms of natural population growth, with widespread perceptions that temporary circular mobility remains the predominant form of population mobility in the region. This book seeks to reconcile these contrasting sets of empirical evidence by examining urbanization and mobility developments in Vanuatu, a country that experienced urban population growth rates exceeding seven per cent per annum throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Vanuatu, formerly known as the New Hebrides, is an archipelago of some 80 islands of which 66 are inhabited. It lies 2,250 km northeast of Sydney, Australia and 400 km north of the French territory of New Caledonia and extends 850 km in a Y-shape from the Torres Islands in the north to Anatom in the south (Figure 1.1). The country's total land area and territorial waters cover about 12,200 and 450,000 square kilometres respectively. Seventeen per cent of the total land surface is at present utilized while an additional 28 per cent can be regarded as potential arable land (Vanuatu 1982: 4). Vegetation and climate resemble those of its Melanesian neighbours (Brookfield with Hart 1971). Most islands have steep, rugged and densely forested mountains, with a climatic range from tropical in the north to subtropical in the south.

The islands were originally settled by Melanesians moving south from the Solomon Islands at least 3,500 years ago, and linguistic evidence on the southern islands of Futuna and Aniwa, indicates more recent westward Polynesian mobility. Ni-Vanuatu society is structured into exogamous clans and tribes featuring two distinct forms of social organization: some islands in the north such as the Banks, Maewo, East Ambae and North Pentecost are organized in matrilineal descent groups in contrast to the patrilineality predominating throughout the rest of the country (Allen 1981). Parallel to such variations one finds different forms of political and economic organization reflected in, for example, regionally distinct land-tenure systems ranging from clan or lineage controlled land to individual ownership (Chapter 2), and an enormous cultural complexity as evident in 105 different languages (Tryon 1976).

¹ In Papua New Guinea, pre-contact mobility beyond one's cultural space was most often linked to the exogamous nature of particular societies (Young 1977b) or to pre-contact trade networks. Ryan (1985) mentions pre-contact trade links between the Motu, the indigenous inhabitants of what is now Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea and groups from the Papuan Gulf including the Toaripi, two groups of people who played an important role in the Hiri trade along Papua New Guinea's south coast. The extensive Kula trade system linked the mainland with the islands in the southeast of Papua New Guinea, and Hughes (1977) refers to trade routes across the centre of the country. Waddell (1975) emphasizes traditional coping mechanisms with frost or droughts in the Highlands involving large-scale, if temporary mobility, and Ward (1980) refers to linguistic evidence in Papua New Guinea pointing to extensive pre-contact population relocations. With regard to Fiji, Bedford (1985) points to an important phase of population movements from Viti Levu in Fiji to islands in the north of the archipelago over 300 years ago and involving the exchange of food stuffs for woodwork, canoes, tapa and mats. Important trade links also between the Kingdom of Tonga and the Lau group in eastern Fiji throughout the 18th century culminated in a near-Tongan colonial control over the central and southern Lau islands in the early 19th century. Concerning population movements in the Solomon Islands, Corris (1973) emphasizes that they were all but culturally static in nature pointing to migration from Malaita to Guadalcanal and San Cristobal, and between Bougainville and the islands to the south. On the southern coast of Guadalcanal pre-contact mobility was primarily associated with natural disasters, increases in sorcery and changing balances of power between groups (Chapman 1969; Corris 1973).

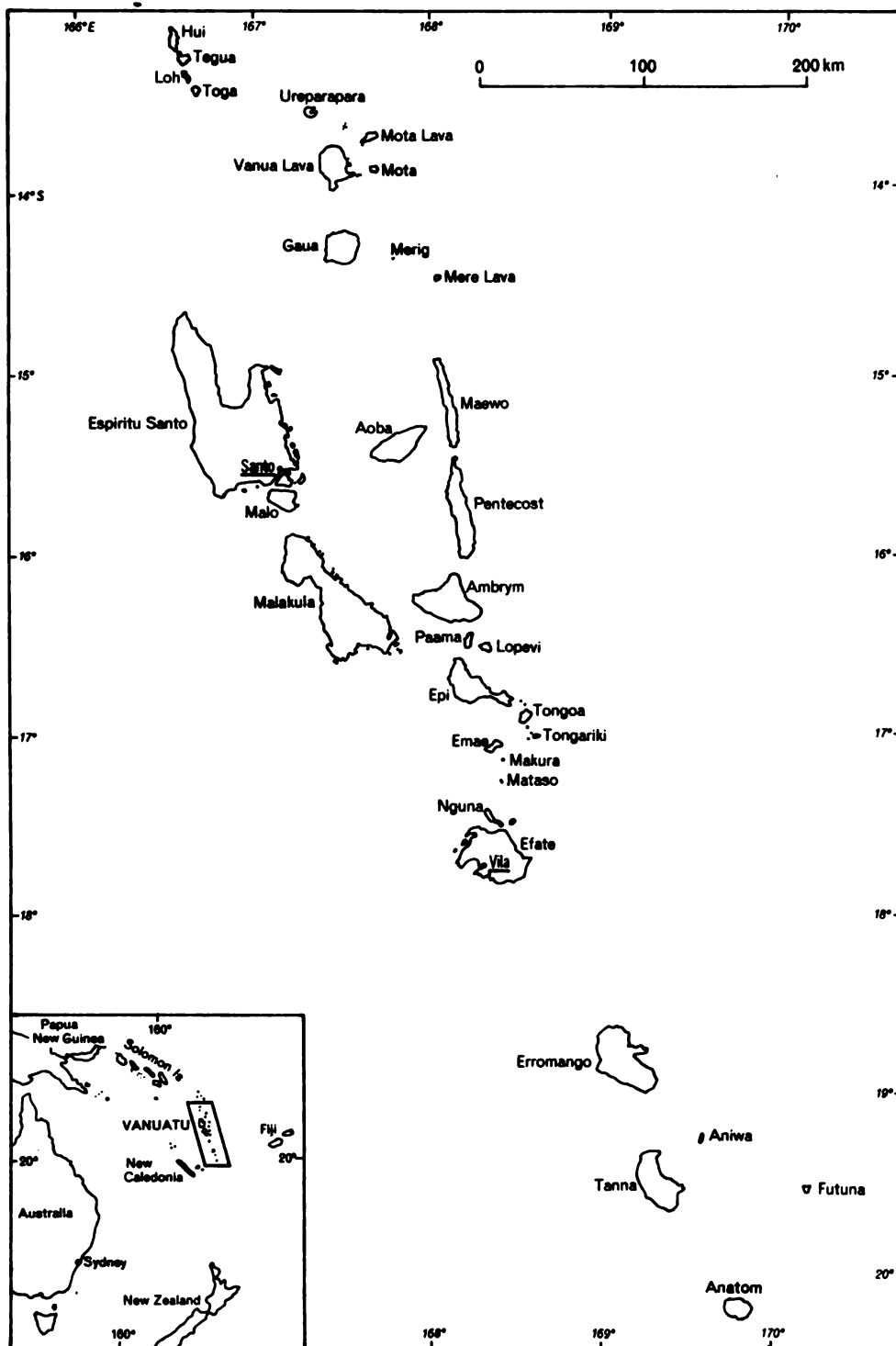


Figure 1.1 Map of Vanuatu

The Republic of Vanuatu, a member state of the British Commonwealth, became a politically independent state in June of 1980, after nearly a century of chaotic colonial administration under joint British and French rule. Despite the discovery of sandalwood by Europeans in 1825, the first missionaries' arrival in 1839, and the beginning of the Kanaka labour trade in the 1860s (subsequently involving the movement of 40,000 ni-Vanuatu to Queensland and a further 10,000 to neighbouring New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa), it was not until 1886 that some organized foreign influence became visible in the form of a Joint Naval Commission set up by Britain and France to safeguard order in Vanuatu (Pacific Islands Yearbook 1981: 488). This pseudo-colonial administration became fully legitimized twenty years later when German expansion in the Pacific led France and Britain to establish a Condominium, initiating 'a unique experience of colonialism in the South Pacific region' (Connell 1983: 3). Ni-Vanuatu opposition to the colonial administration over the years led to the forming of political parties during the early 1970s and the first general election in 1975. This was won by the now governing *Vanuaku Pati*, but ensuing administrative and political chaos prevented a handover of political power. A Government of National Unity was established in 1978 which led to elections in 1979, won by the *Vanuaku Pati*, culminating in the country's independence in 1980, but not until a last minute effort by forces opposed to independence was put down with the assistance of Papua New Guinea Defence Forces.

The islands are administratively grouped into eleven Local Government Regions (LGRs), each of which has its own Local Government Council (LGC). While the chairperson and other LGC members are locally elected every two years, a permanent secretary and treasurer are seconded from the Vanuatu public service to each of these areas.

Vanuatu's economy is dominated by export agriculture (copra, cattle, cocoa, coffee), tourism, international banking and Government activity. Approximately half of the Government's revenue in 1984 was estimated to have come from import and export duties, with import duties alone accounting for 41 per cent (emphasizing the country's large trade deficit); a further 17 per cent was derived from international development aid which dropped considerably from VT 1,232 million in 1980 to VT 490 million in 1984, and 4 per cent each were generated by a tourism turnover tax and the issue of business licenses (Vanuatu 1984: 58-66). The single most important sector in Vanuatu's economy is agriculture, accounting for 80 per cent of both total exports and of the ni-Vanuatu labour force. Although contributing only 20 per cent to the gross domestic product (compared with 35 per cent from Government services and 15 per cent from hotels and restaurants), it represents the prime focus of development planning. With only 28 per cent of all land suitable for agriculture currently utilized, this sector accounts for 73 per cent of all planned capital expenditure in the productive sector (Haberkorn 1987).

Vanuatu's principal export crop is copra, providing the bulk of domestic export earnings with 73 per cent between 1979 and 1983; about three quarters of total production came from ni-Vanuatu small-holdings compared with 50 per cent just twenty years ago (Vanuatu 1984: 95).

Vanuatu's manufacturing sector is very small, employing just 1.7 per cent of the country's workforce in 1979, and contributed a mere seven per cent to the GDP in 1980 (Asian Development Bank 1982: 4). Prospects for sectoral expansion are quite limited given the small size of the domestic market, great distances to major foreign markets, a very limited range of raw materials, the shortage of skilled labour, high energy costs and the scarcity of capital.

Tourism is Vanuatu's second most important source of foreign exchange

earnings after agriculture. It also provides the largest source of employment in the private sector and represents the fastest growing industry over the last decade. Despite its great potential for future expansion, the Vanuatu Government is not intent on encouraging indiscriminate development. To prevent being 'swamped' by tourists, growth is carefully monitored, and 'international-style tourism limited to Efate and Santo, with Tanna being developed more in accordance with the local environment' (Vanuatu 1984: 30).

Concerning employment in these various sectors, non-agricultural wage- and salary-employment is almost exclusively concentrated in Port Vila and Santo, apart from public service positions for rural teachers, nurses and the few administrative staff attached to each of the eleven Local Government Councils. Similarly, a high degree of centralism also emerges in employment opportunities for plantation workers, given the almost exclusive location of commercial coconut plantations on the islands of Efate, Espiritu Santo and Malakula. This spatial concentration of opportunities for wage- and salary-employment on primarily three out of 66 inhabited islands clearly illustrates that, irrespective of whether temporary employment is sought occasionally to supplement or to subsidize more regularly a basically rural existence, or whether long-term or even permanent non-agricultural jobs are perceived as the only or a better alternative to rural life, engagement in wage- and salary-employment entails a considerable degree of mobility for the vast majority of ni-Vanuatu.

Mobility from Pre-contact Times to the Second World War

Population movements within Vanuatu, and elsewhere in Melanesia, date back well before European contact in the last century and were fully entrenched in the social, political, and economic life of pre-contact societies. Apart from the sporadic incidence of 'uncontrolled mobility' (Bonnemaison 1976) as a means to avoid social conflict, it was not until the period of external labour recruiting between 1863 and 1904 that ni-Vanuatu mobility underwent dramatic structural changes. During this period, 39,931 moves were officially documented for Queensland plantations alone, ranging from 1,308 in the first five years to as many as 9,648 during the peak period between 1878 and 1882; a further 10,000 ni-Vanuatu were recruited for plantation work in Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia during the same period (Price with Baker 1976). Initial recruiting concentrated on the southern islands and Efate, where ni-Vanuatu had already been exposed to Europeans and vice versa via the sandalwood trade (Bedford 1971). Yet recruitment statistics provided by Price and Baker highlight that, in subsequent years, recruiting intensified in the central and northern islands, which from 1868 onwards became the main source of ni-Vanuatu labour. The impact on traditional societies throughout the islands was extensive, with about 50,000 ni-Vanuatu being recruited during this forty year period.²

² Other Melanesian islands (groups), with the exception of the Solomon Islands, were affected to a much smaller degree. Of the 17,756 people recruited throughout the Solomons to work on Queensland plantations, 96 per cent came from three southern islands, and from this group 54 per cent came from Malaita, 25 per cent from Guadalcanal and 12 per cent from Flora (Price with Baker 1976: 115). Only 2808 recruits during 40 years of the Queensland Labour Trade came from Papua New Guinea, all of whom were recruited in the New Guinea islands between 1883 and 1887 (Price with Baker 1976). This not only shows that the impact of recruiting was spatially uneven, but that different Melanesian islands entered this labour trade at different points in time. After starting out in the Loyalty Islands in the southwest Pacific, recruiters gradually worked their way northward over the 40 year period: all 1123 Loyalty Islanders recruited were taken between 1863 and 1877, 74 per cent of all ni-Vanuatu recruiting took place between 1863 and 1887 while 67 per cent of all Solomon Islanders taken to Queensland were recruited between 1888 and 1904. Recruiting from Fiji was non-existent apart from two unsuccessful attempts by Peruvian blackbirders in 1863 to obtain recruits from Oni i Lau, a southern Lau island (Maude 1980). In contrast, Fiji served as a destination area for many recruited Melanesian workers.

Although kidnapping was the initial form of introducing ni-Vanuatu to wage-labour migration and plantation work, the safe return of most early recruits after three years abroad and the bringing back of European goods, particularly muskets, prompted many others to enlist subsequently (Scarr 1967). Enlisting for work in Queensland also provided shelter for eloping couples and a means of escape from punishment for crimes committed in the village (Scarr 1967; Bedford 1971; Bonnemaïson 1980).

The demand for plantation labour in Vanuatu itself did not get underway until the 1880s, when European settlers began establishing plantations, primarily on Efate, Espiritu Santo, Malakula and Epi.³ From the start, the domestic plantation industry suffered from severe labour shortages because of competition from the external labour trade, a situation that remained unchanged until brought under control by legislation in Australia and the Condominium in 1906 (Bedford 1973: 30). Concerning the period until 1911, after which labour reports appeared biennially, Bedford estimates that internal labour migration was at least as high as during the sandalwood era. Between 1912 and 1939, approximately 32,000 contracts were signed, nearly 75 per cent with French planters alone (Bedford 1971). Most recruits for French and British employers alike again came from the northern and north-central islands.

The major difference between this internal labour recruiting and the external labour trade lies in the localization of movements and the considerably shorter periods spent in wage-labour employment. The primary destination areas were plantations on Efate and Santo, while Malakula and Epi were of relatively little importance during these years (Bedford 1973: 37). Although most planters desired three-year contract periods to ensure a stable labour force, about three-quarters of ni-Vanuatu recruited in this period opted for six- or twelve-month contracts (Bedford 1973: 33).

Towards the end of the 1930s, the spatially restricted mobility, typical of the years before European contact had virtually disappeared throughout the islands. Indeed ni-Vanuatu mobility appears to have undergone a 'sequential change' during this pre-Second World War era from traditional oscillation, through a period of lengthy absenteeism in contract employment overseas, to more short-term and localized plantation employment within Vanuatu (Bedford 1973: 37). At the time of the Second World War, virtually all ni-Vanuatu had come into contact with labour migration. Demand for labour to construct military bases,

³ Concerning analogous developments elsewhere in Melanesia, internal contract labour migration, or labour under indenture, was the first form of mobility transcending traditional movement patterns for most Papua New Guinean communities. Under a German colonial administration, large numbers of New Guineans were mobilized to work on plantations. Pirth (1976: 51) estimates that at least 85,000 islanders worked as indentured labourers in New Guinea and the German Solomons between 1884 and 1914. Curtin (1980a: 43) portrays the growth of the plantation labour force from 869 people in 1899 to 17,429 by 1914 while in 1983 this number had reached a pre-war peak of 41,849 with the vast majority working on three year plantation contracts. Referring to Papua, under British administration, Skeldon (1978) mentions that labour recruiting was much slower given the generally little economic activity; most recruits were for mining areas in the north and the islands of the southeast, and for labour in shipping, and it was not until 1909 that plantation labour recruiting became of major importance. This type of fixed term indentured labour has also been reported for the Solomon Islands (Bathgate 1975; Frazer 1985). The situation in Fiji, however, was quite different. A migrant labour system had not been set up to regulate labour movements from villages to plantations and mining areas. Gillion (1977) reports that Sir Arthur Gordon interpreted the Deed of Cession in 1874 as British responsibility for the conservation of Fijian society at all costs, and to this end placed a strict prohibition on outmigration from the villages specially to work on plantations. In contrast to colonial New Guinea where head tax was to be paid in cash and hence was used as an inducement to wage labour, Fijian villagers were asked to pay their tax in produce only' (quoted in Connell and Curtin 1982: 125).

airstrips and dry-docks for the American armed forces was of such a magnitude that in 1942 the two resident Commissioners initiated a compulsory conscription of ni-Vanuatu men over the age of 18 on a three month basis. This led to the presence of 1,330 ni-Vanuatu on Efate and Espiritu Santo from other islands by the end of 1942 (Bedford 1971: 92). Although official numbers of ni-Vanuatu employed by the US forces are unknown, Bedford estimated that most ni-Vanuatu men were involved at one stage or another. The scale of this war-time mobility has been explained in terms of benefits derived from such short-term work engagements (Bedford 1971; Bonnemaïson 1977a; Tonkinson 1977). Three-month contracts combined with immediate repatriation appeared more attractive than three-year plantation contracts, which led to substantial turn-over rates causing a faster dissemination of news about working conditions and the material affluence displayed by the Americans. Although wages were supposedly identical to those paid on plantations, such regulations were hard to police. Furthermore, employment with the American Forces entailed a great variety of fringe benefits in the form of free cigarettes, utensils, clothing and scrap building material, all of which represented a range of material wealth previously unknown in this abundance to ni-Vanuatu.

Pre-war Urban Development

Although the first recorded settlement at Vila Bay consisted of the Presbyterian Mission Station on Iririki island in 1873, it was the opening of a trade store by *Comptoirs Caledonienne des Nouvelles-Hebrides* in 1882 which turned Vila into the economic centre of the then New Hebrides (Bennett 1957). The explicit association between early forms of urban settlement and colonial economic development became quite evident when Efate's plantation economy was dealt a severe blow in the form of pests about 1900 and Vila sank into the 'economic doldrums' (Bennett 1957: 118). The economic centre shifted northward to Epi on account of its large and profitable coconut and cotton plantations, but given the absence of a suitable harbour there, Port Vila remained the commercial centre. The gradual northward shift of Vanuatu's economic centre culminated in the rapid development of plantations on Espiritu Santo during the 1930s. Despite the profitability of these plantations and those of the neighbouring islands of Aore and Malo and the existence of a good harbour in the Second Channel, Port Vila remained the undisputed urban (and economic) centre of the group. In contrast, Santo's only claim to be an urban settlement consisted of the Catholic Mission Station established there in 1909, and the location there of a small hospital, a few stores which opened during the 1920s and a Condominium District Agency.

During the 1930s, Port Vila's population grew to about 1000 people consisting primarily of European settlers and administrators, about 200 Chinese and Japanese artisans and farmers, and recently arrived Vietnamese plantation labourers (MacClancy 1980: 93). While the Chinese and Japanese had originally arrived of their own accord, the Vietnamese had been systematically 'imported' by the French administration, since the early 1920s, to counter the alleged general unwillingness of local labour to engage in long-term contracts. This resulted in the presence of 5000 Vietnamese throughout the country by 1925 (MacClancy 1980: 93). Urban residence was highly segregated with each ethnic group living in specific niches and enclaves (Bennett 1957; MacClancy 1980). Apart from this ghettoization, the residence of ni-Vanuatu in town during these years was severely regulated by the Colonial administration. Ni-Vanuatu who were not from Efate or were unemployed, could not remain for more than 15 days in Port

Vila. After that, they faced deportation to their home island. But even Efatese and employed ni-Vanuatu from other islands faced discrimination in that they were not permitted to remain in town after 9pm 'unless they wanted to have to report to the District Agent the next day' (MacClancy 1980: 95).

The true beginning of urban development in Vanuatu came with yet another form of foreign intrusion: the Second World War. In May 1942, American troops arrived in Vanuatu, landing in Mele Bay on Efate. Until they moved their headquarters to Santo, the US Forces made their main base at Havannah Harbour on North Efate and built extensive facilities in and around Port Vila. A major airstrip (Bauerfield) was built at Tagabe, wharves and warehouses were constructed alongside the channel behind Iririki island, and camps and storage dumps were set up south of town in places which still bear the military names of No. 2 and No. 3, referred to in Bislama as *Nambatu* and *Nambatri*, respectively (Brookfield and Glick 1969). Bellevue plantation became the site for a large Navy hospital, and many roads were built or extended to connect these military installations (MacClancy 1980: 107).

While the transformation of Port Vila during the US military presence was greatly aided by an existing though very underdeveloped urban infrastructure, it was in Santo that the Americans practically built a town overnight. A major military and supply base was built, as well as a road network extending over 50 kilometres, and buildings could be found 'every 100 yards in any direction' (MacClancy 1980: 107). Over one hundred thousand servicemen were permanently stationed in the Santo area and about half a million passed through during the years of the American presence (MacClancy 1980). The estimates quoted earlier of about 10,000 ni-Vanuatu having worked for the American Forces in Port Vila and Santo emphasize that it was during this period that most ni-Vanuatu had their first contact with urban life. While morbidity and mortality were high amongst the first groups recruited under Condominium auspices, working and living conditions gradually improved after the Americans took charge of the operation. Many Paamese and Raga informants who worked there during these years re-enlisted up to three times to work primarily as labourers or as domestic servants for US troops. This first experience of better wages and previously unknown fringe benefits in the form of cigarettes and clothing, together with better food and generally improved working and living conditions made most of these men realize that there was more to wage-employment than cutting copra. This is well illustrated in the words of David⁴, now a 78-year old Liro area man:

That was the time when most of us first encountered the work of Europeans [occupations other than cutting copra]. Although the work was very hard when I first went there [in 1942], at a later employment-stint it was much better than copra-cutting. I only sat down, worked a little, mainly doing the laundry for American servicemen. Our employers treated us very well, they were never angry with us, they didn't kick us ... now that's a good job ... And also, the food, that was something we all liked a lot. We ate meat and rice every day, and they also had plenty of bread. Many black Americans gave us clothing, Lucky Strikes [cigarette brand], and also whisky and gin.

The presence of black American soldiers working alongside their white comrades, earning the same wages, eating the same food, and wearing the same uniforms made a further strong impression on ni-Vanuatu men. While circular plantation migration had until then been synonymous with labour mobility, it was this 'urban experience' that was to greatly influence employment and

⁴ To protect the anonymity of informants, pseudonyms are used throughout this book.

mobility patterns in the years following the Second World War. Port Vila and Santo, as potential destinations, had entered the mental maps of most rural ni-Vanuatu, through either their own experience, or that of close kin.

Post-war Mobility and Urban Growth

Despite a 250 per cent increase in plantation wages between 1945 and 1950, plantation owners were faced with increasing difficulties in recruiting ni-Vanuatu plantation labour on contracts exceeding six months (Bedford 1971: 98). High copra prices, at least partly responsible for a general increase in plantation wages, also motivated a growing number of ni-Vanuatu to plant their own coconuts.⁵ As early as 1948, about 50 per cent of Vanuatu's exported copra came from ni-Vanuatu plantations compared with a mere 15 per cent in the mid-1930s (Bedford 1971: 96). An increased range of goods offered by traders was often regarded as enough stimulus for ni-Vanuatu to get involved in cash-cropping, which also meant that during times of high crop prices the number of ni-Vanuatu willing to engage in plantation wage employment sank remarkably (Allen 1968). To overcome chronic labour shortages, many European planters made arrangements with ni-Vanuatu from particular islands to serve as their main labour force and introduced bonus wages and other fringe benefits in the form of free medical supplies, occasional cinema, access to garden land and schools to attract and maintain a more stable plantation labour force (Wilson 1966; Bedford 1971; Tonkinson 1977). However, such inducements notwithstanding, plantation owners continued to face labour shortages, which in the aftermath of the Second World War were further aggravated by the expiration of Vietnamese (Tonkinese) labour contracts in 1947. The Vietnamese subsequently moved to Port Vila and Santo where they either became self-employed or took up skilled urban jobs (Bedford 1971). Such developments prompted the Condominium Administration to search for labour elsewhere. The colonial government not only continued its wartime relaxation of prohibitions on the recruitment of women⁶ and members of the *Big Nambas* people of Northern Malakula, but furthermore encouraged

⁵ After the Second World War, contract labour migration also began to lose its popularity in Papua New Guinea. May and Skeldon (1977: 6) attribute this to the sheer drudgery of most jobs, to the fact that the prestige which people hoped to gain failed to materialize and to difficulties faced while readjusting to village life. Only those with limited contacts with the outside world continued to engage in agreement labour (Ward 1971:81). All in all, only a few people cared to repeat their own plantation experiences at least in terms of signing on for fixed and long periods (Connell 1985). On the other hand, a growing involvement in rural cash-cropping demanded time which could not be sustained by long-term absenteeism (May and Skeldon 1977).

⁶ The general non-participation by females in plantation labour migration was the result of prohibitive measures on the part of both colonial administrations and village leaders. Legal constraints such as the King's Regulation No. 1 of 1913 prohibited the recruitment of female plantation labour by British subjects, while of the 24,000 contracts issued by French authorities between 1912 and 1939, 4700 contracts were issued to women (Bedford 1971: 74). After 1926 and the introduction of the King's regulation No.10, British subjects were allowed to employ women on plantations if specific demands were met: women had to be from villages within 10 miles and had to have the consent of their husbands or village elders, and had to be accompanied by their husbands if they came from more than 10 miles away. During the 1930s other regulations prohibited the recruitment of women from specific areas prompted by a growing concern with a general population decline (such as the drop in the Torres Ia. population from an estimated 3500 in 1910 to a mere 170 by 1936; MacArthur and Yaxley 1968:17) and where such recruitment caused continuous conflicts between ni-Vanuatu and European planters such as involving the *Big Nambas* in Northern Malakula (Bedford 1971: 82). Elsewhere, many village chiefs barred women from access to beaches upon the arrival of recruiting vessels because of earlier plantation incidents involving women from their island (Chapter 2).

recruitment from abroad, culminating in the arrival of 670 Wallisians and Tahitians by 1956 to work on French plantations (Bedford 1971: 102). This latter measure proved to be only a temporary relief since, like their Vietnamese predecessors, most Wallisians and Tahitians left the plantation sector after the expiration of their contracts to pursue urban employment and jobs provided by a manganese mine in southeast Efate in the early 1960s.

This movement to town by Vietnamese, Wallisian and Tahitian plantation labourers upon the expiration of their plantation contracts is of utmost significance in understanding ni-Vanuatu mobility change. If these foreign plantation workers relocated to urban areas, an obvious question arising is why ni-Vanuatu should be expected to act any differently after having spent considerable time working as contract labourers themselves. If one either unquestioningly accepts moves to town by non ni-Vanuatu plantation labour or relates their urban relocations to bad living and working conditions on plantations or to these people's desire for a better or simply a different life in town, it seems inappropriate to apply a different analytical yardstick to ni-Vanuatu. Although, admittedly, ni-Vanuatu could always return to their home islands, the same applies to some extent to foreign plantation workers, none of whom were forcibly abducted from their home countries. A general plantation labour shortage during these years (Wilson 1966) should by no means lead to the conclusion of an overall unwillingness of ni-Vanuatu to engage in plantation work. The inheritance of a newly developed infrastructure from the Americans and an unprecedented copra boom enabled Santo to become a commercial centre through the joint effect of more plantations being established and of higher wages attracting more ni-Vanuatu. By 1955, Santo had become Vanuatu's second town. In the years following the Second World War, both towns experienced a rapid population growth. While the population in both Port Vila and Santo nearly doubled between 1955 and 1967, it was the presence of ni-Vanuatu that increased, by 556 per cent and 802 per cent respectively (Haberkorn 1987: 54). Suffice to say that given the small base population of ni-Vanuatu resident in Port Vila (200) and Santo (170) in 1955 (Bennett 1957), these growth rates were the direct result of an increased rural-urban mobility rather than of natural population growth.

These years also saw the first more permanent urban relocations of rural ni-Vanuatu. The establishment of new plantations providing more employment opportunities, and the prospects of being able to purchase cheaply building materials left behind by the Americans, directed many job-seekers to Santo rather than to plantations on other islands. Although most labour migrants would initially have only come for periods long enough to obtain such construction material, subsequently returning with it to their home islands, many ni-Vanuatu began to settle permanently in Santo during these years.

The best known example of an early permanent 'urban' resettlement of rural ni-Vanuatu was the establishment of Maat-Efate or Mele-Maat in the outskirts of Port Vila during the early 1950s. After eleven months of heavy ashfalls due to volcanic eruptions on Ambrym in 1951, the Condominium Government decided to evacuate the population of West and Southeast Ambrym and, without prior consultation of those involved, to resettle them on the nearby island of Epi, where they were to be struck only a few weeks later by a disastrous hurricane (Tonkinson 1977: 269). While most Southeast Ambrymese returned to their home island soon afterwards, the members of the village of Maat resettled on Efate. Some of their leaders present on Efate at the time organized employment and a village site after a French planter had offered the following deal: if they were to become his exclusive workforce he would provide a village site, some

construction material and access to garden land (Tonkinson 1979: 107). Aware that their home area would take some time to recover, they accepted the deal and Maat-Efate became established. Tonkinson notes that by 1954 their home territory had recovered, but that Maat-Efate residents were by now established and gave no shortage of reasons to stay on: people felt that there was less sorcery than on Ambrym; that their children were in better schools than on their home island; that they had a steady cash income from copra-cutting; and that they enjoyed such urban amenities as a freshwater supply.

The 1960s and early 1970s saw a major shift in migration destinations, with towns and peri-urban wage-employment attracting a growing number of labour migrants. An expanding and diversifying urban economy provided increased employment opportunities for ni-Vanuatu, particularly after both colonial powers decided to step up the development of educational, medical and agricultural services (Bedford 1971: 116). The 1959 hurricane which destroyed many of the wooden and corrugated iron buildings left behind after the war, the repatriation in 1963 of Vietnamese labour who had been the main labour force engaged in the construction industry, and the opening of a manganese mine during the mid-1960s in Forari (20 km north of Port Vila), all illustrate how previously unknown employment opportunities suddenly became available for ni-Vanuatu. The decline of the Vietnamese population from around 1600 in 1956 to 397 in 1967 (McArthur and Yaxley 1968: 24) had a strong impact not only on the urban construction industry but also on the peri-urban plantation sector. Although many positions were filled by ni-Vanuatu, the Vietnamese departure created a labour shortage which led to yet another large-scale 'import' of foreign migrant labour, mainly from Kiribati, Fiji and other then British-controlled Pacific Islands. Migrants from these sources increased in number from virtually nil to 450 in 1967, while at the same time the number of migrants from Wallis, Futuna and other French Pacific Colonies fluctuated between 500 and 1000 (MacArthur and Yaxley 1968).

Vanuatu's steady economic growth during these years had a major impact on ni-Vanuatu mobility, in that employment-related mobility, at least as far as changes in destination areas were concerned, became more liberalized (Chapter 5).⁷ Rural ni-Vanuatu were no longer at the mercy of plantation labour recruiters, and for the first time, could actually choose between various employment alternatives.

The rapid population growth of Port Vila during the late 1960s and early 1970s at a rate of 7.2 per cent per annum (Haberkorn 1987: 78) mirrors the gradual expansion of administrative services and business, primarily involving Europeans and Asians and requiring a steady labour supply provided mainly by ni-Vanuatu and other Pacific Islanders. In 1971, British legislation turned Vanuatu into a tax haven modelled after the Cayman islands (Forster 1980).

The result was electrifying. Between 1972 and 1974 Port Vila became a boom town. Thirteen overseas banks opened their doors, the expatriate population tripled, subdivisions sprouted in what had been previously virgin bush and, as a side effect, tourism took off. Two large new hotels were built to international standards, air services increased rapidly and cruise ships tied up at regular intervals alongside a newly built wharf capable of berthing vessels up to 40,000 tons. Suddenly Port Vila was on the map (Forster 1980: 371).

⁷ Ward (1971) refers to similar developments in post-war Papua New Guinea, when an increasing number of people no longer signed contracts, and paid their own way to places where they hoped to find employment, did not return at the end of any set period and most likely were urban-oriented. This 'independent migration' (Ward 1971: 81) soon became the dominant form of mobility, with the proportion of such casual labourers increasing from 34 per cent of the total Papua New Guinea labour force in 1948 to 60 per cent by 1967 (Curtain 1980a: 43).

Although the overall economic impact of this development was rather limited (the British Government cut its aid by the exact amount which the tax haven generated in annual revenue), it did create substantial employment for ni-Vanuatu, first in the construction industry and subsequently in banks, tourism-related industries and the domestic service sector, leading to an increase in employment opportunities in the urban non-agricultural sector of 54 per cent between 1967 and 1973 (Connell 1983: 10).

The growing participation of ni-Vanuatu in an expanding domestic economy, however, is only a partial explanation for the rapid urban growth of the late 1960s, as indicated by an examination of the wider context of urbanization. By then, Port Vila and Santo were not only attracting rural-urban migrants responding to a diversifying and increasingly urban domestic labour market, but, as the termini for overseas shipping and air services, were being used as a 'place of temporary residence by New Hebrideans in transit for another urban area—Noumea' (Bedford 1971: 124). Although the departure of Vietnamese labour from Vanuatu in the early 1960s had seriously affected the domestic construction industry and plantation sector, their departure from neighbouring New Caledonia had brought about a critical labour shortage which was made even more problematical by the nickel boom of the late-1960s. This boom prompted large expansion plans for the New Caledonian mining and metallurgical industry and placed great strain on available accommodation in Noumea such that, by mid-1971 'considerable new construction was going on in and around the town' (Bedford 1971: 127). Bedford gives the numbers of ni-Vanuatu employed in Noumea towards the end of 1968 as 500, and puts this figure at about 1500 by the end of 1969 and 3500 in 1971. Connell (1983: 32) suggests that, during the entire period of the nickel boom more than 10,000 ni-Vanuatu worked at some time in New Caledonia.

A further explanation for Vanuatu's high urban growth between 1967 and 1972 relates to the 'rural crisis' of the early 1970s (Bonnemaïson 1976). Extensive cyclone damage to coconut groves in the relatively highly populated Banks and Shepherd islands in 1971 and a drastic fall in copra prices in the same year made parts of the rural labour force redundant. Although, in the past, short-term circular migration combined with subsistence and small-scale cash crop activities at home might have provided the solution, these external pressures gave way instead to a more urban-oriented and long-term mobility. Furthermore during these years, the initial effects of a more intensive education program reaching ni-Vanuatu became apparent 'when a considerable number of educated people headed for Port Vila and Santo joined by planters driven away from the islands by the copra slump' (Bonnemaïson 1976: 11). This combined result of 'structural and cyclical factors' set off a new wave of 'uncontrolled urban migration', a form of mobility which no longer reflected 'structures, means of control and links with the home environment' (Bonnemaïson 1976: 11). Bonnemaïson considers migrants of this type to make up more than half of all urban residents in Port Vila and Santo during the early and mid-1970s.

Recent Developments in Vanuatu's Urban Demography

The magnitude of contemporary mobility in Vanuatu is highlighted by the fact that two out of every ten ni-Vanuatu lived outside their islands of birth at the time of the last census, in 1979, with absentee rates fluctuating between a high of 53 per cent in the case of Paama and a low of 9 per cent for Malo (Haberkorn 1987: 59).

The growing significance of rural to urban movements in the context of overall mobility is indicated by the predominance of Port Vila and Santo as principal migration destinations accounting for 53 per cent of all migrants in 1979, and by a much higher annual urban than rural population growth rate of 5.8 per cent versus 2.6 per cent respectively between 1967 and 1979. This trend is even more pronounced for Vanuatu's indigenous Melanesian population, which increased at annual growth rates of 6.2 and 2.8 per cent in urban and rural areas respectively (Haberkorn 1987). This strong disequilibrium between urban and rural population growth is one of the most striking features of the urbanization process in recent times throughout developing countries.

The high urban population growth between 1967 and 1979 reflects two distinct processes: a large increase of Port Vila's and Santo's population at a rate of 9 per cent per annum between 1967 and 1972, in contrast to a less dramatic annual increase of 3 per cent between 1972 and 1979. Disaggregating these figures by ethnicity underlines the various social, economic and political developments in Vanuatu of recent years. An annual increase of 12 per cent in Port Vila's and Santo's European population between 1967 and 1972 reflects the expansion of Vanuatu's urban economy as emphasized above by Forster (1980), as does the annual ni-Vanuatu population growth of 8 per cent and the yearly increase in the urban presence of people of mixed origin at a rate of 12.8 per cent, most of whom would have previously worked on commercial plantations. A different pattern emerges from the 1970s, when only ni-Vanuatu and other Pacific Islanders significantly increased their urban presence by 4.9 per cent and 7 per cent respectively, whereas the number of Europeans, Asians and people of mixed origin declined in real terms by 2.2 per cent, 2.6 per cent and 3.6 per cent, respectively (Haberkorn 1987: 66). Another noteworthy urban development during the late 1960s and 1970s, lies in different growth rates for both urban areas. Port Vila expanded at a slightly faster rate than Santo during the late 1960s and early 1970s, but this trend has since reversed, a fact related to the different economies of both towns as noted above. The extent to which a comparatively small urban growth rate of 3 per cent between 1972 and 1979, as against an increase of three times this magnitude in the preceding five years, represents merely a temporary phenomenon or indicates a new era of urban development, has important planning implications and necessitates a more detailed examination of Vanuatu's urban demography.

The most striking demographic change amongst urban ni-Vanuatu during the 1970s has been a much stronger increase in Port Vila's and Santo's female population. Annual growth rates of 6.1 per cent in the female population compared with 3.9 per cent in the male between 1972 and 1979, highlight the interdependence between urbanization and developments and variations in the domestic labour market. Developments in the urban economy during the 1960s and early 1970s mainly affected the construction industry and the wholesale-retail sector requiring primarily manual labour. This led to strong, male-dominated urban mobility as indicated by high urban sex ratios⁸ in 1967 (144) and 1972 (138), and particularly so amongst urban residents between 15 and 49 years of age (Haberkorn 1987: 67). Economic developments throughout the 1970s, however, were principally based on an expansion and diversification of bureaucratic and service employment. This led to a rapid increase in female formal sector employment beyond the more traditional occupations as domestic servants (Tonkinson 1984). This trend is apparent in the more balanced urban sex ratio of 121 in 1979.

⁸ Sex ratios are here defined as the number of men per 100 women.

Beyond contributing to more balanced urban sex ratios, an increased urban presence of women had a more far-reaching demographic impact. Urban fertility rates were raised to such an extent during the 1970s that natural population growth contributed more to urban growth than rural-urban mobility; a clear reversal of what had happened between 1967 and 1972. The contribution by migrant women to this development—with their own children born in town classified by the census as non-migrants—is illustrated by the fact that they represent three-quarters of all urban women in their reproductive years, and that 57 per cent of all non-migrants were children under nine years of age (Haberkorn 1987:69). The failure of the 1979 census to differentiate adequately between place of birth (physical) and place of belonging (*stamba*), however, does not permit an accurate evaluation of the real contribution of rural-urban mobility to urban growth during the 1970s, which would require the identification of migrant children born in town.

Despite the fact that during the 1970s the contribution of Efate- and Espiritu Santo-born ni-Vanuatu to urban population growth increased at a much higher rate than rural-urban mobility, such mobility still plays a most vital part in Vanuatu's urbanization process. First, migrants contributed 61 per cent to Santo's and 46 per cent to Port Vila's populations in 1979, and secondly, a considerable proportion of ni-Vanuatu born on Efate and Espiritu Santo represent children of these migrants. Taken together, it would not be unrealistic to state that more than two out of every three urban residents in Santo, and more than half of all ni-Vanuatu in Port Vila are not *manples*; in other words, are people whose *stamba* are not Efate or Espiritu Santo.

Although Vanuatu's migrant population is made up of people from throughout the archipelago, only a few islands dominate rural-urban mobility (Figure 1.2). In the case of Santo, migrants from just five islands contribute 69 per cent of the total migrant population, and represent 41 per cent of the entire urban population. These islands are Ambae, Ambrym, Malakula, Pentecost and Paama. In Port Vila, migrants from the same five islands, as well as from Tongoa and Tanna, together represent 72 per cent of all urban migrants and one-third of Port Vila's population. This dominance of rural-urban mobility by migrants from but a few islands has been a consistent feature since the mid-1960s when such statistical information was first available. In Port Vila, migrants from the same seven islands represented 70 per cent of all migrants in 1967 and 1972, and 72 per cent in 1979. The corresponding figures for Santo are 70 per cent in 1967, 66 per cent in 1972 and 69 per cent in 1979.

Figure 1.3 reveals a fairly young urban migrant population in 1979 with more than two out of three migrants under 30 years of age, and also points to a strong male bias as indicated by sex ratios of 137 and 141 for Port Vila and Santo respectively. Considering that urban employment is a major cause behind rural-urban mobility, a consistently young urban migrant population between 1967 and 1979 is not surprising. Although three out of four migrants were aged between 15 and 44 in both 1967 and 1979, the age structure in 1979 appears somewhat more balanced, resulting from a proportionally greater urban presence of migrants over 30 years of age. The high urban sex ratio in 1979, is somewhat unexpected considering the growing presence of women in town as noted above. However, the overall migrant sex ratio declined considerably between 1967 and 1979, dropping from 168 to 137 amongst migrants in Port Vila and from 179 to 141 amongst Santo's migrant population. This development did not affect rural-urban mobility throughout the country, as indicated by a persistent male dominance in

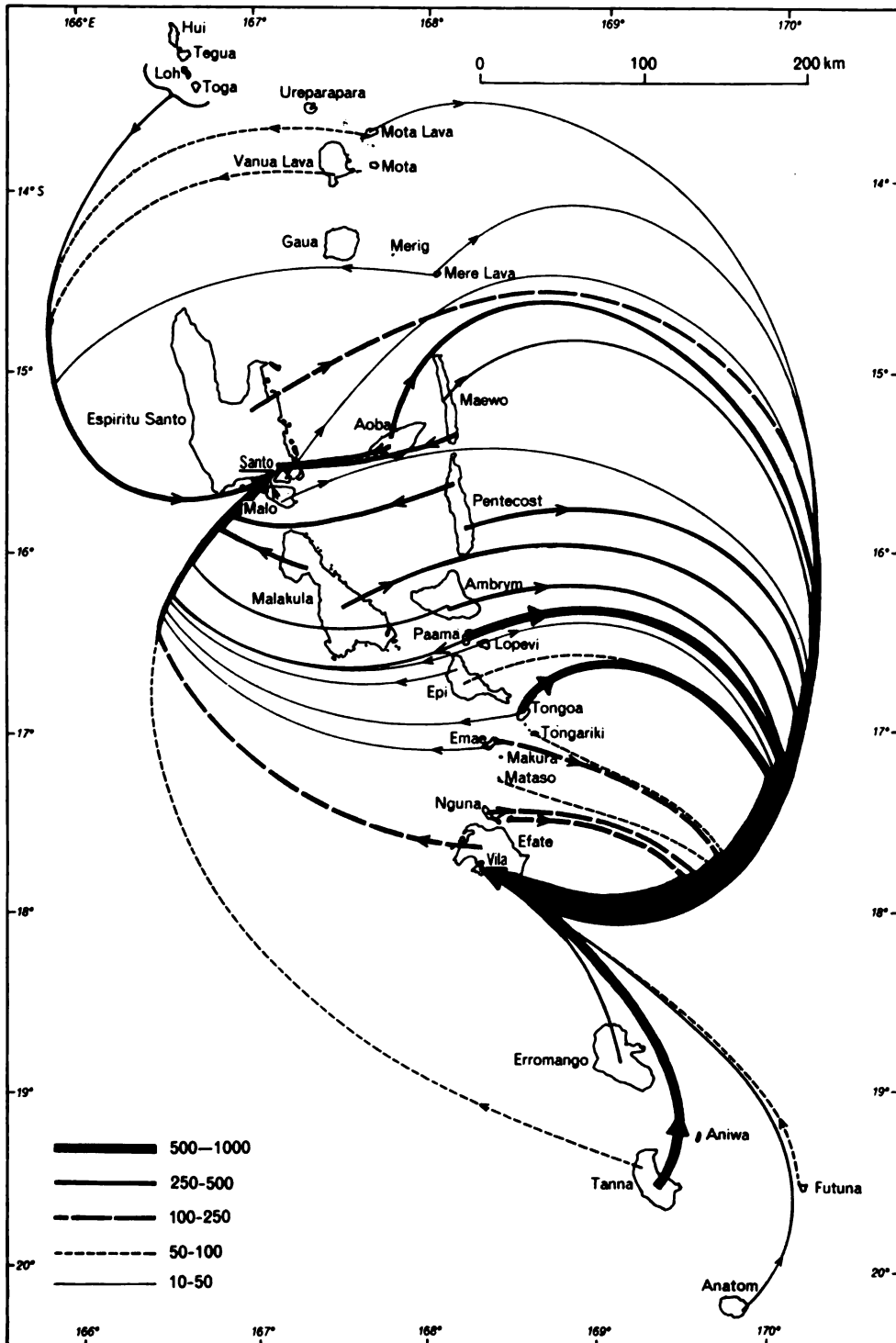


Figure 1.2 The migration fields of Port Vila and Santo, 1979

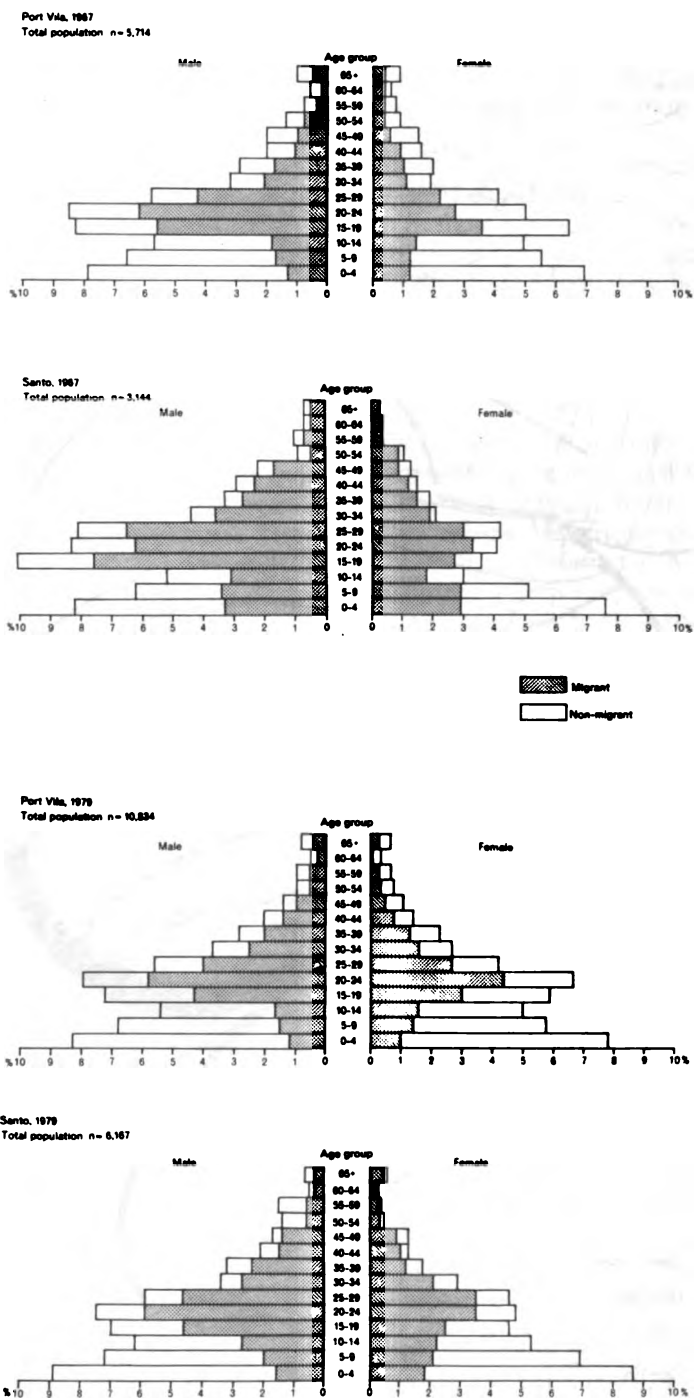


Figure 1.3 Age and sex structure of Vanuatu's urban migrant and non-migrant populations, 1967-79

urban mobility from some islands, such as Pentecost and Tanna, for example, which incidentally also contribute a large proportion of rural-urban migrants (Table 1.1).

A most remarkable feature of Vanuatu's urban economy is the predominance of ni-Vanuatu migrants in the urban labour force. In Port Vila, migrants constitute 66 per cent and 54 per cent of the male and female labour force, a pattern which is even more pronounced in Santo with 80 per cent and 73 per cent respectively (Table 1.2). Their dominance, however, varies considerably across occupations. While migrants fill all administrative and managerial positions held by ni-Vanuatu, their lowest representation is in agricultural employment.

Despite some inter-island variations regarding the proportional distribution of migrants in various employment categories, two out of three men are employed as labourers (Haberhorn 1987: 83). Women experience even more severe limitations in urban job opportunities with three out of four women either working in the domestic service sector or in agriculture (Haberhorn 1987: 84). This somewhat contradicts Tonkinson's (1984) description of the situation during the

Table 1.1 Changes in urban migrant sex ratios by island of birth, 1967-79^a

Island of birth	1967		1972		1979		1979	
	Urban and peri-urban		Urban ^b		Urban ^b		Urban and peri-urban	
	Sex ratio	(N)	Sex ratio	(N)	Sex ratio	(N)	Sex ratio	(N)
Ambae	161	(318)	207	(568)	127	(611)	119	(779)
Santo ^c	277	(98)	138	(193)	117	(236)	117	(236)
Malo	300	(64)	117	(52)	132	(58)	148	(67)
Mere Lava	317	(100)	207	(92)	160	(39)	188	(75)
Mota Lava	141	(82)	122	(82)	98	(117)	102	(121)
Vanua Lava	69	(54)	113	(64)	83	(64)	100	(80)
Ambrym	205	(571)	179	(517)	148	(669)	151	(746)
Malakula	188	(398)	241	(651)	146	(685)	149	(756)
Paama	144	(701)	116	(559)	124	(1159)	121	(1364)
Pentecost	292	(447)	255	(583)	211	(591)	231	(739)
Efate ^c	119	(70)	102	(87)	91	(141)	91	(141)
Emae-Makira	111	(188)	107	(277)	108	(204)	108	(204)
Emao	141	(77)	n.a.		68	(170)	68	(170)
Epi	117	(91)	138	(88)	133	(121)	152	(131)
Nguna-Pele	111	(135)	98	(202)	86	(162)	85	(163)
Tongoa	136	(397)	118	(520)	120	(699)	123	(708)
Futuna		-	127	(50)	142	(87)	142	(87)
Tanna	273	(462)	254	(665)	195	(898)	198	(906)
Total migrants	174	(4619)	167	(5914)	137	(7445)	139	(8327)

^a Only islands with at least 50 urban migrants are included in this table.

^b These figures include Port Vila's urban (town centre) and peri-urban population, but only Santo's urban (town centre) population to allow for a comparison with the 1972 urban census, which did not enumerate residents in peri-urban Santo.

^c These figures only include Espiritu Santo-born migrants in Port Vila, and Efate-born migrants in Santo.

Source: McArthur and Yaxley (1968), 1972 Urban Census, Vanuatu (1983a: Table 20).

mid 1970s when employment opportunities for women allegedly expanded beyond more traditional domestic service employment. This restriction to primarily two job alternatives may also explain the generally rather low female urban economic activity rates of 55 per cent and 38 per cent. For one thing, a stable or decreasing number of expatriates throughout the 1970s, as mentioned previously, entails an absolute decline in available domestic service jobs for a growing number of employable urban women. Another explanation lies in the activities themselves: faced with only the prospect of working as a *haosgirl* (domestic servant) or in agriculture may prevent many women from taking up such employment even if it were readily available.⁹

The predominance of migrants from certain islands in particular urban occupations, such as a high proportion of people from Ambae and Pentecost in white-collar employment and a majority of Paamese and Shepherd islanders working as labourers (Haberkorn 1987), has also been noted in the work of Bedford, Bonnemaïson and Tonkinson, who emphasize the importance of kinship connections and language ties in the allocation of urban employment, particularly concerning semi- and unskilled labouring jobs. Whether or not such island of origin-specific differences in urban labour force participation are also indicative of different degrees of urban stabilization, cannot be ascertained from census data. This question, however, will be addressed again in Chapters 3–5 based on an analysis of the recent mobility experience of people from Paama and North Pentecost (Raga).

Table 1.2 Occupational profile of urban migrants, 1979

	0/1	2	Occupations		5	6	7/8/9	10	Total
			3	4					
Port Vila									
Economically active males (N)	199	26	373	123	466	818	1166	26	3197
(% migrants)	(64)	(100)	(61)	(70)	(74)	(53)	(74)		(66)
Economically active females (N)	141	1	178	44	800	397	50	9	1620
(% migrants)	(60)	(100)	(47)	(36)	(66)	(34)	(54)		(54)
Santo									
Economically active males (N)	71	12	102	77	96	186	646	11	1201
(% migrants)	(85)	(100)	(70)	(83)	(79)	(76)	(81)		(80)
Economically active females (N)	41	1	31	14	160	84	16	7	354
(% migrants)	(61)	(100)	(65)	(50)	(76)	(77)	(81)		(73)

Occupational classification: (0/1) professional and technical; (2) administrative managerial; (3) clerical workers; (4) sales workers; (5) service workers; (6) positions in agriculture, fishery and forestry; (7/8/9) non-agricultural labour; (10) others, not stated.

Source: Special tabulation 1979 census; Vanuatu (1983a: 267–68).

⁹ In many instances husbands in town do not approve of their wives doing such 'dirty work' and village chiefs and parents disallow urban mobility of single women if they are not guaranteed a 'proper job' (see Chapters 2–5)

The following analysis of recent developments in ni-Vanuatu population mobility is set in the historical and local conditions of mobility from the islands of Paama and Pentecost. These two areas have been chosen for their long history of intensive population mobility originating from vastly different structural contexts. The subjects of this book are current and former migrants, who, at the time of fieldwork (from March 1982 until May 1983), lived in four communities in North Paama (Liro, Liro Nesa, Asuas, Voravor), in two communities in Raga (Abwatuantora, Aroa), or were absentees from these six rural settlements living in Port Vila.

The organization of this book reflects the comparative nature of the historical analysis of ni-Vanuatu mobility, with developments in Paamese and Raga mobility being continuously juxtaposed rather than approached in separate chapters. Chapter 2 introduces the islands of Paama and Pentecost, and is followed by a detailed analysis of social, economic and political developments in Chapter 3. Apart from serving as a historical-structural backdrop for the analysis in subsequent chapters, this also forms the basis for various hypotheses about different mobility developments that are examined in Chapters 4 to 6. Chapter 4 addresses the recent mobility experience of rural residents and assesses the relative contemporary significance of temporary versus long-term mobility. Chapter 5 then examines the question of whether rural migrants in Port Vila are merely circular migrants currently on the move (away from their usual home) or represent committed urbanites. Chapter 6 presents a comparative analysis of life-time mobility histories obtained from rural residents and Port Vila-based migrants to ascertain the extent to which Port Vila remains a transit station in the life-cycle of rural ni-Vanuatu or has become a new home for many rural migrants.

CHAPTER 2

Mobility from Paama and Pentecost: the Islands and their Inhabitants

Paama and Raga: a Geographical Introduction

Located halfway between Port Vila and Santo, between the larger islands of Ambrym and Epi, Paama is one of the smallest and most densely populated islands of Vanuatu, with a land area of 32 square kilometres and a population density of 70 per square kilometre. Extending for approximately nine kilometres from north to south, and four kilometres from east to west, its most conspicuous physiographic feature is the range of hills averaging about 500 metres in height and running the entire length of the island. The coastal location and permanent nature of Paamese villages—only Tevalihaut is considered a real inland village by Paamese—is a relatively recent phenomenon dating back to around 1900–10, and reflects the island's missionary history. Except for three villages, all settlements are located on the leeward side of the island (Figure 2.1).

Paama is easily reached by a regular twice-weekly boat service from Port Vila or Santo, or by plane to neighbouring Epi and a subsequent transfer by speedboat. In 1982, a one-way boat fare from and to either Port Vila or Santo amounted to vatu (VT) 1200, whereas a plane ticket from Port Vila to Lamén Bay (Epi) cost VT 2600 and the transfer by speedboat to Paama incurred another VT 3000–4000. Given these relative transport costs, the general travel of Paamese by boat, except for emergencies, is self-evident.

Paama's natural vegetation, like that of all islands in the north and centre of the archipelago, is characterized by dense tropical rain forests with many varieties of large trees and a thick undergrowth rich in tree ferns and lianas. Its larger neighbouring islands of Epi and Ambrym have vast bush areas, and patches of grass lands in coastal areas (Tonkinson 1968), but land utilization on Paama is distinctly different—a direct result of the island's comparatively high population density. Flat ground at sea-level or along the mountainside was planted with coconuts in the early part of this century, and yam gardens occupy most remaining land in coastal areas. Gardens growing daily subsistence crops such as taro, banana and *aelan kabis*, a local cabbage variety, are generally planted in small patches on the often quite steep hillsides. Virgin bush is rare, underlining Paama's limited potential for further agricultural development.

Without rivers or creeks on Paama, most villages depend largely on diesel-powered reticulated water supply systems and on rainwater collection. Every settlement and many individuals have cement storage tanks for the collection of rain water which, given the chronic shortage of diesel fuel for the operation of diesel pumps, is still the primary source of freshwater on the island. Regarding other infrastructural developments, it was not until 1979 that five

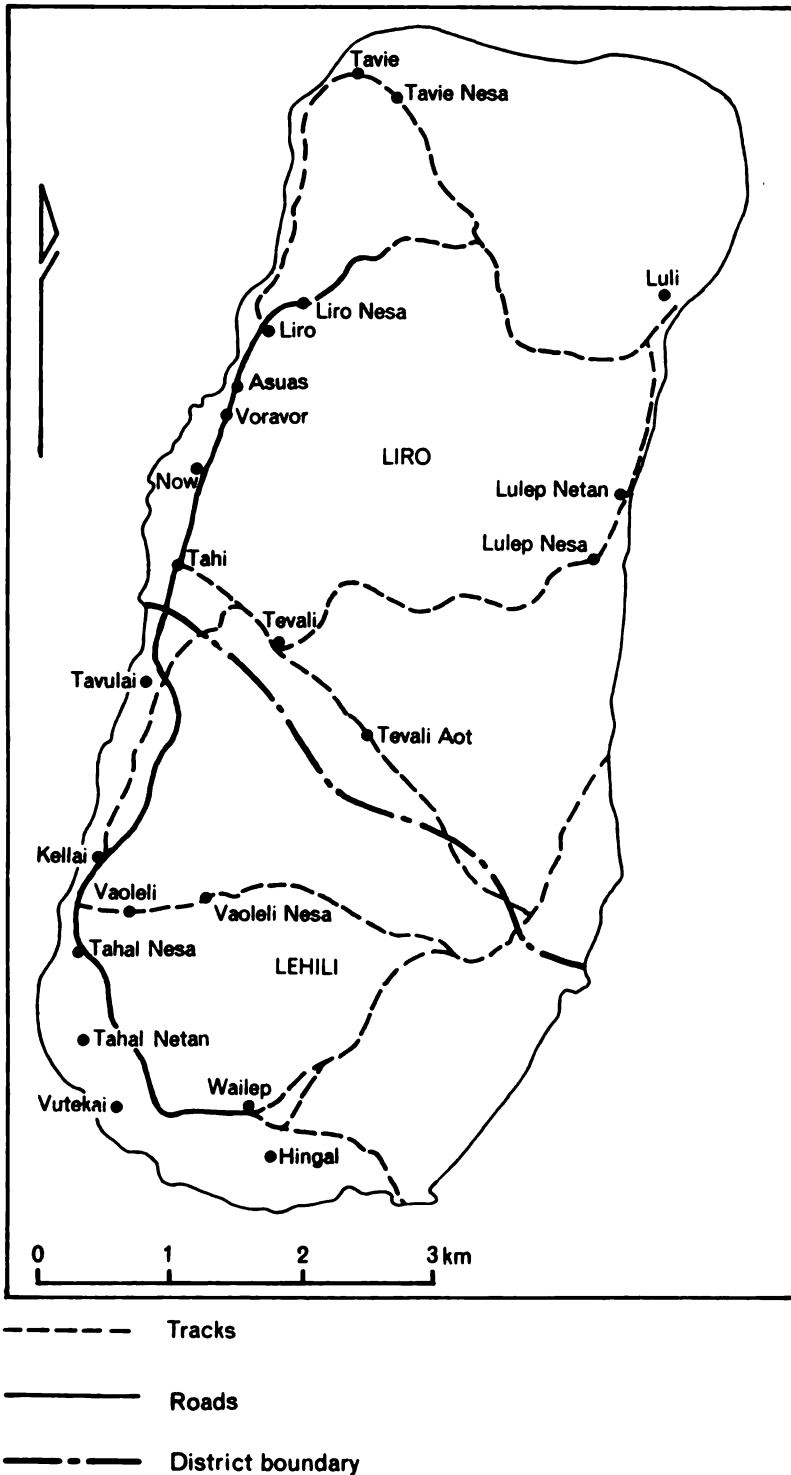


Figure 2.1 Map of Paama

kilometres of trafficable road were built connecting all coastal villages on the leeward side south of Liro Nesa. Previously, settlements could be reached only via narrow and frequently steep foot-tracks, which still represent the only land connection between villages on Paama's north-east and north-west coast. Despite the near-complete decay of the road north of Tahī, making it unmanageable for tractors or four-wheel drive vehicles, most Paamese prefer this road to the old tracks. Rural electrification has not yet reached Paama although some houses in Liro and Lehili occasionally obtain a few hours of electricity per day; this occurs during the operation of the two diesel generators which supply Liro's health centre and primary school and Lehili's primary school and dispensary with about two hours of electricity each day. An additional generator was installed in Tahī in 1982 in association with the establishment of Paama's small scale fisheries program, to enable the production of ice for fish storage. This project began in June 1982, and represents the only commercial enterprise on the island, apart from four local co-operative stores in Liro, Liro Nesa, Tahī and Lehili, which sell a variety of foodstuffs and consumer goods¹ and buy locally produced copra. Although all villages have at least one privately owned store, their operation is not primarily profit-oriented: all stores sell exactly the same limited range of products (stick tobacco, matches, tinned fish and laundry soap) at the same prices and at hardly any profit, and those storeowners interviewed regard these operations less as a commercial venture than as their private 'savings account': spare cash from copra-earnings, previous wage labour or remittances is converted into store goods, and the sale thereof continuously provides these people with small amounts of cash. Predominantly serving family members and extended kin, the social pressure to extend credit (which the local Co-operative societies do not give) and the subsequent shortage of cash to buy store goods generally means a short-lived existence for most of these ventures, a phenomenon reported elsewhere in Melanesia.

With regard to Paama's social infrastructure, six primary schools and one rural health centre are located on the island. Two English-medium schools in Liro and Tahī offer a full six year curriculum, and the French-medium primary school in Lehili offers the full eight years required in the French system. Two further English-medium and one French-medium primary school located in Lulep, Vauleli and Vutekai respectively, offer only a four year program. Students continuing beyond primary education are required to attend secondary institutions on other islands. The island's only rural health centre is located in Liro. Built in the 1960s by Paama residents and predominantly with migrant earnings, remittances and some help from the Presbyterian Church, and originally staffed by an Australian mission nurse until 1978, it now employs three full-time ni-Vanuatu staff provided by the Ministry of Health: one medical assistant (dresser) and two fully qualified and Port Vila trained Paamese nurses. Lehili has a small dispensary, and small first aid stations are found in Tahī, Tahal Nesa and Lulep.

In both its physical environment and infrastructural developments, Raga (North Pentecost) differs from Paama in several aspects. Comprising the Raga-speaking area of Pentecost, one of Vanuatu's largest and most populated

¹ The usual foodstuffs, ranked according to sales frequency (based on Liro and Liro Nesa Co-operative accounts) are several varieties of tinned fish, rice, and more recently, tinned pork, duck and goose imported from the People's Republic of China. Sugar, tea and salt are of equal importance, whereas biscuits and jams, curry powder and tomato sauce, canned butter and fruit are generally only bought on special occasions. Matches and stick tobacco are continual bestsellers, with cigarettes, beer and soft drinks gaining in popularity. Every household generally buys some kerosene and one bar of laundry soap each week, with batteries and razor blades the next most important consumer items.

islands, Raga extends for approximately 18 kilometres north-south including the village of Tasvarongo, and measures between 2.5 and 7.5 kilometres in width (Figure 2.2). Located off Vanuatu's major domestic shipping route between Port Vila and Santo, Raga is not as conveniently reached as Paama. Only during the late 1970s has Raga become more accessible by boat, with the *MV Lali* offering one round trip per week between Port Vila and Santo, costing VT 1100 and VT 2000 in 1982 for a one-way journey from Santo and Port Vila respectively to Abwatuntora. Until the late 1970s, Raga residents either depended solely on air transport from and to Lonorore in South Pentecost or Longana on neighbouring Ambae, or had to rely on highly irregular boat transport provided by Chinese merchants and copra traders based in Santo or by the Anglican mission ship based in Lolowai (Ambae), from where both air and sea transport to Santo was more regularly available. Although plantation labour recruiters from Santo and Malakula called regularly in Raga, such transport was obviously tied to subsequent plantation employment. The major trading vessels owned by Burns Philp and Ballande, operating mainly between Port Vila and Santo, made much rarer appearances than at Paama and other islands in central Vanuatu. Despite its ready accessibility by air and speedboat, high airfares and speedboat hire (amounting to approximately VT 10,000 one-way), make this transport prohibitive for most local residents, except in case of emergencies — a situation which readily compares with Paama².

As many Raga villages are located inland on a plateau extending from Abwatunbuliva southward at an altitude of about 400 metres, or on the island's windward side, Raga residents experience more severe internal transport problems than people on Paama, despite a more extensive road network and the presence of several motorcars linking the inland villages of Ahivo and Aute districts with Laone, Abwatuntora and Lolong (Figure 2.2). Most of Raga's 37 villages were established much more recently than those on Paama. Although Anglican missionaries resident on neighbouring Ambae (Lolowai) and, from 1897 onward, in Lamalanga, are widely credited with the establishment of more nucleated settlements in the most northern part of Raga, (similar to Catholic missionaries' efforts regarding the establishment of Latano in 1898³), most villages south of Ahvio district, such as Raga's largest settlements, Abwatuntora and Labultamata, emerged far more recently through the initiative of local leaders. Traditional Raga settlement patterns, characterized by small populations, a predominantly interior location, and a more temporary nature relative to other islands such as Paama, persisted well into the 1950s, a situation intrinsically linked to Raga's socio-political and economic organization.

Raga's natural vegetation is similar to that on Paama, although some distinct variations emerge in subsistence and cash-crop cultivation. Given a much larger land area, the relative abundance of ni-Vanuatu owned coconut plantations and vast areas of virgin bush are to be expected. This situation, however, does not apply throughout Raga. Ahivo's available land resources are virtually exhausted, whereas Hurilau and Aute have a slightly better potential for future agricultural

² Since 1987, *Air Melanesia* provides a regular service to and from Sara, in North Pentecost.

³ The original settlement of Latano consisted of approximately 100 ni-Vanuatu from all over Raga returning from Fiji, where they had not only spent several years as conscripted labourers but also adopted the Catholic faith. They settled on land acquired by the Catholic mission from a locally resident European trader, who had previously bought land in the Lolong Bay from its customary owners (Bonnemaïson 1986).

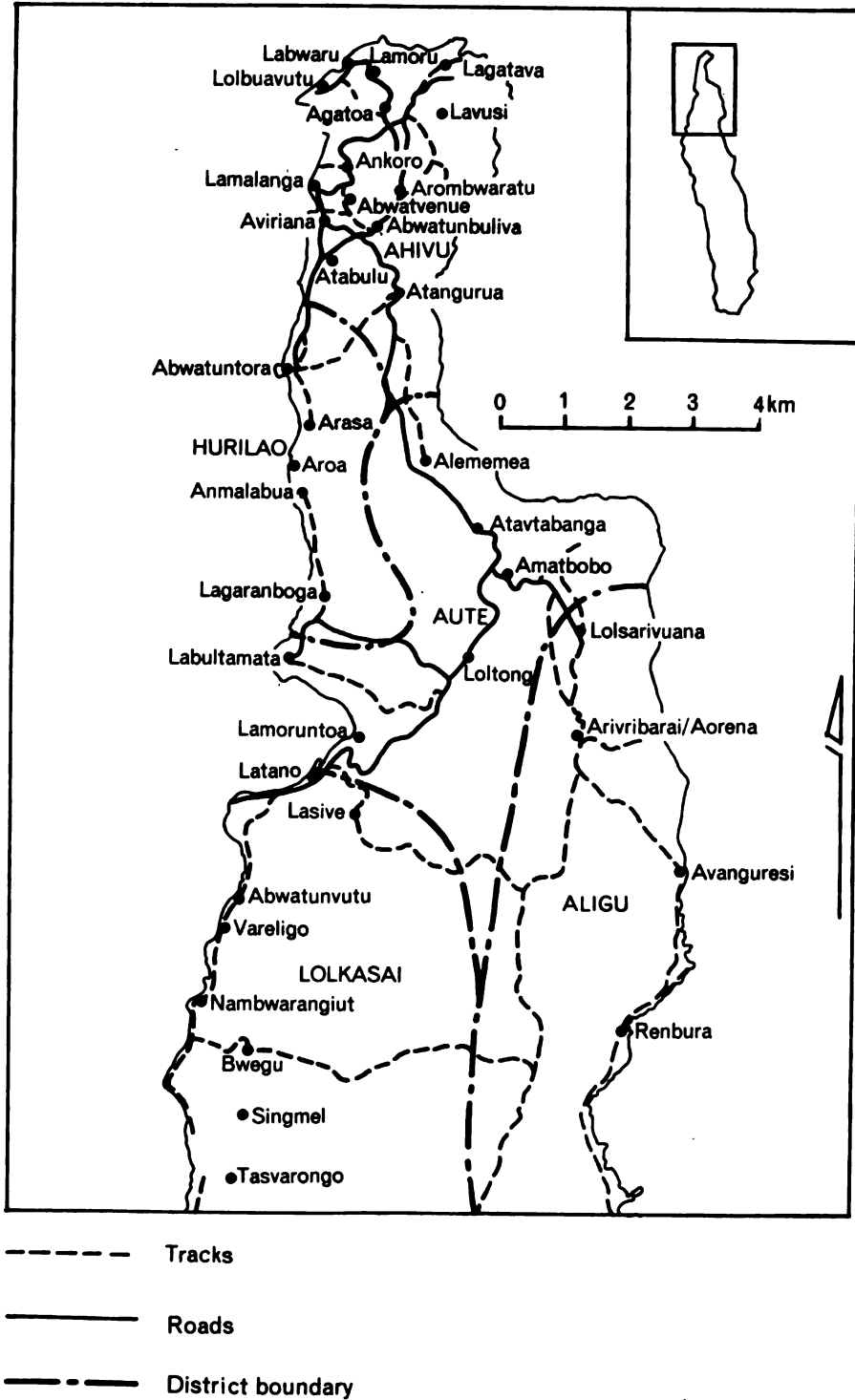


Figure 2.2 Map of Raga

development, while Aligu and Lolkasai show the most promising development potential in terms of available land for commercial agricultural ventures.

Concerning modern amenities such as water supply and electricity, the situation in Raga readily compares with Paama. Although most villages are already connected to the local water supply system, supply is irregular owing to chronic maintenance problems and shortage of funds to buy diesel fuel. This means that people still rely primarily on rainwater, a situation nevertheless regarded by most people as a vast improvement on the days before corrugated iron roofing became widely used on churches, schools, co-operative stores and local council buildings. In those days, people in the northern part of Raga (Ahivo and Hurilao districts) either took canoe trips to the neighbouring island of Maewo to collect springwater, or obtained water from a small creek south of Lagaronboga. Electricity throughout Raga is even more scarce than on Paama, with only a few hours of light occasionally available to the few houses connected to public buildings where diesel generators are intermittently used for other purposes, such as for the rural health centre in Abwatuntora.

On the economic and commercial side, Raga is only slightly more developed than Paama, as indicated by the recent establishment of an industrial forestry project in Lolong, the operation of several small road transport companies, and the planned establishment of a small cane furniture factory in Lolong. Except for Raga's seven co-operative societies, other commercial ventures are restricted to small family owned stores.

Regarding the social sector, Raga has four full English-medium primary schools in Nazareth, Atavtabanga, Gamal Maua and Labultamata, an English-medium junior primary school in Nambwarangiut, a French-medium primary school in the Catholic enclave of Latano, and an English-medium junior High School established in Nazareth in 1987. Two rural health centres, one in Aligu and the main centre in Abwatuntora, provide basic medical services throughout the region, with a small dispensary located in Lolong. Because of distances and often hazardous road conditions, three first aid posts had been established by 1983 in Nazareth, Amatbobbo and Nambwarangiut to make basic health care more readily accessible to all communities.

The Population Structure of Paama and Pentecost

At the time of the last population census in 1979, Paama's resident population numbered 2228 people. Out of a total population of 3560 Pamese actually born on the island, only 1677 actually lived there (47 per cent), so making Paama the island with the highest out-migration rate in Vanuatu (Haberkorn 1987). Two-thirds of its resident population lived in thirteen villages north of Tahī (North Paama), with the remaining population enumerated in nine villages in South Paama (Figure 2.1). These settlements range considerably in size, from only 65 residents in Vutekai to 190 people in Liro Nesa.

The island's age and sex structure varies remarkably from the national picture. Despite the fact that 44 and 45 per cent of Paama's and Vanuatu's populations respectively are under 15 years of age, and despite similar dependency ratios, considerable variation emerges in the proportion of 0-4-year-olds and of those aged between 15 and 34, as well as in sex ratios (Figure 2.3). While the low proportion of Pamese under four years of age could be indicative of a recent

decline in fertility as suggested by a dramatic decrease in child-woman ratios⁴ from 903 per 1000 in 1967 to 615 per 1000 in 1979 (Table 2.1), this could also reflect a high incidence in family relocations from the island — possibilities that can only be examined on the basis of detailed empirical mobility data. Paama's overall sex ratio is well below the national average. This results primarily from low overall sex ratios in the age group 15–49, which suggests a strong male bias in Paamese mobility.

Table 2.1 Changes in the demographic profiles of the resident and locally-born population on Paama and Pentecost, 1967–79.

	Paama		Pentecost		Vanuatu	
	1967	1979	1967	1979	1967	1979
Total residents	1947	2228	6901	9361	76,582 ^a	111,251
(% annual increase)		1.2		2.8		3.1
Ni-Vanuatu residents	1,938	2,222	6,756	9,341	70,837 ^a	104,371
(% annual increase)		1.2		2.8		3.2
In-migrants	37	545	254	535	11,558	19,866
(% annual increase)		25.9		6.6		4.8
(% in-migrants)	2	25	4	6	16	19
Ni-Vanuatu born on island	3,208	3,560	7,559	10,027	70,837	104,371
(% annual increase)		0.9		2.5		3.2
Out-migrants	1,307	1,883	1,057	1,221	11,558	19,866
(% annual increase)		3.2		1.2		4.8
(% out-migrants)	41	53	14	12	16	19
Number of households	441	533	1,416	1,923	14,937	22,621
Members/household	4.4	4.2	4.8	4.9	5.1	4.9
Population density						
Residents	61	70	14	19	6	9
Locally-born	100	111	15	20	6	9
Demographic profile of residents						
Age (% 0–14 years)	53	44	47	46	46	45
Dependency ratio	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0
Sex ratio	79	97	99	108	112	113
Child-woman ratio	903	615	827	811	866	852

^a The 1967 total and ni-Vanuatu populations (including those who refused to be enumerated) amount to 77,988 and 72,243 respectively, which form the basis for the computation of intercensal growth rates. Note: Changes in island-specific economic activity rates cannot be assessed, since the 1967 census does not contain such information.

Source: McArthur and Yaxley (1968); Vanuatu (1983a).

⁴ Child-woman ratios are here defined as the proportion of children aged 0–4 years to women aged 15–44 multiplied by 1000. Although this index is designed to provide a measurement for fertility when birth statistics are lacking (as in the case of Vanuatu), it should be stressed that child-woman ratios provide only a rough approximation of fertility since this index is based on survivors of previous births.

Ninety per cent of Paamese residents over 15 years of age were recorded by the 1979 census as economically active (Table 2.2). This high figure results from almost total (91 per cent) engagement by Paamese in subsistence agriculture combined with some occasional cash-cropping. Only 9 per cent of Paamese residents do not refer to agriculture as their principal occupation, with 6 per cent working in the service and transport sector (Vanuatu 1983a: 309). Commercial agriculture (cash-cropping) as a principal occupation is virtually non-existent on Paama due to a shortage of land, and with all arable land under cultivation.

Pentecost's population profile differs from that of Paama in several aspects (Table 2.2). First, its population of 9361 residents live on a much larger island, resulting in a low population density of only 19 people per square kilometre. Yet the location of the island's 96 villages points to considerable regional variations, with the highest population concentration encountered in the north of Raga, and around Melsisi in Central Pentecost. A second contrast is the fact that only 6 per cent of Pentecost residents can be classified as in-migrants, and only 12 per cent of all Pentecost Islanders (born on the island) lived elsewhere in 1979. A third contrast with Paama lies in the much closer resemblance of Pentecost's age structure to Vanuatu's overall age distribution (Figure 2.3).

Like the situation on Paama, the overwhelming majority of Pentecost's residents (91 per cent) were classified as economically active in the 1979 census; 91 per cent were engaged in agriculture, and 5 per cent were employed in the service sector. However, given Pentecost's much larger land area, there appears to be a greater potential for Pentecost residents to be engaged in commercial farming than on Paama.

Variations in the demographic features of both islands (Table 2.2) should be viewed in the context of different population processes throughout the past two decades.⁵ The most noticeable difference has been Paama's small annual

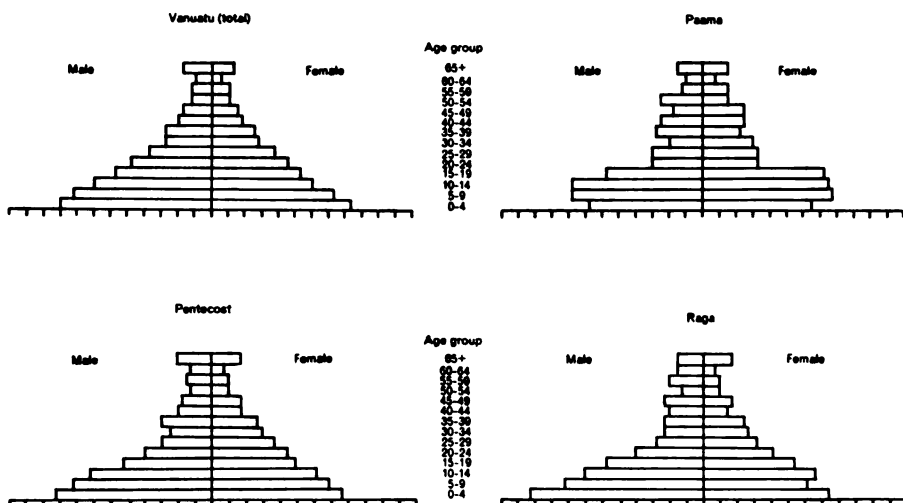


Figure 2.3 Age and sex structure of the population of Paama and Pentecost, 1979

⁵ A longer-term assessment of demographic developments on Paama and Pentecost, predating the 1967 census, is virtually impossible, given either a lack of population data, or data which are extremely inconsistent and unreliable (Haberkorn 1987). Mc Arthur and Yaxley (1968) emphasize that even where population counts, generally based on mission reports, were available, many figures only provide rough approximations.

Table 2.2. Key statistical indicators for Paama and Pentecost, 1979

	Paama		Pentecost		Raga		Vanuatu			
	Paama	North	South	Pentecost	Raga	Central		South	North	South
Total residents (% NI-Vanuatu) (% In-Migrants)	2228 99.7 25.0	1381 99.6	847 99.9	9361 99.8 6.0	3125 99.7	3992 99.9	2244 99.7	1592 99.7	1533 99.7	111251 93.8 18.4
Number of towns	22	13	9	96	37	39	20	19	18	2
Number of villages	-29	-14	-15	-305	-69	-179	-57	-26	-43	-2289
Localities ^a	10-190	16-190	10-150	1-186	1-177	1-129	1-186	3-163	1-177	1-14598
Smallest/largest										
Number of households	533	317	216	1923	667	818	438	353	314	22621
Average HH size	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.9	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.5	4.9	4.9
Land area (sq-km)	32			499						12189
Population density ^b	70-(111)			19-(20)						9
Demographic indicators										
Age (% 0-14 year olds)	44	42	48	46	46	45	46	45	48	45
Dependency ratio (15-59)	1.0	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.0
Sex ratio (total)	97	99	94	108	114	104	108	119	109	113
Adult sex ratio	88	97	74	101	104	93	91	102	90	114
Child women ratio (15-44)	615	650	561	811	901	739	825	839	967	852
Economic indicators										
Economically active pop.(%)	90			91						84
Men-women	89-92			92-91						89-78
% Work in agriculture	91			91						77
Educational attainment (Pop.aged 6+ without ed,%)	14			36						27
Principal religion (%)										
Presbyterian	85	81	92							37
Anglican				42	92	22	9	97	86	15
Catholic				34	6	52	38		11	15
Kustom				4			15			8
Seventh Day Adventist	8	8	8	1		3				6
Church of Christ				12		10	32			4

^a Represents an inhabited place, where one or more persons are stated to have their usual residence. A village is defined as the group of localities linked together by custom, religion, social or economic factors (Vanuatu, 1983:xdv).

^b Population density given in brackets is based on the population born on Paama and Pentecost.

population growth of only 1.2 per cent between 1967 and 1979, despite a considerable increase in in-migration. Pentecost's annual population growth of 2.8 per cent, in contrast, has been more in line with national demographic trends (Table 2.1). The most important demographic developments on Paama, relative to a greater demographic stability on Pentecost, have been the recent emergence of a more balanced age distribution, more balanced dependency and sex ratios in 1979 than in 1967, and a dramatic decline in the child-woman ratios from 903 to 615. These are developments which not only underline the continued importance of out-migration, but furthermore suggest considerable changes in the recent mobility behaviour of Paamese.

The Population of the Liro area and Hurilao

The four Paamese villages selected for an in-depth study of contemporary ni-Vanuatu mobility — Liro, Liro Nesa, Asuas and Voravor — make up an area in the northwest of Paama referred to throughout the island as Liro area. As elsewhere in Vanuatu, these villages are quite small with a total resident population of just 381 people in 1982 (Table 2.3). Liro area's age distribution (Figure 2.4), with about two thirds of all male and female residents younger than 15 or older than 45 years of age, and an overall low adult sex ratio of 84 (Table 2.3), suggests at first glance, a strong male dominance in contemporary Liro area out-migration. This corroborates the pattern for Paamese mobility as indicated in 1979 census data. Much lower dependency and more balanced sex ratios, however, emerge when all usual village residents are included in this population distribution. This includes people who, at the time of the Liro area census undertaken for this research (July 1982) were away on *wokbaot*, in temporary plantation employment, in hospital, or were attending meetings or educational institutions elsewhere, and who represent 15 per cent of the Liro area's usual resident population. Furthermore, a dependency ratio of 1.5 and a sex ratio of 100 closely resemble the figures obtained from the 1979 census for North Paama.

Although the recognition of temporary or short-term absentees⁶ as usual rural

Table 2.3 Demographic profile of the study villages on Paama and Raga

	Resident population		Number of households	Household size	Dependency ratio		Adult sex ratio	
Liro area	381	(441) ^a	91	4.1	2.0	(1.5)	84	(100)
Liro	144	(162) ^a	33	4.3	1.7	(1.3)	88	(94)
Liro Nesa	136	(165)	34	3.9	2.7	(1.7)	83	(112)
Asuas	56	(62)	13	4.3	1.5	(1.2)	57	(77)
Voravor	45	(52)	11	4.0	2.4	(1.7)	108	(129)
Hurilao	196	(210)	42	4.5	1.5	(1.4)	97	(103)
Abwantuntora	158	(169)	34	4.5	1.6	(1.4)	100	(106)
Aroa	38	(41)	8	4.5	1.1	(1.1)	85	(93)

^a Figures in brackets include all villagers who were temporarily absent from these villages at the time of the village census.

⁶ Men and women who usually live in the Liro area or Hurilao, but were absent at the time of my census for less than six months, are regarded as temporary absentees.

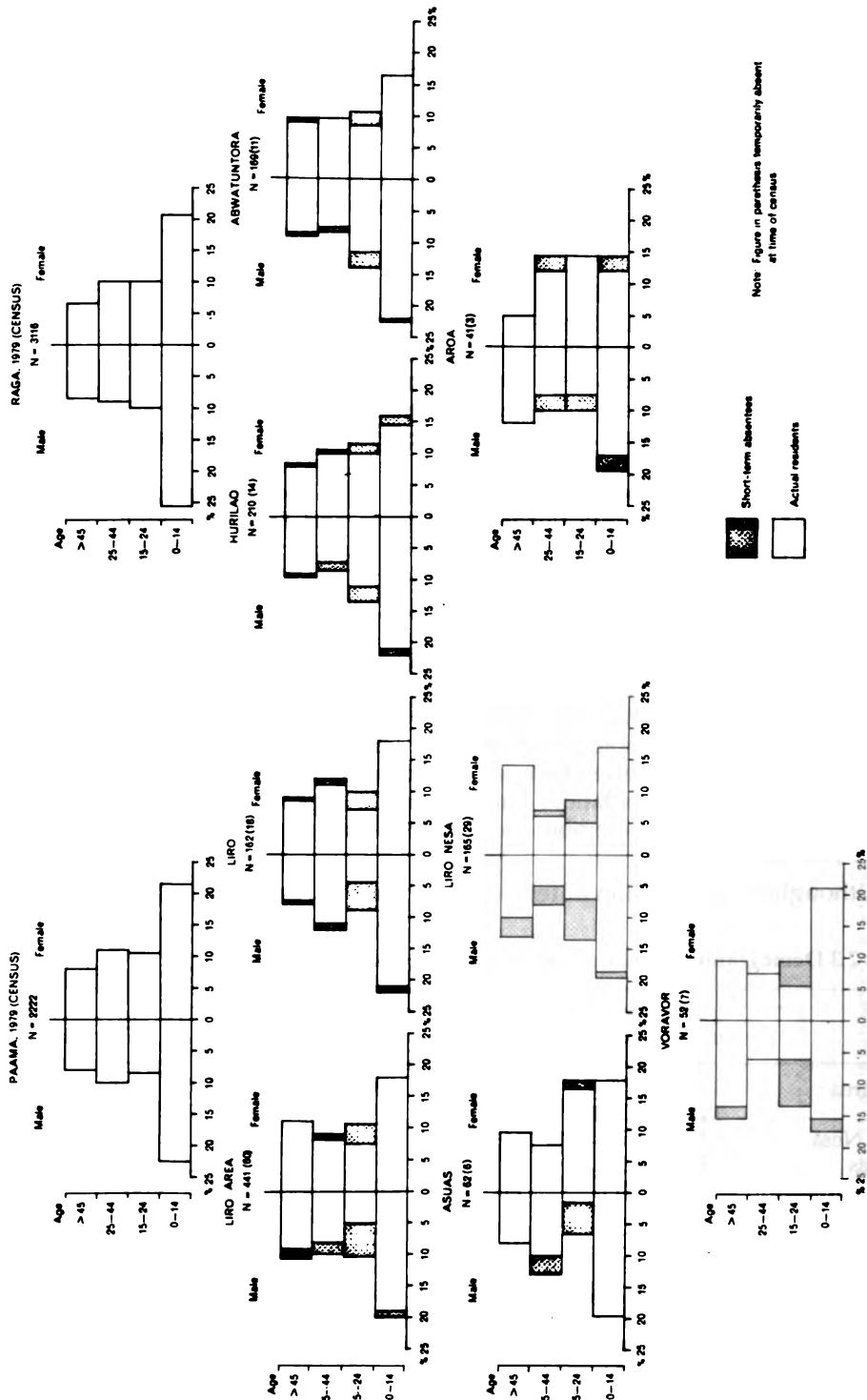


Figure 2.4 Age and sex structure of the resident populations of Liro area and Hurilao

residents (indicated by the shaded areas in Figure 2.4) only reveals a marginal change in the overall population composition of these villages, temporary absenteeism (Table 2.4) is most prevalent in the 15–24 year age group. In all Liro area villages, the same or a larger proportion of young men was temporarily absent than lived there in 1982, while a greater proportion of young women resided in the Liro area than was temporarily absent—a picture that suggests the operation of gender-specific mobility norms. Ongoing fluctuations in rural population composition due to the incidence of temporary absenteeism illustrate the extreme care required when examining contemporary population mobility and interpreting variations in the demographic make-up of rural populations. Intra-island fluctuations in dependency and sex ratios, for example, more often result from different degrees of temporary mobility, than reflect different rural base-populations. A meaningful analysis of mobility which is prone to such fluctuations over time, cannot therefore be based on synchronic data, but requires a longer reference period, as is discussed later.

Table 2.4 The incidence of temporary absenteeism, 1982

	Number of adults resident at time of census ^a		Temporarily absent at time of census		Temporarily absent in 1982 before census	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Liro area	97	117	41	19	15	27
Liro	37	42	10	8	4	13
Liro Nesa	35	42	21	8	7	7
Asuas	12	21	5	1	1	3
Voravor	13	12	5	2	3	4
Hurilao	57	59	9	5	4	10
Abwantuntora	46	46	7	4	4	8
Aroa	11	13	2	1	-	2

^a Figures refer to actual number of absentees. The census date for the Liro area was July 1982, and November 1982 for Hurilao.

After accounting for temporary absentees, however, some variations prevail in the demographic make-up of Liro area's four villages, which suggest inter-village differences in the incidence of 'long-term' out-migration.⁷ The dominance of young and single male migrants, for example, appears to be confined to Liro and Asuas as indicated in low sex ratios (Table 2.5) and proportional age representation (Figure 2.4), in clear contrast to the predominance of men amongst 25–44-year-old migrants from Voravor. As for female mobility, high or balanced sex ratios amongst 15–24-year-olds in Liro Nesa and Voravor respectively, point to a strong outmigration of young women from these villages, with Asuas women predominating in the 25–44 age group. Concerning the absence of villagers over 45 years of age, men figure more prominently than women.

For a comparative assessment of contemporary Raga mobility, two villages from the Hurilao district were chosen owing to this district's high incidence of

⁷ Long-term migrants are, for the time being, referred to as *de jure* Liro area and Hurilao residents, who are regarded by residents in their home villages as usually resident in places other than their home village.

Table 2.5 Sex structure of adult village populations^a

	Age Groups			Total	Total N
	15-24	25-44	45+		
Liro area	67 (100)	97 (110)	83 (96)	83 (101)	[214/274]
Liro	64 (88)	106 (105)	86 (87)	88 (94)	[79/97]
Liro Nesa	122 (147)	80 (108)	70 (91)	83 (112)	[77/106]
Asuas	10 (36)	120 (160)	83 (83)	75 (77)	[33/39]
Voravor	100 (140)	75 (75)	140 (160)	108 (129)	[25/32]
Hurilao	109 (117)	71 (82)	112 (111)	97 (103)	[116/130]
Abwatuntora	133 (140)	75 (88)	93 (94)	100 (106)	[92/103]
Aroa	50 (67)	60 (67)	250 (250)	85 (93)	[24/27]

^a These figures are sex ratios, here defined as the number of men per 100 women. Figures in round brackets are sex ratios which include temporary absentees.

rural out-migration.⁸ Abwatuntora, Raga's second largest settlement with 155 residents in 1982, plays a similar central role in contemporary island affairs as Liro village does on Paama: it is the seat of the North Pentecost Area Council, and has the only health centre and radio-telephone facility of the region. Many people pass through Abwatuntora each day, a fact which provided an additional research bonus in allowing contact with people from throughout Raga. Since three-quarters of all Vanuatu settlements have less than 50 residents, and two small villages (Asuas, Voravor) were included in the Paamese sample, a second, considerably smaller village, Aroa, was included in the Hurilao sample. This village is located two kilometres south of Abwatuntora and in 1982 had a resident population of 36.

Abwatuntora and Aroa are home for thirty-four and eight households respectively, with an average 4.5 members per household (Table 2.3). These villages reveal a more balanced age structure compared with those of the Liro area, suggesting a different nature of overall mobility (Figure 2.4). Abwatuntora's balanced adult sex ratio and Aroa's low figure of 85 are in line with an overall male bias in Pentecost mobility suggested by the 1979 census. A breakdown of sex ratios by age (Table 2.5), however, reveals considerable demographic differences between both villages. Abwatuntora's balanced sex ratio is associated with a surplus of young men compared with a predominance of women amongst older residents, particularly in the 25-44 year age group. Aroa in contrast has more men than women in the younger age-group and amongst adults aged 25-44, with men clearly outnumbering women amongst residents older than 45.

Apart from these variations in demographic make-up, considerable differences also emerge in the economic activities of Liro area and Hurilao residents. Most adult Liro area residents are engaged full-time in subsistence agriculture, with only five men and women (2 per cent) earning a regular salary as primary school teachers and nurses. A further twelve people (6 per cent) are employed in their villages: five women earn a modest income as kindergarten teachers and in family

⁸ Like movements from the Liro area on Paama, the incidence of Hurilao out-migration was not the highest in Raga. This distinction goes to villages in the northern district of Ahivo, whereas the level of out-migration from Lolkasai, Aligu and Aute districts was below that of Hurilao. This assessment is based on information on the number of absentees from each district obtained from the North Pentecost Area Council in Abwatuntora.

stores, and four men are employed in the Liro and Liro Nesa co-operative store, with a further three taking on the jobs of radio-telephone operator, diesel pump operator and school groundsman.⁹ This employment structure corresponds to the general picture previously described for Paama; it also means that only 18 per cent of all Liro area households have at least one household member earning a regular, most often only modest, rural income.

In Hurilao, however, many more adults are employed outside the subsistence sector. About one in three men works at least part-time for a local wage, whereas 90 per cent of all women are engaged full-time in subsistence production. Two men work as medical assistants and one woman works as a nurse in the rural health centre, and four men and one woman receive a monthly salary as employees of the North Pentecost Local Area Council. A further seven young unmarried men are employed by the Local Area Council, with six of them doing occasional maintenance work on the North Pentecost water supply system and one looking after Abwatuntora's co-operative store. In addition, four young women work as nurse-aides in the health centre. Three men are employed by the Anglican church as the local priest, a deacon, and as church secretary for North Pentecost.¹⁰ This high proportion of villagers not exclusively engaged in the subsistence sector, and the fact that 55 per cent of these Hurilao households have at least one household member earning a regular income is not, however, truly representative of other Raga villages, since the principal employers, the Local Area Council and the rural health centre, are both located in Abwatuntora. Differences in economic activity between Liro area and Hurilao residents can hence be at least partly explained in such terms. However, the fact that a higher proportion of Hurilao villagers work outside the subsistence sector must also be linked to the initiative of some village chiefs, members of the Local Area Council and clinic staff who realized that if young unmarried men and women are not given some opportunities to earn money for themselves, little can be done to prevent a large-scale rural exodus. Such sentiments, mentioned by several village elders and young people, are reflected in a much greater proportional absence of Liro area residents aged 15-24 as emphasized above.

Apart from subsistence horticulture, most Liro area and Hurilao households raise some livestock, mainly pigs and chickens. Cattle are less important, because of a lack of cash to purchase calves and of enough land for grazing. While the importance of domesticated pigs lies in their value for exchange, particularly so in Raga, fowls are kept primarily for subsistence purposes, to supplement a rather monotonous diet based on tubers, *aelan kabis*, edible fern and tinned fish or meat. Fresh fish does not form part of the regular diet for most families despite the

⁹ The monthly local wages received by these 12 people varied between VT 500 and 1200 for the kindergarten teachers, amounted to VT 1000 for the radio-telephone operator, the diesel pump operator and the school groundsman, while the two family store attendants earned VT 1000 and VT 2000, respectively. The monthly income of the Liro and Liro Nesa co-operative store-keepers amounted to 5 per cent of the monthly sales, which was shared by both store-keepers in each store. The primary school teachers and nurses, in contrast, are Government employees receiving Public Service salaries, which in 1982 ranged between VT 23,000 and 34,000 per month.

¹⁰ The local salary and wage structure is much better than in the Liro area. Monthly income for the five men and women receiving a Local Council salary ranged from VT 8000 to VT 18,000 amounted to VT 6000 for the three men employed by the Anglican church; and was VT 3000 for the four nurse-aides. The water supply maintenance crew was paid VT 200 for each day their services were required (an average of 3-5 times per month), and the co-operative store-keeper earned 5 per cent of the monthly sales. The two medical assistants' and the nurses' salaries are in line with Public Service awards and ranged between VT 16,000 and VT 34,000 per month.

coastal location of all six villages. Only five Liro area and three Hurilao men fished on a regular basis about twice a week: the lack of canoes, broken lines, lost fish-hooks, insufficient time and fear of shark attacks are generally cited as the main reasons by those who hardly ever or never fish.

Although local wage- or salary-employment affects only 18 per cent of Liro area households compared with 55 per cent of Hurilao households, all rural households are definitely involved in a cash economy, as indicated by the number of European-style houses or dwellings at least partly built from permanent material, and by material possessions ranging from essential kitchen utensils and kerosene lamps to transistor radios or radio-cassette recorders. All households own such items, and the number of forks and knives, sheets and pillows, tea-cups and buckets varies according to household size or needs rather than as an indication of different degrees of wealth. Only two Liro area households, both from Asuas, and one Hurilao (Aroa) household own a small dinghy equipped with an outboard motor, and five Liro area and four Hurilao households each own an old Singer sewing machine; no cars, motor cycles nor even bicycles appear amongst Liro area and Hurilao household possessions.

A first comparative assessment of these rural population profiles point to different mobility processes from the Liro area and Hurilao. Sex ratios of 67 (Liro area) versus 109 (Hurilao) amongst 15-24-year-old residents, and a larger proportion of young Hurilao than Liro area men and women resident in their respective villages, emphasize two clear contrasts in the mobility of young Liro area and Hurilao residents. First, Liro area mobility in this age-group appears heavily male dominated, and secondly, temporary absenteeism plays a more prominent role in the Liro area than in Hurilao. With regard to rural residents aged 25-44, a reverse pattern emerges. Raga mobility appears more clearly the domain of men as indicated by low resident sex ratios (71: 82) compared to a greater female participation in mobility amongst Liro area women, as indicated by more balanced resident sex ratios (97: 110). Amongst Liro area and Hurilao residents over 45 years of age, men again appear more mobile than women. The influence of different mortality on the ratio of men to women in this age group can be ruled out, given a slightly higher life expectancy for men than women throughout Vanuatu. Furthermore, with a much larger proportion (82 per cent) of Liro area households having no access to a regular rural income than is the case amongst their Hurilao counterparts (45 per cent), mobility from the Liro area appears to play a more prominent role on Paama than in Raga.

Although these contrasts and fluctuations in rural population composition suggest differences in Liro area and Hurilao mobility (in terms of its incidence and forms), it is possible that variations in their rural demographics conceal different rural base populations. The interference of random demographic events (stochastic interference) is of particular significance when dealing with small populations. Different sex ratios at birth in successive years can create havoc with later population composition. One way to gauge the relative probabilities of these two explanations is to attempt a reconstitution of rural populations in order to assess the nature of the population distribution in the absence of any out-migration.

The Extent of Rural Absenteeism

The reconstitution of rural populations should not be equated with establishing a *de jure* population in the standard census fashion which, in Vanuatu, would regard all ni-Vanuatu as *de jure* residents of a particular locality if they 'usually

lived there, regardless of where they actually were on census night' (Vanuatu 1983a: xii). It must also be stressed that the concept of *de jure* does not imply a normative assessment as to who should belong to any given household (Murray 1981: 49). The problems with this are two-fold. First, the assessment could well include people who usually live in Liro, for example, yet who are migrants from other islands, or people who are long-term visitors with residence rights in neighbouring villages. Secondly, it fails to recognize continuous residence rights of even the most long-term absentees. The *de jure* definition of rural populations used throughout this book is based on the concept of *stamba*, the place a person belongs to, where he or she enjoys indefinite residence rights. Irrespective of how many months or years a man from Liro might have been absent in Port Vila, he will always be regarded as *man Liro*, unless he has lost his residence rights (through having been exiled from his village over land disputes or alleged sorcery, for example). Women, on the other hand, become members of their husbands' communities upon marriage, and ideally never lose residence rights in their husbands' community even well after their husbands' deaths. Liro area's low adult sex ratio then cannot simply be equated with male-dominated out-migration. The fact that 73 per cent of all married women in this area settled in their villages only after marriage illustrates the impact of marriage mobility on the demographic make-up of Paamese settlements (see also Table 2.6). A similar phenomenon also applies in Hurilao, where 40 per cent of Abwatuntora's adult residents and 56 per cent of all adult Aroa villagers originate from other villages. This underlines the continuous significance in Hurilao of multilocal residential arrangements.

For the purpose of establishing a *de jure* Liro area population then, all absent men whose *stamba* is, by general consensus, ascribed to this area (irrespective of their actual place of birth) are regarded as out-migrants. In contrast, absent women who had married outside their village are treated as members of their husbands' community. For example, a Liro-born woman married to a man from Liro Nesa and at present living in Port Vila is regarded as a Liro Nesa absentee and not a Liro absentee. In a similar way, a Liro-born woman who is married to a man from another village outside the Liro area and who, at the time of this study lived in Port Vila, is not regarded as a Liro area absentee at all by this definition. This conceptualization of mobility, emphasizing the rural location people could or would live in if it were not for their current residence (mobility) elsewhere, implies a considerable sex bias in mobility rates, as is discussed below (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6 Adjustment of sex ratios of Liro area migrants

	Number of absentees		(A) Include Female	(B) Exclude Female	(C) Adjusted Female	Adjusted Sex ratio
	Male	Female				
Liro area	182	125	67	35	157	116
Liro	42	29	13	8	34	124
Liro Nesa	75	54	22	14	62	121
Asuas	30	19	17	6	30	100
Voravor	35	23	15	7	31	113

^A Refers to the number of absent local women married to men from outside the Liro Area;

^B Refers to the number of women from outside the Liro area married to Liro area men;

^C Results from adding the difference between a and b to the number of currently absent women.

The reconstitution of a *de jure* Hurilao village population is a more complicated matter, on account of the highly complex nature of residential access rights. For the purpose of this analysis, all currently absent men and their families, who through maternal associations can claim residence rights in Abwatuntora and Aroa, whose claims are recognized by local residents, and who furthermore pay their local council tax 'in the name' of these villages, are regarded as local out-migrants. The same applies to women who, despite their marriage to men from other villages, resided in Abwatuntora or Aroa prior to their current residence elsewhere, providing that their residence rights are recognized in the village, and local taxes of both women and their husbands are paid 'in the name' of either Abwatuntora or Aroa.

Fluctuations in temporary absenteeism also necessitate the introduction of a temporal dimension of mobility. This allows an examination of the relative significance of short-term (temporary) versus long-term mobility, and of changes over time. In present-day Paama and Raga, rural residents distinguish explicitly between such different forms of mobility. Residents who *go i kambak nomo* (people who leave and return rather quickly to their place of usual residence) are differentiated from those who *go longtaem lilbit* or who *go longtaem tumas* (people who have been absent for a 'little long' or 'very long'). An explicit temporal reference, however, does not emerge from these expressions, and people distinguish between temporary and long-term absentees on the basis of where they usually live. *Tru ples blong hem naioia i stap long Vila* (his real place of residence now is in Port Vila) exemplifies this situation for a long-term absentee, even if he or she has only lived there a few years. Although 'short' or temporary rural-based mobility in the sense of *go i kambak* moves can entail rural absences of varied length, temporary moves (in the sense of short-term circular mobility of usual rural residents) nowadays rarely exceed six months (Chapter 3). This is an approximation of the average period between the planting (July–September) and harvesting (April–June) seasons. Acknowledging such local distinctions, all *ni-Vanuatu* are here regarded as long-term absentees (migrants) if at the time of this study, they had been absent from Paama and Raga for more than six months, and if their place of usual residence, according to local opinion, was outside the Liro area or Hurilao.¹¹ Villagers absent for shorter periods but who usually reside in the Liro area or Hurilao, and those who have only recently left or whose migratory status was unclear¹² are all treated as temporary or short-term absentees (migrants).

One major demographic impact of rural out-migration on the adult populations¹³ of Liro area and Hurilao is quite evident from Figure 2.5, which shows that variations in the age and sex structure of the four Liro area villages primarily result from out-migration rather than reflect local demographic

¹¹ Bedford (1971: 214) explains this arbitrary time limit of one month on the basis that 'a sufficiently high proportion of respondents themselves drew a rough distinction between short-term and long-term absences on the basis of whether or not they exceeded *wan manis*, the pidgin English expression for one month' (italics in original).

¹² This category refers to absentees who had left within a year before the present study, yet those relatives could not agree on how long they had been absent.

¹³ The overall demographic consequences of the out-migration of young boys and girls (under 15 years) as regards an assessment of *de jure* rural populations could not be determined in the course of my fieldwork. In the case of 14 per cent of all absent families, relatives in rural areas had only vague ideas about the number of children of these absent family members, particularly of long-term absentees who had not visited for many years.

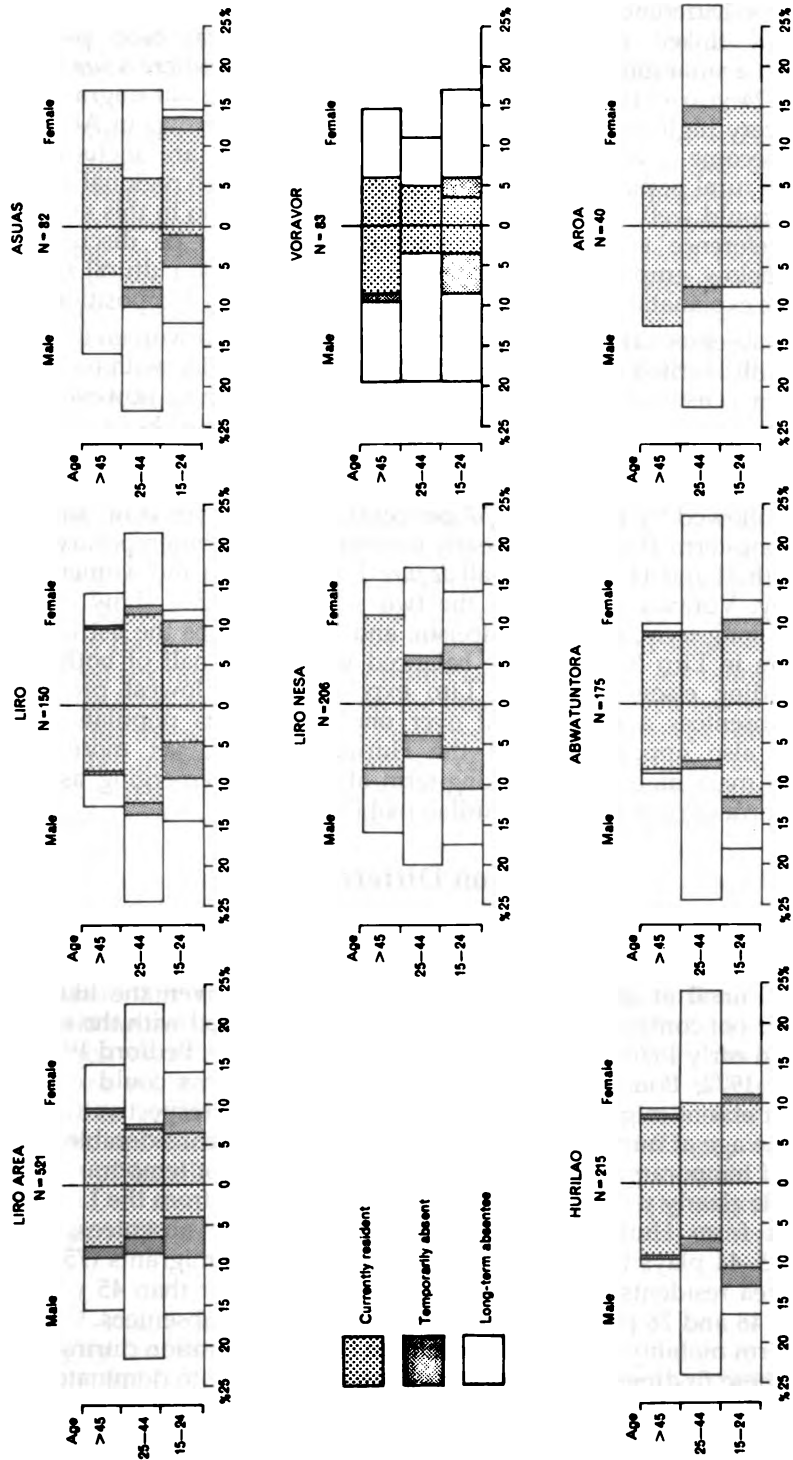


Figure 2.5 Age and sex structure of the *de jure* populations of Liro area and Hurilao

idiosyncracies. Differences between both Hurilao villages, however, seem to be more directly linked to demographically different rural base populations. Contrary to the situation of Asuas on Paama, for example, where a sex ratio of 10 amongst 15–24-year-olds is clearly the result of heavy male out-migration in this age-group, very high and very low sex ratios in this age-group in Abwatuntora and Aroa become even more pronounced if absentees are included in the reconstituted rural populations (Figure 2.5). Although a high regional sex ratio at birth of 111 could well explain Abwatuntora's high sex ratio in this age group,¹⁴ an earlier reference to multilocal residence in Raga, to be discussed more extensively below, emphasizes a greater importance of socio-cultural rather than demographic explanations for variations in rural population composition.

A higher absentee rate of Liro area men (65 per cent) and women (52 per cent) compared with Hurilao (49 per cent and 43 per cent) is in line with earlier trends derived from census data (Figure 2.5). Somewhat startling, however, are the variations at village level. More than two-thirds of Liro Nesa, Asuas and Voravor's adult *de jure* male populations no longer live there, compared with only half of Liro's men; two-thirds of Voravor's *de jure* female population resides elsewhere, followed by Liro Nesa (57 per cent), Asuas (48 per cent) and Liro (41 per cent). Long-term absenteeism clearly predominates in contemporary Liro area mobility, with 51 and 44 per cent of all *de jure* Liro area men and women falling in this category. Voravor and Asuas, the two smaller villages, show the highest incidence of long-term, male absenteeism, and Voravor tops the list for women. The situation in Liro Nesa is quite balanced with about half of both men and women residing elsewhere, while Liro experiences the lowest proportion of long-term absentees averaging just over one third of its population. Similar fluctuations also appear amongst the Hurilao villages, yet more explicitly restricted to male mobility, with long-term absenteeism emerging as the most prominent form of contemporary Hurilao mobility.

Migration Differentials

The age distribution of Liro area and Hurilao absentees (Figure 2.5) shows that young adults do not dominate mobility to the extent often reported in the literature (Connell et al. 1976; Singh 1984). However, given the likelihood of longer periods of contemporary rural absenteeism compared with the situation in the 1960s and early 1970s (Brookfield and Brown Glick 1969; Bedford 1971; Vienne and Vienne 1972; Bonnemaïson 1977a), these age patterns could also merely indicate that absent migrants have simply grown older, irrespective of an actual change in the age at migration. Figure 2.5 also underlines considerable variations in the age of temporary and long-term absentees. Amongst temporary migrants, young people clearly predominate, making up 65 per cent from the Liro area and 57 per cent from Hurilao, whereas amongst long-term absentees, the older age-group 25–44 plays the leading role amongst Hurilao migrants (75 per cent), with Liro area residents in that age-group and those older than 45 years of age constituting 48 and 26 per cent respectively of all current absentees. Considering that short-term mobility was the predominant form of migration during the 1960s and 1970s, these findings show that young people continue to dominate this form of mobility. These data also suggest, however, that the overall less imposing

¹⁴ This figure is based on birth statistics available from the Abwatuntora rural health centre involving 950 births (500 boys, 450 girls) between 1967 and 1981. Aroa's low sex ratio is most likely affected by the small size of this age-group consisting of just 13 people.

representation of young Liro area and Hurilao migrants (33 per cent and 24 per cent) is the obvious result of the growing significance of longer-term rural absenteeism, accounting for 80 and 86 per cent of all current Liro area and Hurilao absentees.

While differences in absentee rates between villages and across age-groups could be indicative of different mobility settings at the micro-scale, and might also reflect different individual circumstances, the possible interference of under-enumeration cannot be ruled out. Such a problem is of particular importance when relying on household reconstitution methods (Caldwell 1969; Hugo 1975) and when working with small populations. This is illustrated in the case of Liro village. There, residents could not recall the exact number of adult children of three long-term absentee families and of two widowers, which may at least partly account for this village's comparatively low mobility rate of 47 per cent, and for its somewhat unbalanced adult age and sex distribution (Figure 2.5). This problem of incomplete information regarding the number of children of long-term absentees raises an important methodological issue. Considering the conceptual base of rural *de jure* populations, defined in terms of *stamba* and residential access rights, one cannot expect to find homogeneous age and sex distributions across villages.¹⁵

Figure 2.5 also corroborates earlier remarks about the sex selectivity in rural mobility, as shown by the high sex ratios for total (146) and long-term (133) Liro area mobility (ratios which contradict 1979 census data that suggested reasonably well-balanced sex ratios in mobility from Paama). Migrant sex ratios obtained for Abwatuntora (131) and Aroa (78) on the other hand are well below the 1979 sex ratio of 202 for the whole island of Pentecost. While differences between villages may well be indicative of variations of mobility settings and individual circumstances at a village level, the overall contrast in Liro area migrant sex ratios derived from 1979 census data and the 1982 survey appears to be primarily related to different definitions of mobility. This is evident from the census's exclusive focus on spatial aspects, in contrast to the definition used here which is based on the concept of 'residence rights'. The Census included all female migrants ever born on Paama and their island of birth is treated as their *de jure* residence. This therefore provides a higher figure on female mobility than is obtained under the current definition, since the latter excludes Liro area born women residing outside of Paama, who are either married to Paamese men from other villages, or to men from other islands, and who, since the time of their marriage, are no longer (locally) regarded as Liro area residents. Table 2.6 illustrates this problem quite convincingly. If all currently absent Liro area women, who are married to men from outside these four villages, were added to the number of female absentees (A), and all women from outside the Liro area married to Liro area men were excluded (B), the resulting migrant sex ratios appear remarkably different. Considering the overall ni-Vanuatu sex ratio of 113,

¹⁵ While a Liro Nesa born man residing in Port Vila, for example, may enjoy a continuous and unquestioned right to reside in Liro Nesa, with this privilege also extending to his two sons even if they have never set foot in their 'home' village, the same situation involving a migrant from Voravor could well mean that access rights in his case do not extend to his sons. This is particularly so if this person should have failed to meet certain obligations to his rural kin (see also Morauta and Ryan 1982). As regards *de jure* rural population composition, Liro Nesa villagers may well treat all three men as *tru manples* (locals), whereas Voravor villagers may extend this recognition only to the absent father; that is, in the latter case, only he should figure in this village's age-sex distribution, which 'inflates' the proportion of all other age groups.

this adjusted sex ratio points to a relatively balanced sex ratio in contemporary Liro area mobility.

The much higher adult migrant sex ratio of 202 for the whole of Pentecost in 1979, and much lower scores for Abwatuntora (131) and Aroa (78) migrants in 1982 represent a more complicated issue. While neither the multi-local nature of Raga residence nor a recent increase in female mobility can be ruled out, the impossibility of a regional disaggregation of 1979 census data for Pentecost (which might well indicate a lower sex ratio for Raga in 1979) precludes a reliable assessment of developments in Raga mobility.

The discussion so far on migration differentials has indicated that rural absentees in the 1980s are not necessarily predominantly young males. An examination of marital status further shows that neither are they usually single (Table 2.7). Only amongst Asuas migrants is there a slight predominance of single men, whereas amongst male migrants from the remaining three Liro area villages, married men have a slight edge over single men; it is also married men (69 per cent) who clearly dominate Hurilao mobility. The proportion of married to single migrants is even more pronounced amongst women from Liro area (70 per cent) and Hurilao (82 per cent) which suggests the operation of gender-specific mobility norms. The introduction of a time factor, however, shows that this predominance of married over single migrants is not characteristic of Liro area and Hurilao mobility in general. Instead, it is a clear reflection of the predominance of long-term mobility from these areas. As indicated earlier in the different age-structures between long-term and temporary absentees (Figure 2.5), an obvious parallel emerges in marital status, with married migrants predominating amongst long-term absentees, in contrast to a greater prominence of singles amongst rural-based temporary movers.

Table 2.7 The proportion of married men and women amongst the long-term and temporary absentees from Liro area and Hurilao

	Males			Females			Total		
	LT ^a	TM ^b	All	LT	TM	All	LT	TM	All
Liro area	60 (141)	34 (41)	54 (182) ^d	75 (106)	37 (19)	70 (125)	66 (249)	35 (60)	60 (307)
Liro	66 (32)	30 (10)	57 (42)	86 (21)	38 (8)	72 (29)	74 (53)	33 (18)	63 (71)
Liro Nesa	59 (54)	43 (21)	55 (75)	67 (46)	50 (8)	65 (54)	63 (100)	45 (29)	59 (129)
Asuas	52 (25)	20 (5)	47 (30)	78 (18)	- (1)	74 (19)	63 (43)	17 (6)	57 (49)
Voravor	60 (30)	20 (5)	54 (35)	81 (21)	- (2)	74 (23)	69 (51)	14 (7)	62 (58)
Hurilao	76 (45)	33 (9)	69 (54)	85 (40)	60 (5)	82 (45)	80 (85)	43 (14)	75 (99)
Abwatuntora	73 (40)	29 (7)	66 (47)	91 (32)	50 (4)	86 (36)	81 (72)	36 (11)	75 (83)
Aroa	100 (5)	50 (2)	86 (7)	63 (8)	100 (1)	67 (9)	77 (13)	67 (3)	75 (16)

^a Long-term absentees.

^b Temporary absentees.

^c All absentees.

^d Figures in brackets refer to actual number of absentees.

This new picture of rural mobility in the 1980s, which in the late 1960s and early 1970s appeared to have been the domain of single young men has important implications for the rural 'sending' areas. An increase in husband-wife mobility, and a greater incidence in the mobility of unmarried young women undermines the necessity for male migrants to return periodically to their home base. With wife and children alongside, married men no longer need to return to be with their families, nor need to restrict their mobility to periodic, temporary rural-based circulation. A greater presence of single women in town, who moved there either with their families or independently, also means that single young men no longer have to return to *showim fes* (show their face) in their home area, so as not to lose out on the Paamese or Raga marriage market. Under such circumstances, one can expect not only longer periods of rural absenteeism but a gradual weakening of rural ties, as, for example, in the form of a reduced flow of remittances and urban-rural visits—two hypotheses which are examined in Chapter 4.

Parallel to these different demographic profiles between temporary and long-term absentees, one also finds occupational variations (Table 2.8). The most striking difference between long-term and temporary Liro area absentees is the predominance of male labourers (53 per cent) and female service workers (61 per cent) amongst the long-term migrants, whereas agricultural self-employment and plantation labour dominate amongst temporary absentees. A similar contrast emerges amongst Hurilao out-migrants, where professional, technical and clerical positions are most prominent amongst long-term absent men and women, and agricultural activities more prominent amongst temporary migrants.¹⁶ The high proportion of plantation labourers amongst temporary Liro area absentees, contrasts sharply with the situation for Hurilao where no absentees are engaged in this occupation. This reflects differences in their respective local economies as mentioned previously, and will be examined in more detail below.

Principal Destinations of Liro Area and Hurilao Absentees

Three out of four Liro area absentees in 1982 lived in either Port Vila (57 per cent) or Santo (17 per cent), 5 per cent were overseas, primarily in Noumea, 3 per cent worked on ships and only 18 per cent were to be found throughout rural Vanuatu (Figure 2.6). This picture mirrors the urban bias in general Paamese mobility which, in 1979, saw 75 per cent of all adult absentees in town (Haberkorn 1987). Hurilao mobility shows few dissimilarities from that of Liro area. Urban destinations also predominated amongst absentees at the time of the village census (74 per cent), and the proportions of people enumerated on neighbouring islands (9 per cent) and in other rural destinations (11 per cent) are comparable to Liro area figures of 10 and 7 per cent respectively. While urban destinations emerge unmistakably as the preferred destinations for long-term absentees from both areas, the majority of temporary movers are found in other rural areas (Haberkorn 1987: 195).

¹⁶ Whether or not different levels of education between Liro area and Hurilao absentees can explain these variations cannot be ascertained. While most rural residents were able to recount the occupational status of currently absent household and family members (information which could readily be cross-checked with other villagers), the recollection of levels of educational attainment posed considerable problems similar to the recording of age data.

Table 2.8 Occupational profiles of long-term and temporary absentees from Liro area and Hurilao

	Liro area						Hurilao					
	LT ^a		TM ^b		Total		LT		TM		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Number of economically active migrants	129	46	29	12	158	58	41	16	6	3	47	19
Proportion active ^c	91	43	71	63	87	46	91	40	67	60	87	42
Professional/Technical/ Clerical	19	11	-	-	15	9	46	44	17	-	43	37
Sales workers	7	2	-	-	6	2	7	13	-	-	6	11
Service workers	9	61	7	17	8	52	2	38	17	-	4	32
Agriculture												
Farming	9	17	24	42	12	22	2	6	50	100	9	21
Plantation labour	4	-	45	33	11	7	2	-	-	-	2	-
General labour	53	9	24	8	47	9	39	-	17	-	36	-
Number of economically inactive migrants	12	60	12	7	24	67	4	24	3	2	7	26
Proportion inactive ^d	9	57	29	37	13	54	9	60	33	40	13	58
Housewife	-	40	-	-	-	34	-	45	-	20	-	42
Family helper ^e	-	4	7	21	2	6	-	5	-	-	-	4
Student	2	4	20	11	6	5	2	-	33	20	7	2
Retired	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unemployed	5	9	2	5	4	9	7	10	-	-	6	9
All migrants	141	106	41	19	182	125	45	40	9	5	54	45

^a Long-term absentees.^b Temporary absentees.^c The proportions of people engaged in various activities are based on the total number of economically active people to facilitate a comparison with census data.^d The proportions of people who, for various reasons, are economically inactive, are based on total populations.^e Family helpers are young adults who fulfil the role of domestic helpers (service workers) for which they generally receive no wage.

Apart from a somewhat greater extent of inter-district mobility compared with the Liro area, which is readily explained in the multi-local nature of Raga residence arrangements and the frequent temporary movement to gardens and coconut holdings in south Raga, the only real contrast in mobility streams from both areas lies in urban-oriented moves: similar proportions of Hurilao absentees were found in either Port Vila or Santo (Figure 2.6), compared with a distinct Port Vila bias amongst Liro area absentees. Raga's closer proximity to Santo than to Port Vila suggests a spatial explanation, but Paama's location halfway between both towns points to other explanations, such as employment opportunities and kin contacts. The inappropriateness of a spatial explanation has also been stressed by Bedford (1971: 166), who, testing the social gravity model (to explain migration to Port Vila and Santo) found only very low correlations between the influence of distance and the intensity of movement to both towns.

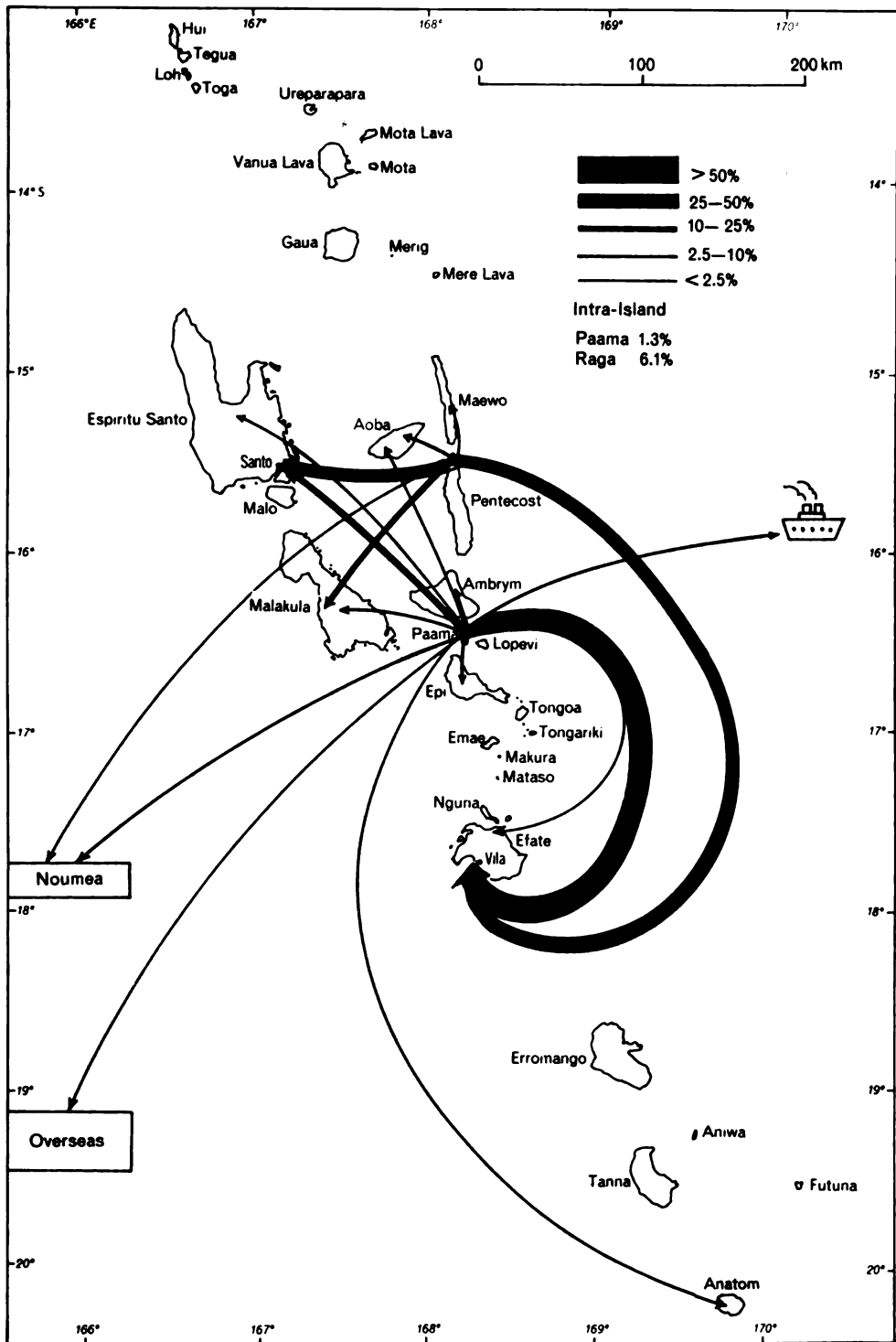


Figure 2.6 Principal destinations of Liro area and Hurilao absentees

CHAPTER 3

Social and Political Organization and Systems of Production: the Setting of Mobility in Paama and Raga

The significance of stressing a structural and historical component in an analysis of the contemporary setting of mobility lies in the dual nature of mobility, and its conceptualization as a dialectical process (Haberkorn 1987: 7–25). The dual nature refers to the simultaneous appearance of mobility as both a result of, and a cause for, ongoing transformations in the setting of mobility. Its dialectical appearance relates to the emergence of different mobility processes over time, as both individuals and households act and respond differently to interaction with an ever changing setting.

While a comprehensive analysis of the setting, as pursued in the remainder of this chapter, highlights the 'overall general features of the social system within which the acts of movement of individuals are located' (Mitchell 1985: 35), the extent to which people respond to these conditions cannot be resolved at this level of enquiry. It requires further analysis on a lower level of abstraction. This level, the 'situation' of mobility (which will be dealt with more comprehensively throughout Chapters 4 to 6), refers to particular sets of circumstances 'in which migrants actual or potential find themselves', such as 'the constraints imposed upon them by the wider system of social, economic and political relationships in which they are involved' (Mitchell *ibid.*). This analytical distinction between setting and situation is of pragmatic and substantive value (Mitchell *ibid.*). It permits reducing the complexity of mobility to 'dimensions that we are able to handle'; it also provides for the clear specification of contextual parameters as a prerequisite for both a comparative analysis and the generalization from empirical case material (Mitchell *ibid.*). Yet such a combined setting-situation analysis still falls short of accounting for the variability in mobility. Phenomena which can be subsumed under 'situational' aspects (such as kinship obligations and social and economic role requirements) undoubtedly explain some of the variation in mobility out of a particular setting.

However, people (both actual and potential migrants) differ in their perceptions, interpretations and evaluations of such roles and obligations and their underlying norms and sanctions, as well as in their interpretations of objective setting criteria. This can lead to varied responses. To emphasize a cognitive dimension of mobility, however, should not be mistaken for an individualized analysis of mobility. Its recognition alongside an examination of

the setting and situation of ni-Vanuatu mobility merely reflects the reality that, although setting and situation impose constraints on individual mobility behaviour, it is ultimately people who move or stay, and who are in charge of their own history even if they don't make it always 'exactly as they please' (Gouldner 1980: 68).

Historical Orientation: Pre-contact Social and Political Organization and Systems of Production

In traditional Paamese social organization, a man's most important kin in terms of descent and inheritance, were his relatives traced through his patriline, that is, his biological and classificatory fathers, brothers and paternal grandfathers.¹ Maternal uncles, however, played a considerable role at three stages in a man's life: they were responsible for a boy's circumcision (his initiation into manhood), had to supply a certain number of pigs for his wedding, and were in charge of his burial.

Marriage was rigidly controlled through the rule of lineage exogamy and the practice of sister exchange, involving both consanguineal and classificatory sisters. Patri-virilocal residence implied the movement of women to their husband's village, although intra-village marriage was theoretically possible in the case of more than one resident patrilineage. Paamese demographic reproduction was far more flexible than the situation encountered in societies following matrilineal descent rules, such as will be later discussed in the case of Raga. With pubescent girls circulating between several hamlets belonging to one matrimonial area, many more women were available for marriageable men. The obvious advantage of such 'gynaecomobile societies' (Meillassoux 1983: 52) for demographic reproduction lies in the possibility of redressing sexual imbalances, particularly so in times of stress brought about by warfare, cyclones and famine.

In addition to the circulation of women (sister exchange) to regulate demographic reproduction, adoption was widely practised to manipulate local demographic events. The high infant mortality in pre-contact days (Frater 1928) meant both boys and girls were equally valued: families with more boys than girls required sisters to be exchanged to secure future wives for their sons to guarantee lineage continuity, while boys were primarily adopted to pass on lineage-controlled land thereby securing its economic reproduction. Whether or not children were adopted immediately after their birth or in name only, remaining with their real parents until required by their adopted parents, depended solely on individual circumstances. Adoption could also encompass young male and female adults, and often involved a 'down-payment' in the form of a pig, for example, to parents of an unborn child to secure a future offspring. Adoption was highly regulated, despite such variability. It was not only restricted to brothers of the child's father who contributed to his wedding expenses, but also entailed some form of reciprocal arrangements analogous to the practice of sister exchange. That is, although families may, through adoption, have found some temporary relief out of a demographic impasse, they were expected to return this favour at a subsequent stage.

¹ Paama has a classificatory kinship system, that is, 'collateral kin are terminologically equated with lineal kin' (Keating 1975: 148). Thus a father's brothers (FB) are referred to as father (F), and father's brothers' sons (FBS) are referred to as brothers (B). When discussing kin relations, the standard practice of social anthropology has been followed with the use of the following abbreviations: F=Father, M=Mother, S=Son, D=Daughter, B=Brother, Z=Sister.

This phenomenon of deferred reciprocity regularized marriage alignments between particular settlements in a continuous exchange cycle (Tonkinson 1968: 18). The practice of sister exchange recognized the principle of deferred reciprocity extending even to the unborn child, a practice which also explains the absence of child-marriage in living Paamese memory, in contrast to its alleged widespread acceptance in pre-missionary days (Frater 1928). Concerning traditional marriage norms, patrilineal cross-cousin marriage involving first-degree cousins was taboo on Paama, according to older Paamese informants on the island and in town. Yet it remains uncertain whether a preferred marriage system as on Southeast Ambrym², or ideal arrangements involving FZDD, as indicated by some examples for which sufficient genealogical evidence is available, was the traditional marriage norm. Polygyny was a frequent occurrence in the past but restricted to chiefs and older men, who by virtue of their status could afford multiple bride price payments generally involving several pigs, a variable number of large yams and the organization of the necessary feasts.

Before the arrival on Paama of the first of six ni-Vanuatu Presbyterian teacher-catechists in the village of Now in 1887³, people lived in some sixty hamlets scattered throughout the island. Primarily located inland, where they gained greater protection from surprise enemy attacks than in coastal areas, most such settlements contained just one patrilineage. Between five and ten larger settlements consisted of more than one patriline, which, in common with the situation described by Tonkinson (1968: 16) for Southeast Ambrym, were united under a 'big name' and had a head chief in addition to the usual heads of each patriline. Patrilineages are associated with their place of origin which they appear to retain even after several relocations, unlike the practice reported in Southeast Ambrym (Tonkinson 1968). The patriline of *Oneli*, for example, originated from an area in the hills above the village of *Asuas*; yet, despite several relocations over the years before settling in its present location in the village of *Liro* after the Presbyterian reorganization of Paamese settlements, it always kept its name.

Precontact settlements and lineage territories were highly 'personalized' (Bonnemaison 1985) by mythical origin explanations. Tavie villagers from North Paama, for example, trace their ancestry back to a yam growing out of the menstrual blood of a woman (Crowley 1980: 75), about whose own origin, however, nothing is revealed. The actual ancestry in Paamese mythology appears to be only of secondary importance relative to the particular locality associated with such events. Given such strong identification with a specific place, Bonnemaison (1985) emphasizes that people did not merely live in particular localities rather than elsewhere, but personified these places, and that the 'ideology of custom' required people to live where they had their roots, their *stamba*. A logical implication of such an analogy between people and plants was quite specific mobility restrictions

² Tonkinson (1968:18) refers to a preferred marriage system in neighbouring Southeast Ambrym, involving FZDD and MBDD as ideal wives.

³ Samuel, a ni-Vanuatu resident from Nikaura on Epi, was the first teacher-catechist working on Paama. He came to the village of Now upon the explicit request of its chief, Tamat Eman, who had previously worked and been baptized in Queensland, and wanted Christianity introduced in his village and island upon his return, allegedly to stop the endemic inter-village feuding. Subsequent teacher-catechists settled in what is now Liro Nesa (Kalmata from Epi Island) in 1892, and around 1897 in Tah (Peter Tor from Fila Island), Tavie (Kalvat - island of origin not known), Tevali (Sam from Nguna Island) and Liro (Kaltal from Nguna Island). With regard to the intensity of intra-island conflicts on Paama, Frater (1928) refers to allegations by captains of labour recruiting vessels during the Queensland labour trade, that Paama was the most dangerous island throughout the group before the commencement of mission work there. See also Wawn (1893).

regarding both time and space, since survival could only be guaranteed when and wherever people had their roots (Bonnemaison 1985).

At least three forms of political organization are known to have existed on Paama. On the lowest level, each settlement featured an unstructured council system comprising all adult (circumcised) men. Lacking a formal leadership, these men regularly met in the evenings in their *nakamal* to discuss village affairs ranging from land disputes with neighbouring lineages to local adultery. Every participant could contribute irrespective of age or status. The organization of day-to-day activities was governed by the patriline. Garden work and housebuilding was the ultimate and unquestioned domain of the chief (*asuv*) of the patriline, who generally inherited this role from his father. It was not always the oldest or biological son who was appointed to succeed a chief. If the age of the most likely successor was a concern, or the person was not physically strong enough to become a respected leader, or could not *mekem gudfela toktok* (negotiate), or lacked other desirable attributes, all adult male agnates could either select another son or choose one of the chief's younger brothers (see also Tonkinson 1968).

The *mangki* system, or the public graded society which is discussed below, represented a third parallel form of political organization on neighbouring Southeast Ambrym (Tonkinson 1968), but its presence on Paama could not be conclusively established. Although no Paamese questioned on this subject could remember whether or not this system was ever prevalent on the island, its past existence is suggested by Frater (1928), who commented on the absence of separate 'caste cooking fires in the *nakamals*' (which is an indication of the existence of separate ranks) long before his arrival, compared with their existence on Ambrym. Some evidence for its former existence also emerges in local stories about past voyages in big sailing canoes to Epi, Southeast Ambrym and Emae to procure large quantities of pigs. Furthermore, Bonnemaison (1986) refers to Paama as the most southern island featuring the *mangki* system, in contrast to the predominance of the inherited title system on islands further south. Explanations as to when, how and why the graded society disappeared from Paama can only be speculated upon, given its non-existence in living Paamese memory. There was insufficient space to rear the sizable herds of pigs required to participate in the *mangki* to achieve social status and power; land and land use were controlled by each lineage chief who, already assured of rank and political control, was highly unlikely to sponsor his own downfall. Thus, the co-existence over a long period of two such contradictory forms of political organization seems highly unlikely. This is implicitly acknowledged by Tonkinson (1968) who associated the low profile of the *mangki* system in Southeast Ambrym with a system of chieftainship, which was non-existent in North Ambrym and where the *mangki* is still highly developed today. Although Frater (1928) commented on the absence of caste cooking fires at the time of his arrival, missionary interference explaining their absence cannot be ruled out completely, since the first ni-Vanuatu teacher-catechists had arrived on Paama 13 years earlier. Another possibility is that the graded society may have disintegrated on Paama during the time of the Queensland labour migration (Table 3.1).

The introduction of material goods upon the return of Paamese labour migrants represented new categories of status and wealth desirable for their intrinsic value. Both material goods and money also caused new forms of social differentiation when used to procure custom-wealth, such as pigs in order to achieve higher ranks, in that they may have gradually undermined the intricate

sophistication of a system of perpetual indebtedness. Several informants stated that their grandfathers not only returned from Queensland with gold coins, subsequently used to buy pigs in neighbouring Emae and Epi, but often deliberately signed three year labour contracts motivated by the sole ambition to purchase pigs after their return. Not only was this early form of mobility at least partly a product of a particular type of society, but it subsequently altered the very conditions causing migration in the first place, which exemplifies the dual nature of mobility.

Traditional social and political organization in Raga differs from that of Paama in two critical aspects: first, people belong to matrilineal descent groups where maternal uncles are regarded as the most important kin; secondly, traditional Raga society appears to have been structured in a more egalitarian fashion in that social status and power were derived from individual achievement rather than clan membership.

Raga society, like that of east Ambae, south Maewo and the Banks Islands, is socially organized in two named exogamous matrimoieties, *Tabi* and *Bule*, traditionally also referred to as *Malau* and *Tagaro* respectively, which again are subdivided into several named matrilineal kin groups and land-owning unities called *vara*.⁴ Each *vara* traces its origin to a mythical founding ancestress associated with a particular plant or animal and a specific place of origin, and all

Table 3.1 Mobility from Paama and Pentecost, 1863–1939

	Paama	Pentecost
Queensland labour migration		
1863–1867	–	–
1868–1872	14	4
1873–1877	145	461
1878–1882	190	533
1883–1887	187	461
1888–1892	98	215
1893–1897	76	122
1898–1904	93	164
Internal recruitment of ni-Vanuatu labour		
1912–1915	107	845
1916–1919	226	1052
1920–1923	121	1161
1924–1927	73	470
1928–1931	40	93
1932–1935	338	770
1936–1939	67	918

Note: Regional data could not be obtained for Raga.

Source: Bedford (1971); Price with Baker (1976).

⁴ Several such groups constitute what Yoshioka (1985) terms 'clusters', four of which exist in each moiety and which function as a corporate group in that every member of a particular cluster had access rights to land controlled by all member *varas*. Members of each cluster can be clearly differentiated on the basis of distinct names given to the children of male members of each cluster (Yoshioka 1985: 29). A fourth social group, termed 'division' by Yoshioka, combines two particular clusters in each moiety and has as its principal function the regulation of marriage

members of this group regard themselves as descendants of this particular land (Lane 1971; Bonnemaïson 1985; Yoshioka 1985). Yet, unlike the territorial fixation to one specific area (as in the context of Paamese patrilineages), ancestral land in Raga is by no means confined to one particular location, but extends to many places throughout Raga territory and is divided into many hundred named plots. Although each *vava* owns several of these areas, they only recognize one particular place as their place of origin (*stamba*) which also bears the name of their descent group. The history of the *Gimari* descent group, belonging to the *Tabi* moiety, is typical.

We *Gimari* trace our origin to a woman who, a long time ago, fell from heaven and landed on a *Walohi* tree, close to where you find the village of *Lavusi* now. People, already established in the area, appeared very frightened when they saw this woman and chattered loudly, which again scared the woman so much that she flew away to another *Walohi* tree at *Amatangurua*. With no people in the whole area, she decided to make this her home, and over the years gave birth to a great many daughters. One day, after prolonged rainfalls had swollen a local creekbed, all the daughters decided to have a bath. But with the water running very strong, all the girls got swept away. Although none could swim, they were able to remain afloat before reaching, one at a time, the shore at different places, where they settled down, married local men and had many children over the years. This is the reason why we *Gimari* are not only a big line right now, but have land all about in Raga.

Similar accounts cited by Bonnemaïson (1985) and Yoshioka (1985) on the emergence of other matrilineages all emphasize that different settlements comprising only members of one descent group were spread throughout Raga, separated from each other by landholdings and settlements belonging to other *vavas*.

A further contrast to Paamese settlement structures lies in the relative instability of Raga villages as a result of institutionalized mobility affecting both men and women during several stages of their life cycle. The exogamous nature of matrimoieties ensures the movement of women upon marriage, yet the prevalence of viri-avunculocal residence rules guarantees considerable male mobility as well.

Former settlements appeared in a constant state of flux: women at marriage joined their husbands' communities to which the husbands themselves might have just recently moved, and since their children were not genealogical members of the local matriline, and hence could not make claims to their father's land, male children particularly would have had to return at one stage to their mother's land. Yet whether and when men 'returned' to a place they had never lived in, according to Lane (1971) depended primarily on individual and local circumstances. Some Raga informants confirm Lane's alleged flexibility of the system, insisting that many men in the past actually remained all their lives with their fathers' matriline long after they themselves had married or their fathers had died, and experienced no problems in gaining the right to use their land. The majority, however, were quite adamant in denouncing such flexibility, referring to the 'rule of the old days' when a man could remain with his father's matriline only until the latter's death, after which he was asked to leave and had to live with his maternal uncles. Most likely, such flexibility was linked to regional and temporal variations in land pressure.

Traditional Raga residence rules required women to join their husbands, but if their husbands died or took another wife, they had to return with their children to their own *vava's* land. Since they were born in their father's village before

moving to their husband's settlement, it was generally only under such circumstances that women actually lived with members of their own matriline. Irrespective of the length of their absence, their age and reason for return, their residence rights were never disputed, a right which also extended to all matrilineal kin even after several generations' absence (Allen 1967). It needs to be stressed that women held land in a different sense than men; they acted as conduits for men and so may have posed a lesser threat than male claimants.⁵ Considering the 'gynaecostatic nature' of societies whose demographic reproduction is always proportional to the total number of women belonging to that group, it is easy to understand their unquestioned acceptance by communities to which they never physically belonged; women's reproductive services were of utmost significance if the reproduction of each matriline was not to be compromised (Meillassoux 1983). Reproduction comprised both biological reproduction and the reproduction of land. In this context it is not surprising to find a rigidly controlled and highly elaborate prescriptive marriage system on Raga. This often extended far beyond one's immediate physical surroundings to a much larger space compared to the territorially more restricted matrimonial areas on Paama.

A second major difference between traditional Paamese and Raga social and political organization is the latter's more egalitarian structure. In contrast to the islands south of Paama (Bonnemaison 1986), status and power were not inherited but each man could, at least theoretically, achieve them. An institution known throughout Vanuatu as *mangki* formed the basis of Raga's political structure. The *mangki* consist of a series of hierarchically arranged grades, in Raga ranging from *tari*, *moli*, *liwasi* to *vira*.⁶ A man's entry into the system and his subsequent performance are achieved through two mechanisms: as part of his *bolololi*, or rank-taking ceremony, a man was required to both kill a certain number of tusked pigs (varying in tusk shape), and to purchase various emblems from someone of higher rank. Pigs and big red mats (*buana*) were the only currency to buy admission to a new rank, and with each successive grade the number and quality of pigs to be killed increased dramatically.

Although the *mangki* was traditionally open to every man, and the taking of various grades was considered an individual achievement, the initial admission required sponsorship of a member. In Raga, this responsibility rested traditionally with the boy's father rather than his maternal uncles, and most men in the past were members of the graded society simply through this initial sponsorship by their fathers. The importance of the matriline emerged only after the first pig had been killed and the rank of *tari* had been taken. This reference to sponsorship shows that egalitarianism was far from absolute. The fact that some were more equal than others is implicit in Allen's (1968) remarks that a man of high rank could put his favoured son more rapidly through the lower grades than a low(er) ranking man. However, no one could get to the top without demonstrating the necessary qualities.

⁶ Whereas in Raga only four different grades are known — each of which however subdivided into smaller ranks — other islands have up to 16 grades (Allen 1968; Tonkinson 1968). Inside the *nakamal*, only men belonging to the same grade could gather around the same fire, eat together and drink kava from the same bowl. While Paamese social stratification was primarily based on age and marital status, social differentiation in Raga was primarily based on individual achievements in the *mangki* system.

The basis of the *mangki* system is a highly intricate system of continuous indebtedness (Layard 1942; Lane 1962) ensuring that no man could ever accumulate enough pigs and big red mats to achieve a certain rank on his own account.⁷ Even if he were able to raise enough pigs, these animals, by virtue of custom, would have been available to all men of his matriline, who could have borrowed some animals at any time, thereby preventing any individual *bolololis*. In other words, the system of continuous debts ensured that one could only achieve higher rank and become a recognized leader, after having received the consent of one's matriline, which was implicit in one's (demonstrated) capacity to organize the required number of pigs from several important members of this group. Their agreement was of the utmost importance since they inherited one's accumulated debts in case of death. Women held considerable power as the sole producers of the mats required to purchase pigs and emblems, and thereby played a significant role in facilitating or preventing movement through the grades. Although the achievement of a particular grade with its status and power was recognized as an individual achievement, its success depended ultimately on the encouragement of others.

The *mangki* is a never-ending process despite the limited number of grades: 'like the pig's tusk, once the circle is complete, the tusk keeps on growing'.⁸ Even after having reached the highest rank of *vira* and the title *ratahige* (chief), many men continued practising *bolololi* striving for increased prestige and status by killing greater numbers of higher-class pigs. It must be stressed that the actual number of pigs killed and emblems purchased are only of secondary importance, for the continuous establishment and maintenance of complex debt networks provided the power base for these *ratahige*. Such networks often extended far beyond the immediate locality (Lane 1962), and linked widely dispersed settlements comprising members of the same matriline, cluster, or even division, on the basis of common interest and responsibilities rather than mere economic grounds (see also Tonkinson 1968).

Raga political organization clearly had different implications for regional mobility compared with that on Paama. Movement on Paama was restricted to the immediate cultural territory and was strictly controlled by chiefs of different patriline; in Raga, greater movement was allowed through a system of spatially dispersed yet socially interconnected settlements. The *mangki* system required constant interaction between members of the same matriline and clusters and allowed for considerable intra-regional mobility. Furthermore, men belonging to higher grades, and whose prestige and power transcended their own group of origin, enjoyed considerable movement rights, often assuming inter-regional forms (Bonnemaïson 1985).

⁷ Most pigs have traditionally been borrowed on a *bugu* basis, where men were not only required to return an animal of the same value (tusk shape) later on, but also had to pay up to ten pigs as interest [Yoshioka (1983) mentions an additional loan system called *vuru*, which entails the exact repayment of the loan]. A pig borrowed on a *bugu* basis could be recalled at any time when required by its owner. This often necessitated the borrowing of yet another animal to repay the first creditor, thereby increasing the interest repayments of up to twenty pigs. One of the most interesting aspects of this system of exchange, ultimately reflecting a true *bigman*, was his capacity to spread his wealth in such a fashion as to avoid being caught off-guard, having himself to resort to borrowing (with interest) from others to repay his debts. This form of circulating one's wealth has the additional advantages of ridding oneself of the daily care for one's animals and of transferring to others the risk of 'losing a major asset through death' (Tonkinson 1968: 27).

⁸ I am grateful to Joel Bonnemaïson for this idiom, which he obtained from a Latano villager in Raga (personal communication, August 1986).

Pre-contact agriculture and systems of production in Paama and Raga consisted of two different forms. First, subsistence production was based almost entirely on horticulture with root crops predominating, mostly yam and taro, while a second form was geared towards the production of goods for ceremonial exchange. In other areas of Melanesia, the production of goods for ceremonial exchange often merely entailed the production of a greater quantity of produce (Connell 1980). A ceremonial 'mode' of production, however, as defined by Bonnemaïson (1978:31), not only comprised the production of different types of commodities not otherwise used in daily subsistence (giant yams, tusked pigs), but was also gender-specific unlike subsistence production.

As land was collectively held, the lineage chief in each settlement decided before each planting season on a suitable area for a fenced village garden. In settlements with more than one resident lineage, all lineage chiefs agreed on a particular plot of land belonging to one lineage, continuously shifting over the years between landholdings of different lineages. Labour was strictly divided along gender lines in the early stages of the planting season. All males of each settlement were responsible for the clearing of bushland, the felling of trees and construction of fences to protect the crop from domesticated pigs roaming about freely. Women were in charge of burning-off the land and levelling the ground before the actual planting. In view of frequent intra-island conflicts, a considerable proportion of men took turns in standing guard to protect other lineage members, primarily women, against potential attacks from neighbouring groups. Inside each communal garden, families were allocated garden land according to individual household needs, and a separate area was set aside for communal food production for village affairs.

Traditional horticulture, as noted above, was not exclusively geared towards the production of food for subsistence, but the quality of produce was considered of equal if not greater importance than the sheer quantity, as evident in the cultivation of giant yams (Bonnemaïson 1978). The planting of, and continuous care for, these tubers was the exclusive priority of adult men. Around the giant yams, which played a major role in traditional systems of exchange and social obligations, a variety of other crops were planted such as kava roots, and different types of smaller yams and taro for daily consumption. Apart from kava, tending these other crops was the responsibility of women. Daily subsistence was supplemented by wild-growing edible ferns and several tree-crops, particularly breadfruit and nuts, which were mainly collected by women. Though trees were planted on lineage land, their ownership was ideally individual in the sense that only the members of each family who actually planted these trees could use their fruit. Depending on the location of settlements, a basically vegetarian diet was occasionally supplemented by fish and shellfish, birds or other wild animals.

A distinctly individual occupation rather than communal or lineage-related activity was the raising of domesticated pigs in both Paama and Raga. Their exchange, rather than subsistence value extended beyond bride price payment to other festive occasions (births, deaths, initiation ceremonies) and played a considerable role in traditional legal settlements and in the graded society. The breeding of tusked boars was a very time-consuming, often full-time, occupation, particularly in the case of highly valued animals whose fully circled tusks had re-entered their jaws thereby requiring continuous and careful hand-feeding. This task was performed primarily by young unmarried men⁹ who traditionally lived

⁹ Bonnemaïson, however, emphasizes that women were often responsible for these tasks in other parts of Vanuatu, such as on Tanna (Bonnemaïson, personal communication, December 1986).

together, often with their entrusted animals, in the *nakamal* of each settlement rather than with their families.

Paama and Raga differ in the nature of pre-contact subsistence horticulture in one major aspect: the organization of subsistence production. Although it was nominally shared between men and women on Paama, the production of subsistence crops was primarily the task of women, as regards the daily chores of weeding and food collection; in Raga, however, both men and women, married or single, were more equally engaged in these activities. Such individualized subsistence strategies on Raga relate to the instability of pre-contact settlement structures with a continuous inflow and departure of men and women, single or married, with or without children. Although Paamese men always accompanied their wives and daughters on frequent, often daily gardening journeys, their primary task was to protect them from possible attacks. It could be argued that given frequent feuding on the island, Paamese men, in fulfilling such protective duties, played an integral part in subsistence production. However, in a more peaceful environment, such as in post-contact Paama, men may have become increasingly obsolete in relation to everyday subsistence. In such circumstances then, large-scale male mobility appears clearly less disruptive to Paamese than to Raga society.

Contemporary Social and Political Organization

Contemporary Paamese social organization differs from pre-contact structures in two fundamental aspects: the nature of settlements and prevailing marriage systems. The present location of all Paamese villages dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. At first ni-Vanuatu teacher-catechists (and, from 1900 onwards with more success, Missionary Frater) persuaded Paamese not only to relocate in coastal areas but also to live in larger communities. Their early success was due to various factors: their coming to Paama had the full support of many of the islands' chiefs, many of whom had been introduced to Christianity during earlier plantation stints in Queensland; early Christianization brought about an abrupt end to frequent feuding, thereby removing a major obstacle to more open and readily accessible communities. Coastal lands also proved more suitable for coconut planting and gave easier access to trading with both resident European traders and passing ships. Such developments, coupled with a continuous undermining of pre-contact ritual life by the Presbyterian church, also meant that areas previously inaccessible owing to local taboos, magic stones or fear of attack, became more open to everyone, causing an early demise of restrictive intra-island mobility. The early relocation of almost all Paamese villages to coastal areas in the early twentieth century could also have increased the likelihood of out-migration; not only were these populations more accessible to passing recruiting ships, but a much larger population resident in these new communities facilitated mobility through a process of job-rotation with several men taking successive turns with the same employer, more readily compensating for the continuous absence of different community members at any given time (see also Arizpe 1981; Standing 1985).

Other changes affecting Paamese community structures relate to the co-residence of several distinct patrilineal descent groups in such enlarged settlements, and to the emergence of new patterns of interpersonal relations. In pre-contact times, the Liro area was made up of about ten different communities, but now several such previously segregated patrilineal groups form the villages of Liro,

Liro Nesa, Asuas and Voravor. Although residence continues to be patri-virilocal, and co-resident patriline relatives ideally remain the most important kin relations, there is considerable evidence for a gradual breakdown in kin-based behaviour and activities. For house construction and the planting of food gardens, for example, a man can as readily call on friends and affines, as he can on agnates. The same flexibility extends to women as well who often rely on their own kin for help. Associations extending beyond the traditional reliance on a man's agnates are of particular contemporary significance; for example, in the hiring of local *kampanis* for garden work as is discussed below, and the borrowing of large sums of money for bridewealth payments and the organization of wedding festivities.

The two most noticeable developments in Paamese marriage systems are a considerably expanded matrimonial area, and a complete monetization of marriage transactions: both result from and continuously contribute to mobility. A much enlarged matrimonial area is the result firstly of an increase in intra-island communication over the years and a rapid increase in inter-island mobility, and secondly of the continuous adherence to the practice of sister exchange albeit involving classificatory sisters far more often than consanguineal sisters. Most informants stated that, with an increased chance of women being lost to their own family through migration (and hence of being lost also to a potential Paamese husband and his family), the traditional male concern with ensuring the demographic reproduction of his patriline becomes even more pronounced. Another important reason behind the continuous practice of sister exchange has a distinctly more economic character. A seventeen year old unmarried Paamese woman either contributes to her household's subsistence and cash-crop production thus freeing other (older, and/or male) household members to engage in wage labour elsewhere, or herself engages in wage-labour mobility. Considering her contribution to the production of household subsistence or the generation of income, it is readily understood why Paamese parents are keener than ever to have such contributions matched by a daughter-in-law. Another household strategy, also primarily economically motivated, is a contemporary modification of sister-exchange, with a stronger emphasis on the strategic exchange of husbands: some Paamese parents are eager to marry their daughter to a man from neighbouring Epi or Southeast Ambrym, for example, so as to secure usufruct rights to the garden land and coconuts of their daughter's affines; and also they want their son after his marriage to his ZHZ either to settle there or at least gain access rights to land and coconuts himself, thereby reducing his family's pressure on limited resources.

A further aspect of marriage change on Paama, the monetization of marriage transactions, dates back to the early twentieth century. Missionary Frater was so outraged by the practice of purchasing pigs for bridewealth that he put forward a motion to the Presbyterian Church to stop this practice. Frater's primary concern, according to several older informants, was that the shortage of pigs on Paama prompted most men to engage periodically in wage-labour elsewhere to obtain the required cash to buy these animals, as Paama had few commodities to exchange with other islands that they did not already have. What exactly Frater may have proposed as bridewealth alternative is not known; suffice it to say that a formal decision taken by the Presbyterian Synod (Frater 1928) was not regarded as binding by most Paamese, and the pig trade with neighbouring islands continued largely unchanged. But, as early as the 1920s, cash-payments (*pig blong waetman*) became gradually accepted as bridewealth when pigs were

increasingly harder to come by, and the payment of five Australian pounds plus one pig became the generally accepted standard for years to come.¹⁰

A rapid inflation in bridewealth in the late 1940s prompted yet another intervention by the Presbyterian Church, which in 1950 set a cash payment at ten Australian pounds, payable to the officiating churchman, who was to pass it on to the bride's parents (Tonkinson 1968: 64). Despite such official price-fixing, payment of up to seventy pounds was not uncommon during these years, and in 1983, the standard amount set by the *Malvatumauri*, the Vanuatu Council of Chiefs, amounted to VT 60,000. However, marriage transactions involving Paamese women and men from other islands consistently exceed this limit¹¹ which in recent times has given nubile Paamese women in Port Vila the nick-name *Toyota*, because 'they cost as much as a truck'.

This dramatic inflation in Paamese bridewealth in recent years cannot be dissociated from mobility, since the lack of domestic resources (land, cash-crops, employment opportunities) to generate the necessary cash led to a growing need for young men to seek employment elsewhere. Such moves notwithstanding, the actual bridewealth and other costs for the wedding feast generally require the help of others.¹² In the past such assistance came primarily from the groom's fathers and brothers, but contemporary support networks extend beyond agnatic kin to maternal relatives and friends. It would, however, be both analytically shortsighted and utterly unrealistic to perceive this relationship between increased bridewealth payments and marriage costs as merely one-directional. Two very distinct mechanisms of social control have to be considered, exemplifying the dual nature of mobility as both continuously resulting from and causing the emergence of new time-specific settings.

One process, similar to the 'crab antics' described by Wilson (1973) in a Caribbean island environment, ensures that people remain in their prescribed social place.¹³ While an increasing number of men participate in wage-labour migration, an increase in bridewealth ensures that migrant earnings represent no threat to the local social, political and economic *status quo*. It actually nullifies any potential rural investment by institutionalizing either short-term or long-term consumption, such as through increased bridewealth requirements or the social acceptance of a 'European-style' house. An alternative strategy, more explicitly geared towards a wider circulation rather than neutralization of migrant earnings,

¹⁰ According to an older Paamese informant from Tahi village, who was born in 1911 and married in 1931, this innovation took place about 5-10 years before his own marriage, when he was still an uncircumcised boy. The story is that a man from Tahi village returned from his teacher-catechist training at Presbyterian Teacher Training College on Tangoa to marry the daughter of a local chief, and proposed a bridewealth payment of five pounds stating that he had seen a European man in Santo pay that sum to obtain a gold ring for his bride, and that this was an example worth following, particularly since 'we are all Christians now'.

¹¹ Such 'over-charging' is most frequent amongst parents who do not agree on the suitability of a potential son-in-law, and is by no means restricted to men from other islands but also applies to undesirable Paamese men.

¹² Costs for the wedding feast alone, for alcohol, rice, fresh and tinned beef amounted to A\$800 during the only wedding on Paama that took place during my fieldwork. Costs for the wedding feast alone varied between A\$500 and A\$1100 for all men who got married between 1978 and 1982.

¹³ Wilson (1973: 58) gives the following description. 'Crab antics is behavior that resembles that of a number of crabs who, having been placed in a barrel, all try to climb out. But as one nears the top, the one below pulls him down in his own effort to climb. Only a particularly strong crab ever climbs out—the rest, in the long run, remain in the same place'.

is clearly associated with the declining political control of chiefs and elders in rural communities. As traditional mobility norms gradually broke down in the aftermath of missionization, and there was a growing participation in the colonial plantation economy, rural migrants exchanged political subordination to their local chiefs for the labour requirements of an alien economy, by signing labour contracts whenever recruiting boats arrived, rather than when local conditions, such as agricultural seasons, allowed.¹⁴ By raising bridewealth, local chiefs thus ensured some control otherwise lost over young men, a control they might not have lost if it were not for mobility.¹⁵ This measure, however, appears more often than not as a folly, in that it provides an environment conducive to long-term rural absences of young Paamese.

The most notable change regarding Paamese political organization resulted from certain political innovations brought about by missionary influence and by the direct intervention of successive colonial administrations since 1906. The most significant events in recent history relate to the establishment of Local Councils throughout Vanuatu during the 1960s. The main purpose behind these organizations was for islands to identify local development issues and priorities (local health centres, roadworks, schools, water supply systems). The role of political middlemen between local councils and Government District Agents lay with locally designated, but government appointed assessors, whose function was to assemble complaints and requests for discussion with visiting District Agents.¹⁶ If conflicts could not be solved locally, assessors would report these to visiting District Agents, who had the authority to convene a Native Court, to try the offenders, and if necessary to sentence them to prison terms in Port Vila or Malakula (see Tonkinson 1968). Each local council devised its own tax scheme: on Paama, the annual council tax was set at VT 300 for each adult man and woman, which ideally also extended to all absentees, although many of these had ceased payments long before the end of Paama's Local Council in 1980.¹⁷

At the village level, changes in political organization were equally dramatic.

¹⁴ Although plantations in Vanuatu tended to recruit in the agricultural off-season (between planting and harvesting), that is, between September and April (Wilson 1966; Bedford 1971), Paamese and Raga informants insist that such recruitment took place throughout the year, and was not limited to the agricultural off-season. Although these men admit to a preferential plantation circulation in the agricultural off-season, they emphasize that their mobility was more in line with the arrival of recruiting boats and good wage offers (promises).

¹⁵ See also Meillassoux (1983:56), who regards the delivery of bridewealth in cash as part of a security system established by local elders, who that way 'regain part of the security which should have reverted to them had the young men stayed and worked for them'. Bastin (1981) emphasizes, with regard to Tanna, that wealthy return migrants are generally not afforded the support necessary to start a rural business by the local elite, to prevent individual economic advancement and a challenge to the existing leadership structure.

¹⁶ The role of assessors, as defined in the Anglo-French Protocol of 1914, was to act as consultants in cases brought to Native Courts (Rodman 1977). They were also entitled to mediate minor disputes at their own discretion and were required to inform Condominium authorities of major crimes committed in the district. Rodman (1977) emphasizes that assessors represented a 'pragmatic means of controlling legal processes in indigenous societies in Vanuatu without installing a resident police force or a European magistrate on each island'. The British District Agent of Central District II (encompassing Paama, Ambrym, Malakula and Pentecost) who was based in Norsup, in north Malakula, visited Paama about every two months. Visits by his French counterpart, who was based in Lamap, south Malakula, were less frequent.

¹⁷ The only other tax Paamese had to pay was an annual church levy, in 1982 amounting to VT 200 payable each year by all adult men and women, whereas school-leavers were taxed VT 100 each.

The most significant erosion of traditional powers came with the expansion of settlements leading to the co-residence of several patrilineal groups. Although each group retained its own chief, these lost virtually all their power to a local head-chief in the day-to-day running of each village. Yet, given the individualization of land and a gradual loss of political control to missionaries and the colonial government, it was the settlement of small local disputes and the organization of communal work-gangs, or *kampanis*, which remained as the last real bastion of chiefly authority on Paama. These *kampanis* are one of the few remnants of pre-colonial times, virtually disappeared with the individualization of land tenure. Their re-emergence during the 1950s is attributed to the leadership of Chief Benjamin of Liro, and the presence of Reverend Pun, a Presbyterian missionary residing in Liro from 1954 to 1959.¹⁸ Paamese residents, however, point out that its present form of nominally taking up four days each week dates back to a time during the 1970s. Having been originally re-introduced during the 1950s to help the old, sick and generally needy with gardening activities and house maintenance, local *kampanis* have gradually become small enterprises involving cash-payments. Money thus earned by the *kampanis* is pooled in a village fund to provide a cash reserve for local festivities or other matters of communal concern. Anyone in need of extra manpower specifies the work required to the local chief and negotiates with him a fee. Payment for work provided by the whole *kampani* usually varies between VT 500 and VT 2000, and may also entail the provision of food for the *kampani*. At least one, but more often all adult members from each household are expected to participate, depending on the job required, and only the elderly and sick are excused from these activities. Non-appearance incurs a fine of between VT 50 and VT 100 per person. Two days each week are set aside to provide free communal labour for the local pastor and church elders, and for weekly village clean-up operations; and the local Presbyterian Women and Mother's Union and the Youth Fellowship each have one day set aside per week for fund-raising activities, where any interested party can hire their services on the same basis as a local *kampani*. Although not all four days are taken up every week with such activities, particularly not during the agricultural off-season, the fact that four days are reserved for such activities leaves most villagers only two days per week where they can be sure to look after their own affairs. With Saturdays usually taken up by household gardening activities (weeding, gathering vegetables, etc.) this leaves just one day per week.

Kampani work, like recent developments in bridewealth payment, ensures both continuous chiefly authority and that all residents remain on a fairly equal (low) socio-economic level, as suggested by a Liro man in his late thirties, married with three children.

Kampani work presents three problems. Such activities prevent people from locally earning some money because they have no time whatsoever to look after their own affairs; there are ways to make money here, but people cannot do so because of too much *kampani* work and the endemic jealousy here. Also, chiefs undermine progress [development] on the island, by occupying people all the time and preventing them from looking after their own affairs. Another important factor is that such activities have led to the out-migration of many people.

The reference to these activities as an important structural cause of Paamese out-migration is only one link in a continuous feedback chain, exemplifying the dual nature of mobility. An increasingly longer-term absence of young men, women and entire families increases the demand for communal labour, and those

¹⁸ Another (minority) opinion, links this re-emergence to the disastrous hurricane which struck Paama on Christmas day, 1951.

remaining have to work even harder. This in turn leaves little or no time, particularly on a regular basis, for those remaining to engage in local cash-earning activities. Subsequently, more people may want to leave, which perpetuates a vicious circle which could ultimately lead to the demise of the domestic community.

When parallel developments are examined in Raga, the most visible changes affecting the social organization in North Pentecost have been fundamental alterations in traditional settlement structures. There was early pressure from the first resident Anglican missionaries on Raga, Edgell (1898–1904) and Drummond (1905–1911) for an amalgamation of several hamlets into larger settlements, primarily to provide for better control of mission education (Hilliard 1978). Nevertheless, traditional settlement patterns, particularly south of Ahivo district, remained virtually unchanged until the 1950s, when people either moved from small and widely dispersed inland settlements into larger coastal communities, or amalgamated into larger inland villages. The major consequence of such large-scale population relocation for social and political organization on a village level has been the incorporation of several matrilineal descent groups and different *vara* landholdings in one settlement. Abwatuntora, for example, comprised members of ten such *varas* in 1982.

A logical consequence of such developments towards larger and more permanent settlements in recent years, has been a dramatic change in traditional residence rules. Men are no longer required to leave their paternal village after their marriage or at their father's death and activate viri-avunculocal residence, although they ought to make a formal request for permission from their father's matrilineal kin to continue their residence, a request which is usually granted. Continuous patri-virilocal residence is the most common contemporary form of residence. Yet despite these radical changes in residence rules, traditional forms of inheritance have not yet universally changed on Raga. Whereas Yoshioka (1985) claims that the former matrilineal inheritance system has given way to patrilineal inheritance, no consistent evidence for such a change was found during this current study in either Abwatuntora or Aroa village (although a man's material possessions pass to his sons rather than to his *aloe* (ZS), coconut trees planted by him on *vara* land are inherited by his sister's sons rather than his own). But, a gradual breakdown of the traditional marriage system, away from MMBDD or MBDD unions to those with a man's FFBDD or FBDD, allows men to marry into their father's land (see also Bonnemaison 1986). Men with access to many coconuts on *vara* land often strategically marry their sons into their own *vara*, to ensure that the coconuts they planted earlier ultimately benefit their sons rather than their *aloe*. Such changes in traditional inheritance have not resulted from modified residential arrangements, however, but are linked to new economic imperatives as discussed below. Apart from these developments, the arrangement of marriage has remained fairly traditional, unlike the complete monetization of marriage transactions on Paama requiring a substantial cash-inflow from migration. With Raga bridewealth remaining payable in pigs and red mats, plus a token cash gift of VT 4000 to the bride's parents, Raga men face much less pressure to participate in wage-labour elsewhere in order to accumulate their own bridewealth or contribute to that of relatives, as experienced by Paamese men.

Apart from the expansion and nucleation of most Raga communities since the early 1950s, two new patterns of intra-regional mobility began to emerge during the early 1980s. One was the sporadic movement of villagers from coastal settlements, such as Abwatuntora and Aroa, back to their customary land further

inland, officially to be closer to their garden areas. A second development refers to incidences, in 1982 still rare, of inter-district relocations, particularly from Ahivo villages and to a lesser extent from Hurilao and Aute communities, to locations further south in search of garden land. Although such relocations are legitimate by Raga custom, since they are territorially localized, representing a relocation from one *vava* area to another, residents in these new destinations are becoming increasingly irritated and frustrated. Their anger results from their perception of landlessness in particular areas — which is regarded as the main reason for such inter-district relocations — as man-made, resulting from extensive coconut planting during the 1950s and 1960s. Having themselves shown greater concern for future generations by not overplanting valuable subsistence land with coconuts, they argue that they should not now be punished by having to accommodate customary practices (permitting access to *vava* land to all *vava* members) to the exclusion of their own unc customary behaviour (using *vava* land, that is, communal resources, for individual gains).

Such land conflicts, which according to Raga absentees in Port Vila and Santo, have been on the increase in recent years, also point to recent changes in Raga's political structure. The two most notable developments since European contact, in striking contrast to the situation in Paama, lie in the establishment and continuous operation of the North Pentecost Local Area Council, and in a nominally less autocratic village leadership structure. Despite its colonial background, the Local Area Council, established in 1962 in Abwatuntora under the leadership of the late Philip Ilo, remained fully operational at the time of fieldwork, employing four salaried staff. Its comparative success and longevity, in contrast to similar institutions elsewhere, is clearly political in character: Raga is the home of Vanuatu's Prime Minister, Father Walter Lini, and of several senior government officials. The Council has always been regarded as a means of exercising some degree of self-government at least in domestic issues, rather than as a colonial outpost. This sentiment is also reflected in the fact that people regularly paid their council taxes amounting to VT 600 for men and VT 200 for women over the age of sixteen, a duty also extending to all temporary or long-term absentees. Whereas the Paamese Local Council collapsed long before the establishment of the Paama Local Government Council in 1983, the North Pentecost Area Council remained active until its duties were taken over by the Local Government Council established in 1984.

On a more local level, the political administration of villages has also undergone some major changes. While traditional descent-group based settlements were under the leadership of their most senior member in terms of rank achieved in the graded society, the contemporary situation is more complicated owing to the co-residence of different matrilineages. Today, most Raga villages not only have a local chief responsible for all residents (irrespective of their own *vava* membership), but also have several other leaders responsible for distinct areas. Abwatuntora has one leader responsible for matters relating to the graded society, one responsible for contemporary village affairs, and one concerned with land issues. While leadership in the past was always synonymous with a high rank in the graded society, this new system both allows for the appointment of leaders on a village, rather than *vava* level, and accommodates the political participation of non-members of the graded society.¹⁹ While this system would appear to allow younger and more educated men a greater local political

¹⁹ In 1982, only Abwatuntora's village chief and the chief responsible for land matters were high ranking members in the graded society.

role than would be possible on islands where status and power are predominantly inherited or at least remain in the same patriline (such as on Paama), contemporary reality in Hurilao villages, and presumably elsewhere in Raga as well, is quite different. This is evident from much earlier attempts by the Condominium administration's introduction of assessors, who unlike their counterparts in the former Australian-controlled New Guinea, were not recruited from amongst the traditional political elite (Rodman 1977). Though they were non-participants in the graded society, many assessors became members of this organization after their appointment as a result of skilful political manoeuvring by the local powerbrokers. By sponsoring the grade-taking of newly appointed assessors, traditional chiefs not only 'reaffirmed the importance of traditional prerequisites for recruitment to the local administration', but more importantly 'protected their own position as leaders'. After the original sponsorship, 'established *ratahiges* can block any bid by an assessor (to achieve higher ranks) by withholding vital support' (Rodman 1977: 532), which ultimately blocked the impositions of new means of local political control (Rodman 1977: 533).

Raga informants both on the island, and more so amongst Port Vila and Santo residents, regard such political manoeuvring by traditional leaders as the main reason why few educated young men and women actually reside in Raga, and even fewer play any significant role in the local political structure of Raga villages.²⁰ This phenomenon points, once again, to the ongoing dialectic between mobility and its setting: by adhering to traditional political structures, local authorities protect their positions from potential usurpation by younger and more educated men (return migrants, for example), who, because of such social and political impediments at home, may move more frequently than others or remain absent for much longer periods. The continued social and political significance of the graded society also has quite distinct implications for mobility. First, because tusked boars and a large number of red mats represent the material basis for continuous social and political participation (commodities which cannot be purchased with money) active membership militates against long-term absenteeism from Raga, since the production and circulation of such ceremonial wealth requires rural residence. Secondly, the underlying system of continuous indebtedness extending to all vara members actually encourages mobility, particularly long-term absenteeism of more individually-minded people, and also of people who simply escape from a massive debt-repayment.

A further aspect of contemporary Paamese and Raga social and political organization with implications for mobility relates to mobility norms. Compared with the early years of Paamese and Raga labour migration, when local chiefs, village elders and labour recruiters exercised considerable control, mobility has become much freer in recent times. Past control was manifest in three aspects. The first relates to the practice of direct labour recruitment, when the timing of mobility, the type of employment engaged in, and the choice of destinations were ultimately controlled by labour recruiters, given the non-existence of other inter-island transport facilities. A second aspect of mobility control was the general taboo on female mobility, when women on both islands were barred from the beach whenever a recruiting ship arrived, and neither Paamese nor Raga men wanted their women exposed to sexual threats and exploitation allegedly rampant on commercial plantations, particularly on Epi, Malakula and South

²⁰ It needs to be stressed, however, that these educated men and women, particularly those with secondary education, are also expected to work in town. See discussion on mobility norms below.

Espiritu Santo.²¹ A third form of mobility control, particularly evident on Paama, was a system of job rotation, or relay migration (see Arizpe 1981), which ensured equal access to wage employment elsewhere, and also guaranteed the presence of a stable population of adult men in the village at any one time. Since men were not able to hold on to a particular employment for too long if they did not want to risk rural repercussions (destruction of gardens or dwellings, stealing of land and coconuts), or a permanent relocation elsewhere, no one was able to accumulate more wealth than others and hence pose a threat to the *status quo*. While men on the islands emphasize the positive aspect of this system in that all men had the periodic opportunity to earn some cash elsewhere, Paamese in town place a much greater emphasis on the fact that local chiefs were the prime beneficiaries of this system since it prevented any threat to chiefly authority.

Apart from first urban employment experiences by most men working for the American forces during the Second World War, three other developments had a major impact on a gradual loosening of mobility restrictions in subsequent years: the considerable increase in post-war copra prices, and the spread of education to rural communities and, in Paama, the devastating cyclone which struck in 1951.

The increase in copra prices and the engagement of many rural ni-Vanuatu in cash-cropping²² meant an increase in inter-island transport facilities, with Port Vila and Santo-based Chinese and European traders making frequent visits to outer islands purchasing copra produced on ni-Vanuatu small-holdings. Although all of the copra produced on Paama was purchased by a local trader and transported to Southeast Ambrym, from where it was shipped to Santo, this period had a significant impact on Paamese mobility in that Paamese men worked as crew on almost every copra-schooner operating in the islands. Apart from providing many Paamese with employment opportunities other than plantation work, the frequent calls by these vessels on Paama for rest and recreation stops, to take on supplies for their crew (island-produced foodstuffs) or to exchange crew-members (job rotation), provided other Paamese with an opportunity to obtain a ride elsewhere—either to go *wokbaot* for a few weeks, or to look for employment in town or on plantations. This meant that Paamese were no longer solely dependent on labour recruiters for transport and employment-related mobility. Although Raga figured more prominently in copra output, frequent and quite regular transport opportunities as on Paama were non-existent, since employment on copra-schooners did not play as important a role as on Paama, and since much of the locally produced copra was purchased by Ambae-based European traders from where it was shipped to Santo.

A second development leading to a gradual relaxation of mobility restrictions relates to education, particularly to the establishment of secondary institutions by the Presbyterian Church in Onesua (North Efate), and by the Melanesian Mission in Longana (Ambae) in 1954, which, until the early 1960s provided the only

²¹ Respondents emphasized that while expatriate plantation owners and managers contributed their share, trouble also came from fellow ni-Vanuatu plantation workers, who were often lured to specific plantations by recruiters and hearsay with promises about freely available women. This author heard several accounts of practices on certain plantations, whose managers hired female labour for the sole purpose of sexual exploitation, so as to be in a better position to attract labour, and also 'steal' labour from other (competing) plantations.

²² This also had a dramatic impact on the plantation labour force, with rural ni-Vanuatu, particularly from resource-rich islands, earning more from domestic, small-holder production than as plantation wage-labourers (Wilson 1966; Bedford 1971). Even an increase in plantation wages by 250 per cent had not the desired impact of recruiting a stable plantation labour force.

English-medium post-primary education in Vanuatu (Vanuatu 1980).²³ School-fees constituted a considerable expense for Paamese and Raga parents and naturally they expected that their children would subsequently obtain appropriate employment. While this association between investment in their children's education and expected economic returns has been widely documented in the literature, two important implications for mobility change need to be emphasized. First, Paamese and Raga parents have come to expect long-term urban relocations of their sons (and in recent years of daughters as well) as an inevitable consequence of their engagement in skilled urban employment.²⁴ This aspect still reflects a notion of control in that an acceptance of this mobility is restricted to young men and women with secondary education. The second implication of an expanding education system, however, had a more destabilizing effect on rural mobility norms. This concerns the large number of young men and women who failed to gain access to secondary education, but who felt that six years of primary education had qualified them for 'better' work than village agriculture. Bonnemaïson (1976) holds this to have been at least partly responsible for the substantial rural exodus of the early 1970s.

A third impact on Paamese mobility restrictions relates to the cyclone which devastated the island in 1951. The Condominium Government provided emergency relief in the form of food supplies; however, this assistance was only of a temporary nature. It was during the time immediately after the cyclone that some Paamese left their island for good. Although these people did not establish a permanent community elsewhere on a scale similar to their Ambrymese counterparts in Mele-Maat (Tonkinson 1968), several men from North Paama (Liro area), who had previously worked on the Colardeau plantation in Port Vila, had their families join them in town and became Colardeau's regular labour force, having been provided with housing and some land to plant food gardens. With bare survival the main concern at that time, with food gardens destroyed and with coconut holdings requiring at least eight years to produce again, many married women accompanied their husbands on permanent relocations elsewhere or joined them on temporary plantation moves. Paamese fathers also made employment arrangements for their unmarried daughters, predominantly with urban employers personally known to them through work experience. This process was further facilitated by the presence in Port Vila and Santo of kinfolk who could look after these young women.

These developments notwithstanding, it would be misleading to suggest a complete abolition of rural mobility control. In contemporary Paama, mobility restrictions still apply primarily to young women, whereas on Raga they apply to young people in general. Married women, however, no longer experience restrictions other than possible objections from their husbands. Most parents object to the independent mobility of their unmarried daughters for fear of instant pregnancy upon arrival elsewhere, particularly in Port Vila and Santo. Such objections range from references to young independently mobile Paamese women as 'rubbish girls' to a more explicit interference in the free mobility of single Raga

²³ While the French National service had established secondary schools in Port Vila and Santo during the 1940s, these catered mainly for the children of French resident expatriates. The British National Service did not establish a secondary school in Port Vila until the early 1960s (Vanuatu 1980).

²⁴ A similar situation has also been described by Bonnemaïson (1974), Strathern (1975) and Townsend (1977) who emphasize that villagers not only clearly differentiate between different employment opportunities for educated and uneducated people, but also expect both groups will ultimately follow different mobility patterns.

women who are required to obtain a written permit from parents and local chiefs before moving away.²⁵ If these young women are encountered in town without such permits, chiefly representatives in Port Vila or Santo are entitled by virtue of customary rights to send them back home on the next boat. Although the rules also apply to young Hurilao men, they can get away with breaking them more easily.

Such stigmatizations or explicit mobility restrictions do not apply to young Paamese men, although their parents are opposed to them idling in town without employment and living off other kin. Their mobility is not only accepted as an integral part of growing up but somehow expected given the lack of local resources (land, employment) and the monetization of marriage transaction. Frequent tensions, allegedly resulting from their 'idleness and general disrespect for elders', also mean that their absence is not really regretted, except for their sporadic contributions to *kampani* work. On the contrary, many families regard their absence as alleviating some strain on scarce household resources and as contributing to rural peace. This attitude, however, does not extend to the mobility of young Hurilao men. Parental opposition is readily understood considering that these young men could, at least nominally, play an economically more productive role in rural Raga than their Paamese counterparts, and also since traditional bridewealth does not require substantial amounts of cash. Only in the case of pre-arranged urban employment, or when it is connected to previous secondary education, is parental consent readily given, which, incidentally, also applies to young women.

Recalling other aspects of Paamese and Raga social organization discussed above, it becomes apparent that parental opposition to the mobility of unmarried daughters is primarily a social and economic, rather than simply a moral issue. Paamese parents' predominant concern is over the feared loss of bridewealth payments, in case a young woman gets pregnant, is abandoned, and any future husband would not be prepared (nor expected) to pay the full brideprice. Also, the collapse of carefully designed marriage arrangements, as implicit in sister-exchanges on Paama and in the circulation of brides in Raga, is equally feared in both study areas, particularly in the context of strategic 'land-marriages'. The free choice of husbands, especially involving men from other islands, is also frowned upon since it implies an economic loss to the women's families. While the loss of subsistence, or even local wage labour in the case of female mobility can readily be compensated for by remittances, marriage to a man from another island lets any potential future economic assistance pass on to the husband's family. Although this would also occur in the case of an approved local marriage, such a 'loss' of one's daughter is compensated for through sister-exchange and the circulation of brides.

Contemporary Systems of Production

The contemporary economies of Paama and Raga have followed distinctly different paths of development. Three closely inter-related processes fundamentally changed

²⁵ The extent to which these practices in Hurilao apply throughout Raga is difficult to establish. Hurilao residents in Raga and in both towns insist that they are universal, yet several Ahivo and Aligu men, though liking the idea, deny any such universality.

Paama's traditional economy towards the end of last century: these were the individualization of land tenure, the introduction of cash-crops (mainly coconuts), and a shift from predominantly lineage-based to household production.²⁶

Contemporary Paamese households plant several food gardens each season, for subsistence purposes rather than for sale; they keep a few pigs for purposes of ceremonial exchange and raise some fowls to supplement their diet. Gardens are made on the land of the husband, who ideally receives some land from his father after his marriage, and together with his brothers inherits all remaining paternal landholdings upon the father's death. The lack of both a produced surplus and a local market, the fact that all families plant more or less the same subsistence crops, and prohibitive transport costs to ship produce to Port Vila or Santo, explain the similar number of food gardens in all villages (Table 3.2).²⁷ This situation, and the general absence of local employment opportunities mean that most Liro area households depend on copra-production as their sole cash-income source on the island. Both subsistence and cash-crop production are predominantly household affairs, although during the planting season help is provided by both agnatic and affinal kin, by friends or a local *kampani*. With most days each week taken up with *kampani* work, particularly so between April and October (harvesting and planting season), subsistence gardening is restricted for most households to about two days each week. As regards the organization of household subsistence production, male household heads decide when and where particular crops are planted, and also divide different tasks amongst all household members.

Besides daily food preparation and most other household chores, women organize and do most of the regular garden work, such as weeding, collecting food and firewood. Given a dramatic decline in the overall importance of producing goods for ceremonial exchange, such as giant yams and a large number of pigs, men are primarily responsible for routine house repairs and the cutting of firewood. Copra-making, on the other hand, is more of a household activity, with work explicitly organized (by male household heads) along age and gender lines: children and women collect the fallen nuts while male teenagers and adult men split these nuts by axe or machete.²⁸ Afterwards, both men and women shell out the copra, while children keep copra and shells neatly separate, and collect the driest coconut-shells, subsequently used as fuel for the process of smoke-drying the copra, which again is the exclusive domain of men. The packing of about 70 kg bags of copra a few days later is done by both men and women, and men shoulder-carry these loads to the local co-operatives or a copra dock at the beach.

The individualization of land-holdings and the concomitant decline in communal forms of production date back to the 1880s and 1890s, when large numbers of Paamese returned from three-year labour stints in Queensland, and the first teacher-catechists arrived on the island. Older Paamese informants recall

²⁶ A household is defined as a social and economic unit, whose members eat and sleep together, and whose labour product (subsistence and earnings from cash-crops) is shared principally by members of this unit.

²⁷ On Paama and in Raga, these gardens average about 500 square metres for yam gardens, and between 200 and 300 square metres for taro patches. Apart from these approximate indicators, exact measures concerning the size of food gardens cannot be given owing to the delicate political nature of land issues at the time of fieldwork.

²⁸ Those few households fortunate enough to have several small plantations generally hire a local *kampani* to collect, split and shell out the coconuts.

how their grandfathers and fathers began to cut down vast areas of bushland, employing newly acquired tools such as axes and saws. As these developments were generally restricted to virgin bush (*graon blong pigeon*) controlled by each patriline, and did not affect previously utilized (fallow) communal garden land, nobody objected to such activities. Indeed, such moves were socially sanctioned and many chiefs, having themselves previously been to Queensland, worked in the forefront of this initial land exploitation. The Presbyterian Church and, subsequently, resident traders and the Colonial Government, fully supported these attempts to use unproductive bush by planting coconuts and later cotton, and provided seedlings and seeds to this end (Frater 1928; Allen 1968). Such newly cleared areas were visibly marked, either by natural boundaries such as big banyan trees or dry creekbeds, or by placing special boundary stones, demarcations which are still recognized today, regardless of continuous quarrels and disputes over land ownership.

This period, referred to by older men as *taem blong winim graont* (the time of original land acquisitions), exemplifies the impact which early migration already had on the setting of source areas. Those who had previously migrated and been exposed to a plantation economy brought back with them axes and saws, essential tools for a comparatively speedy clearing of vast bush tracts; only they, and chiefs who frequently appropriated such items (Shineberg 1967), could actually acquire land for themselves, mark it and plant it with coconuts. The sick and elderly, those who had never been to Queensland and/or lacked the necessary tools, and others who happened to be in Queensland at that time, all missed out during this period of securing individual titles to previously untapped communal resources.

Contemporary inequalities of access to landholdings of variable sizes date back to this period, according to most Paamese informants who regard differential mortality and fertility on a lineage and household level to be of only secondary importance. Most male household heads in the Liro area own some land on the island and subsistence production provides no real problems for most households, since land of comparatively land-rich fellow villagers or of absentees can be borrowed for subsistence gardening, if prior permission is asked. Permission is usually granted for one season at a time, and neither money nor rental payment in kind is expected. The only conditions underlying such usufruct agreements are that land ought to be returned in good condition after the harvesting season, and that no tree-crops or other cash-crops are planted. Most Paamese, however, readily admit that if all households were restricted to their own land, many would not be able to produce enough food for everyday subsistence requirements, which is illustrated by the fact that only half of all Liro area households plant their food gardens on their own land (Table 3.2).

The lack of coconut trees or enough land to grow other cash-crops, however, proves to be a big problem for the majority of rural Paamese households, as indicated by the low levels of annual production and of economic returns (Table 3.2). While it remains fairly easy, even in the 1980s, to borrow some land from agnatic kin, affines or even friends to plant subsistence gardens, such assistance is categorically denied when it comes to cash-cropping. Although occasional permission may be granted by other residents or absentees to use their coconut groves, the planting of tree-crops or even of yams for sale on land belonging to others, is absolutely taboo. Many Liro area men tackled this problem during the late 1960s and early 1970s by purchasing land on neighbouring Epi, either directly from its customary owners or from French plantation managers and owners before they left Vanuatu prior to independence, and planted coconuts,

Table 3.2 Economic profiles of households in Liro area and Hurilao

	Liro	Liro Nesa	Aauas	Vora- vor	Liro area	A'Tora	Aroa	H'lao
Total no. of households	33	34	13	11	91	34	8	42
Housing: % of								
•European-style houses	68	39	64	36	51	13	18	14
•traditional houses	20	46	27	41	35	56	45	54
Income: ^a								
% of households without rural income earner	79	88	62	100	82	44	50	45
Average rural income (Vatu) ^b								
•total 1	43,361	6103	55,592	7037	26,797	50,850	66,650	53,860
•total 2	8097	6103	25,807	7037	9626	28,868	19,600	27,161
Copra only	3001	4007	3069	7037	3892	n.a. ^d	n.a.	n.a.
Average copra production (kg)								
•all households	297	426	330	725	403	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
•producing households	354	471	358	725	450	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Agriculture								
Number of food gardens per								
•household	4.6	4.6	6.2	6.0	5.0	5.2	4.8	5.1
•household member	1.5	1.6	2.4	2.1	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.6
% of households								
•with all gardens on own land	53	47	23	91	51	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
•most gardens on land of others ^c	27	30	62	-	30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
% of households with								
•cattle	39	25	31	34	33	32	75	40
•pigs	87	87	100	100	91	100	100	100
•chickens	84	84	92	100	87	94	100	95
% of households owning land elsewhere	24	15	38	-	20	44	75	50

^a Refers to a twelve-month period, October 1981– September 1982.^b Total 2 excludes rural salary earners (teachers, nurses).^c Refers to more than half of all gardens by each households.^d Not applicable.

fruit-trees and some subsistence crops. Such purchases ceased when Vanuatu became independent in 1980, with the inalienability of land becoming part of Vanuatu's constitution. The whole issue, even regarding land leases between ni-Vanuatu, remains problematic.

Paama has gradually but steadily been incorporated into the cash economy throughout the twentieth century, as evidenced by the complete monetization of marriage transactions, the imposition of a Local Council tax and church levy, the need to pay school fees even for primary education²⁹ and the need experienced by some or the desire by others to supplement daily subsistence with imported foodstuffs. The vast majority of households, however, cannot meet such cash demands locally as is evident from a cross-classification between annual rural income and recurrent expenditure (Figure 3.1).³⁰ While this negative expenditure balance affecting eight out of ten households is primarily due to structural impediments (lack of land, employment opportunities, interference of *kampani wok*), some, albeit only a small number of households, also experience occasional cash-flow problems due to their own voluntary disengagement from copra-production when commodity prices are considered to be too low. This contrast between minimum rural expenditure and maximum rural income unmistakably highlights the dependence of Liro area households on external income sources, such as employment-related mobility or remittances from absent household members or other kin (see also Morauta and Hasu 1979; Morauta 1984).

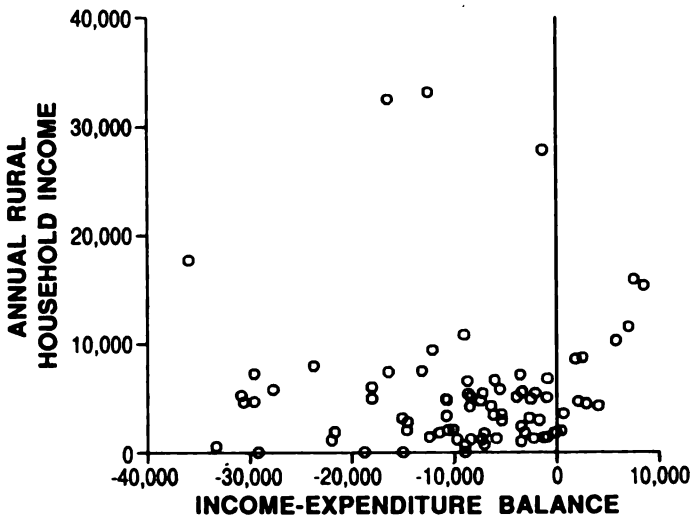


Figure 3.1 The rural income-recurrent expenditure balance amongst Liro area households, 1981-82

²⁹ This was abolished by the Vanuatu Government in 1985.

³⁰ Recurrent expenditure is here defined as absolute minimum rural expenses. It excludes all payments for which no reliable information could be obtained (school-fees, local taxes, church dues, clothing, transport costs, as well as purchases in small family-owned stores which keep no records).

Raga's contemporary economy differs quite significantly from that of Paama. The most striking contrast is a generally more relaxed attitude towards the potential for local economic self-sustenance, which is widely attributed to the persistence of a traditional (lineage-controlled) land tenure system, despite similar exposure to Queensland labour migration (Table 3.4), to European missionaries and to a colonial administration in Port Vila. However, early recruiting was far more localized than on Paama, and during the heyday of the labour trade, recruitment appears to have been concentrated on south and central Pentecost;³¹ the settlement structure was far more dispersed with many communities located inland and hence less accessible to traders and missionaries; and the Anglican Church had an explicit policy until 1936 of not interfering with indigenous customs such as the graded society (Rodman 1977). Thus one may notice considerable differences between Paama and Raga in the gradual erosion of traditional political control. Also, the participation of many Paamese chiefs in Queensland labour migration contributed to the dissolution of the pre-contact land tenure system, whereas Raga chiefs in the graded society lacked such migration experience, and subsequently may have been more reluctant to have their power and status undermined through the individualization of land tenure.

The maintenance of traditional land tenure and the seasonal allocation of garden land means that rural inequality, based on differential access to land, is kept to a minimum in Raga. This system also entails a better coping mechanism for problems brought about by demographic change in that it allows for a seasonal readjustment of households' subsistence needs, accommodating fluctuations resulting from births, deaths and migration. Further evidence for a greater relative self-sustenance of Raga communities lies in the fact that the production of goods for ceremonial exchange, such as pigs and red mats, is still very much in evidence today, as are relatively cash-free marriage transactions. All adult household members continue to be responsible for their own food gardens, which are planted on land close to each community, not necessarily on land belonging to their own matriline. Yet seasonal land allocation on 'village ground' (based on the subsistence needs of each household) is by no means the upper limit of food gardens that an individual or household can cultivate. Each person can plant as many gardens as he/she wishes, as long as such surplus production does not interfere with the basic needs of other community members, taking into account necessary fallow periods. Individuals and households can claim use rights over any piece of uncultivated land belonging to their own *vara*; all it entails is a formal request to the highest ranking resident member of their *vara*, who then consults with other senior members. If no objections are raised, permission is granted for the planting of seasonal crops such as yams and taro, even for kava with a longer life span (4-6 years). The planting of coconuts and cocoa is theoretically feasible as long as permission can be obtained. But since access rights to these crops extend to all *vara* members, few people would plant cash-crops on *vara* land in contemporary Raga.

Although the production of a surplus of subsistence crops for sale is uncommon and seasonal land allocations for subsistence production on village land generally meet the subsistence demands of all local households, there are instances when different parties vie for the use of the same piece of land. Under

³¹ In comparison with Paama, stories about Queensland were less numerous in Raga. Although this could be due to the sample of Hurilao residents, Wawn (1893) refers to Bwatnapne as the most northern bay from which recruitment usually took place. It remains unclear whether he referred to his own recruiting trips, or to recruitment in general.

such circumstances, claims are ranked according to specific criteria: matrilineal members have preference over those with patrilineal or affinal ties to the lineage controlling the land under claim; people who have resided near or used the land most recently have precedence over earlier users; and residents carry a greater weight than non-residents (Lane 1971: 251). Although there is no clear ruling on the relative importance of these criteria, Lane (1971) suggests that social (genealogical) considerations precede temporal and spatial principles.

The contemporary significance of such issues becomes readily apparent in the practice by several, short-term (and sometimes long-term) absentees of still cultivating one or several food gardens to supplement their urban existence. In the case of Abwatuntora and Aroa villages, for example, absentees who maintain a house in their home village have definite preference over those who can only claim matrilineal affiliation to the land under question. The same principle also applies to the situation discussed earlier, involving, for example, the attempts of some Ahivo men who are married to Hurilao women to claim garden land or residence rights on their wives' land. The principal cause behind these land disputes lies in the fact that Hurilao residents in this case also attribute greater weight to spatial than to social considerations. The real crux of ongoing Raga land disputes, however, was the widespread establishment of ni-Vanuatu-owned coconut plantations throughout Raga during the 1920s and 1930s, emulating several such enterprises by resident Europeans³², and a second major wave of coconut planting which occurred in the aftermath of large-scale population resettlements in the early 1950s. The large number of small plantations in the Hurilao district, for example, date back to this second period. In some areas, such as in Ahivo, these developments not only encroached severely upon available space for subsistence horticulture as noted above, but also introduced a new social and economic component into Raga society; the concept of private ownership of land. However, these developments have not completely undermined lineage land tenure and land under coconuts remains lineage-controlled. Tree-crops are primarily accessible to those who planted them and their immediate families (spouses and children) but, upon the death of those who planted them, ownership of these trees passes on to these men's *aloe*. The implications of an individual-oriented market economy in a traditional setting became increasingly more problematic, especially during the 1950s, with the trend towards patri-virilocal residence. The end result resembles a classical 'Catch-22' situation: although a man could live with his paternal kin, any coconut or cocoa trees planted by him on their land were traditionally not his since members of his father's *vara* could press for access rights to the harvest; if he decided to plant such trees on his own *vara* land, his *aloe* would have explicit preference over his own children (see also Rodman 1981; 1984).

Whereas a lineage tenure system is more readily suited to the maintenance of equal access rights in subsistence production and accommodates seasonal demographic fluctuations, its very principle undermines the viability of cash-cropping (see also Fitzpatrick 1980; Rodman 1984). Since not all community or *vara* members are equally keen to participate actively in a market economy, the more cash-crop inclined community members could find themselves in continuous strife through pressures by their *aloes* and other lineage members to share out the benefits and profits of their labour, towards which these others had little to contribute. 'Tired of such pressures', as one Abwatuntora man put it, several men set out to redefine *kastom* in the 1960s: they traced unoccupied *vara*

³² Lane (1971) refers to five plantations.

land in south Raga, particularly in Lolkasai district (Nambwarangiut and Buego) and re-established themselves there, while others went so far as to purchase this ground from some smaller subsections of their own *vava* via 'traditional' payments of pigs and red mats but spiced with substantial cash 'gifts'. Others, mainly people from Ahivo district, resettled on unoccupied land in south Maewo (Lane 1971). Those men who actually purchased land not only secured individual ownership and exclusive access to benefits and profit, but also, and to many men this was of equal if not greater importance, they secured the inheritance of this land by their own children. It ought to be emphasized that these men, many of whom are members of the graded society, repeatedly stress that they do not oppose traditional land tenure as such, rather they despise the 'laziness' of many of their children's maternal uncles who do not show proper care and concern for their future by planting coconuts or cocoa.

While the outright purchase of *vava* land has not been practised now for some time in Raga, particularly since the years before independence, many villagers talked of their concern about a resurgence of traditional take-over tactics, already referred to by Lane fifteen years ago. This practice involves 'ambitious and unscrupulous men' (Lane 1971: 263), not only with the necessary pigs and mats, but increasingly nowadays with cash, who cover the debts of a deceased man or contribute massively to his mortuary feast, and thereby claim his coconuts, or his land to plant them. Somewhat paradoxically, the biggest participants in such schemes are frequently the very protagonists of *kastom*, high ranking chiefs in the graded society, who not only are often the most senior members of their respective *vavas*, but also, through their rank, have enough traditional wealth in circulation to marshal the resources essential for such quick take-over bids.³³ This reference to a paradox is not to suggest that such procedures are not customary, but to underline the contradiction that chiefs rely on customary means (covering someone's mortuary feast and debts) for unc customary ends (the individual appropriation of material wealth, such as exemplified in land for individual cash-cropping).³⁴

Raga's contemporary economy, with its three parallel forms of production (subsistence, ceremonial wealth, and cash-crops) and its two concomitant systems of land tenure and inheritance, poses quite dissimilar and more complex problems in the emergence and maintenance of rural inequalities, than is the case in Paama (see below). Considering the implicitly individualist nature of cash-cropping, and the emerging contradictions between this form of production and its communal setting where the ultimate control over means of production (land), its organization (lineage chiefs) and labour output (copra) rests in the hands of a traditional local elite, the creation of rural inequalities and the structural context of out-migration from this area are clearly different from Paama. The difficulty of engaging in cash-cropping on Paama, which is due to both an absolute shortage of land and to the political manipulations of local chiefs as evident in *kampani* work, is in stark contrast to contemporary Raga, with its adherence to a traditional land tenure system interfering with individual enterprise. The latter is aptly illustrated in the virtual absence of copra-production in Hurilao during 1981-82, when persistent quarrels over land ownership and

³³ Rodman (1984: 68) refers to a similar process on east Ambae in the *boni* system of land redistribution, which 'favors individuals with wealth and experience in organizing ceremonial exchanges over generally less-experienced and less-affluent children of the deceased'.

³⁴ See also Rodman's analysis on neighbouring Ambae of the process 'of how customary land tenure allows a system of land holding to change while appearing to remain the same' (1984: 3).

access rights prompted local *vava* elders to freeze production, temporarily, with the result that only five out of 42 households sold any copra during this period.

Rural out-migration from both areas appears, therefore, to be based in two distinctly different economic settings and occurs under two distinct sets of economic conditions (namely less need for money on Raga than Paama). Rural out-migration exemplifies the dual nature of mobility in that it continuously reinforces the contemporary social, political and economic structures on both islands. Whereas past mobility, in relative terms, supplemented rural living, contemporary mobility exacerbates rural inequalities and paradoxes. This is evident on Raga in the persistent contradiction between a continued adherence to a traditional system of (communal) land tenure amidst the emergence of a different (individual-oriented) mode of production—a contradiction which could not survive long were it not for continuous out-migration.

Contemporary Rural Stratification

Pre-contact Paama and Raga societies were not stratified on the basis of established class structures emerging from differential access to land or control over animals, or from different occupational categories (specialized warriors or artisans, for example) such as has been widely documented for Latin America (Frank 1969) and Africa (Stavenhagen 1975). With everyone engaged in subsistence horticulture, there was no need for the production of a surplus to support non-agricultural sectors of the population. Lineage chiefs controlled communal landholdings to the extent of having ultimate power over seasonal land allocation; however, relationships of production entailing the extraction of a surplus in the form of either a surplus product or labour in exchange for land use were unknown in Paama and Raga.

The lack of an explicit class structure notwithstanding, pre-contact Paama and Raga showed considerable internal differentiation associated with political power in the context of kinship structure, and power and prestige based on the circulation of ceremonial wealth. Many community elders, for example, having access to the reproductive and productive services of several women, carried a much greater political weight than younger and unmarried men, who, living as a group in the local *nakamal*, represented the political backbone of each lineage chief. Although the predominance of the graded society in Raga theoretically allowed for a more fluid political structure than the relatively inflexible Paamese system of inherited chieftainship, a rise in rank could never be achieved without either the support of important lineage members or the encouragement of those already entrusted with considerable power.

The production of items for ceremonial exchange was probably the closest that pre-contact Paama and Raga came to inner differentiation based on individual 'ownership'. It is important to distinguish three different patterns of ceremonial production. The first relates to the cultivation of giant yams for ceremonial purposes. With land allocated according to household subsistence needs, the production of yams co-varied with household size and efforts to grow these tubers, rather than with differential access to land *per se*. However, status differences based on individual ownership emerged from the two other forms of ceremonial production: the rearing of domesticated pigs on both Paama and Raga (which, analogously to the cultivation of giant yams, was the sole responsibility of

men) and the production of red mats by Raga women. Given the value attached to these commodities, it is self-evident that ownership or circulation of large numbers of pigs and mats carried high individual prestige and status.

Transcending the division of labour along gender lines, the rearing of pigs for purposes of ceremonial exchange points to an interesting aspect of pre-contact dependency relations: the appointment of young and unmarried men as guardians of these animals. These arrangements were clearly of a temporary nature; age, sex and marital status were the only criteria for the appointment to these positions, and most often involved members of the same lineage (father-son on Paama; maternal uncle-nephew in Raga), although extensions to other descent groups (father-son in Raga) were possible. The transient and generally familial nature of these relationships notwithstanding, they entailed a dimension of inequality, since young men were forced into looking after these animals in return for eventually receiving some pigs for themselves to be able to buy a wife. While young community members, either unmarried men or young families, were always at one stage dependent on older lineage members for an 'advance in subsistence' (Meillassoux 1983: 54) in order to start their own subsistence production, these ongoing credit-cycles were structurally different from the control of community elders over local demographic reproduction. The polygamous nature of pre-contact ni-Vanuatu societies, and the head start of older men over younger generations in their chances of buying a wife or wives, clearly illustrate such early forms of pre-contact dependency relations.

Contemporary Paama and Raga, in contrast, show more distinct signs of rural stratification and institutionalized inequality. The change from lineage to individual land ownership, particularly on Paama, and the appearance of new forms of wealth and distribution have the potential to contribute to increased socio-economic differentiation amongst villagers. Although the inflation of bridewealth and the omnipresence of *kampani* work on Paama were previously referred to as attempts by village chiefs and elders to counteract socio-economic differentiation, this differentiation was essentially reinforced by the chiefs and elders themselves, as capitalist relations of production became more entrenched. The same applies to Raga regarding land purchases in south Raga and south Maewo. Both examples illustrate that the impact of capitalism, and the concomitant process of socio-economic differentiation, is greatly facilitated through the participation of the local political elite (see also Rey 1976).

Although each Paamese household head has access to several pieces of land on which to plant subsistence crops, the introduction of cash-crops towards the end of last century and concomitant changes in land tenure caused significant divisions in Paamese communities. Contemporary inequalities in land distribution are seen by the vast majority of Paamese, to be the result of this individualization of land tenure which occurred towards the end of last century. Young Paamese men in particular refer to 'land-owners' as those whose ancestors were amongst the first to secure large land areas for themselves. While boundaries have remained the same ever since this change in land tenure, ownership may well have changed many times. Differential mortality was of great significance in this context, particularly so in view of frequent outbreaks of violent epidemics around the turn of the century (Frater 1928). Another major factor was the communal land take-overs. In pre-contact Paama, these were the by-product rather than intentional effect, of feuding between different settlements. Similar attacks in the early twentieth century, however, were allegedly more explicitly motivated by the acquisition of land and coconuts.

Frater (1928) reports an attack by Wailep villagers on Hingal, involving the killing of all but four men of the latter population. With time, more subtle and effective takeover tactics gained in prominence, such as that shown by the expansion of Tavie, Lulep Nesa and Now household landholdings, which occurred sometime between 1887 and 1939. Through this process, these households gradually took over the settlements of Viong, Metano and Vaoli.³⁵ Sorcery, aimed at the female population of these settlements and leading to infertility, allegedly caused the gradual disappearance of their population, and long-established marriage exchange networks allowed Tavie, Lulep Nesa and Now villagers to claim their land. Such practices to acquire land and coconut groves on a communal basis are not known to have recurred or to have involved other villages; yet there are several allegations about more recent attempts by individuals involving similar measures to secure ownership over local resources in light of a growing land shortage and the impossibility of purchasing land legally on Paama. The contemporary success of such methods is more often based on widespread fear than actual poison attacks: fear of being a target for an impending sorcery attack, or of being accused as a sorcerer is usually enough to send people running (see Chapters 4 and 5). Land purchases by Paamese men on Epi, and by Raga men in south Raga or south Maewo are more socially acceptable forms of land acquisition, as is evident from the number of rural Paamese and Raga households who have either acquired or inherited such properties in recent years (Table 3.2).

The individualization of land tenure on Paama led to a growing polarization between land-rich community members and those having only small landholdings, as indicated by the inability of many rural households to plant even subsistence crops on their own land (Table 3.2). 'Functional landlessness', defined by Howlett (1980) as a situation where people do have access to land but are economically disadvantaged by the environmental and locational constraints of that land, is not significant on Paama since all potentially arable land is presently under cultivation (Vanuatu 1983b). However, Paamese informants on the island and in town stress that most Paamese household heads who cultivate their food-gardens on land belonging to others have not yet been allocated land by their fathers upon their marriage, as has become customary practice after the transition from lineage to individual land tenure. Although the temporary nature of this situation does not yet justify talk about a process of rural class formation which differentiates landowners and a landless proletariat, such uncustomary practices nevertheless contribute to a growing polarization between landowners and people who lack control over their means of production and are wholly dependent on paternal goodwill with respect to both seasonal land allocation and their choice of crops. In Raga, the fact that many household heads themselves have either purchased land or inherited some land from their fathers throws into question the contemporary viability of lineage land for cash-cropping, and points towards a growing and more permanent rural stratification based on individual land ownership.

Rural stratification based on differential access to land and different tenure systems has quite distinct effects on rural out-migration. Landlessness and a process of temporary proletarianization on Paama are of equal importance in regard to land-related mobility. The persistence of lineage tenure on Raga and the

³⁵ On the timing of these events, older informants could only agree that these settlements still existed after the arrival of the first teacher-catechist, and that some Vaoli and Viong villagers were still alive when Reverend Frater was working on the island. Viong was located between Tavie and Liro Nesa, Metano lay between Lulep Nesa and Wailep, and Vaoli was situated between Voravor and Now.

impossibility of purchasing land there now, however, suggest that a lack in control over means of production (another form of functional landlessness) is the predominant land-related cause for Raga out-migration.

Other contemporary phenomena contributing to rural stratification are the few opportunities for rural wage employment, and the emergence of new forms of wealth and their distribution. Jobs such as village kindergarten teachers, diesel generator and radio-telephone operators, and employment in the local co-operative stores are sought-after positions because they provide prestige and a regular, though very modest, income. The ownership of a European-style house and speedboats are, at least on Paama, increasingly equated with success and status, whereas on Raga the circulation of customary wealth still plays a more predominant role. The greater prominence of European-style houses in the Liro area should not, however, be mistaken for greater overall economic well-being since much higher rural incomes are to be found amongst Hurilao households (Table 3.2). The building of house types is more directly related to land matters. Hurilao men who could (have) afford(ed) a European-style house have refrained from building one because their matriline does not own any land in the area which represents the site of Abwatuntora or Aroa villages. Other reasons are that some men, allegedly, did not obtain the permission from *vava* elders to build such a dwelling, while others, were worried about falling victim to local jealousies and feared being asked to move to their 'own' land once they had built a European-style house.

The dual nature of mobility in regard to the contribution of material possessions in socio-economic differentiation is readily apparent. The gradual influx of individually earned and owned cash and consumer items into a non-monetized economy as a result of migration tends to induce others to seek similar fortunes, and these new forms of wealth have already begun to undermine traditional value systems based on the ownership and circulation of pigs, yams and additionally on Raga, red mats. Over time, mobility has become a viable alternative for the acquisition of material wealth and status (particularly on Paama), especially where the means to procure the latter could not be generated locally.

Increased rural stratification based on differential access to land, the evolution of new forms of wealth and the emergence of individual and household strategies, such as employment-related mobility (which has itself contributed to these developments), has led over time to the institutionalization of counter-strategies to ward off a gradual erosion of the alleged egalitarian structure of Melanesian society. In Raga, the maintenance of a lineage mode of production and the persistent circulation of traditional wealth clearly work against a more pronounced rural stratification. On the other hand, a strong emphasis on individual achievement, as is evident in the graded society, could become conducive to increased socio-economic differentiation in Raga, particularly regarding the introduction of material wealth in parallel with the continued importance of traditional wealth. This latter possibility transpires from the U-shaped distribution of Hurilao household incomes, which suggests that there is an equally high proportion (42 per cent) of households with no rural income and of households with an income in excess of VT 50,000 per annum. This is in stark contrast to a more balanced (normal) distribution of Liro area incomes (Figure 3.2). This polarized situation in Hurilao illustrates the potential for an ideally more egalitarian system of social organization to create the pre-conditions for divisions between have-nots and affluent villagers. It is similarly paradoxical that a society opposed to individual achievements, such as on Paama, can generate counter-strategies to ward off the processes of socio-economic differentiation.

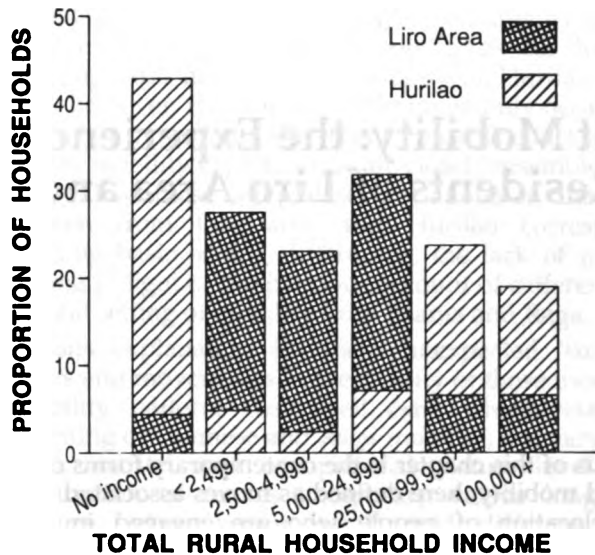


Figure 3.2 Rural income distribution amongst households in Liro area and Hurilao, 1981-82

Paamese 'crab antics', as discussed in the context of highly monetized marriage transactions and the omnipresence of *kampani* work, represent just such counter-strategies. They are a means of political manoeuvring by local chiefs and village elders in a bid to maintain the social, political and economic *status quo*. Attempts by individuals to set up rural enterprises are continuously undermined by *kampani* work, and efforts by young men to invest locally some earnings from previous employment-mobility are systematically negated in the form of high bridewealth payments. The ownership of a European-style house appears as one of the few socially sanctioned forms of rural investment, particularly since it forever neutralizes capital which can no longer be utilized productively. While such mechanisms may well ensure that rural stratification is kept to a minimum, they ultimately contribute significantly to continuous out-migration, and thereby effectively reinforce a process of stratification via the maintenance of two polarized, smaller and spatially separated communities instead of one.

CHAPTER 4

Recent Mobility: the Experience of the Rural Residents of Liro Area and Hurilao

The primary focus of this chapter is the contemporary forms of employment- and education-related mobility, here defined as moves associated with the temporary or long-term relocation of people who are engaged in different forms of remunerative activities, or who attend educational and training institutions.¹ Such moves can range from regular wage or salary employment in the formal sector to only intermittent engagements in the informal sector. This definition also includes engagement as unpaid or irregularly paid domestic helper with older absent family members, who themselves are economically active, and extends to people who could not find employment of any type during their absence. It also includes women who, although themselves not actively participating in the labour force, accompany their working husbands, and who, through their own work as housewives or in urban or rural subsistence production, subsidize their spouses' participation in the labour force.²

In establishing a meaningful differentiation of migrants, a distinction is made between three different groups of usual rural residents. *Stayers* or non-movers are rural residents who have not engaged in employment- or education-related mobility throughout the past ten years. *Occasional movers* are people who moved only once or twice during the reference period. People who moved more frequently are regarded as *frequent movers*. The proportional representation of usual residents in these categories corroborates the setting analysis of the previous chapters. Mobility clearly emerges as an integral part of the life of Liro

¹ No mention is made in the following analysis of developments in casual mobility, here defined as brief journeys to visit absent kin and friends; hospitalization in town or on neighbouring islands; periodic intra- or inter-island trips to attend food gardens and plantations. Although people engaged in inter- and intra-island mobility to attend their food gardens and coconut plantations are economically active as self-employed subsistence gardeners and small-scale cash-crop farmers, the frequency of moves by these people does not lend itself to a systematic long-term evaluation. The same applies to various forms of *wokbaot*.

² The analysis is based on the mobility experience of all adult men and women, who at the time of fieldwork were residing either on Paama and in Raga, or in Port Vila. People who then resided in other locations have been excluded, since most people interviewed experienced great difficulties in recalling past movements of other household members and close kin. Since the principal aim of the following chapters concerns the documentation and explanation of patterns and trends in the context of social, political and economic change, the focus from now on will be on the Liro area and Hurilao, rather than on the six rural communities.

area men (Table 4.1). Most Liro area women, by contrast, moved only occasionally, while 41 per cent had not engaged in mobility at all during this period. This clearly establishes rural-based mobility as the domain of men. A similar pattern also appears in the recent mobility of Hurilao men. Compared with Liro area men, however, the majority had moved only occasionally, and one out of four men had not moved at all in recent times. The fact that most Hurilao women had no recent mobility experience at all, closely resembles the situation of Liro area women. While these inter-island variations in the recent mobility performance of men from Liro area and Hurilao correspond to earlier observations regarding basic setting differences, the lack of more pronounced contrasts is surprising in light of the previous account of differences in the social, economic and political setting of mobility from Paama and Raga.

The most obvious explanation for these unexpected 'similarities' in the proportion of stayers and movers, lies in the crudity of these measures. However, more distinct mobility patterns may well exist which relate to structural differences in the setting of Paamese and Raga mobility, but vary with individual characteristics (age, marital and occupational status, level of educational attainment), the duration of moves (temporary versus long-term mobility), different destinations (urban versus rural), and different individual and household 'needs' and purposes of mobility.

Individual Level Characteristics

The significance of age as an explanatory variable of mobility has been widely documented in the literature, generally suggesting a curvilinear pattern throughout the life cycle, beginning in adolescence, emerging most strongly in early adulthood and then progressively weakening with age (for example, see Shaw 1975; Connell et al. 1976; Singh 1984; Conroy and Curtain 1985). In the case of Liro area and Hurilao residents, 'movers' are substantially younger than 'stayers', the only exception to this pattern emerging amongst the few Liro area women who had moved frequently over the past ten years (Table 4.1). Furthermore, frequently moving men are on average ten years younger than those who only occasionally engaged in recent mobility. Despite similarities in the overall age of male migrants, a much greater proportion of young Liro area than Hurilao men have previous mobility experience. The fact that considerably more young Liro area than Hurilao men (50 per cent compared with 10 per cent) had already moved more than three times during the reference period clearly reflects certain structural differences in the setting of mobility in Paama and Raga.

The need to procure cash for bridewealth amidst a completely monetized system of marriage transactions on Paama; the comparative lack of opportunities for young men to earn some money locally for themselves owing to few and lowly paid jobs on one hand, and the lack of access rights to land on the other; and the fact that young Paamese males are more 'peripheral' to the day-to-day running of rural households and communities, with the sole exception of providing free labour in local *kampanis*, are all reflected in a much higher past incidence of mobility compared with young Hurilao residents. The much higher proportion of Hurilao men (47 per cent) than Liro area men (25 per cent) over 45 years of age who had not moved at all during the past ten years is also readily explained in structural differences between both areas; however, the fact that nearly two-thirds of all men aged 25-44 emerge as frequent movers, is a finding most unexpected given the marked setting differences between Paama and Raga.

The fact that married migrants clearly outnumber single rural residents engaged in mobility is a finding infrequently reported in the literature (Table 4.2). However, a more dominant role in contemporary mobility played by adult men rather than by adolescents principally reflects the demographic make-up of the rural base population, with married adults out-numbering single adults at a ratio of about three to one. A much greater proportion of single movers emerges when considering marital status at the time of mobility, although ever-married movers are still quite prominent. It is particularly amongst Liro area women that ever-married movers outnumber single movers, at a ratio of two to one, whereas virtually no differences emerge amongst Liro area men and Hurilao residents.

The influence of two further individual level variables on the mobility of usual rural residents, their occupational and educational status, is far less clear and consistent compared with that of age and marital status—a situation best explained in terms of employment opportunities elsewhere available to usual rural residents. Employment requiring higher levels of education and training generally also requires long-term job commitments (Chapter 1), and as such does not accommodate usual rural residents. Along similar lines, the only types of employment available to usual rural residents are jobs as unskilled labourers in the urban service or construction industry or in the plantation sector; that is,

Table 4.1 Age and mobility

	Stayers				Occasional movers				Frequent movers			
	age				age				age			
	(%)	Median	Mean	SD	(%)	Median	Mean	SD	(%)	Median	Mean	SD
Liro area												
Males (78)	14	60	53	(18)	40	44	42	(16)	46	34	35	(11)
Females (92)	41	38	41	(15)	51	34	35	(14)	8	45	39	(13)
Hurilao												
Males (40)	28	48	42	(18)	43	40	38	(16)	30	30	34	(10)
Females (48)	52	35	36	(15)	44	26	31	(13)	4	24	24	(7)
Liro area males												
15-24 (14)	7	[9] ^a			43	[19]			50	[19]		
25-44 (32)	6	[18]			31	[32]			63	[56]		
45+ (32)	25	[73]			47	[48]			28	[25]		
Liro area females												
15-24 (26)	27	[18]			65	[36]			8	[29]		
25-44 (25)	46	[42]			51	[38]			3	[14]		
45+ (31)	48	[40]			39	[26]			13	[57]		
Hurilao males												
15-24 (10)	40	[36]			50	[29]			10	[8]		
25-44 (15)		—			40	[35]			60	[75]		
45+ (15)	47	[64]			40	[35]			13	[17]		
Hurilao females												
15-24 (17)	41	[28]			53	[43]			6	[50]		
25-44 (19)	58	[44]			37	[33]			5	[50]		
45+ (12)	58	[28]			42	[24]			—			

employment which requires little formal education or skills. Irrespective then of whether rural residence is preferred over long-term relocations elsewhere or is the result of being unable to obtain long-term employment, there is little room on conceptual grounds for expecting a consistent relationship between levels of educational attainment and mobility of usual rural residents.

An examination of recent mobility by type of employment or activity supports this line of reasoning, since the vast majority of economically active men and women worked in unskilled positions (Table 4.3). Engagement in different forms of employment, however, varies somewhat between Liro area and Hurilao residents. Work on boats figures more prominently amongst Liro area than Hurilao men, and plantation labour is particularly more pronounced amongst Liro area than Hurilao women. While the latter is readily explained in the greater opportunities for Hurilao residents to engage in local cash-crop production, the lack of a more marked contrast in plantation mobility between men from both areas is surprising. Whether this relates to the contemporary disengagement by Hurilao men from local copra production noted previously, cannot be examined at this level of enquiry.

The Duration of Moves

The lack of a more pronounced contrast between the occupational profiles for Liro area and Hurilao residents could well be due to the emphasis on the number of moves as the unit of analysis, irrespective of the duration of rural absences involved. The consideration of a temporal dimension, however, is of great significance given that three temporary moves each of three months duration have quite different social and economic implications for rural migrants and their families, and also point to a different underlying causality, than a once-only move of nine months.

Between 1973 and 1982, rural residents had rarely moved for long periods at any one time (Figure 4.1). Only about 20 per cent of all moves exceeded one year's duration, while most moves (except some by Hurilao women) did not last beyond six months. This clearly establishes temporary circular moves as the principal form of contemporary mobility involving usual rural residents. On an island level, the median duration of moves by Liro area men is considerably longer than that of women, with the opposite and more pronounced pattern applying to Hurilao residents. While the average duration of moves by Liro area and Hurilao men is virtually identical, a more pronounced contrast emerges in female mobility, with Hurilao women having been involved in longer absences than Liro area women.³

Principal Migration Destinations

Unlike the urban bias underlying overall Liro area and Hurilao absenteeism (Chapter 2), the predominance of Port Vila and Santo as principal migration destinations does not extend to the recent mobility of current usual rural residents. While urban destinations have clearly dominated female mobility over the past ten years, particularly amongst Liro area women, rural-oriented moves played a more dominant role in the recent mobility of Liro area and Hurilao men (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).

³ Much of this variability is due to the influence of various individual level characteristics (Haberkorn 1987: 208-14).

Table 4.2 Marital status and mobility

		Stayers (%)	Occasional movers (%)	Frequent movers (%)	Average no. of moves ^a
Liro area males					
Ever-married	(59)	14 [73] ^b	41 [77]	46 [75]	2.4 (2.3)
Single	(19)	16 [27]	37 [23]	47 [25]	3.2 (2.4)
Liro area females					
Ever-married	(78)	41 [84]	50 [83]	9 [100]	1.0 (0.8)
Single	(14)	43 [16]	57 [17]		0.9 (0.8)
Hurilao males					
Ever-married	(31)	23 [64]	42 [76]	35 [92]	2.0 (1.4)
Single	(9)	44 [36]	44 [24]	11 [8]	1.1 (0.8)
Hurilao females					
Ever-married	(33)	52 [68]	45 [71]	3 [50]	0.7 (0.5)
Single	(15)	53 [32]	40 [29]	7 [50]	0.7 (0.4)

Note: These proportions have not been standardized for age since marriage is almost universal in contemporary Paama at around the age of 25.

^a First figure is mean, figure in bracket is median average number of moves throughout the ten-year reference period.

^b Figures in square brackets are column percentages.

Table 4.3 Occupations of Liro area and Hurilaoa residents during different absences, 1973-82

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	%	%	%	%
Economically active (Occasional/frequent movers)	90 (94/89)	60 (73/32)	90 (78/96)	50 (48/57)
Professional-technical	-	1	8	-
Clerical	1	-	-	3
Sales	4	1	7	-
Service	5	36	4	44
Plantation labour	35	22	25	3
Transport (boats)	21	-	10	-
General labour	23	-	29	-
(Church work)	1	-	7	-
Economically inactive (Occasional/frequent movers)	10 (6/11)	40 (27/68)	10 (22/4)	50 (52/43)
Education-training	8	6	10	18
Accompany husband	-	33	-	32
Could not find work	2	1	-	-
Total number of moves	(202)	(91)	(72)	(34)

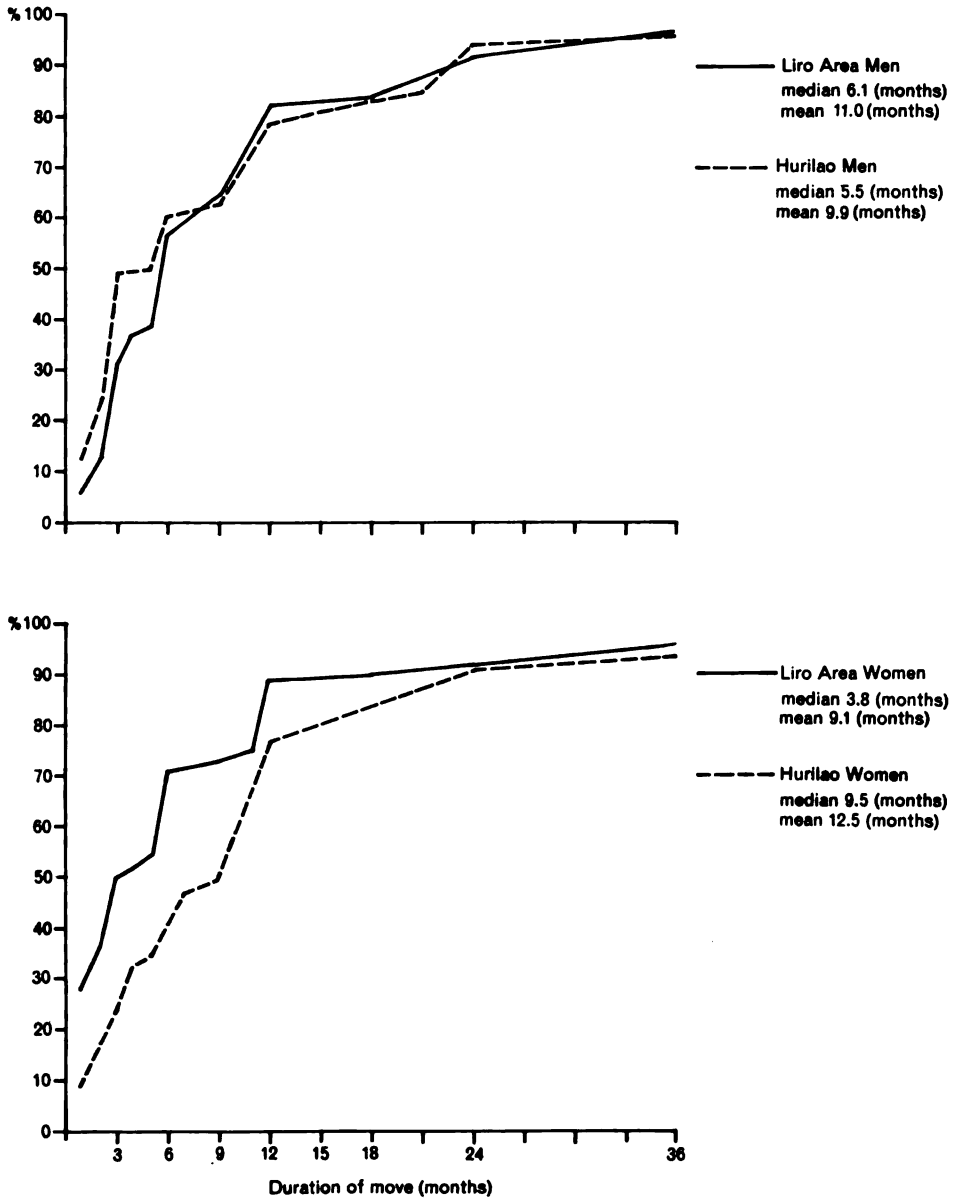


Figure 4.1 Average duration of moves by residents of Liro area and Hurilao, 1973-82

Malakula's plantations represent the principal destinations for 27 per cent of Liro area men, followed by Port Vila (23 per cent) and employment on boats (20 per cent); amongst Hurilao men, moves to Santo (29 per cent) were slightly more pronounced than moves to neighbouring Ambae (22 per cent) and Malakula (15 per cent), with Port Vila accounting for only 14 per cent of all moves. The greater incidence of intra-island mobility amongst Hurilao residents is due to the fact that these moves involved some students attending primary schools in Aligu and Bwatnapne, and the transfer of rural health workers, Abwatuntora's Anglican priest and their respective spouses to other health centres and parishes throughout the island. With only one clinic and parish on Paama (both in Liro), the lack of intra-island employment-related mobility of Liro area residents is to be expected.

Malakula's attraction for Liro area men far outweighs that of neighbouring Epi (27 per cent versus 8 per cent of all moves) because of the ready availability of employment on Malakula's large commercial plantations and the decline of similar opportunities on Epi from the mid-1970s onwards.⁴ Yet it is surprising that Ambae and Malakula, which provide employment mainly in the plantation sector, should account for 22 and 15 per cent respectively of all moves by Hurilao men, and also surprising that 42 per cent of all moves to rural areas over the past ten years were associated with plantation labour given that only one of 99 absentees at the time of this study had been engaged in such activity. In view of the much greater viability for copra production on Raga than Paama, it seems paradoxical that such a large proportion of Hurilao men would engage in plantation labour when they could more profitably pursue the same work on their own or their *vava*'s land. Resolution of this paradox may be attained by shifting the level of analysis from the setting (better opportunities for cash-cropping in Hurilao than in the Liro area) to situational considerations to account for individual circumstances of plantation mobility.

Although equal proportions of moves by Liro area and Hurilao men to Malakula and neighbouring islands (Epi and Ambae) were associated with plantation labour, these moves reflect the operation of two quite distinct mobility systems, as indicated by marked differences in people's causal interpretations as to why they had engaged in those particular moves (Table 4.4). According to Liro area men, their recent plantation mobility originated primarily out of economic necessity: 79 per cent of their moves to Malakula and 83 per cent of their moves to Epi were interpreted this way. Hurilao men, however, explained their recent plantation experience in Malakula (80 per cent) and on Ambae (75 per cent) more explicitly in terms of economic convenience and of moving to fulfil customary social obligations.

Mobility of Usual Rural Residents: a Matter of Survival or Mere Convenience?

These contrasting interpretations correspond to previously stated discrepancies between both rural economies, as evident in a greater proportion of Hurilao households having access to a regular rural income outside agriculture; in a greater potential for most Hurilao households to engage in cash-cropping due to

⁴Sensing political change in Vanuatu, Epi's expatriate plantation owners began to wind down operations from the early 1970s onwards; since most of their plantation labour was recruited from Paama and the Shepherd Islands, Epi no longer figured as a prominent Paamese migration destination.

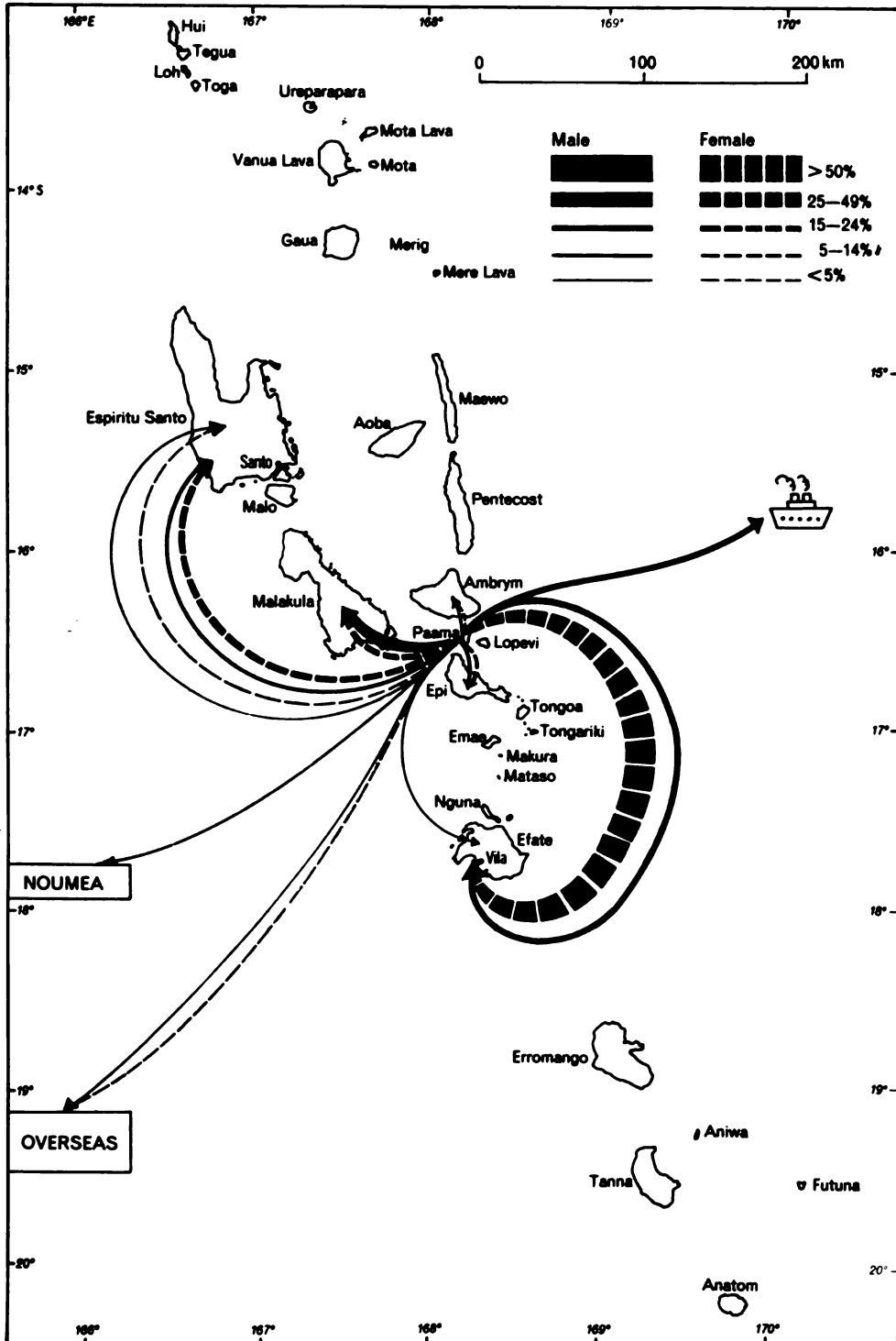


Figure 4.2 Principal destinations in the recent mobility of Liro area men and women, 1973-82

less land pressure and a tenure system flexible enough to adjust to demographic fluctuations; and in more Hurilao households additionally owning plantations elsewhere (50 per cent) compared with the Liro area (20 per cent). This comparative lack of local economic pressures forcing Hurilao residents to engage

Table 4.4 Reasons given for plantation mobility by Liro area and Hurilao men

	Liro area	Hurilao
Destination: Malakula		
Number of moves	54	11
•economically active	49 (91%)	11 (100%)
•plantation work	47 (87%)	10 (91%)
Reasons for plantation work ^a		
	47% General 'economic needs' (no further specification)	60% Sent by local chiefs to generate cash for the purchase of village boat
	17% Because no jobs available in town	20% Sent by father (brother) to help payoff his debt (through provision of free labour)
	15% To earn money for children's school fees	
Destination: neighbouring island ^b		
Number of moves	17	16
•economically active	13 (76%)	11 (69%)
•plantation work	12 (70%)	10 (63%)
Reasons for plantation work ^a		
	33% General 'economic needs' (no further specification)	50% Asked by relatives to come and help them with work (while there, found job on plantation)
	25% Because no jobs available in town	40% Taken there by family (while there, found job on plantation)
	25% To earn money for children's school fees	

^a Percentages based on number of moves to plantations.

^b Epi and Ambae, in the case of Liro area and Hurilao, respectively.

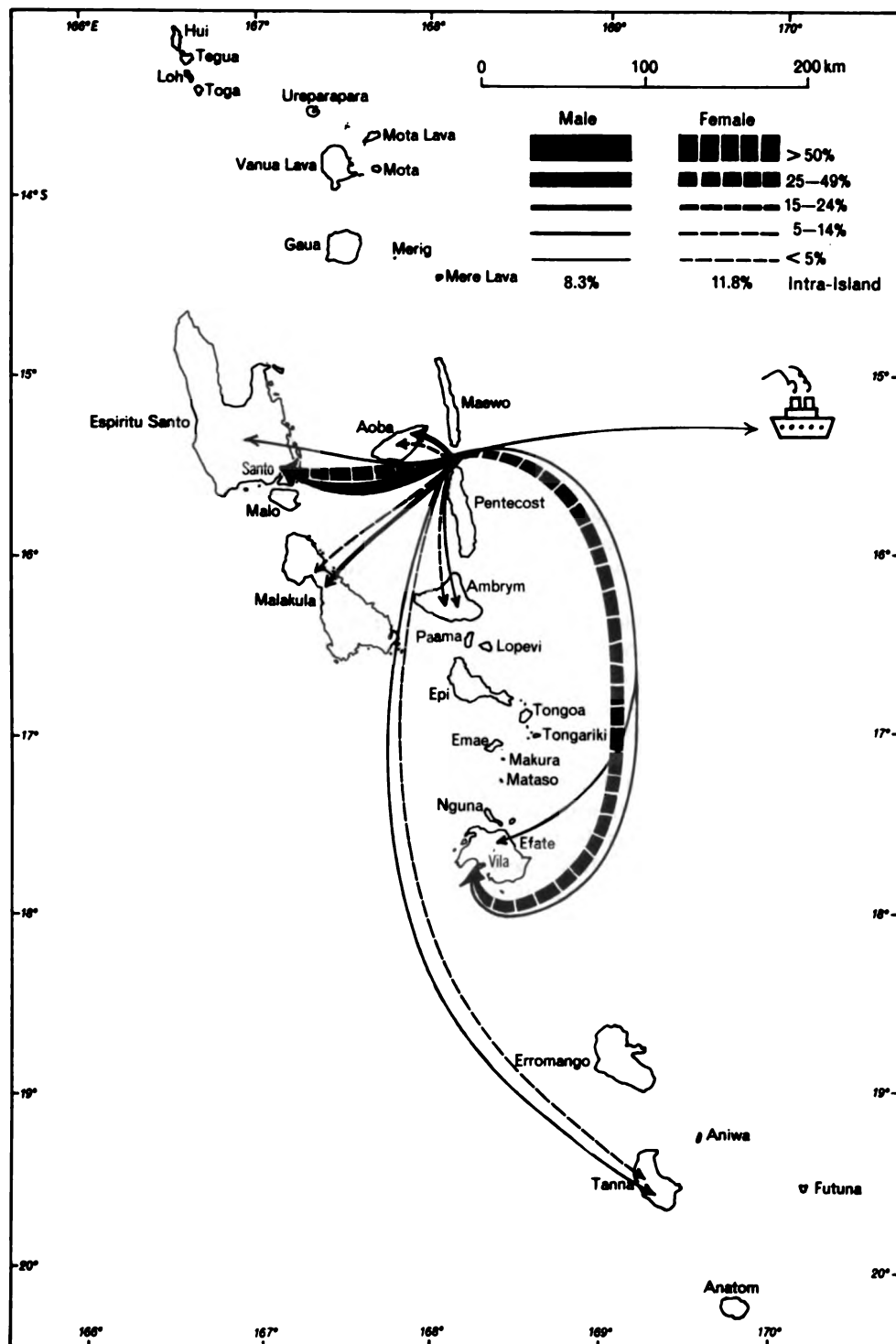


Figure 4.3 Principal destinations in the recent mobility of Hurilao men and women, 1973-82

periodically in employment elsewhere is furthermore reflected in the possibility of disengaging from copra production, as a result of low commodity prices and ongoing land disputes. It is significant that 15 of 21 plantation-owning Hurilao households belong to the highest rural income group, having at least one co-resident household member as a local wage or salary earner.

The extent to which some of the differences in the recent mobility of usual Liro area and Hurilao residents can actually be explained in terms of two different mobility systems, reflecting quite contrary underlying causal structures, is examined in two ways. First, the consideration of mobility as a household survival strategy (Wood 1981; Vlassoff 1983) requires an examination of certain socio-economic and demographic features transcending the individual as the exclusive level of analysis. A second emphasis focuses on Liro area and Hurilao residents' interpretations of their own mobility, and of Liro area and Hurilao mobility in general.

Household Characteristics

If differences in Liro area and Hurilao mobility are to be linked to contrasts in the social and economic setting, such variations in mobility should also emerge between households in each area in association with specific household characteristics. In other words, if access by more Hurilao than Liro area households to a regular rural income, and Hurilao's greater potential for cash-cropping, for example, can explain much of the variability in mobility from these areas, such influences ought also to be evident on a household level. Mobility from low-income households and from households without access to coconut plantations of their own would be expected to be more pronounced than movement from high-income households and from households with access to plantations of their own.

Contributions to rural household incomes, however, extend beyond local income earning opportunities and earnings derived from the periodic mobility of usual rural residents. This is indicated in much of the Melanesian mobility literature as well as by studies elsewhere which emphasize the importance of remittances received in rural areas (Connell et al. 1976; Connell 1981; Lipton 1980; Rubenstein 1983; Hugo 1983b; Morauta 1984. See also Chapter 6). The potential influence of remittances on mobility can be assessed by controlling for the number of presently absent household members;⁵ the influence of such contributions should then be reflected in an inverse relationship between the number of currently absent household members and the incidence of mobility amongst present household members.

Rural household size can also be expected to influence mobility. Considering access to rural incomes, and to possible assistance provided by absent household members, one should expect a curvilinear relationship between household size and the incidence of mobility amongst household members. Small households (up to three members) usually represent young couples, widows, or families with several absent household members, who may find it easier to survive on local resources (lowly paid rural job; small proceeds from local cash-cropping) and/or remittances, than medium-sized households (four or five members). The latter

⁵ Although remittances are often also received from usually non-co-resident kin, such occasional contributions from married sons and daughters (who, were it not for their current mobility, would live in a household on their own, often in another location) are negligible in the present case, since they do not contribute to the day-to-day existence of rural households as do contributions sent by absent spouses, or unmarried sons and daughters

predominantly represent young families with heads of households and their wives in their late twenties and early-to-mid thirties, who would not have bought land elsewhere when it was possible to do so ten or fifteen years ago and none of whose children are old enough to work elsewhere. Members of large households (six to nine members) ought to experience less economic pressure to move than members of medium-size households, since some of their members would be old enough to earn a wage or salary locally; large households also represent a greater pool of potential migrants, with a greater number of adolescents or adult sons and daughters exercising less pressure to move on each household member than would the presence of just one such person.

The influence of such household characteristics on mobility can be examined in two ways, focusing either on the household or on individual movers as units of analysis. Treating individuals as the unit of analysis on the basis of their household characteristics may introduce some bias towards particular household features which could well be, in overall terms, uncharacteristic of the study area. This occurs in the case where several members of one household moved during the reference period. An assessment of characteristics of 'stayer' or 'mover' households (Bedford 1971; Hugo 1975), on the other hand, also provides an unrealistic view of the mobility of usual rural residents, given its emphasis on current absentees and household characteristics at the time of the study. The problem here, apart from the fluctuating nature of mobility, relates primarily to the impossibility of establishing an accurate linkage between household characteristics prevailing at the time current absentees had left the Liro area and Hurilao. Considerable changes occur in household composition over time, and associated with them are fluctuations in household income, access to land and the number of absent household members—changes which cannot be accounted for in the same way as the consideration of age and marital status at the time of people's mobility, for example.

While assumptions of constancy (of household characteristics) for the mere sake of a diachronic analysis may appear the 'best' way out of this methodological dilemma, they cannot be justified given the extent of fluctuations in rural household composition over a period as long as ten years. Nor, on the other hand, can the disregard of household characteristics altogether be accepted as an alternative. Hence a shorter reference period is proposed here, namely the three years preceding fieldwork in rural Vanuatu (1980–82), which will at least allow a brief description of likely patterns and relationships. Although a three-year, rather than ten-year period also implies a considerable reduction in the total number of migrants and moves, particularly amongst Hurilao villagers (Table 4.5), the very absence of a more pronounced mobility amongst the latter can itself be taken as indicative of a relative lack of local pressure to engage repeatedly in mobility unlike the situation in the Liro area. The fact that only 16 out of 88 Hurilao villagers had moved at least once during the past three years, compared with 61 out of 170 Liro area residents, presents no major problem from an analytical point of view, considering that information on 'stayers' contributes as much to an understanding of mobility as information on 'movers'. A stronger association between male than female mobility and certain household characteristics, particularly amongst Liro area residents, is primarily due to the economic inactivity of many women who either accompanied their husbands or visited them for brief periods. The majority of Liro area men with recent mobility experience come from households which have no access to plantations on neighbouring Epi, have rural incomes of under VT 10,000 in 1982, have no currently absent members who could contribute to rural incomes through remittances, and which are households of medium-size

(Table 4.5). The fact remains, however, that about 40 per cent of men from these very households did not move at all during the three-year reference period. The simultaneous influence of several household characteristics appears as the most likely explanation, as indicated in Table 4.6.

Survival Versus Convenience: the View of Rural Residents

The predominance of Liro area men with recent mobility experience in households with only limited economic resources, underlines the survival image of mobility from this area. Although the small number of Hurilao residents who moved between 1980 and 1982 does not permit an analogous examination of the association between various household characteristics and mobility, the very fact that only few Hurilao residents move during these years in itself supports the argument that mobility from this area has been primarily a matter of convenience. The extent to which this notion concerning two different mobility systems actually extends beyond recent male plantation mobility to both female mobility and urban-oriented moves as well, can be examined in two ways: through villagers' interpretations of their own recent mobility; and through a more general causal evaluation of Liro area and Hurilao mobility, as experienced by 'stayers' and 'movers' alike.

This dual emphasis on causal interpretations of people's own and others' recent mobility is of utmost significance in theoretical terms. This is well-illustrated by a 33 year-old Liro man (Tony), who, while ascribing his own recent plantation mobility explicitly to economic needs, regards sorcery and

Table 4.5 The proportional distribution of 'movers' across different household categories.

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Males Number %	Females Number %	Males Number %	Females Number %
Ownership of coconut plantations				
Yes	(16) 25 ^a	(21) 14	(23) 13	(26) 15
No	(62) 58	(71) 25	(17) 35	(22) 13
Yearly household income^b				
<VT 10,000	(64) 58	(71) 23	(16) 25	(23) 0
>VT 10,000	(14) 21	(21) 24	(24) 21	(25) 28
Absent household members				
Yes	(37) 38	(44) 23	(14) 21	(16) 13
No	(41) 63	(48) 23	(26) 23	(32) 16
Household size				
Small (1-3)	(18) 33	(24) 25	(8) 13	(15) 13
Medium (4-5)	(35) 66	(40) 23	(11) 45	(12) 8
Large (6-9)	(25) 44	(28) 21	(21) 14	(21) 19

^a These percentages refer to the proportion of 'movers' amongst rural households. That is, of 16 men coming from households with access to coconut plantations, only 4 (25%) moved during the past three years.

^b A separate calculation of household incomes accounting for household members, and the further introduction of different weights for adults and children showed no meaningful difference.

kampani work pressures as the principal causes underlying the mobility of most other Liro area residents.

I have to go periodically to Malakula [plantations] because I need money to pay for my children's school-fees, but a great many men from here leave because of sorcery and continuous *kampani* work.

The interpretation of one's own action in a different light from the very same behaviour of others in similar circumstances is not unusual from a social-psychological perspective (Jones and Nisbett 1972; Nisbett and Valins 1972); however, such different processes of causal attribution underlying self- and other-perception are rarely acknowledged in social analysis. Suffice it to say that an exclusive conceptual emphasis in survey research in general focuses on either self- or other-interpretations. Over time, survey respondents often tend to simplify the motives and causes of their mobility which then leads the researcher into such well-documented yet sadly uncritical truisms that rural residents generally move for economic reasons. This is not to deny the validity of an economic explanation of mobility (the previous setting analysis and much of the discussion so far is ample proof of that). However, it must be emphasized that objective realities in both study areas are structurally far too different (as is explicit in a physically-existent rather than socially-created land pressure, for example) to speak simply in terms of economic causality. This is frequently a failing of research designs which examine variations in land-ownership and rural incomes as exclusive covariates of mobility. Objective realities, such as a lack of coconuts or enough land for cash-cropping, for example, often fail to impress rural residents to the same extent as they do mobility researchers; this is illustrated in Liro area residents' primary concern with local cash-cropping as more explicitly linked to low and unstable copra prices than to a physical lack of coconut trees and land (Haberhorn 1987: 173). This, and the fact that people live in, and act out of different realities (as indicated in Tony's statement above) necessitates a greater emphasis on cognitive aspects.

Table 4.6 The proportional distribution of Liro area 'movers' and 'stayers' across different household categories.

Number	Access to plantation		Annual household income		Absent household members		Household size		
	Yes (%)	No (%)	<VT10,000 (%)	>VT10,000 (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Small (%)	Med (%)	Large (%)
No access to plantation									
Stayer (26)			73	27	73	27	31	38	31
Mover (36)			92	8	36	64	17	58	25
Household income below VT10,000									
Stayer (27)	30	70			67	33	37	26	37
Mover (37)	11	89			37	63	13	57	30
No absent household members									
Stayer (15)	53	47	60	40			27	20	53
Mover (26)	11	89	88	12			12	54	34
Household size (Medium)									
Stayer (12)	17	83	48	42	75	25			
Mover (23)	9	91	81	9	39	61			

Despite analytical problems implicit in the likelihood of people engaging in a *post facto* rationalization of their past mobility, particularly concerning moves which occurred some time ago and/or which were only of a very short duration, this represents no major problem in the present context. The primary analytical concern is not with causal interpretations *per se*, but with contrasting perceptions by Liro area and Hurilao residents as they relate to a theme (survival versus convenience), and there are no reasons to assume that Liro area residents had different inclinations from Hurilao residents to rationalize their recent mobility. Causal interpretations of rural residents' own recent mobility yield a large variety of stated motivations and causes (Haberkorn 1987) which, for the purpose of comparative evaluation, were classified in the following six categories:

- (i) *economic needs* (for example, the need to obtain money to pay for children's school fees; not enough coconut trees to earn money to cover daily expenses);
- (ii) *employment-general* (for example, the desire to obtain a job in town; to do something different from subsistence gardening);
- (iii) *employment-transfer* (for example, transferred to another job; needing to work there to repay scholarship);
- (iv) *family-social pressure* (for example, to accompany husbands; to accompany parents; sent by chiefs to get money for village project);
- (v) *desire for change* (for example, frustrated by village life; needed a break from boredom at home);
- (vi) *miscellaneous* (for example, to get circumcised; sent to jail; attendance at school).

Although the first three categories overlap to some extent in that employment elsewhere carries some form of financial remuneration, this differentiation is conceptually important to the extent that employment-related mobility is not necessarily or always economically motivated, as illustrated in the case of Tom, a 22 year-old single man from Liro area.

In July of 1982, Tom spontaneously joined a group of men bound for a plantation on Malakula. Standing at the beach and farewelling others, Tom suddenly showed his intention to come along — clad in nothing but shorts, T-shirt and thongs — after being teased by those leaving, that he was 'a girl, afraid of working for a white man'. Of several men sitting on the beach that day, it transpired that all of them had engaged in plantation mobility under similar circumstances, when they were younger.

The importance of such chance events, or fortuitous mobility, emerges from several accounts of rural residents concerning their own mobility when they were much younger, as illustrated below.

Mathew, Liro area: In 1958 I began work on the Polynésie (major trading vessel), at the time I started this job, I was working in Santo with Burns Philp [a private company] for a few years ... Anyway, I had to go to Vila to buy something for a cousin's wedding which we could not buy in Santo, and I got a ride with our ship [reference to the Polynésie and to the fact that most crew were Paamese]. When we arrived in Port Vila, a friend told me that they were looking for a crew ... so I went to see the captain. He liked the thought of me working there because I was a foreman with Burns Philp ... I went to the store, bought what I came to Vila for, took it to a friend's house who was going to the wedding in Santo and asked him to take it with him, and to tell Burns Philp that I was going to work on the boat for a while ... that same night we left for Sydney.

Rosi, Hurilao: In earlier years, we women here were not allowed to go anywhere, because the men here did not allow us ... I got my first job in Santo through a sore tooth [1972] ... I had to go to the hospital there, because they could not do anything on

Ambae...after they pulled my tooth, I stayed a little while, because a family member asked me to look after his children ... I earned some money, but I liked town ... I stayed for one year.

Causal interpretations by rural men and women regarding their own recent mobility support the existence of different mobility systems in both areas (Table 4.7). A much greater proportion of moves by Liro area men are explicitly associated with economic considerations, whereas the proportion of moves primarily linked to non-economic and non-employment matters involving Hurilao men is substantially greater than amongst their Liro area counterparts; even if economic and employment considerations are grouped together, a substantial contrast remains between non-economic and non-employment considerations. The greater economic pressure (to move periodically) experienced by Liro area men is also clearly illustrated in that mobility associated with economic needs and the desire to engage in employment elsewhere account for the greatest proportion of moves, in contrast to more pronounced references by Hurilao men to social pressure and job transfers. Women from both study areas do not differ much in their interpretations. Family pressure and other forms of social influence far outweigh economic and employment considerations, which suggests that the notion about the operation of different mobility systems does not extend to Liro area and Hurilao women.

The greater economic pressure experienced by Liro area men is most pronounced amongst married men, illustrating the necessity of periodic engagement in employment elsewhere to support their rural households. Such explicit economic considerations are far less important or even nonexistent amongst single men. A change from the monotony of subsistence agriculture, the desire to engage in new types of work, and job rotation amongst family members, appear as the most frequently quoted reasons behind the recent mobility of single men. In addition, however, young Hurilao men are subject to more extensive social control in their mobility than young Liro area men, as evidenced by the fact that 38 per cent of their recent moves resulted from social pressure compared with only 6 per cent in the case of young Liro area men.

Rural residents' causal interpretations of the mobility of fellow residents not only support the general notion of two different mobility systems, but also provide a more accurate portrayal of the complex causality underlying

Table 4.7 Causal interpretations of own recent mobility by Liro area and Hurilao residents (%)

	Liro area						Hurilao					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
	Total	S	EM ^a	Total	S	EM	Total	S	EM	Total	S	EM
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Economic need	37	[19	54]	14	[17	13]	4	[-	9]	-		
Employment general	37	[45	29]	9	[14	7]	40	[39	42]	6	[11	-]
Employment transfer	7	[6	8]	2	[7	-]	15	[15	15]	3	[-	7]
Family-social pressure	7	[6	9]	69	[52	77]	33	[38	27]	62	[47	80]
Desire for change	4	[8	-]	1	[-	2]	-			3	[-	7]
Miscellaneous	8	[16	1]	4	[10	2]	7	[8	6]	15	[21	7]
Forgotten	-			-			-			12	[21	-]
Number of moves	202	[96	106]	91	[29	62]	72	[39	33]	34	[19	15]

^a Refers to single (S) and ever-married (EM) residents at the time of their move.

contemporary rural mobility. This is most aptly illustrated in the emphasis on phenomena reclassified as *social despair*, *economic convenience* and *social convenience*, which were not apparent in the previous interpretation of villagers' own recent mobility. While few men and women admitted to frustration, anger and bitterness concerning certain aspects of rural life, or referred to attractive features in destination areas, as influencing their own mobility (Table 4.7), discussion of the movements of others seemed to have had a cathartic effect. References to:

- land fights and associated intrigues;
- a feeling of powerlessness regarding the corruption of *kastom* by incompetent leaders, such as when the principle of 'crab antics' completely dominates *kampani* work;⁶ and
- the 'easier way' of earning money elsewhere (regular income and regular working hours) and a generally easier life style, particularly in town, not only appeared more frequently, but were generally accompanied by assertions that these represented the 'true reasons' behind Liro area and Hurilao mobility.

This contrast in causal attributions concerning one's own mobility and that of others is clearly reflected by Liro area and Hurilao women, who explained two-thirds of their own recent moves in terms of family reasons and other forms of social influence, while disregarding economic aspects (Table 4.7). Yet three out of four women regarded the latter as a major contributing factor to overall Liro area and Hurilao mobility, while references to family and other forms of social pressures were of no significance. Such discrepancies between self- versus other-perception are most apparent when causal interpretations are associated with critical, or even negative views about particular aspects of rural life, and when it is 'safer' to project one's own true feelings about mobility onto others, while describing personal moves in terms of more socially acceptable information.⁷ A man's periodic mobility to earn money for his children's school fees, for example, represents just such a socially-desirable statement. Undoubtedly true in most circumstances, particularly when he really has children, some of whom actually go to school, such reasoning is readily understood and accepted by all parties involved: himself, fellow villagers (who may also be inconspicuously present during such conversations) and the researchers. Yet, from a proper analytical and theoretical point of view, this information is quite meaningless. The same mobility can be explained in more realistic terms. Often money for school fees cannot be generated locally owing to socially-created land pressures (for instance, many fathers have not allocated land to their sons upon the sons' marriage); to *kampani* work commitments in the Liro area; and to most Hurilao people's lack of control over their means of production and profits. However, to (publicly) provide any such explanation is a social taboo in a society which does not tolerate open criticism, and where consensus is a most important behavioural norm. An acceptable alternative, however, is the projection of personal feelings onto others, such as on currently absent community members, or on people from neighbouring settlements. This is illustrated in the words of a 37-year-old Liro area man:

⁶ The most often heard example about *rong blong kastom* (interpreted here as misuse of *kastom*) is the continuous pressure of having to share the rewards of one's own work with lazy kin. Most people emphatically stated that they are glad to help the elderly, sick and general needy as a matter of self-respect and because of *kastom*, yet only do so grudgingly as far as lazy family members, kin and the local political elite are concerned.

⁷ Evaluation apprehension is the term social psychologists use to describe this situation (Kingsbury et al. 1975). See also Shulman and Berman (1975), Rosenthal and Rosnow (1969).

Many people from ... village all leave because their chiefs are a bit crazy. They only boss people around all the time, but really don't know very much themselves. That's now the reason why many people have left, because they are really angry.

Stated motivations and causes underlying contemporary Liro area and Hurilao mobility have been reclassified into seven general categories, to allow for a comparative assessment between men and women, 'stayers' and 'movers' from both islands. Since respondents were not constrained in the number and ordering of their interpretations,⁸ the material obtained is presented in two different forms to allow for a clear distinction between the general and specific manifestations of various causalities. The *general manifestation* of various causal categories refers to the proportion of respondents who made at least one reference to any particular category. Yet the fact that many respondents made multiple references to one and the same category requires acknowledgement of the relative significance attributed to these different phenomena, which are listed in Table 4.8 under *specific manifestations*.⁹ These causal interpretations of Liro area and Hurilao mobility again support the notion of two distinct mobility systems. Economic pressures, manifest in references to problems associated with land and general economic needs, are viewed by Liro area men as the predominant cause of mobility, while Hurilao men place a much greater emphasis on matters of social and economic convenience. Liro area men also rank social despair on a par with concern over land matters and above explicit economic needs, and attribute a much greater importance to its effect on mobility than either Hurilao men, or Liro area women. A less contrasting pattern emerges from female causal interpretations: although a similar proportion of Liro area and Hurilao women refer to economic needs as leading to widespread mobility, a more explicit contrast emerges in the specific manifestation of these various causal attributions. Liro area women place a much greater emphasis on economic needs and problems associated with land as the major influence on mobility (67 per cent of all references), compared with Hurilao women who attribute equal importance to matters of social and economic convenience (43 per cent) and to economic (and land) considerations (44 per cent).¹⁰

The exposure to greater social and economic pressures, resulting in a more pronounced experience of recent mobility by Liro area men than their Hurilao counterparts, is also evident in contrasting expectations concerning their future residence (Table 4.9). Although two-thirds of Liro area and Hurilao men, and an even greater proportion of women, expected to reside in their respective home areas in the immediate future,¹¹ considerable variations emerge amongst and between men from both study areas, when cross-classifying such statements with age, which suggests an exposure to different social and economic pressures throughout the life-cycle of rural men. Different causalities underlying female mobility, and the fact that the majority expected to reside in their respective home

⁸ When asked their general opinion as to why people from the Liro area or Hurilao move elsewhere, respondents could give as many different interpretations as they felt appropriate; most made reference to at least 2-3 different features, nine being the maximum number supplied by a few Liro area and Hurilao men.

⁹ They are arrived at by adding up all references made to each of the seven causal categories accounting for all references made; with the denominator (total number of references made by each person) being identical in all seven computations, it was possible to compute the specific salience of each category controlling for several different independent variables, such sex, age, island and migrant status.

¹⁰ Migrant status and age yielded no major digressions in causal attributions from the general trend along gender and island lines.

¹¹ Villagers were asked where they realistically expected (not wished or intended) to live five years after the survey. Such a clearly defined reference period was preferred to a generalized reference to the 'future' (as evident in many mobility publications) to minimize emotional wishful thinking.

areas, account for the lack of similar associations amongst and between Liro area and Hurilao women. The large proportion of men over 45 years of age who expected to reside in the Liro area (78 per cent) and Hurilao (87 per cent) in five years time, without engaging in temporary circulation, is readily explained by the fact that this age group is most likely to own land and coconut plantations or to exercise a much greater control over seasonal land distribution and resource allocation. This, plus the fact that they have to support fewer dependents (most children would be married and live in households on their own) and are more likely to be beneficiaries of economic assistance from adult children, means that

Table 4.8 Causal interpretations of mobility given by 'stayers' and 'movers' in Liro area and Hurilao.

	Liro area						Hurilao					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
	Total	Stayers	Movers	Total	Stayers	Movers	Total	Stayers	Movers	Total	Stayers	Movers
General manifestations (%)												
Economic needs	53	54	52	73	74	72	58	36	66	75	72	78
No land	63	54	64	8	3	11	23	18	24	15	16	13
Social despair	58	45	60	8	8	7	43	36	45	19	24	13
Economic convenience	10	9	10	3	3	4	48	36	52	44	44	44
Social convenience	19	27	18	13	8	17	63	66	62	60	48	74
Urban attractions	15	9	16	16	11	20	25	18	28	17	8	26
Miscellaneous	5	-	6	12	13	11	40	18	48	6	8	4
Specific manifestations (%)												
Economic needs	21	28	19	63	67	60	17	12	19	39	41	36
No land	29	28	29	4	2	6	7	8	6	5	6	4
Social despair	28	21	30	5	5	5	15	15	14	6	9	3
Economic convenience	3	3	3	1	1	2	21	22	20	19	22	17
Social convenience	9	17	7	8	7	10	22	26	21	24	18	30
Urban attractions	7	4	8	9	7	10	8	11	7	6	3	9
Miscellaneous	3	-	4	9	12	8	10	7	12	2	2	1
Specific manifestations (Ranked 1-7)												
Economic needs	3	2	3	1	1	1	3	4	3	1	1	1
No land	1	1	2	6	6	5	7	6	7	6	5	5
Social despair	2	3	1	5	5	6	4	3	4	4	4	6
Economic convenience	7	6	7	7	7	7	2	2	2	3	2	3
Social convenience	4	4	5	4	4	3	1	1	1	2	3	2
Urban attractions	5	5	4	3	3	2	6	5	6	5	6	4
Miscellaneous	6	-	6	2	2	4	5	7	5	7	7	7
Number of stayers and movers	78	11	67	92	38	54	40	11	29	48	25	23

they are more likely to cope locally with day-to-day survival without having to engage in employment elsewhere. Day-to-day survival, however, poses a particular problem for Liro area men with young families (25–44 years of age): 28 per cent anticipated continuous temporary circulation, whereas none of their Hurilao counterparts showed such inclinations. A further one-third did not rule out the possibility of an urban relocation within the next five years, with nearly half of all Hurilao men in that age-group thinking along similar lines.

A much smaller proportion of young Liro area men (14 per cent) than young men from Hurilao (40 per cent) expected to reside at home in five years time. This situation, and the fact that a greater number make their future rural residence contingent upon obtaining urban employment (43 per cent and 20 per cent respectively), confirm earlier discussions regarding the exposure to different forms of social and economic pressure, where it was stressed that young Liro area men play only a minor role in the day-to-day running of their households and villages, other than providing 'free labour' to local *kampanis*. Young Liro area men have no land of their own, have fewer chances to obtain local wage-employment, are not responsible for their own subsistence production as in Hurilao, and experience a far greater dependence on wage-labour elsewhere to obtain the necessary cash for bridewealth payments. Such differences in the underlying causality of Liro area and Hurilao mobility notwithstanding, temporary rural-based circulation appears equally unattractive to young men from both areas, of whom one-third expected to live in town in five years time.

Focusing on the same household characteristics discussed above shows that a much larger proportion of Liro area men who expect no change in their residential status in the immediate future come from households with either access to plantations on neighbouring Epi, or from households with an annual rural income exceeding VT 10,000, or from small rural households (Table 4.10). This pattern, and the lack of similar associations amongst Hurilao men (except for a greater proportion of men from small households who expect to reside in Hurilao in five years time) correspond to the picture previously established when

Table 4.9 Variations in future residential expectations between various age groups

		Males				Females			
		Home area		Town		Home area		Town	
		No-CM %	Some-CM ^a %	Yes %	Depends ^b %	No-CM %	Some-CM %	Yes %	Depends %
Liro area	[78] ^c	51	18	12	19	83	3	7	7 [92]
15–24	[14]	14	7	36	43	73	4	15	8 [26]
25–44	[32]	41	28	13	19	89	3	–	9 [35]
45+	[32]	78	13	–	9	84	3	7	7 [31]
Hurilao	[40]	63	3	20	15	88	8	2	2 [48]
15–24	[10]	40	–	40	20	82	18	–	– [17]
25–44	[15]	53	–	27	20	90	–	5	5 [19]
45+	[15]	87	7	–	7	92	8	–	– [12]

^a (No-CM): people do not expect to move elsewhere, not even engage in temporary circulation.

(Some-CM): some temporary circulation is expected

^b (Yes): people definitely expect to reside in town in five years.

(Depends): urban residence contingent on other factors

^c Figures in brackets refer to total number.

discussing the mobility of Liro area and Hurilao villagers throughout the past ten years, and where variations in periodic rural-based circulation were discussed in terms of two distinct mobility systems.

Table 4.10 Future residential expectations amongst Liro area and Hurilao men across different household categories.

	Liro area males				Hurilao males			
	Home area		Town		Home area		Town	
	No-CM	Some-CM ^a	Yes	Depends ^a	No-CM	Some-CM	Yes	Depends
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Access to plantations								
Yes	[16] ^b 75	19	—	6	[23] 61	—	26	13
No	[62] 45	18	15	22	[17] 65	6	12	18
Annual household income								
<VT10,000	[64] 47	22	12	19	[16] 69	6	13	13
>VT10,000	[14] 71	—	7	21	[24] 58	—	25	17
Household size								
1-3	[18] 67	11	11	11	[8] 75	—	—	25
4-5	[35] 43	17	11	29	[11] 55	9	27	9
6-9	[25] 52	24	12	12	[21] 62	—	24	14
Absent household members								
Yes	[37] 51	8	16	24	[14] 64	7	14	14
No	[41] 51	27	7	15	[26] 62	—	23	15

^a See Table 4.9.

^b Figures in brackets refer to total number.

The evidence of two different mobility systems operating within the social and economic settings of mobility among Liro area and Hurilao villagers also emerges from their interpretations of their expected residence in the immediate future. Whereas 44 per cent of Hurilao men explained their expected continued residence there in terms of access to local resources, and 48 per cent related such future residential expectations to a better and cheaper way of rural life there, only a small proportion of Liro area men (23 per cent) saw their expected future residence in this area in such terms. Fifty per cent of Liro area men instead made their continued rural residence contingent on other factors, such as developments in the labour market elsewhere (i.e. availability of urban employment). This contrast, together with the more pronounced emphasis on economic considerations for future rural circulation and rural-to-urban mobility by Liro area men not only confirms the survival versus convenience aspect of Liro area and Hurilao-based circulation, but also underlines the fact that rural residential expectations of many Liro area men principally reflect their lack of any real choice.

CHAPTER 5

Migrants in Port Vila: Villagers on Leave or Committed Urbanites?

The length of urban residence seems a sensible measure for ascertaining whether or not rural migrants in town are merely temporary city-dwellers (i.e. circular migrants operating from a rural base) or committed urbanites. However, degrees of urban commitment and permanence are rather difficult to determine empirically. This is aptly illustrated in the Melanesian mobility literature. References to an emerging urban permanence of migrant groups in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu during the 1960s (on the basis of the many years these people have already lived in town), appear alongside more numerous assertions that despite such long rural absences, these people still regard rural areas as home, and as places to which they intend to return permanently at some unspecified time in the future. However, to paraphrase Goldstein (1978: 30), can one justify regarding an individual as a temporary urban resident 'who moves to an urban location and lives there for 20, 30 or 40 years simply because he intends, or is even likely, to return to his home village upon retirement'? The fact that urban migrants, technically speaking, could always return to their 'home' villages irrespective of how long they have been residing in town provides a methodological problem in that urban permanence can be established unequivocally only after their death (Fahey 1979; Morauta 1979; Connell 1986). This points to a crucial conceptual absurdity characterizing much mobility research, which seemingly applies two distinct yardsticks for similar mobility phenomena in developed and developing countries. Ward (1980: 129) at least implicitly pinpoints this inconsistency:

I doubt if we would regard a person from Coffs Harbour who has been employed and resident in Sydney for 10 years but who hankers to return to his home town upon retirement as a temporary absentee or a transient in Sydney. If that person is unfortunate enough to die before retirement and is buried in Sydney, does he then become a permanent migrant by virtue of changed intent? The change in his permanent/temporary status will of course not have made a scrap of difference to his economic or social role over the previous 10 years.

To rely on merely *post facto* evidence for differentiating between temporary and more permanent urbanites is as irrelevant as the overemphasis on future residential intentions is conceptually inadequate. What is required is a less absolute and more comprehensive understanding of urban permanence, one that incorporates both static indices of permanence (e.g. demographic make-up of urban migrant populations; length of urban residence; urban labour force participation) and more dynamic measures (e.g. urban-rural contacts; future

residential expectations). In addition an examination of changes in the urban economy which are conducive to the emergence of new forms of population mobility must also be incorporated. This would ultimately permit a more realistic and meaningful assessment of the extent to which urban migrants are likely to remain in town for years to come, or represent circular migrants 'on the move'.

A Demographic Profile of Urban Migrants

A census of the Liro area and Hurilao migrant population in Port Vila in February 1983 revealed a total population of 264 residents from the Liro area, and 71 residents from Hurilao, living in 69 and 18 households respectively. The large proportion of Liro area and Hurilao migrant children in town (80 and 78 per cent of whom respectively were born in Port Vila rather than had moved there with their parents) and the well balanced adult migrant sex ratios, particularly in the age-groups of 25+ years (Figure 5.1), convey a very different picture of mobility compared with the demographic profile of earlier migrants reported in much of the Melanesian literature. Instead, these characteristics suggest a long-term rather than temporary urban orientation of these people.

The only notable demographic difference between Liro area and Hurilao migrants is the virtual absence of Hurilao migrants over 45 years of age. The fact that Liro area men and women over 45 years of age represent 20 per cent of all adult migrants in town suggests a more belated stabilization of Port Vila-bound mobility by Hurilao than Liro area migrants. The fact that 95 and 100 per cent of all ever-married Liro area and Hurilao migrants respectively (representing two thirds of the entire adult migrant population from both study areas) reside in Port Vila with their wives and children also suggests a long-term rather than temporary urban presence on the part of these migrants.¹

Amongst Liro area and Hurilao men in Port Vila, single migrants predominate only amongst those under 25 years of age (90 per cent) whereas about half of their female counterparts in Port Vila are married. This relatively high proportion of young married Liro area and Hurilao women in town, in the context of a much greater urban presence of young males than females, is explained primarily by the existence of different mobility norms (Chapter 2).

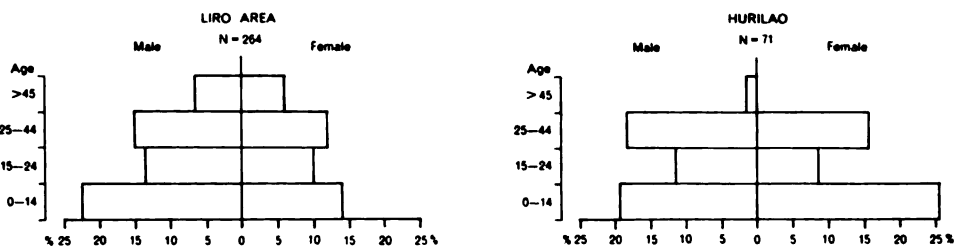


Figure 5.1 Age and sex distribution of Liro area and Hurilao migrants in Port Vila

¹ Bedford's (1971: 267) study of Shepherd Island migrants in Port Vila in the late 1960s also found a very high proportion of men in town who were accompanied by their spouses (42 of 51 men); however, only half of these families had all their children living with them in town.

Although the relatively balanced age and sex structure of Liro area and Hurilao migrants in Port Vila suggests a considerable degree of urban stabilization, such demographic indices by themselves reveal little about the long-term orientation of urban residents. The predominance of families could merely reflect a change in the structure of rural-based circulation—for example, that husbands have become more inclined to take wives and children along for short journeys to town—rather than a change in the process of mobility itself, such as a longer duration of urban residence. While an examination of the period of urban residence appears to be a logical way to determine whether this is so, the extent of urban intermarriage amongst different migrant groups may provide even more meaningful evidence than a simple account of marital status. Several authors have argued that such couples are most likely to show greater 'commitment to urban life where they have access to both groups of *wantoks*' (Connell 1986:15), rather than face social problems in the home area of either spouse (Connell and Curtain 1982:126). Connell and Curtain also stress the availability of fewer rural opportunities for such couples, and the fact that they produce children with few emotional ties to either parental area as further indicators of a greater urban commitment (see also Bonnemaïson 1985). Amongst the fifty married Liro area men in Port Vila who are accompanied by their wives, only just over half are married to women from the same area; amongst their Hurilao counterparts, just three of thirteen men are married to Hurilao women.

A much higher level of educational attainment amongst urban than rural Liro area and Hurilao residents corresponds to findings reported elsewhere in Melanesia (Conroy 1970, 1976, 1977; Strathern 1975; Bathgate 1975; Young 1977a, 1985; Curtain 1975; Townsend 1977; Ward 1980; Frazer 1985), and in other developing areas (Wallerstein 1965; Caldwell 1969; Watters 1970; Connell et al. 1976; Portes 1978; Jones and Ward 1981). Fifty seven per cent of all Liro area men and women in Port Vila, and 71 per cent of Hurilao men and women in town have experienced at least full primary education, in contrast to just 35 and 31 per cent respectively of their rural counterparts. The higher level of education displayed by urban Hurilao residents, with 56 per cent of all adults having experienced at least three years of secondary education compared with only 15 per cent of their Liro area counterparts, and the marked contrast in levels of educational attainment between urban and rural Hurilao residents both corroborate earlier remarks about differences in the normative context of Paamese and Raga mobility. Hurilao mobility is generally accepted and encouraged only when it is associated with 'good' urban employment and the utilization of one's education (see also Strathern 1972, 1977).

Length of Urban Residence

Despite the apparent plausibility of the underlying assumption that the longer migrants remain in town the less likely they are to return to their rural 'homes' (Morauta and Ryan 1982: 49), years of urban residence *per se* should not, as Mitchell (1976) emphasizes, be taken as an indicator of the probability that certain people are more likely than others to remain urban residents. Neither are long periods of urban residence necessarily accompanied by the emergence of an urban proletariat (Elkan 1976). Mitchell's and Elkan's propositions are of particular relevance in the context of circular mobility, where it could be argued just as convincingly that the likelihood of return mobility increases with the number of years spent in town. Statements by two fifty year-old Liro area men in Port Vila, who have resided there for over fifteen years, illustrate this conundrum.

- I have been in Vila for twenty years. Why should I return to Liro? Life on Paama is very hard, and I have forgotten how to manage the hard everyday work [on the island].
- Young people will remain in town for many years to come. But I will return home next year, because I have been away for a long time already.

The fact that current Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila have lived there for an average of 10.5 and 8.2 years respectively clearly indicates a greater long-term urban orientation than is the case among their rural counterparts, whose periodic absences throughout the past ten years averaged between six and twelve months. While Liro area men and women, together with Hurilao men show remarkable similarities in their average length of urban residence, this clearly emerges as a more recent phenomenon amongst Hurilao women. Whether or not this feature reflects a belated process of urban stabilization of Hurilao women or is simply indicative of these women being much younger is discussed below (Table 5.1). Given that:

- in 1965, the median length of residence by urban migrants in Port Vila was 5.6 years (Brookfield and Brown Glick 1969: 44);
- in 1969, only 26 of 172 Shepherd Islanders interviewed by Bedford (1971:266) in Port Vila considered themselves to be permanent residents, while those defined as 'movers' averaged a mere 1.5 years of residence in town (1971:275); and
- in 1972, 52 per cent of 590 household heads interviewed by Vienne and Vienne (1972) resided in Port Vila for less than 1 year, a proportion similar to that reported by Bonnemaison (1977b: 64) for Port Vila in 1973 with 58 per cent;

the average length of urban residence by Liro area and Hurilao migrants in Port Vila clearly points to an intensification of a more stabilized rural-urban mobility during the 1970s. These data support Bonnemaison's (1977a, 1985) assertion that social and economic transformations in the late 1960s and early 1970s could give rise to an increase in more permanent urban mobility, and also corroborate the earlier discussion regarding a structural change in ni-Vanuatu mobility in the aftermath of the New Caledonian nickel boom of the early 1970s.

However, it is possible that Liro area and Hurilao mobility to Port Vila may not have undergone such changes at all, but that the long periods of urban residence simply result from older migrants having spent a very long time in town. The latter clearly holds true when controlling for the age structure of current residents (Table 5.1), but men and women over 45 years of age account for only a small proportion of all urban Liro area and Hurilao residents. The fact, however, that the shortest average urban residence (involving 15-24-year-olds) is primarily associated with age rather than with a lack of long-term urban orientation is illustrated in comparative indices of 'urban stabilization' (Table 5.2).²

This table also reveals that the difference in the length of urban residence between young Liro area and Hurilao women (6.4 and 2.8 years respectively) arises primarily from an age factor. The contrast amongst their male counterparts instead remains very pronounced, as indicated in Table 5.1, which points to a much more recent participation of young Hurilao men in rural-urban mobility. The fact that these Hurilao men also lived a much smaller proportion of their adult lives in Port Vila than did young women from this area is somewhat

² Mitchell (1976: 456) introduced this measure to reflect the proportion of time spent in town since the age of fifteen. He explains that this age is the approximate time when 'people make decisions to go to town or stay away' (from rural areas). As regards the computation of this index see Table 7.2.

striking in light of the earlier emphasis on gender-related mobility norms. Yet, given that Raga parents do not interfere with the mobility of their sons and daughters providing that moves to town are associated with 'good' (white-collar) employment, these contrasts could well owe something to differences in the urban labour force participation between young Hurilao men and women.

Table 5.1 Years of residence of Liro area and Hurilao migrants in Port Vila by age and sex

Age	Number	Males			Females			
		Mean	SD ^a	Median	Number	Mean	SD	Median
Liro area	(67)	10.1	(7.1)	9.3	(58)	11.0	(7.7)	9.3
15-24	(23)	5.8	(5.7)	3.4	(16)	6.4	(5.9)	4.0
25-34	(19)	11.1	(6.6)	10.3	(24)	10.5	(5.6)	9.5
35-44	(13)	12.2	(4.3)	11.8	(9)	11.4	(5.8)	11.0
45-54	(7)	11.7	(7.4)	9.3	(7)	18.0	(9.1)	15.0
55+	(5)	17.8	(10.1)	14.0	(2)	27.5	(12.0)	27.5
Hurilao	(18)	9.2	(7.5)	8.5	(14)	6.8	(4.3)	7.5
15-24	(5)	2.8	(2.2)	2.0	(5)	2.8	(2.6)	2.3
25-34	(6)	8.3	(6.8)	8.5	(6)	9.0	(1.7)	8.5
35-44	(6)	13.5	(7.5)	13.5	(3)	9.0	(6.2)	11.0
45-54	(1)	21.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
55+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

^aSD: = Standard deviation.

Table 5.2 Proportion of adulthood lived in various locations by Liro area and Hurilao residents of Port Vila by age and sex^a

Age	Number of males	Males			Number of females	Females		
		(A) ^b	(B) ^c	(C) ^d		(A)	(B)	(C)
		%	%	%		%	%	%
Liro area	(67)	59	66	78	(58)	62	69	74
15-24	(23)	64	70	82	(16)	66	76	84
25-34	(19)	73	75	87	(24)	68	72	75
35-44	(13)	53	71	81	(9)	48	52	58
45-54	(7)	35	40	60	(7)	54	69	72
55+	(5)	38	38	54	(2)	55	55	56
Hurilao	(18)	49	64	79	(14)	57	65	78
15-24	(5)	34	50	65	(5)	60	62	72
25-34	(6)	49	60	87	(6)	67	73	86
35-44	(6)	59	74	79	(3)	33	54	72
45-54	(1)	66	100	100	-	-	-	-
55+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

^a These percentages were computed in the following way: [Years lived elsewhere since age 15 / (Current age - 15)] × 100.

^b Proportion of adulthood lived in town.

^c Proportion of adulthood lived elsewhere since last residing on home island.

^d Proportion of adulthood lived outside home island.

The length of urban residence among 25–34-year-olds and the proportion of time they have spent in Port Vila as adults reveal a similar picture: a more belated entry into Port Vila-bound mobility by Hurilao men than those from Liro area and, among Hurilao absentees, a greater proportion of their adulthood lived there by the women than by the men.

A third major contrast lies in the stark discrepancies between Liro area men and women over 45 years of age, and in the relative absence of urban Hurilao residents in this age group. Although stochastic interference cannot be ruled out given the small number of migrants involved, these contrasts between Liro area men and women are readily explained in terms of different migrant cohorts, rather than as true fluctuations along gender lines. Five of the nine women in question are widows who elected to remain in town after their husbands' deaths, while two women have never married. In contrast, four of the twelve men older than 45 years of age have their wives living on Paama, two are widowers, and the spouses of two further men have not been interviewed.

These low indices of urban stabilization amongst Liro area men over 45 years of age could be explained first in terms of a greater likelihood of mortality interference, as suggested by the fact that five of nine Liro area women in this age group are widows who remained in town after the death of their husbands. Secondly, they may be due to a life-cycle artefact, with younger men having had fewer years to live elsewhere than these older Liro area men in town (a hypothesis which will be examined in the following chapter). A third explanation for these low indices could lie in a greater incidence of stage-migration (Young 1977b) in this age-group. Yet an examination of the proportion of their adulthood lived elsewhere since last residing on Paama when compared with the time spent in Port Vila rules out this explanation. Incidentally, stage-migration plays a more prominent role amongst Liro area women in this age-group. By taking into account the time spent elsewhere immediately preceding current residence in Port Vila, this measure provides a more accurate description of a long-term urban orientation than would mere emphasis on the time lived in Port Vila since last residing on their home island. In other words, although a three-year-long uninterrupted residence by a 21-year-old Hurilao man in Port Vila, for example, may reveal little regarding his degree of long-term urban commitment, a continuous absence of seven years from his home village due to having attended secondary school elsewhere, may well portray such a person as a committed rural absentee.

A preliminary examination of adult life-time mobility of Liro area men aged 45 and older points to considerable rural-based circulation prior to their current residence in town (Table 5.2). Although a consideration of such moves may add little to the conceptualization of long-term urban commitment, the recognition of urban migrants' earlier engagement in other forms of mobility not only puts the comparatively low figures of Liro area men aged 45 and older into a new perspective, but also lends support to the hypothesis of a recent structural change in ni-Vanuatu population mobility.

Urban Labour Force Participation

An appraisal of the labour force participation of Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila may provide a more realistic basis for examining the question of temporary versus long-term residence since skilled and semi-skilled occupations are more conducive to long-term urban employment and residence than to temporary circulation (van Ammersfort 1978; Connell 1985; Frazer 1985). Bed-

ford's (1971) data on urban employment amongst Shepherd Islanders in Port Vila during the late 1960s underline such a pattern. Some 40 per cent of those working in skilled and semi-skilled occupations 'had continuously lived in town for four or more years, and did not anticipate returning to the villages they claimed as "home" for some time' (1971: 281). Regarding this situation in the early and mid-1970s, Bonnemaïson (1985) emphasized that rural-based circulation was highest amongst peri-urban plantation labour and unqualified wage-labour in town, whereas urban permanence increased with a rise in the level of professional qualifications. The intervening importance of education and professional qualifications in the context of a change from temporary rural-based circulation towards long-term urban residence has been widely documented throughout the Melanesian mobility literature. Young (1985) emphasizes that people with some formal education and marketable skills are most likely to obtain secure (hence long-term) employment. Connell and Curtain (1982: 127) point to the growing number of bureaucrats and other elite workers with skills that are inappropriate in rural areas, and who remain in town by being 'encouraged to do so'³. Bonnemaïson (1974), Strathern (1975) and Townsend (1977) emphasize that villagers not only clearly differentiate between distinct employment opportunities available to educated and uneducated people, but expect and accept that both groups will ultimately follow different employment and mobility patterns. This has previously been stressed when discussing the interference of Raga parents in the mobility of their unmarried sons and daughters, whenever such urban-bound moves are not explicitly associated with obtaining 'good' employment.

This emphasis on the quality of urban employment, where skilled jobs bring with them a higher social prestige for employees (and their rural families), a better salary or wage, and greater job security and better career prospects (upward mobility), is illustrated in clearly distinct forms of Liro area and Hurilao labour force participation (Table 5.3). Given the large number of employment categories relative to the small Hurilao sample, these employment categories have been classified into three groups to highlight the differential emphasis on prestige and status placed on occupations by Liro area and Hurilao residents:

- *High Prestige Occupations* (Categories 1–3), comprise all jobs entailing any of the following components: secondary education; tertiary or other professional training; high salary; guaranteed employment tenure; performance of work in an office ('where people can dress well, smell nice all the time and don't get dirty').
- *Medium Prestige Occupations* (Categories 4–5), comprise lower-level white-collar positions, such as sales workers with one of the larger urban companies, for example, with Burns Philp or Ballande, and to service workers in the hotel- and tourism-industry (great emphasis is placed, once again, on *insaed wok*, that is, an indoors occupation). Unskilled labour in the latter, such as gardeners and cleaners are not included here.
- *Low Prestige Occupations* (Categories 6–9), comprise all forms of unskilled labour. *Haosgal* (domestic servants) are included in this category rather than amongst service workers because of the low status ascribed to such positions, and the considerable differentiation Liro area and Hurilao residents make between such jobs and employment in the hotel- and tourism-industry.

³ Watters (1970: 135) emphasized this point while criticizing Western education as inappropriate for local conditions in the Pacific Islands, creating would-be migrants and migrants without providing them with the economy that goes with it. See also Portes (1978) referring to a similar problem in Latin America. Conroy (1970) concludes, with regard to Papua New Guinea, that an increase in rural-urban migration has to be recognized as one of the costs of an expanding education system.

Table 5.3 Labour force participation of Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila

	Males		Females	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Liro area	(67)		(58)	
Economically active	(64)	(96)	(35)	(60)
(1) Professional	(1)	(1.5)	(3)	(5.2)
Technical				
(2) Skilled trade	(5)	(7.5)		
(3) Clerical	(6)	(9.0)	(2)	(3.4)
(4) Sales	(7)	(10.4)	(2)	(3.4)
(5) Service	(11)	(16.4)	(1)	(1.7)
(6) Agriculture	(-)		(1)	1.7
(7) Transport	(3)	(4.5)		
(8) Labour	(28)	(41.8)	(26)	(44.8)
(9) Informal sector	(3)	(4.5)		
Economically inactive	(3)	(4)	(23)	(40)
(a) Housewife			(21)	(36.2)
(b) Student	(-)		(-)	
(c) Unemployed	(3)	(4.5)	(2)	(3.4)
(d) Retired				
Hurilao	(18)		(14)	
Economically active	(18)	(100)	(11)	(79)
(1) Professional				
Technical	(3)	(16.7)	(3)	(21.4)
(2) Skilled trade	(5)	(27.8)		
(3) Clerical	(3)	(16.7)	(1)	(7.1)
(4) Sales			(2)	(14.3)
(5) Service	(1)	(5.6)	(1)	(7.1)
(6) Agriculture	(1)	(5.6)		
(7) Transport	-	-		
(8) Labour	(5)	(27.8)	(4)	(28.6)
(9) Informal sector				
Economically inactive	(-)	(-)	(3)	(21)
(a) Housewife			3	(21.4)
(b) Student				
(c) Unemployed	-			

More than half of all Hurilao men are engaged in high prestige employment compared to only 15 per cent of their Liro area counterparts. Two Liro area men are employed as sales and service workers for every one in high prestige employment, whereas amongst Hurilao men this situation is not only reversed but also far more pronounced. Beyond these stark contrasts in high and medium prestige employment, about half of Liro area men, and about one-third of Hurilao men work in low prestige jobs. In terms of employment/unemployment their overall economic activity rates closely resemble those reported for Paamese (88 per cent) and Pentecost residents (90 per cent) in Port Vila in the 1979 census. Between Liro area and Hurilao women, similar discrepancies emerge. While about half of the Hurilao women work in high and medium prestige employment

and just over one quarter work in low prestige jobs, half of their Liro area counterparts work as unskilled labour. Furthermore, a much higher proportion of Liro area than Hurilao women is economically inactive. Analogous to male economic activity rates, the proportion of economically active Liro area women closely resembles the figure reported for Paamese women in the 1979 census (55 per cent), whereas the figure for Hurilao women appears much higher than that for all Pentecost women in 1979 (53 per cent), which could be due to the small sample of urban Hurilao women or to a higher employment profile of Raga than Pentecost women in general.

Two major aspects emerge from these occupational profiles and underline a long-term rather than merely temporary urban presence of Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila. First, urban unemployment is very low amongst Liro area residents and non-existent amongst their Hurilao counterparts. Secondly, there is virtually no involvement in informal sector activities. Only three Liro area men earned their livelihood this way, doing occasional odd jobs around town, mainly gardening, washing cars and sweeping stores. In urban economies of most developing countries where urban growth rates are high, the informal sector provides employment for a large number of migrants (Roberts 1978), and these economic activities are also clearly associated with a temporary rather than a long-term urban residence (Hugo 1975; Perlman 1976; Forbes 1979; Roberts 1978; Hetler 1986). Such informal economies did not exist in Vanuatu in 1983, at least in terms of providing an employment niche for migrants from outer islands. Pavements packed with hawkers, a usual sight throughout most cities and towns of developing countries, are rarely found in Port Vila. Although prepared food, such as *laplap* (a form of pudding) as well as fish and fresh produce is sold outside the Port Vila market, these activities appear to be firmly controlled by residents of Port Vila's four peri-urban villages, Fila, Pango, Erakor and Mele, rather than involve migrants from islands other than Efate.⁴ Some Liro area and Hurilao migrants occasionally sell foodstuffs and, more recently, kava and island handicrafts; but such activities are pursued in conjunction with regular employment, if at all, and in most instances do not even supplement urban incomes but are carried out on behalf of rural relatives. Only two Liro area women occasionally supplement their household incomes selling home-made dresses, but this is primarily to other Paamese women, rather than on the Port Vila market or to Chinese and Vietnamese merchants in town. Except for the three Liro area men referred to above, all of whom happen to live in households with regular wage- or salary-earners, no migrant household derives its livelihood from engagement in the informal sector. No urban household receives any additional income from their home islands, apart from one Liro area man who owns a small trade store on Paama. Although most households receive occasional food shipments from rural relatives these cannot be regarded as urban income subsidies, since such island foodstuffs are generally reciprocated by urban-rural remittances. This is in contrast to Bedford's assessment that Shepherd Islanders resident in Port Vila in the late 1960s could not be regarded as a wage-dependent proletariat because their home villages remained an 'important source of income as well as social security' (Bedford 1971: 288). Here, however, the sole economic dependence on urban wages and salaries amongst Port Vila-based Liro area and Hurilao residents reveals a clearly different picture.

Cross-classifying the duration of current employment and length of urban

⁴Williamson (1977) and Walsh (1983) point to a similar phenomenon in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

residence by urban labour force participation reveals a change in rural-urban mobility patterns from the situation of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Table 5.4). Although Liro area and Hurilao men working in professional-technical positions or as skilled tradesmen average a longer urban residence than men working in other occupations, the lack of more distinct discrepancies between sectoral engagement and duration of residence, and the lack of a similar consistency amongst women, indicates that the association between type of employment and temporary versus long-term mobility no longer applies in such a linear fashion as reported by Bedford and Bonnemaïson for Vanuatu, or as has been documented in other developing areas. Compared with the situation described by Bonnemaïson (1977b) during the early 1970s, when 77 per cent of construction

Table 5.4 Length of employment in present occupation and duration of urban residence by occupation (in years)

	(N)	Males Duration of Residence Port Vila		(N)	Females Duration of Residence Port Vila	
		Present Employment	Mean (SD)		Present Employment	Mean (SD)
Liro area	(67)			(58)		
(1) Professional-Technical	(1)	8.0	16.0	(3)	5.7 (5.1)	9.0 (5.3)
(2) Skilled trade	(5)	7.0 (6.8)	15.8 (7.2)	(-)		
(3) Clerical	(6)	7.5 (6.6)	9.0 (6.7)	(2)	6.5 (2.1)	10.5(3.5)
(4) Sales	(7)	9.7 (9.3)	10.0 (9.6)	(2)	3.5 (2.1)	20.0(0.0)
(5) Service	(11)	2.8 (2.2)	10.5 (9.6)	(1)	3.0	18.0
(6) Agriculture	(-)			(1)	14.0	14.0
(7) Transport	(3)	6.0 (3.5)	10.3 (1.5)	(-)		
(8) Labour	(28)	5.5 (4.0)	9.3 (6.3)	(26)	5.1(5.3)	12.4(8.8)
(9) Information sector	(3)	4.0 (3.6)	10.7 (1.5)	(-)		
(a) Housewife				(21)	4.7 (4.0)	9.0 (6.7)
(b) Unemployed	(3)	1.3 (0.6)	6.0 (3.5)	(2)	1.5 (0.7)	3.0 (1.4)
Hurilao	(18)			(14)		
(1) Professional-Technical	(3)	2.7 (2.5)	15.3 (13.4)	(3)	5.7 (3.2)	8.3 (0.6)
(2) Skilled trade	(5)	8.8 (7.7)	9.8 (6.8)	(-)		
(3) Clerical	(3)	10.7(4.2)	10.7 (4.2)	(1)	1.0	7.0
(4) Sales	(-)			(2)	11.0	11.0
(5) Service	(1)	1.0	1.0	(1)	1.0	2.0
(6) Agriculture	(1)	1.0	3.0	(-)		
(7) Transport	(-)			(-)		
(8) Labour	(5)	4.2 (3.1)	7.0 (5.5)	(4)	2.8 (0.5)	8.5 (5.2)
(9) Information sector	(-)			(-)		
(a) Housewife				(3)	1.7 (1.5)	1.7 (1.5)

workers had been employed in these jobs for less than one year, Liro area and Hurilao labourers working predominantly in the construction industry, in road maintenance and as domestic servants (women), a decade later had worked on average for more than five years in their respective jobs.⁵ This underlines the fact that, at least amongst current Liro area and Hurilao migrants in town, employment as unskilled labour can no longer be associated with only a temporary urban residence.

Urban Economic Developments Conducive to Mobility Change

Developments in the rural setting facilitating a shift from temporary to long-term mobility were previously discussed in Chapter 3. Analogous structural transformations at the urban end which have facilitated such a change occurred primarily in three areas: in the urban wage-structure, the housing market and in an expanding and diversifying urban economy necessitating different labour force requirements.

Changes in the urban wage levels, formerly geared towards single migrant workers irrespective of their actual marital status, to levels more conducive to the co-residence of wives and children, have been emphasized by several authors as a major cause facilitating a change from temporary circulation to long-term mobility in Melanesia and other parts of the Pacific islands (Finney 1967; McCreary 1973; Curtain 1980a, 1980b; Connell and Curtain 1982). Tonkinson (1979), in his work on a resettled Ambrymese community in peri-urban Port Vila, emphasizes that since 1967, per capita income has risen more than threefold, from US\$11.30 per month to US\$38.25. While the lowest wage received by an unskilled ni-Vanuatu worker still amounted to only A\$50 (VT 5000) per month in 1977 (Pacific Islands Yearbook 1981: 479), the average monthly income for agricultural workers in Port Vila and Santo increased to just under VT 13,000 in 1983, with production workers and labourers averaging VT 17,000; administrative and managerial workers averaged the highest monthly incomes (VT 68,200), followed by professional-technical workers (VT 42,400).⁶ The monthly incomes of Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila in 1983 correspond to this picture (Table 5.5). The higher average earnings for Hurilao than Liro area residents reflect different occupational profiles (Table 5.3), which results in correspondingly higher household incomes (VT 48,400 and VT 31,900 respectively).

While data derived from the 1972 Urban Census and the 1983 Urban Employment Survey point to considerable changes in the urban wage-structure in recent years, incompatible income categories and distributions, as well as the lack of such information from earlier years, preclude a more detailed evaluation of long-term developments in the urban wage structure. However, an examination of employment histories of urban and rural Liro area and Hurilao residents, permits at least a tentative illustration of such changes. The pattern of average wages received by unskilled labourers in Port Vila points to a steady increase throughout the past two decades, from a monthly income of VT 3500 received by

⁵ Only 18 per cent of Liro area and Hurilao men and 8 per cent of all women had worked in their jobs for less than one year in 1983.

⁶ These figures are based on average hourly wages listed in the 1983 employment survey in the private sector of Port Vila and Santo (Vanuatu, 1985), and were derived from 4 x 40 hour working months conversions. Average hourly salaries were listed as follows: VT 73 (agricultural workers), VT 107 (production workers and labourers), VT 256 (professional-technical workers) and VT 426 (administrative and managerial workers).

men in the early 1960s, to an average monthly income in 1983 amounting to VT 15,100 (Table 5.6). Female wages, albeit consistently lower than those received by men, have changed in a similar fashion. While such a steady increase in urban wages⁷ may have gradually facilitated family residence in town and hence permitted longer periods of urban residence, it ought to be stressed that many women, particularly wives joining their husbands in town, also joined the urban labour force to contribute to urban household incomes. Whether or not these women thought about and sought employment only after their arrival in town, or moved there specifically for that purpose (to supplement urban household incomes), such moves were only facilitated by the rapid expansion in female formal sector employment during the 1970s (Tonkinson 1984; Connell 1985). This is reflected in 1967 and 1979 census data which show an increase in Port Vila's female labour force participation by 80 per cent between 1967 and 1979, and a much higher growth rate in female urban employment outside agriculture by 168 per cent (Haberkorn 1987: 267).

Table 5.5 Average monthly urban incomes by occupation.

	Liro Area		Hurilao	
	Males VT	Females VT	Males VT	Females VT
Average income	(61) 20,900	(35) 11,600	(18) 27,600	(14) 20,300
High prestige occupations	(12) 37,800	(5) 33,200	(11) 32,500	(4) 34,100
Medium prestige occupations	(20) 21,000	(3) 11,700	(1) 12,000	(3) 18,700
Low prestige occupations	(29) 13,800	(27) 8,200	(6) 21,100 ^a	(4) 7,600
Average household income	(57) 31,900		(16) 48,400	

^aThe much higher average monthly incomes earned by Hurilao men in low prestige occupations compared to their Liro area counterparts results from the employment of 5 of these 6 men in the Public Works Department, whereas most Liro area men in similar occupations are employed in the private sector.

Table 5.6 Changes in wage levels for male and female unskilled labourers in Port Vila, 1960-83.^a

	Males				Females			
	Mean	Median	SD	N	Mean	Median	SD	N
1960-1964	3500	[2700]	2100	(12)	2500	[2400]	1200	(16)
1965-1969	4800	[4400]	1700	(27)	3400	[3000]	1600	(19)
1970-1972	6200	[5700]	3500	(31)	4300	[4000]	1900	(23)
1973-1975	7800	[7000]	5800	(48)	5000	[4100]	2900	(27)
1976-1979	9300	[8000]	7500	(32)	6000	[6000]	3000	(51)
1980-1982	11800	[12000]	4400	(40)	7200	[7000]	2800	(41)
1983	15100	[16000]	5500	(35)	8100	[8000]	3000	(31)

^aAll wages in *vatu*.

Source: Employment histories of urban and rural Liro area and Hurilao residents (fieldwork).

⁷Standardized urban wages based on changes in consumer price indices would provide more desirable information, but the lack of CPI data before 1977 does not permit long-term evaluation.

A second major change in the urban economy facilitating a long-term urban presence of migrants and their families is the gradual decline in employment-tied accommodation, a feature identified elsewhere in Melanesia (Bedford and Mamak 1976; Fahey 1979; Curtain 1980a; Connell and Curtain 1982). In the past, major employers in Port Vila, such as the Condominium Administration and the two main trading companies, Burns Philp and Ballande, supplied their workforce with housing, and most domestic servants used to live with their employers. However, these provisions were generally geared towards single men and women, irrespective of their actual marital status. Family accommodation was provided only to senior staff, and such provisions did not affect many ni-Vanuatans during the years of Colonial Administration. In 1983, only 16 per cent of Liro area households were provided with accommodation in the private sector, and 7 per cent were provided with government accommodation, whereas the vast majority of Liro area residents either rented accommodation on the open market (49 per cent) or lived in their own homes (28 per cent). A different pattern characterizes the urban residence of Hurilao households, in that most (56 per cent) are provided with accommodation by their employers. These households, with at least one household member employed in at least a middle-level Public Service or private sector position, reside in quarters formerly reserved for expatriate staff, that is, in a large and comfortable environment to accommodate spouses, children, and often even additional kinfolk.

The change from temporary to more long-term urban residence and labour force participation during the early 1970s was underlined by two important changes in Port Vila's economy during the 1970s and early 1980s which actively worked against temporary rural-based circulation. Indeed, they somehow necessitated a longer-term urban orientation. First, as already noted, the expansion and diversification of bureaucratic and service employment during the early 1970s (Tonkinson 1984; Connell 1985) provided not only new employment opportunities, but also a growing demand for more skilled manpower. Irrespective of whether such positions were for barmen and cooks in the restaurant industry, or qualified tradesmen and technicians, the demand for such skills and qualifications required a greater labour force stability than the peri-urban plantation sector or unskilled labouring. This is not to say that the efficiency in the latter sectors may not also have benefited from a more stable labour force (see Wilson 1966), but it highlights obvious differences in job demands, in that qualified tradesmen and technicians are less readily replaced than copra-cutters, road-workers and domestic servants.

A second development in Port Vila's economy, necessitating rather than merely facilitating a long-term orientation in the urban labour force, was a substantial cut-back in employment for unskilled labour during the mid 1970s, and again around 1980 when political independence was gained. The biggest single change arose from the abolition of a tripartite colonial administration which, amongst other idiosyncrasies had three Public Works departments, one run by the French, one by the British and one organized jointly by the Condominium. In the private sector, the two largest trading firms, Burns Philp and Ballande, also considerably reduced their labour forces during the mid 1970s. This affected primarily their dock workers. Although both companies retain a small contingent of permanent dockside workers, the past decade has seen a trend towards hiring day-labourers whenever required, such as unloading a large cargo vessel. Anticipating political independence, many self-employed expatriate business men began to leave Port Vila from as early as the mid 1970s, thereby closing further employment outlets. With urban employment, particularly for

unskilled labour, becoming more scarce except in the peri-urban plantation sector, temporary rural-based circulation has become somewhat of a luxury few labourers can afford nowadays.

Rural based circulation had once been a matter of:

- *requirement* (contracts, wages and accommodation, for example, were all geared towards the employment of single men or women);
- *necessity* (mobility supplemented rather than replaced rural subsistence production; low wages required the subsidy of plantation labour by migration source areas, which bore most of the costs for the reproduction of labour); and
- also in later years a matter of *personal preference* (when, such as in the case of Raga, for example, many villagers have had a choice between working on their own small coconut plantations or engaging in contract labour elsewhere).

Now, with the scarcity of jobs, the picture has changed. This is illustrated in the words of Joe, a 38-year-old former Liro area dock worker now employed by Ballande as a general labourer:

Some time ago, three of us shared a position [working in the docks] with Ballande. When it was my turn, I worked for three, or six months, then took a rest on the island [Paama]. Then, another friend took the job ... and so it went until it was my turn again. But the last time [around 1978], a friend held on to the job. I talked to the manager, who told me 'sorry, but I can't do anything about that because that's your people's business'.

A similar concern is voiced by Frank, a 44-year-old Liro area man, working in the road maintenance crew of the Public Works department in Port Vila:

It's quite a hard job, and the pay is bad. If I had had this job in earlier years, I would have taken a break from it [and returned to Paama]. But now, if I were to do that, another man would take my position straight away which then would be lost for good.

Confronted with a suggestion that such a situation does not necessarily imply trouble, because his replacement may soon want to take a break as well, he replied: 'No, because nowadays it's hard to find work, so people hang on to their jobs'.

The significance of such a dramatic change in mobility practices lies well beyond any temporal issue, as implicit in the first quotation. Although this form of labour rotation amongst unskilled labour was of greater economic benefit to urban employers than to their labour force (because it allowed the maintenance of low urban wages), the above quotation underlines this system's appeal to many rural ni-Vanuatu, particularly to those no longer able to participate periodically in the urban economy. Although ample opportunities still exist for temporary rural-based circulation to Port Vila, such opportunities are restricted to the peri-urban plantation sector—a form of employment which is rarely viewed as a true alternative (especially amongst the young), not even to urban unemployment. While wages have improved to the extent that individual copra-cutters nowadays work on a contract basis, rather than for a flat weekly rate, many young people in town prefer temporary, or even longer-term unemployment or occasional jobs to 'dirty work' on plantations. This situation underlines the importance of a generally neglected phenomenon, that alternatives imply more than a choice between several options, they imply *meaning* and *compatibility* (Haberkorn 1981). This is not always the case as illustrated in the views of Tim, a 22-year-old unemployed Liro area man in Port Vila:

Suppose I worked on Blacksand plantation, I could make some money. But one thing, if I were to undertake such work, no girl in town would look at me, because of me doing

such 'rubbish' work. All the town girls like men with town jobs. Never mind they do dirty jobs such as garbage collection like Henry does, this is better work than copra cutting, because copra cutting is for 'bushmen' [term used in a derogatory fashion for people from the interior of islands], and town girls do not like 'bushmen'.

While most Liro area and Hurilao residents can no longer afford the luxury of short-term urban employment stints given such fundamental changes in the rural and urban setting of mobility, the availability of retirement benefits for ni-Vanuatu public servants is a further inducement for long-term commitments to urban employment. Similar benefits are also provided by some private sector employers, notably Burns Philp and Ballande, to employees with more than 20 years of service. Retirement benefits for skilled manpower provided by Burns Philp, for example, are based on former positions and salaries, whereas unskilled labourers in 1983 received a monthly allowance of VT 4000 and a 25 kg bag of rice. The availability of retirement benefits also points to a gradual change in perception amongst urban migrants to looking towards Port Vila as a source for old-age security rather than to their 'home' island. Although such benefits are transferable to the islands and —*ceteris paribus*— could possibly be stretched further than in town, only one such retiree living in North Paama (outside the Liro area) has been found, whereas at least eleven such men are known to live in Port Vila. The illustration of Jack, a 69-year-old retired Burns Philp *bosboe* (foreman), challenges both a widespread assumption that even the longest-term urban migrants will ultimately retire to their 'home' islands, and also idealizations of migrants' home areas as peaceful retirement spots.

If I were to return to the island with my retirement benefits [money and rice ration], I would not be able to hold on to those things for too long. The time the boat arrives, everyone is at the beach, and they see my rice being unloaded ... so, then I feel I have to share it with other family members, because that is our custom. The time the boat departs, I have very little left ... The same applies to my retirement money, pay a little here and there [covering expenses incurred by other family members]. In Vila I have few worries. I live in a good house because I worked with Burns Philp for a long time. My children are in town as well, and they help us [himself and his wife] a bit here and there'.

Dynamic Indices of Urban Permanence: the Extent of Urban-Rural Contacts

Long periods of continuous urban residence and the large proportion of adult life spent in town naturally suggest a stronger involvement in, and commitment to, urban rather than rural life. However, these indices *per se* reveal little about the actual extent of rural disengagement by Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila. Ryan's emphasis on bi-locality (1985), for example, and the previous emphasis on the multi-local nature of rural Raga residence patterns highlights the point that long-term urban residence and a continued social, political, economic and psychological involvement in one's area of origin (*ples blong stamba*) are not mutually exclusive (Weisner 1976; Ross and Weisner 1977; Strathern 1977; Macpherson 1984; Bedford 1985; Conroy and Curtain 1985).

However, to maintain an active interest and role in current economic and political issues in one's area of origin, perhaps with a view to eventual return, requires the maintenance of close urban-rural contacts. Periodic visits to their areas of origin, facilitated by near-compulsory Christmas holidays throughout most of the public and private sectors in Port Vila, or through regular periods of annual leave, represent one way for urban migrants to acknowledge ties with

their rural kin and areas of origin. Most Liro area and Hurilao adults incidentally stressed that the lack of holidays in earlier years, particularly amongst unskilled labourers, was one of the main reasons for only short-term employment stints. When they wanted to see their families or simply have a break from the monotonous drudgery, they had to quit their jobs.

Apart from periodically *showim fes* (show one's face) in one's home village, regular remittances of cash or goods, the payment of rural church dues, local council taxes or financial contributions to village projects, as well as the hosting of rural visitors, play a similar role. Hugo (1983a) and Chapman (1985) emphasize the importance of return visits and remittances as strong indicators of 'a continuous involvement with (action) and commitment to (attitude) specified places and communities' (Chapman 1985: 432) alongside such other phenomena as the primary location of household members and important kin. Macpherson (1984), however, questions the notion that such a display of interest in, or the maintenance of regular contacts with, one's area of origin should always be interpreted as evidence of a high probability that these migrants will ultimately return. Referring to Western Samoans abroad, he emphasizes the need to distinguish between their 'public and private views of home', and argues that considerable remittances by Samoan migrants often reflect more their 'desire to protect or enhance the reputation of their families or villages rather than indicate their desire to return and reside permanently in Western Samoa' (1984: 243).

The Extent of Rural Return Visits

Although most Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila (78 per cent and 85 per cent respectively) have visited their home island at least once since first arriving in town, such return visits have been quite rare. The average number of return visits since first arriving in town amount to only one every five years (Liro area) and two and a half years (Hurilao).⁸ There are two likely explanations for the rather low incidence of Liro area return visits relative to the somewhat higher incidence amongst their Hurilao counterparts. First, Liro area men and women appear less explicitly interested in maintaining their option for an eventual return to Paama, as is evident in the different explanations given for their most recent visit (Table 5.7). Only 7 per cent explain their last journey in terms of a long-term 'rural strategy'⁹ compared with 41 per cent of their Hurilao counterparts; the majority returned either for a brief holiday, or only after being recalled for a family matter, such as a wedding or funeral. Although brief holidays could possibly disguise strategic intentions, there is still a marked contrast between Liro area and Hurilao residents. This author is sceptical of the possibility of masking intentions, since Liro area and Hurilao migrants had no reason not to refer to long-term rural strategies. Confronted with persistent questioning, whether or not brief holidays

⁸ Cross-classifying the incidence of such urban-rural contacts with the duration of urban residence points to a slight negative association amongst Liro area ($r=-0.37$) and Hurilao women ($r=-0.14$). Contrary to this slight decline in the frequency of return visits with longer periods of urban residence amongst women, the frequency of such visits amongst their male counterparts appears largely independent of the length of urban residence ($r=0.05$ and $r=0.06$ respectively).

⁹ Some expressed concern over the need to look after one's house and gardens; organize a feast in order to be able to build a new house (so as to prevent jealous villagers from destroying it); to stay in touch with lineage members, so they will be remembered when they return; the intention to build a small house for the time after retirement from urban employment; the necessity to settle land disputes with other villagers; and to check out the general situation before an eventual return.

were concealing such strategic intentions after all, Robert, a 36-year-old Liro area man having just returned from a brief visit to Paama, was equally insistent in his denial.

Why should I make such plans to go back? I left because of many problems: I have no land, I don't like the jealousy of the place, I don't like 'kampani work'...I am not a free man ... in town I can do anything I want.

Secondly, the maintenance of close contacts with family members on Paama does not necessarily imply the need for periodic return journeys for urban-based Liro area residents. The availability of frequent, regular and not too expensive transport to Port Vila, as noted earlier, makes this town readily accessible for Paamese visitors. That 46 per cent of all adult Liro area residents had visited Port Vila at least once during the twelve months preceding fieldwork on the island, compared with 30 per cent of their Hurilao counterparts, and the fact that 46 and 31 per cent respectively of all Liro area and Hurilao households in town had received at least one visitor from their home area between January and March of 1983, may also account for the different frequency in return visits between Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila. The large size of Paamese and Raga communities in Port Vila (1200 and 300 people respectively) also means that Port Vila has become another 'home' for these migrants, in that the maintenance of close emotive and linguistic contact to kin and fellow islanders — a major function ascribed to temporary circulation in earlier years — no longer requires periodic visits to one's home island.¹⁰

Urban-Rural Remittances

A greater incidence of face-to-face contacts between urban- and rural-based islanders resulting from rural-urban rather than urban-rural visits, has also been reported by Bedford (1985: 344) amongst Lau migrants in Suva, whose expression of interest in events in eastern Fiji was manifested predominantly in urban-rural remittances of cash and goods, as well as in the provision of accommodation for visiting kin. A similar pattern also emerges amongst town-based Liro area and Hurilao residents, of whom most claim to remit cash, foodstuffs and other

Table 5.7 The explanations given by urban Liro area and Hurilao residents for their most recent visit to Paama or Raga

	Liro area %	Hurilao %
Brief holiday	39	30
Recalled for family matters	34	15
Long-term rural strategy	7	41
Accompany child or woman	12	11
Others	7	4
No. of visits	(97)	(27)

¹⁰ See also Tonkinson's (1984: 148) emphasis of the notion amongst Ambrymese residents in Mele-Maat in peri-urban Port Vila of 'Efate as "home" — but not "homeland"' particularly so amongst the Efate-born majority of Mele-Maat's inhabitants.

consumer goods at least occasionally to their areas of origin (Table 5.8). Of the people who had not sent any remittances, three-quarters no longer had any close family members living in their areas of origin. The intermittent nature of urban-rural remittances is suggested in Table 5.8, and points to the insignificance of urban-rural cash-flows as against food shipments (predominantly in the form of tinned meats, rice and bread).¹¹ This greater incidence of food- than cash-remittances results from a general reluctance amongst urban migrants to remit cash other than for specific and 'sensible' purposes.¹² This was emphasized by several men and women in town stressing that they only send money *taem we hemi stret*, only when it is considered to be needed for something 'proper', such as for school fees or wedding expenses. They explain their unwillingness to remit money in terms of much higher prices for consumer goods in rural stores and on trading ships, for the purchase of which most of this cash would be destined anyway. This predominant use of cash-remittances for everyday household needs and conspicuous consumption, rather than for productive economic ventures, has

Table 5.8 Frequency of urban-rural remittances amongst town-based Liro area and Hurilao residents^a

	Males				Females		
	Cash	Food	Goods	Cash	Food	Goods	
Liro area							
No. of senders (57)							(45)
No never send (10)							(13)
Regularly ^[b]	14	40	16	2	4	-	
Occasionally ^[c]	14	40	18	22	49	-	
Rarely-when asked ^[d]	27	16	7	8	33	-	
Never	46	4	60	67	13	100	
Hurilao							
No. of senders (14)							(11)
No. never send (4)							(3)
Regularly	-	29	21	18	18	9	
Occasionally	29	50	21	9	55	9	
Rarely-when asked	36	14	-	18	-	-	
Never	36	7	57	55	27	82	

^a Figures are percentages based on people who at least sometimes send remittances (N of Senders).

^b Incidence: regularly every 2-3 months.

^c Incidence: only about once or twice every year.

^d Incidence: not every year, and also predominantly when asked.

Note: The survey was based on remittances from individuals rather than households since husbands and wives and adult co-resident sons and daughters often send remittances independently from each other.

¹¹ Urban-rural cash-flows were most prominent amongst the less established Liro area residents in town; controlling for occupational differences and urban income did not yield any consistent relationship (Haberkorn 1987: 282).

¹² This pattern clearly differs from that reported by Conroy and Curtain (1985: 301). Drawing on data from the 1974-75 Papua New Guinea Rural Household Survey, they show that; with the exception of Malalaua and Goilala absentees, a much greater proportion of migrants from other districts remitted cash rather than consumer goods.

been widely reported for Melanesia and other developing areas (Connell et al. 1976; Connell 1981; Lipton 1980; Oberai and Singh 1980; Rubenstein 1983; Hugo 1983b).

Although this relatively low incidence of urban-rural cash-flows and remittance of consumer goods could be indicative of a gradual loosening of urban-rural contacts, it needs to be stressed that the increased urban presence of spouses and children, themselves the prime beneficiaries of such assistance, makes regular and frequent contact no longer necessary. While the provision of economic support for one's immediate family remains unaltered, this change in directional flows of support deprives other rural kin from potential spin-offs and thereby contributes to a further loosening of urban-rural ties. This situation is enhanced by an increased individualization of remittance use observed in contemporary Paama and Raga. Although the occasional receipt of a 25kg bag of rice or a carton of tinned mackerel may be shared with other kin, such sharing (and this more so on Paama than Raga) is less frequent and, according to most older Paamese, no longer expected to the degree it was in earlier years, when not doing so invoked considerable social sanctions (see also Connell 1985; Boyd 1989).

In addition to the strong urban presence of nuclear family units, the low frequency of contemporary urban-rural remittance flows can also be attributed to an increased significance of indirect remittances. The accommodation of younger lineage members attending school in Port Vila, the payment of urban school fees for other kin, and the covering of urban hospital expenses for rural relations and providing them with a place to convalesce, all mean that fewer economic resources are available for more direct forms of urban-rural remittances. The most prevalent amongst such forms of indirect economic assistance in contemporary urban Vanuatu is periodic accommodation of rural visitors.¹³ The fact that 46 and 31 per cent respectively of Liro area and Hurilao households in town hosted at least one visitor from their home area during the first three months of 1983, and that 75 per cent had received at least one such visitor since independence in 1980, reflects the magnitude of such forms of indirect economic assistance. Short visits can turn into stays of several months, during which time most costs incurred for food, entertainment and 'proper clothing for town' are covered by the host, who often needs to rely on the financial contribution of other urban kin and friends. Most rural visitors, however, do not abuse this hospitality by remaining for weeks on end with the same urban household. Most search for and obtain some form of paid employment. Yet the large Paamese and Raga communities in Port Vila guarantee the presence of several relations for the majority of rural visitors. This allows for considerable 'family-hopping' over extended periods of time, a merry-go-round often only halted through yet another collective fund-raising activity to provide the guest with a one-way ticket back home and presents to take along for other rural kin.¹⁴

¹³ For the importance of such forms of economic assistance provided by town-based migrants to visiting rural kin elsewhere in Melanesia, see Strathern (1977), Salisbury and Salisbury (1977), and Conroy and Curtin (1985) for Papua New Guinea; Bedford (1985) for Fiji, and Frazer (1985) for the Solomon Islands.

¹⁴ To protect urban migrants from becoming 'sucked dry' by such long-term visitors, the *Malatumsauri*, Vanuatu's National Council of Chiefs, reached an agreement in 1982 to allow local chiefs of different migrant communities in Port Vila to send back to their home island 'every man or woman found roaming around town, who have been without employment for more than three months and live off their urban families' (Chief Willi Bongmatur, President of the *Malatumsauri*, personal communication, March 1983). Although it is only an advisory body to the National Government on cultural and customary matters, and without executive powers to enforce such 'repatriations', this 'agreement' reached by the *Malatumsauri* met with little public opposition.

While such visits may appear selfish, and exploitative of urban relations, it needs to be stressed that such actions by rural visitors reflect in many instances a deliberate coping mechanism, responding to a decline in direct forms of urban-rural assistance. This attitude that 'if money no longer comes to us, we go towards it' is clearly evident from statements by one Liro area and one Hurilao villager in their late forties:

- In case my son won't send something soon to me and his mother, I shall have to see him myself.
- The last time I went to Santo was to see my son, from whom I hadn't received any news for quite some time. I took a bag of yams, and some kava to him, and he in turn gave me a small amount of money and paid for my return trip. This is our custom, I give something to him, and he in turn gives something to me.

This reference to a customary exchange of gifts reflects a change in the nature of urban-rural exchange networks, and yet also emphasizes rural residents' continued adherence to their basic underlying principle. While urban and rural residents alike stress that in the past, villagers acknowledged the receipt of gifts from town-based relatives with an urban-bound shipment of island food-stuffs,¹⁵ many men and women in town claim to feel manipulated by contemporary rural-urban food shipments, which they regard as explicitly meant to induce reciprocal remittances. Some migrants claim that they avoid sending direct remittances altogether, so as to get out of a cycle of continuous indebtedness (which incidentally may have led some to leave their home island in the first place), only to find themselves facing greater financial burdens implicit in having to meet expenses of rural visitors. Others state their preference for periodically sending something to rural kin in a bid to put off their coming to town too often, as indicated by Rosi, a 42-year-old Liro area woman:

It is better if we send food and other things to the island. If we were not to do so, they would come and see us. And that is often very hard for us here in town, because visitors always like to eat meat every day, eat bread, ice-cream, and the men like to drink beer all the time. At such times, our money just disappears.

Analogous to such a defensive strategy underlying urban-rural remittances is the conscious effort amongst urban migrants to honour their family reputation as expressed by Fred, a 21-year-old Hurilao man in town:

Look at Tom. His father is unhappy, because other people at home laugh at him, because of his bad son, who doesn't look after his parents. That's why I send things home, I don't want to spoil my parents' reputation.

All of this serves to point out the conceptual limitations of relying on remittances as indicators of urban and rural commitment. Apart from such conceptual difficulties there is a methodological problem concerning the reliability of data on urban-rural exchange networks. This is evident from the fact that only half of all the rural-urban food-supplies which the rural households claimed to have sent over a period of twelve months was acknowledged to have been received by the designated recipient household, while only one-third of all receipts acknowledged by urban households were actually sent according to the alleged rural sender.

Although these data suggest a quite regular contact between town-based Liro area and Hurilao residents and their areas of origin, the predominance of indirect

¹⁵ Some families in town allegedly receive more food from the island than they actually remit themselves. Although such assertions could not be verified, they correspond to observations by others who have argued that rural-urban remittances, such as in the form of food supplies, are often greater in value than urban-rural remittances (Connell et al. 1976; Lipton 1977).

and less quantifiable remittances (periodic hosting of visitors), and the greater importance of rural-urban rather than urban-rural visits, particularly regarding people from Paama, render such data a somewhat dubious guide to urban migrants' commitment to life and residence in town or in their areas of origin. While for some remittances reflect a conscious strategy of maintaining contact to ensure an eventual return to their area of origin, for others they reflect quite different functions. Apart from serving the purpose of avoiding all too frequent visits by rural kin or maintaining one's family honour and reputation, remittances could furthermore reflect a sense of guilt for having left, and having left others behind in the first place, that is, represent some sort of 'emotional pay-off'.

Future Residential Expectations

All static measures discussed so far indicate that Port Vila-based Liro area and Hurilao residents appear to be more committed to life in Port Vila than might be expected of villagers merely on temporary leave. In view of this, and the fact that urban-rural contacts are dominated by rural-urban and indirect remittances, the expectation by about 80 per cent of all men and women that they will definitively live in Port Vila in five years time comes as no real surprise (Table 5.9). Such expectations are undifferentiated by gender and age, and appear also largely independent of occupational status and the duration of urban residence. Not surprisingly, however, economically inactive men and women are less adamant about this, and the most recently arrived Liro area and Hurilao residents in town make such expectations contingent on their own, or their spouses' employment situation. Most people explain their residential expectations in terms of their current employment situation, emphasizing the necessity to hold on to their jobs owing to the scarcity of urban employment (Table 5.10). This, incidentally, corroborates earlier comments regarding changes in the urban economy during the 1970s, with its requirements for a more stable labour force. However, the low proportion of Liro area women expressing such views should not be mistaken for an indication of a lack of concern over such issues, but it merely reflects their overall lower economic activity rate (Table 5.3). A strong general preference for urban over rural life for a variety of primarily non-economic reasons is also equally shared amongst men and women.

Apart from these perceptions, shared equally between men and women, more explicit variations in interpretations emerge along gender lines. This is evident from a greater salience of family- and home-oriented explanations given by women, and a more pronounced reference amongst men to disenchantment with certain social and economic features of island life. The lack of more explicit, and urban-centred economic explanations, underlying the expected urban continuance of Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila, lends support to the previous discussion of non-economic factors associated with much of contemporary Paamese and Raga mobility. It also corresponds to a similar finding by Tonkinson (1977: 284) that, in the 1970s, long-term Southeast Ambrymese residents of Mele-Maat in peri-urban Port Vila attributed little importance to 'economic rationales for their continuance on Efate', although their initial reasons for staying in the 1950s were explicitly economic. This lack of urban-centred economic reasons regarding an expected continued urban residence is not contradicted by Jack's statement noted earlier, since his emphasis was clearly on anticipated difficulties in retiring on Paama.

Only one of 157 Liro area and Hurilao residents interviewed in town admitted to any explicit economic rationale underlying the original move to town (Table

5.11). Half of the men ascribe their arrival in Port Vila to their search for employment or to job transfers, with an equal proportion of Liro area men and one-third of Hurilao men explaining their original move strictly in social terms. Social reasons play an even more predominant role in female mobility, with two out of three women having arrived in town for the purpose of either accompanying or visiting their husbands, parents or other relatives. Even if some of the employment-centred explanations could, admittedly, conceal an economic rationale in that the stated 'better work than in village' could refer to 'better pay', other non-economic and non-employment considerations still play a more prominent role.

Table 5.9 Expectations of residing in Port Vila five years after the survey^a

	Expect to reside in Port Vila							
	Males				Females			
	Yes %	Job ^b %	No %	(N)	Yes %	Job %	No %	(N)
Liro area total	81	15	5	(67)	81	16	3	(58)
Age groups								
15-24	83	13	4	(23)	63	31	6	(16)
25-44	81	19	-	(32)	88	9	3	(33)
45+	75	8	17	(12)	89	11	-	(9)
Years of residence								
< 2	60	30	10	(10)	-	75	25	(4)
3-5	100	-	-	(8)	69	23	8	(13)
6-10	83	13	4	(23)	88	12	-	(16)
11-15	85	15	-	(13)	100	-	-	(12)
>15	77	15	8	(13)	92	8	-	(13)
Occupation								
High prestige	100	-	-	(12)	100	-	-	(3)
Medium prestige	90	10	-	(20)	100	-	-	(5)
Low prestige	72	21	7	(29)	89	11	-	(27)
Econ. inactive	50	33	17	(6)	65	26	9	(23)
Hurilao total	78	17	6	(18)	79	-	11	(14)
Age groups								
15-24	100	-	-	(5)	40	-	60	(5)
25-44	75	25	-	(12)	100	-	-	(9)
45+	-	-	100	(1)	-	-	-	-
Years of residence								
< 2	80	20	-	(5)	50	-	50	(4)
3-5	100	-	-	(2)	-	-	100	(1)
6-10	67	33	-	(3)	100	-	-	(5)
11-15	80	20	-	(5)	100	-	-	(4)
>15	67	-	33	(3)	-	-	-	-
Occupation								
High prestige	73	18	9	(11)	100	-	-	(4)
Medium prestige	100	-	-	(1)	100	-	-	(3)
Low prestige	83	17	-	(6)	75	-	25	(4)
Econ. inactive	-	-	-	-	33	-	67	(3)

^a People were asked where they realistically expected to reside in five years time.

^b Expectations contingent on employment.

Table 5.10 Explanations for continued residence in Port Vila^a

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
Employment	74	30	85	73
Bought house-land in town	9	28	—	9
Prefer urban to rural life	40	39	39	36
Family reasons	4	46	31	55
No family left on island	4	22	—	9
Economic problems on island	28	15	39	18
Social problems on island	17	2	15	—
Number of migrants ^b	(53)	(46)	(13)	(11)

^a Owing to multiple references, column totals exceed 100%.

^b Refers only to people who expect to reside in Port Vila in five years time (see Table 5.9).

Explanations given during survey:

Employment: 'have to hold onto job, if I go home, lose work; need to stay in job for retirement benefits; only go if I lose job and cannot find a new one.'

Prefer urban to rural life: 'happier in town; no interest in island any longer; stay here and only return to island for visits; better quality of life; easier life; more women to chase; can get drunk without repercussions.'

Family reasons: 'spouse has job, need to stay; better education for children; wait until children finished school; stay until they have found a job; stay until they are grown up.'

Economic problems on island: no land; problem with sharing land; no way to earn money; few jobs; can't always earn money when you need it for school fees, bridewealth; always have to share out money.

Social problems on island: too much jealousy; problems with sorcery; too much *kampani*-work all the time; problems with family; freedom from chiefs.

Table 5.11 Explanations for original move to Port Vila

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
Economic	—	—	6	—
Employment	49	7	56	7
Rural disenchantment	8	7	17	—
Family	24	62	11	71
Education	9	7	6	21
Hospital	6	7	—	—
Unclear	5	10	6	—
Total number of migrants	(67)	(58)	(18)	(14)

Explanations given in survey:

Economic: to earn money.

Employment: want to find job; better work than in village; heard about available employment; was sent there (job transfer); had a job offer from employers; take the place of a brother (job rotation).

Rural disenchantment: trouble at home - ran away; just ran away; nothing for me to do, so left; finished school, wanted to have a look around.

Family: father/family took me along; family already in town sent for me; accompanied somebody to town (chaperone) and stayed; got married and followed husband; visit husband; visit family.

Education-Training: attended secondary school in Vila or North Efate (Onesua) and stayed on; went for course, failed, was ashamed to return so stayed in town.

Hospital: accompanied pregnant wife to Vila Base Hospital, while waiting for birth, took up employment; was ill, sent to hospital and stayed on; accompanied ill family member to clinic, and stayed on.

Unclear: people could not remember for what particular reason they made this trip.

Earlier references to fortuitous mobility emphasized the role of chance events in temporary rural-based circulation. Although references to such moves also appear throughout the life-time mobility histories of Port Vila-based Liro area and Hurilao residents, only a few men and women explicitly linked their original arrival in Port Vila to such circumstances (e.g. hospital treatment, helping kin in town, attending festivities).

Cross-classifying urban migrants' causal explanations of their original move to Port Vila with explanations as to why they expect to remain there in the immediate future, reveals a similar pattern to that discussed by Tonkinson (1977). It emphasizes that original motivations for rural-urban mobility do not necessarily overlap with reasons associated with expected urban continuance. Only one-third of those expecting to reside in Port Vila in the immediate future cite 'search for employment or job transfers' as principal reasons for their original move to town, yet 54 per cent relate their expected continuation in town to employment. Analogously, only 6 per cent associated their original move explicitly with having been disenchanted with rural life, yet more people refer to social and economic problems in their home areas (10 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively) as principal reasons why they expect to remain in town. A better

Table 5.12 Perceived advantages of urban life ^a

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Males %	Females %	Males %	Females %
Economic	52	32	59	21
Better, easier money in town	22	7	35	14
Employment	39	33	29	43
Disenchantment with rural life	21	5	24	-
Better quality of life	58	60	65	50
Greater personal freedom	13	4	12	14
More stimulation	46	51	71	43
Total number of migrants	(67)	(58)	(18)	(14)

^a Owing to multiple references, column totals exceed 100%.

Explanations given in survey:

Economic: able to earn money; obtain big salary.

Better/easier money in town: chance for obtaining regular income as against only occasional returns from copra-making; obtain more money for physically equally hard labour; easier to obtain *kwik* money than in the village.

Employment: can get a job; better work than that available in village; obtain job where you can use your education; better than gardening.

Disenchantment with rural life: get away from *kampani* work; less jealousy; fewer problems with family; no constant fights over land issues; no sorcery; able to work for yourself without always having to share everything.

Better quality of life: easier life; easier life for women; regular working time; have lunch-break, with good food to eat; finish work at 5 pm, then have a shower to look good and go for a walk; better food; better clothing to wear; take a taxi to transport heavy things; better houses to live in; have toilet; have shower; better hospital for sick people; better roads to walk on.

Greater personal freedom: young men and women can do what they want without too much trouble from chiefs and parents; can go to dance without family looking; can marry who you want; greater variety of girls to choose from (and marry) than on island.

More stimulation: more entertainment (cinema, music, dancing); see and hear about new things all the time; plenty of beer; better stores to look at.

quality of life in urban rather than rural settings did not figure at all when explaining their original move, yet 39 per cent stress such considerations when explaining why they expected to remain in Port Vila.

A better quality of life also emerges as the most salient advantage attributed to urban over rural living (Table 5.12). The explicit emphasis on non-economic factors is evident in references to a more stimulating environment. Furthermore, amongst women, the possibility of urban employment in occupations other than in agriculture rates as far more important than mere monetary rewards. No longer having to carry most of the subsistence burden, not having to slide up and down muddy hills in dirty clothes to collect produce from one's garden, fetch firewood, collect water and face the prospect of cooking in salt water whenever the village diesel-pump breaks down, but instead being able to prepare purchased food on a gas or kerosene stove, and have a stroll (*lukluk*) around town, are things most women refer to as real advantages of urban life. Although men are more likely to cite economic considerations, only half explicitly refer to them at least once. A better quality of life and a more stimulating environment are regarded as of equal, if not slightly greater importance.

CHAPTER 6

Mobility Developments and Perceptions: Rural/Urban Divergence

Introduction: the Analysis of Mobility Histories

A systematic examination of individual life-histories as a means for the study of social and economic change has been a widely accepted practice amongst historians (Thompson 1981). With regard to the study of mobility change, however, only a few researchers have made use of such a methodology (Balan et al. 1969, 1973; Perlmann 1976; Bertaux-Wiame 1981; Karpati 1981). The most likely explanation for the lack of a more widespread utilization of biographical information for the purpose of mobility analysis concerns the reliability of biographical data. This is of particular concern when very detailed information is required (Prothero 1982), such as accurate dates, a correct chronological sequence, and a precise account of underlying causes of past moves. Concern about data reliability, however, should not imply that this methodology and the complex information available from individual biographies be discarded altogether. Problems of accurate recall can be minimized both *conceptually* and *methodologically*, thus enhancing the validity of biographic analysis as an appropriate means for the study of mobility change. By conceptually limiting the analysis to particular types of moves, (such as those related to employment and education), and by taking a life-history approach where individual-specific points of reference (dates of marriage, the birth of children, deaths of relatives) are set alongside readily available dates of local significance (years of major cyclones; dates when schools, clinics, cooperatives were established) considerable chronological accuracy, can be gained.

Yet the difficulties of accurate recall have probably been responsible for shaping the two prevailing methods of assessing mobility developments in Melanesia. One of these is the presentation of descriptive case-histories delineating the predominance of particular types of movement over time (Chapman 1970, 1985; Young 1977b; Bennett 1981; Friesen 1983). The other method lies in the calculation of migration and circulation indices, with some authors, such as Young (1977b) combining both methods. Details from period-specific case-histories provide rich information on various aspects of mobility change, and the computation of migration and circulation indices permit an assessment of the relative salience of rural-based circulation in the context of overall mobility. But both methods are severely limited when it comes to evaluating changes in the duration of rural absenteeism over time. Given a hypothesized change in mobility from temporary to longer-term relocations, these indices actually obscure such transformations altogether. Liro area and Hurilao mobility data well illustrate this problem. Despite the fact that long-term

absentees outnumber temporary absentees in the ratios of 4:1 and 7:1 for Liro area and Hurilao respectively, temporary and rural-based circulation remains of great significance amongst usual rural residents, particularly on Paama, as is evident from diachronic rather than synchronic mobility data. However, the very emphasis on a longitudinal assessment of mobility obscures the growing significance of long-term relocations in recent years. Where the incidence of mobility (i.e. the number of moves) is treated as the crucial dependent variable, any long-term absentees fail to figure in period-specific computations of circulation indices after their 'final' move.

The use of period and cohort analysis, two procedures frequently used by demographers, may help overcome this methodological dilemma. Although ideally more suited to the analysis of larger data sets, these methods provide a more satisfactory means to investigate the question of temporariness versus permanence in contemporary Liro area and Hurilao mobility, than mere reliance on case histories. While the use of cohort analysis may appear somewhat misplaced or over-ambitious, given the small size of various sub-populations, its descriptive power and value in delineating the evolution of broad patterns over time are considerations which, in this author's opinion, are independent of sample size.

Period analysis 'involves a quantitative description and analysis of the data for the many cohorts observed during a specified time interval' (Shryock and Siegel 1976:550). Cohort analysis¹ refers to the 'quantitative description of data occurrences from the time a cohort is exposed to a risk of such occurrences' (Ryder 1965:546). Period analysis, involving the past mobility experience of several cohorts, provides a total account of mobility over specified periods (of all cohorts). Cohort analysis, on the other hand, permits the structuring of past individual mobility experiences 'for purposes of developing projections of the basic series' (Shryock and Siegel 1976:551); it also allows a comparative assessment of the mobility experience of different cohorts of individuals at similar stages during their life-courses. The corresponding measures are various forms of period-ratios and cohort-specific mobility ratios, which represent simple ratios of durations of different mobility states (in this case, rural absence) over a specific period of time, to a measure of total exposure over that period. They are calculated in the following way:

$$PMR_{Cj} = \frac{\sum_{i,Cj} ME_i(P_t)}{\sum_{i,Cj} EXP_i(P_t)} \times 100$$

where ME_i refers to the cumulated mobility experience (in person-months) during a specific reference period P_t of all individuals (i) belonging to cohort C_j , divided by the total time of exposure (person-months lived) during the same period P_t of all individuals EXP_i belonging to the same cohort C_j .

While the cohort mobility ratio (CMR) is essentially identical to Mitchell's index of urban stabilization, the computation of successive CMRs at various stages (ages at mobility) throughout the life-course of different birth cohorts,

¹ A cohort represents 'a group of individuals who experienced the same demographic event during a specified time period, and who may be identified as a group at successive later dates on the basis of their common experience' (Shryock and Siegel 1976: 550).

overcomes the problem of a ratio effect 'distorting' Mitchell's index. The ability to examine the following three factors permits a systematic assessment of recent developments in Liro area and Hurilao population mobility:

- (i) period-specific mobility developments (Period Mobility Ratios, PMR),
- (ii) the mobility experience of various birth cohorts (Cohort Mobility Ratios, CMR) at identical stages throughout their life-course (Age-Cohort Mobility Ratios, ACMR), and
- (iii) changes in the relative salience of different mobility destinations over time (Destination-specific Period Mobility Ratios, DPMR).

Any retrospective analysis of life-time mobility histories, however, has to be temporally restricted to minimize the interference of stochastic processes. The danger that random phenomena might distort a diachronic evaluation of Liro area and Hurilao mobility developments increases with the length of the reference period and a concomitant gradual decrease in the sample size resulting from mortality and permanent out-migration in the past. An unusually long rural absence in a very small migrant cohort, for example, can seriously jeopardize the reliability of period-specific mobility patterns. Considering the sample of 395 out of 415 Liro area and Hurilao adults interviewed, from whom complete mobility histories could be obtained, and the analytical desirability of comparing mobility histories of current urban and usual rural residents, the following examination of period and cohort data will span the past thirty years — except for the case of Port Vila-based Hurilao residents, where a very small sample allows for an assessment of 'developments' over only the past twenty years.

Mobility Developments, 1953–82

Developments in the adult life-time mobility of Liro area and Hurilao residents throughout the past three decades clearly illustrate the operation of two distinct mobility processes amongst the Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila: the continued existence of periodic, short-term and rural based circulation alongside a more permanent urban orientation (Figure 6.1). Few notable discrepancies appear between the period mobility ratios (PMR) prior to 1960 of urban and rural Liro area residents, although current urban residents experienced a somewhat higher mobility than their rural counterparts. Disaggregating these totals by gender, however, reveals a striking contrast in the past mobility of men and women. While the PMRs of urban and rural men did not diverge until 1963, with rural men revealing slightly higher PMRs in earlier years than those currently residing in Port Vila, such a diverging pattern amongst women dates from considerably earlier. The early 1960s saw a sharp increase in the mobility of current urban residents, particularly amongst men, and a concurrent stagnation followed by only a gradual increase in the mobility of rural Liro area residents. These overall trends stabilized during the second half of the 1960s. The mobility of urban Liro area residents increased steadily from around 1969 onwards, at a time when many new employment opportunities became available, through both the nickel boom in neighbouring New Caledonia, and an expanding domestic urban economy. A parallel downward trend in the mobility of rural residents resulted in a gradual divergence in the PMRs of urban and rural residents.

Developments in the mobility of Hurilao residents throughout the past 30 years are remarkably similar to those of Liro area men and women, albeit occurring in different periods. The sharp increase in PMRs of urban Liro area residents during 1960–64 is replicated by their Hurilao counterparts several years

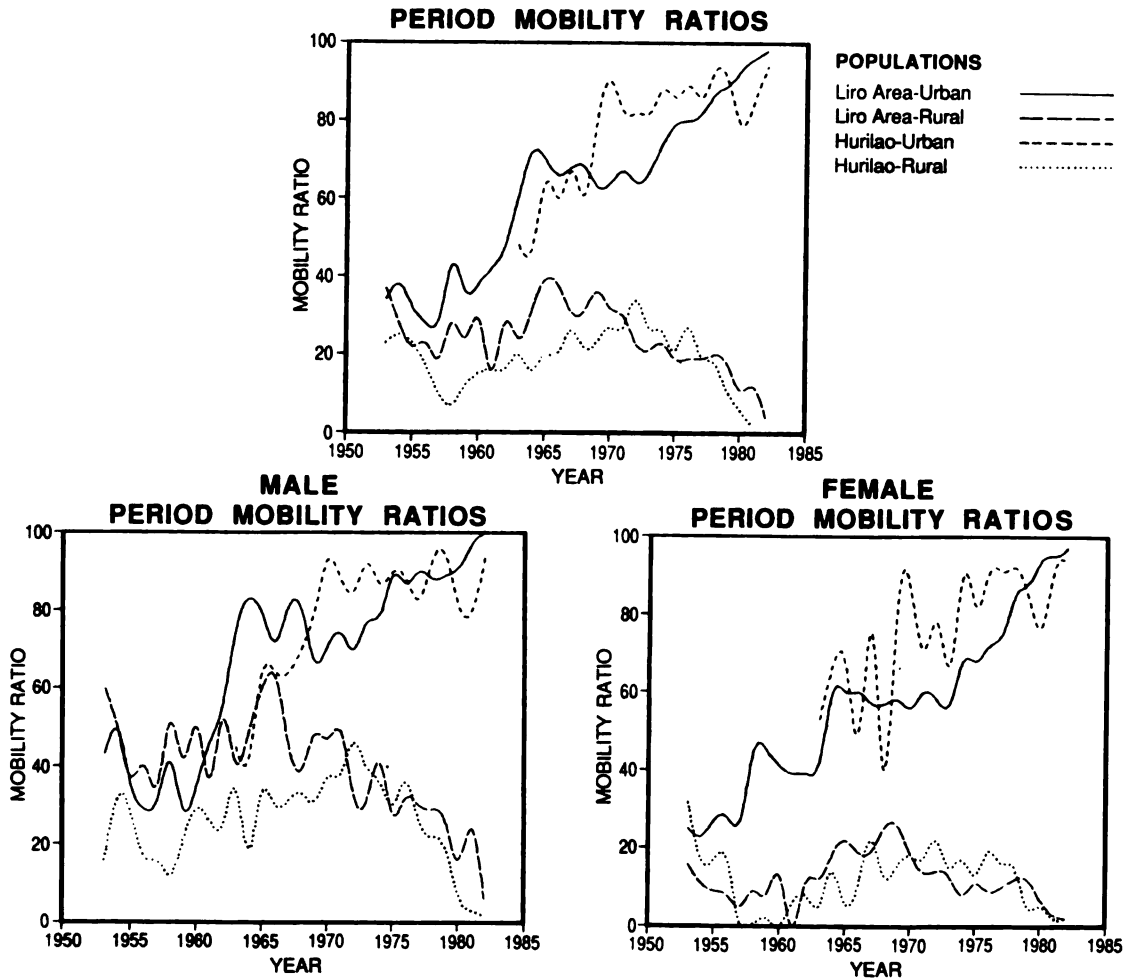


Figure 6.1 Adult life-time mobility developments amongst Liro area and Hurilao residents, 1953–82

later (1964–69), and is also followed by a period of urban stabilization. Much higher PMRs amongst urban Hurilao than urban Liro area residents between 1969 and 1979 reflect occupational differences between both urban migrant groups as previously emphasized, with a much higher proportion of Hurilao than Liro area migrants engaged in high prestige occupations (Table 5.3), entailing longer periods of urban residence (Table 5.4). A gradual mobility decline amongst rural Hurilao residents from 1972 onwards, after years of low fluctuations (prior to 1968) and a brief growth period (1968–72), follows a similar decline amongst rural Liro area residents which had set in several years earlier.

The considerable contrast in PMRs between rural Liro area and Hurilao men during the 1950s and 1960s becomes even more pronounced when education-related moves are excluded from these period data as is discussed below (Figure 6.5), when the inaccessibility to full primary education in Hurilao, and North Raga generally, necessitated mobility elsewhere. This underlines the relative insignificance of employment-related mobility amongst rural Hurilao men during these years. Analogously, such a modification also reveals slightly higher PMRs between Liro area and Hurilao women, pointing to a more pronounced contrast in employment-related mobility during the 1960s; much of this mobility, however, entailed accompanying husbands on their employment journeys, rather than reflecting female employment-mobility in its own right (Figure 6.6). While contrasting PMRs between rural men correspond to basic structural differences in the social and economic settings underlying Paamese and Raga mobility, and while similarities in the incidence of mobility during the 1970s have been earlier discussed in terms of two different rural-based mobility systems (survival versus convenience), the overall recent mobility decline amongst rural men may simply reflect changes in the rural age structure rather than a genuine development in rural-based mobility. On one hand this apparent decline in rural period mobility ratios could be due to an increase in more permanent urban relocations during these years. The resulting demographic imbalance amongst the populations of the Liro area and Hurilao with a high concentration of very young (teenagers) and older (50+) adults, and an under-representation of men and women in their thirties and forties as illustrated earlier (see age-pyramids in Chapter 2) could simply mean an over-representation of less mobile rural residents in the population at risk in 1982, relative to earlier years.² Secondly, age-specific variations in mobility throughout a man's life-cycle (Chapter 2) could also mean that the high PMRs during the mid to late 1960s are artefactual, given a demographically different composition of the population at risk during that time. While the calculation of recent PMRs encompasses a rather broad age-spectrum, thus acknowledging the totality of age-specific mobility fluctuations, the computation of PMRs some 15 to 20 years ago is obviously somewhat inflated, considering that many men in their sixties and seventies then are either no longer alive or reside permanently elsewhere, and their possibly low mobility at an older age (at migration) is not reflected in these figures.

Concerning mobility developments amongst rural Liro area men, neither possibility seems likely given highly consistent life-time cohort mobility ratios (CMR), and a general decline in age-cohort mobility ratios (ACMR) after initial increases at earlier stages during the life-course of these men (Table 6.1). Although the possible impact of mortality and past permanent out-migration on this mobility decline cannot be fully ascertained, much higher age-cohort mobility

² That is, the base population underlying the computation of period and cohort mobility ratios.

ratios, over the age of 25 at the time of mobility, amongst older than younger birth-cohorts at similar ages, suggest that this recent mobility decline is a genuine development. A somewhat different picture, however, emerges when examining analogous developments amongst rural Hurilao men. These point to a more considerable age interference regarding the pattern shown in Figure 6.2, as indicated both by considerable fluctuations in age-cohort mobility ratios between age-cohorts, and a far greater variability in life-time cohort mobility ratios (Table 6.1). Young men (15-24), unlike their Liro area counterparts, have virtually never moved, men over 45 years of age have 50 per cent lower CMRs than Liro area men of similar ages, and only amongst those currently aged 25-44 has mobility played an equally important part during their life-course, as amongst Liro area men. Despite these inter-island variations, a slight decline emerges in the mobility across all age-cohorts.

Contrary to the considerable mobility decline amongst rural Liro area and Hurilao men from the mid 1960s and early 1970s respectively onwards, and their different mobility experience during the 1950s and 1960s, rural women reveal a far less pronounced decrease in period mobility ratios (Figure 6.3). A consistently

Table 6.1 Life-time cohort mobility ratios (CMR) and age-cohort mobility ratios (ACMR) of rural Liro area and Hurilao residents

Age at move	Age cohorts (Current age)							
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	>50
	L (H) ^a	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)
Male								
CMR	29 (1)	40 (3)	37 (38)	36 (47)	39 (-) ^b	28 (36)	46 (22)	38 (21)
ACMR								
15-19	29 (1)	46 (5)	30 (55)	33 (55)	31 (-)	9 (21)	45 (16)	36 (37)
20-24		32 (1)	50 (38)	57 (76)	65 (-)	34 (58)	68 (21)	53 (33)
25-29			26 (13)	27 (31)	47 (-)	59 (35)	66 (34)	49 (30)
30-34				22 (20)	23 (-)	38 (41)	58 (21)	52 (23)
35-39					20 (-)	9 (38)	45 (38)	55 (6)
40-44						11 (12)	18 (26)	38 (14)
45-49							6 (6)	29 (15)
>50								11 (12)
Female								
CMR	13 (3)	10 (5)	23(22)	11(41)	7 (7)	14 (0)	19 (15)	8 (6)
ACMR								
15-19	13 (3)	14 (8)	25 (23)	16 (47)	11 (0)	4 (0)	9 (22)	0 (2)
20-24		3 (0)	21 (28)	23 (54)	10 (4)	24 (0)	14 (17)	4 (16)
25-29			24 (12)	2 (33)	2 (14)	20 (0)	16 (10)	5 (8)
30-34				0 (0)	6 (15)	6 (0)	27 (17)	12 (10)
35-39					1 (1)	19 (0)	33 (17)	13 (12)
40-44						7 (0)	17 (7)	14 (2)
45-49							15 (9)	9 (0)
>50								6 (3)

^a Refers to Liro area (L) and Hurilao (H) residents.

^b No resident in this age-group.

low mobility throughout the years, without much inter-island fluctuation,³ emphasizes, once again, the gender-bias characteristic of rural-based mobility (Table 6.1). These overall similarities notwithstanding, some inter-island variations emerge in life-course mobility. With the exception of 25–34-year-old women, Liro area women under 45 years of age experienced a higher mobility at younger ages than Hurilao women, with the opposite pattern applying to women over 45. Yet low female lifetime cohort mobility ratios and fluctuations in age-cohort mobility ratios do not permit the detection of an overall trend.

A trend, however, clearly emerges in the examination of life-course developments amongst Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila. There, much higher cohort mobility ratios compared with their corresponding rural cohorts, and a steady increase in age-cohort mobility ratios across all cohorts (except for Port Vila-based Hurilao women aged 20–24), both point towards a considerable degree of urban stabilization (Table 6.2). This development is also evident in a gradual increase in age-cohort mobility ratios between different male and female Liro area age-cohorts, which shows that the amount of time spent away from Paama has increased most dramatically at younger ages (15–29). While Liro area men now in their forties and fifties spent little time away from Paama when aged 15–19, this age-specific mobility ratio has increased substantially, with men currently 15–19 years old having lived 86 per cent of their adulthood away from the Liro area. A similar development emerges in the mobility of Liro area women. While those presently over fifty years of age had never left their home island before their mid-twenties, 15–24-year-old women have lived most of their adulthood away from Paama at similar stages of their life-course.

While this increase in age-cohort mobility ratios between urban age cohorts, and the parallel decline in ACMRs amongst corresponding rural cohorts, underline a gradual change from short-term rural-based circulation towards a longer-term urban orientation amongst Liro area men and women in Port Vila, a much greater consistency in ACMRs amongst their urban Hurilao counterparts points to a different mobility development. Rather than gradually changing from periods of short-term and rural-based circulation to long-term rural absenteeism (as would be indicated by a gradual increase in urban ACMRs and a parallel decrease in rural ACMRs), a consistently high contrast in urban and rural ACMRs amongst men over 40, and the absence of Hurilao men and of women over 45 in town, suggest that long-term urban relocations of Hurilao residents developed independently from prior temporary and rural-based circulation experiences.

Controlling for changes in mobility destinations over time suggests some explanations for the development of different mobility patterns between urban and rural residents from the mid to late 1960s onwards (see Figure 6.1). Notwithstanding their similar period mobility ratios between 1953 and 1962, urban and rural Liro area men engaged in different forms of mobility during this period (Figure 6.2). Urban areas were the major destinations for current town-based Liro area men, and employment on domestic and international cargo boats played a greater role in the mobility of rural men. While this urban bias has been a consistent feature in the mobility of town-based Liro area men throughout the past thirty years, a greater variety in destinations characterizes the mobility of their rural counterparts over the same period. The predominance of employment on cargo boats in earlier years was followed by a greater balance in mobility

³ The high CMRs of Hurilao women and men aged 30–34 decrease to 19 and 37 respectively when education-related moves are excluded.

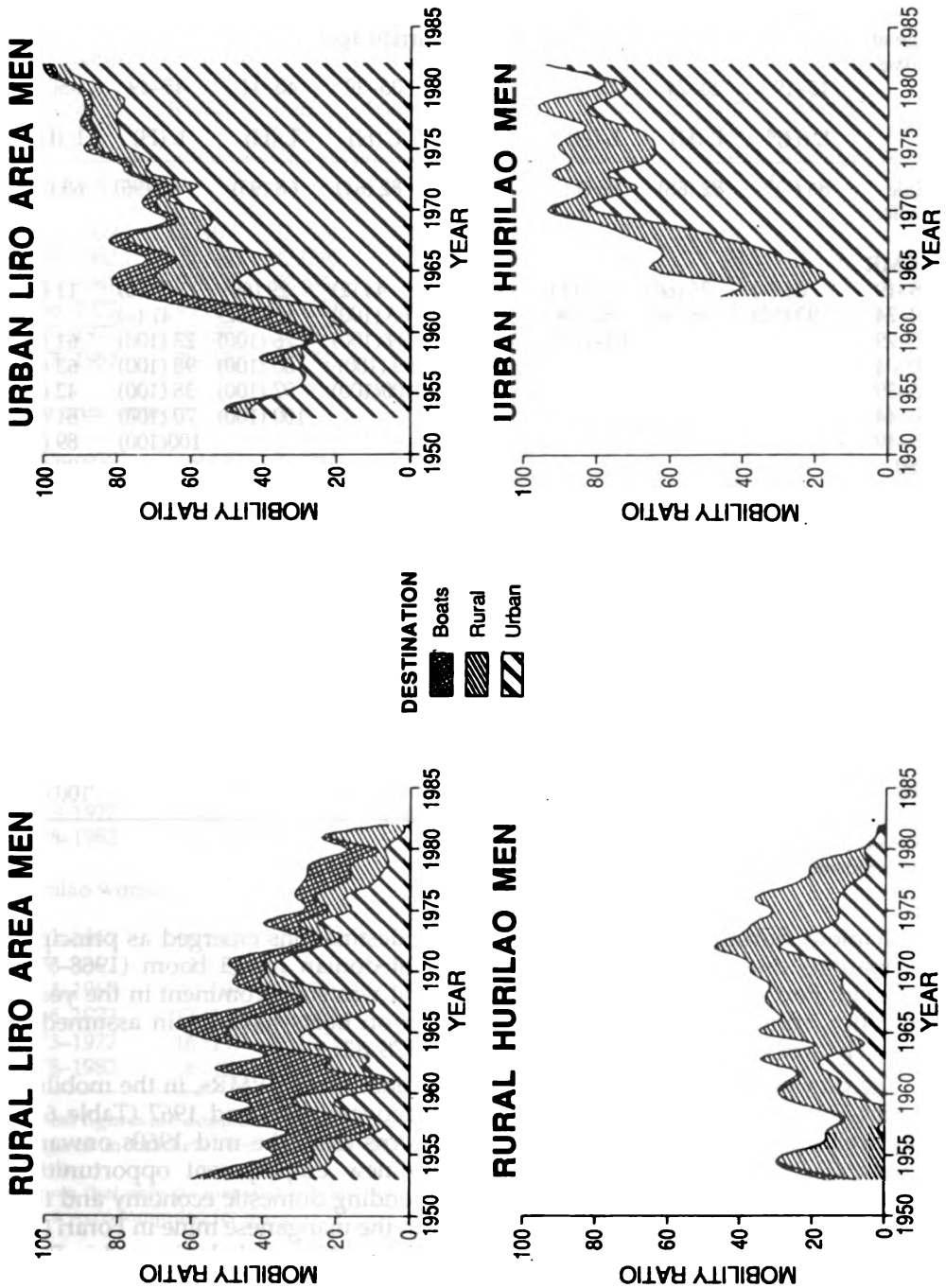


Figure 6.2 The importance of different destinations in the mobility of Liro area and Hurilao men, 1953-82

Table 6.2 Life-time cohort mobility ratios (CMR) and age-cohort mobility ratios (ACMR) of urban Liro area and Hurilao residents

Age at move	Age cohorts (Current age)							
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	>50
	L (H) ^a	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)	L (H)
Male CMR	86 (-) ^b	82 (68)	86 (71)	82 (87)	82 (64)	68 (93)	45 (96)	63 (-) ^b
ACMR								
15-19	86 (-)	75 (60)	70 (43)	67 (72)	44 (2)	29 (60)	5 (95)	11 (-)
20-24	93 (82)	95 (90)	82 (90)	87 (46)	63 (100)	8 (82)	41 (-)	
25-29			100 (100)	87 (100)	89 (100)	76 (100)	23 (100)	61 (-)
30-34				96 (85)	99 (100)	60 (100)	90 (100)	63 (-)
35-39					100 (100)	97 (100)	38 (100)	42 (-)
40-44						100 (100)	70 (100)	81 (-)
45-49							100 (100)	89 (-)
>50								100 (-)
Female CMR	82 (68)	76 (60)	57 (84)	81 (94)	61 (-) ^b	50 (71)	65 (-) ^b	48 (-) ^b
ACMR								
15-19	82 (68)	59 (70)	28 (60)	56 (80)	23 (-)	22 (41)	21 (-)	0 (-)
20-24		98 (45)	73 (100)	81 (100)	47 (-)	33 (51)	52 (-)	0 (-)
25-29			86 (100)	98 (100)	67 (-)	49 (60)	78 (-)	11 (-)
30-34				100 (100)	83 (-)	36 (100)	77 (-)	21 (-)
35-39					100 (-)	87 (100)	80 (-)	41 (-)
40-44						100 (100)	80 (-)	85 (-)
45-49							73 (-)	100 (-)
>50								100 (-)

^a Refers to Liro area (L) and Hurilao (H) residents.^b No residents in these particular age-groups.

destinations during the mid-1960s, and urban destinations emerged as principal destinations during the years of the New Caledonian nickel boom (1968-72). Although Port-Vila and Santo-bound movement was still prominent in the years thereafter, rural destinations and employment on boats have again assumed a relatively greater importance in recent years (1978-82).

The prevalence of different destinations, amidst similar PMRs, in the mobility of Port-Vila and island-based Liro area men between 1953 and 1962 (Table 6.3) may well explain the diverging mobility patterns from the mid 1960s onward. During the second half of the 1960s, many new employment opportunities became available as a result of the rapidly expanding domestic economy and the nickel boom in neighbouring New Caledonia: in the manganese mine in Forari (15 kilometres north-east of Vila); in the nickel mines of New Caledonia; and in Port Vila's and Noumea's booming construction industries. However, many such jobs, and particularly positions conducive to long-term employment, favoured people with previous work experience, qualifications and contacts with employers. Such criteria were more readily met by migrants with previous urban work experience than by those men employed primarily on ships and plantations.

Table 6.3 Changes in destinations in the mobility of Port Vila- and island-based Liro area and Hurilao residents, 1953-82^a

Destinations:	All		Urban		Rural		Boats	
Sample:	Island	Port Vila	Island	Port Vila	Island	Port Vila	Island	Port Vila
Liro area men								
1953-1957	43 (40) ^b	37 (33)	20	35	7	1	16	1
1958-1962	47 (44)	42 (39)	12	24	8	10	26	9
1963-1967	52 (51)	78 (66)	19	44	19	23	14	10
1968-1972	43 (42)	72 (59)	28	59	7	9	8	4
1973-1977	32 (30)	85 (67)	16	73	7	7	8	3
1978-1982	20 (18)	93 (74)	5	85	9	6	6	2
Liro area women								
1953-1957	9 (9)	26 (26)	6	15	3	11		
1958-1962	8 (8)	41 (41)	4	30	4	11		
1963-1967	18 (17)	56 (51)	12	42	6	14		
1968-1972	19 (18)	58 (46)	12	52	7	6		
1973-1977	10 (9)	68 (58)	7	66	3	2		
1978-1982	7 (7)	92 (80)	4	90	3	2		
Hurilao men								
1953-1957	22 (10) ^c	-	1	-	19	-	2	-
1958-1962	23 (16)	-	8	-	14	-	1	-
1963-1967	29 (15)	57 [33]	10	26	19	31	0	0
1968-1972	37 (34)	83 (72)	16	68	21	15	0	0
1973-1977	33 (32)	88 (76)	14	69	19	19	0	0
1978-1982	10 (8)	88 (81)	4	81	6	7	0	0
Hurilao women								
1953-1957	16 (16)	-	0	-	16	-		
1958-1962	2 (3)	-	0	-	3	-		
1963-1967	11 (8)	62 (50)	1	11	10	51		
1968-1972	17 (11)	74 (50)	3	41	14	32		
1973-1977	16 (14)	85 (67)	6	70	10	15		
1978-1982	6 (5)	88 (70)	3	84	3	4		

^a These figures are destination-specific period mobility ratios.

^b Figures in brackets refer to destination-specific PMRs, after the exclusion of education-related moves.

^c Given that only six men and women from Hurilao lived in Port Vila before 1963, no period mobility ratios were computed for this period.

The importance of these contrasts between urban and rural employment-related mobility experiences in explaining the subsequent development of different mobility processes, recalls Young's (1982) concept of 'critical moves'. These moves 'predispose towards a particular kind of wage work and increasingly channel the subsequent choices made from a range of mobility

options' (quoted in Chapman 1985: 440). While the matter of volition is debatable, such a link between subsequent employment patterns has been recently illustrated by Friesen (1983, 1986) in his analysis of Choiseul labour mobility in the Solomon Islands. Liro area men on the island and in town emphasized that skills, or at least the familiarity with a given job and with employers, were helpful in obtaining urban employment conducive to a long-term urban residence during the economic boom years of the early 1970s. The importance of contacts, that *man i mas gat rod*, to obtain such employment is evident from a Liro area man's illustration of how his 52-year-old, married brother Tom obtained such employment.

... you have talked to many men already...we hardly differ here in our mobility. In earlier years, we cut copra on Epi, worked with Burns Philp [BP] and Ballande, worked on the small inter-island trading vessels ... just work like that. My brother in Vila did the same, he worked with BP in Santo, worked on one of Roy Gibby's boats, then went to Vila and worked at T-Dock [T-Dock refers to Ballande's wharf in Port Vila, a traditional workplace for Paamese migrant labour from the 1950s onward]... and so it went. When the manganese mining operation started in Forari and they were looking for labour, he left T-Dock and went to Forari together with many other Paamese ... many of us worked there ... a Ballande manager, who knew him [from his earlier work at T-Dock] asked him if he wanted to work in Ballande's store in Forari ... and that's what my brother did ... he worked there for many years. When Forari's operation folded, his boss took him to Port Vila and employed him in the main store there, because by then my brother was well acquainted with working in a store.

When I interviewed Tom later in Port Vila, he corroborated the circumstances of his involvement with Ballande. He emphasized that his being offered the job in Forari was luck—which underlines earlier comments about fortuitous mobility—in that a Ballande manager recognized him there from his previous employment with the company in Port Vila, so highlighting the importance of job connections.

While the sample of Port Vila-based Hurilao men is too small to permit a detailed examination of mobility trends over a 30 year period, the overall pattern emerging during the past two decades differs from that of their Liro area counterparts in three major aspects (Figure 5.2). First, the contrast in PMRs between Port-Vila and Hurilao-based men during 1963–67 is much greater than that between their Liro area counterparts, which suggests a somewhat earlier divergence between temporary rural-based circulation and more permanent urban relocations of Hurilao men. The exclusion of education-related mobility, which incidentally accounts for about half of Hurilao men's PMRs before 1967, supports this argument, as indicated in employment-related PMRs of island- and Port Vila-based Hurilao men (34 and 72 respectively) between 1968 and 1972, compared with the corresponding PMRs of Paama- and Port Vila-based Liro area men (42 and 59, Table 5.3). This somewhat earlier divergence between temporary rural-based circulation and longer-term mobility amongst Hurilao men, however, was greatly facilitated by the virtual absence of temporary moves before 1967, when employment-oriented PMRs varied between 10 and 16, compared with much higher figures amongst Liro area men ranging between 40 and 51. Such contrasts, once again, reflect the considerable differences in the Paamese and Raga settings of mobility and the existence of two different rural mobility systems.

A second major contrast lies in clear destination differences. Movement to rural destinations elsewhere consistently accounts for most of the mobility of rural Hurilao men, which is in stark contrast to a greater salience of urban-bound

mobility and employment on ships amongst rural Liro area men. This rural bias is primarily due to the incidence of attending schools on neighbouring Ambae given the lack of educational facilities throughout North Raga until the late 1960s.

The importance of education in differentiating between temporary rural-based circulation and long-term urban relocations amongst Hurilao men emerges as a third contrast in the mobility of Hurilao and Liro area men. Between 1963 and 1967, about half of the PMRs of Port Vila-based Hurilao men were associated with education-related mobility, particularly to neighbouring Ambae, which was followed by a phenomenal increase in employment-related mobility. This increase in employment-related PMRs from 33 in 1963–67 to 72 in 1968–72 (Table 6.3), has been followed by a process of urban stabilization during the past ten years. Although a similar rapid increase in employment-related mobility appears amongst Port Vila-based Liro area men five years earlier, education never had such a strong impact on Paamese mobility. This is apparent in virtually identical PMRs of rural men, irrespective of the inclusion or exclusion of education-related mobility. However, a widening gap between employment-related PMRs and the corresponding figures after the exclusion of education-oriented moves indicates that this form of mobility has gradually increased during the past 20 years amongst Port Vila-based Liro area men.

The impact of education on Raga mobility, particularly on long-term urban moves, has previously been emphasized in the discussion of the much higher proportion of Port Vila-based Hurilao men in white-collar employment than Liro area men (Table 5.3). It has also been stressed in the discussion of mobility norms, where the urban-bound movement of educated Raga men (and women) to obtain such employment is not only encouraged, but somehow expected by their rural families, as illustrated in the words of two married Hurilao men, both in their mid-thirties.

Mark, Abwatuntora village: If I were better educated, I probably would also be in Vila now like Peter, Paul and others ...they have good jobs there, because they have good education from Vureas, and many also went to Honiara [Technical Institute, to obtain qualifications as skilled tradesmen]. But I have no good education, because when I was in class 5, our family had some problems, and there was also no money for my school fees on Ambae. If people have good education, they have to work in town, because their parents paid their school fees. Just look at old Joe, he is very angry with his son, because he paid for three years secondary education in Vureas, and now, he only sits at home...that's not good. Suppose people have no education, they can stay, but if they have good education they should get a good job to [be able to] look after their parents.

Peter, Port Vila: When I left Vureas, I sat for the entrance examination to the British Secondary School in Vila, but they told me I was too old to be admitted [he was 17 then] ... so I started to look for jobs. One day, a Pentecost man working at the British Works Department told my uncle that they were looking for people. So I went and worked there. For two years, they were teaching me everything about ..., and after that they sent me to the Honiara Technical Institute for further training. When I finished my training there [four-year course], I rejoined the British Works Department, and upon Independence, we all joined the Public Works Department. I like my job, but it is a town job. I can't do work like that on Raga, because there is no such work there ... if I go, what would I do there?

Unlike their male counterparts, Port-Vila and island-based Liro area women have been more urban than rural-oriented in their mobility throughout the past thirty years, except during the late 1950s and during the past five years, when no real destination preferences emerge amongst rural Liro area women (Figure 6.3). Much lower female than male PMRs reflect the gender bias in temporary rural-based circulation, and also indicate a more belated process of urban

stabilization, with a gradual convergence in PMRs of urban men and women only emerging during the past ten years. Similar consistently low PMRs amongst rural women, and much higher figures shown by their urban counterparts, also characterize the recent mobility of Hurilao women. Like Hurilao men, yet in contrast to Paamese women, rural Hurilao women have been far more rural- than urban-oriented in their mobility throughout the past thirty years. Only during the past decade have urban areas emerged as principal destinations in the movement of Port Vila-based women.

These developments in period and cohort mobility point to considerable changes in the mobility process itself. Developments in employment-related mobility are clearly linked to changes in the economic setting of mobility, and may well explain the gradual divergence between temporary and rural-based circulation and more permanent urban relocations. But earlier references to a growing importance of job qualifications and experience, to the influence of early mobility experiences on subsequent mobility behaviour, to the decline in labour recruitment with its temporal limitations (the signing of contracts), and to a recent liberalization of gender-specific mobility norms, all suggest that this gradual divergence between temporary rural-based circulation and more permanent relocations cannot be attributed to explicit economic phenomena alone. They point to considerable changes in the social and political setting and to situational developments underlying the organization of mobility—developments which allow for greater individual freedom and flexibility, both of which are also conducive to long-term and permanent moves. Developments such as a decline in labour recruitment, the gradual abolition of employment-tied accommodation and the increase in urban wages, both formerly geared towards the sustenance of 'single' workers, facilitating family residence in town, cannot be dissociated from economic change, but once such transformations have occurred, their subsequent maintenance acquires a dynamic of its own. Such new forms of mobility gradually become independent of their original causes, which exemplifies the ongoing dialectic of mobility change.

Developments in the Mobility Process

With regard to changes in the organization of mobility, a declining incidence in direct labour recruitment throughout the past thirty years emerges as the most consistent development amongst all migrant cohorts, except for the case of Hurilao women amongst whom this form of mobility was never of real importance (Figure 6.4). The slight reversal of this trend amongst rural Liro area men between 1978 and 1982 is due to a recent increase in the incidence of plantation circulation as opportunities for temporary employment in town and on boats have become more scarce in recent times. This plantation 'recruitment,' as manifest in contemporary Paama, differs greatly from that of earlier years: nowadays, groups of Liro area men may send messages to a particular plantation indicating that they are ready to engage in plantation work; a boat is then dispatched to pick them up.

While the rather consistent mobility of married women in the company of their husbands has been noted previously, the gradual increase in the incidence of joint husband-wife mobility amongst urban Liro area men is a more recent development. This has increased from 14 per cent in 1953–57 to over 60 per cent during the past ten years. Viewed in conjunction with the low mobility of rural married couples this points to a more long-term urban orientation amongst urban

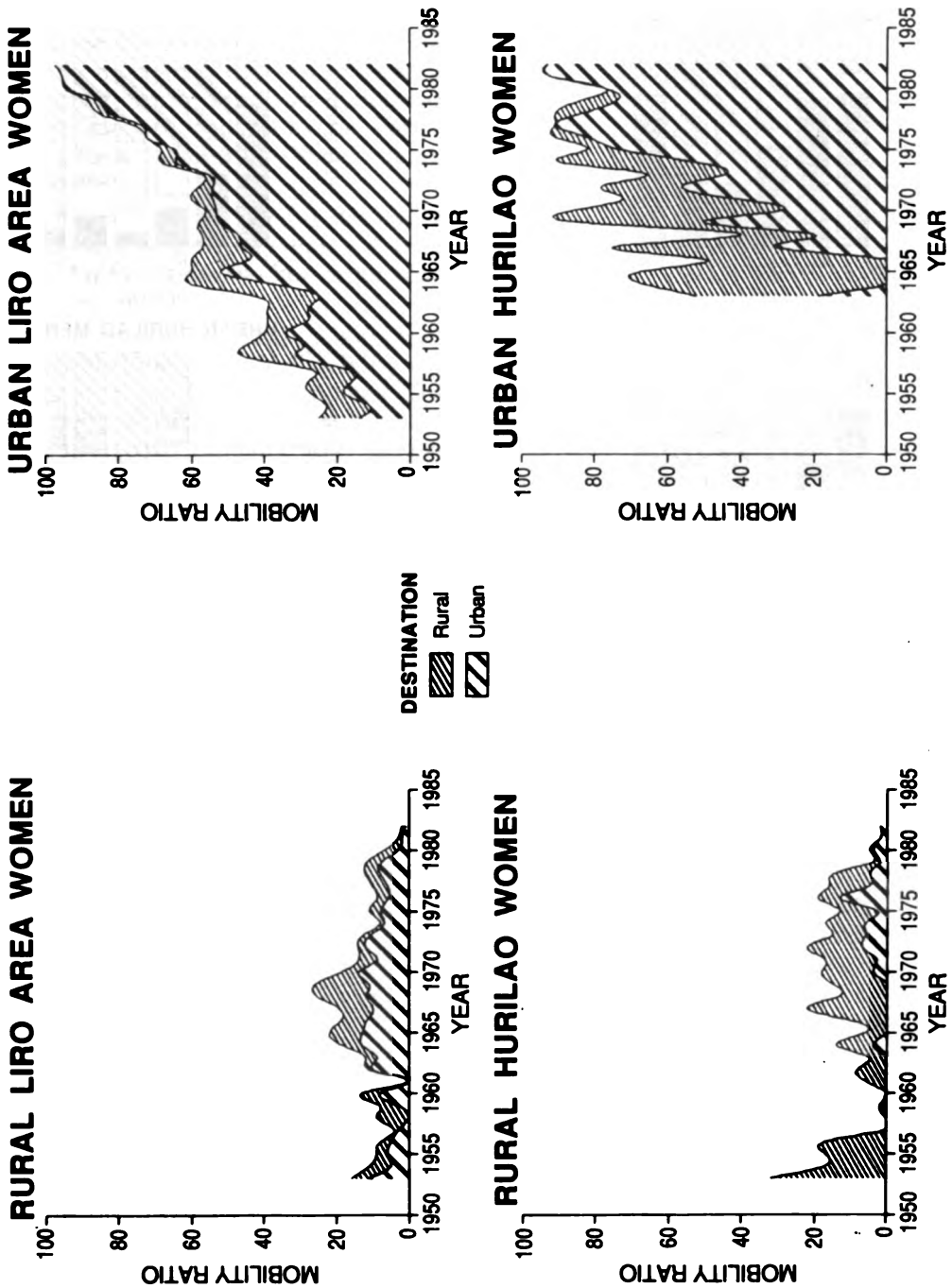


Figure 6.3 The importance of different destinations in the mobility of Liro area and Hurilao women, 1953–82

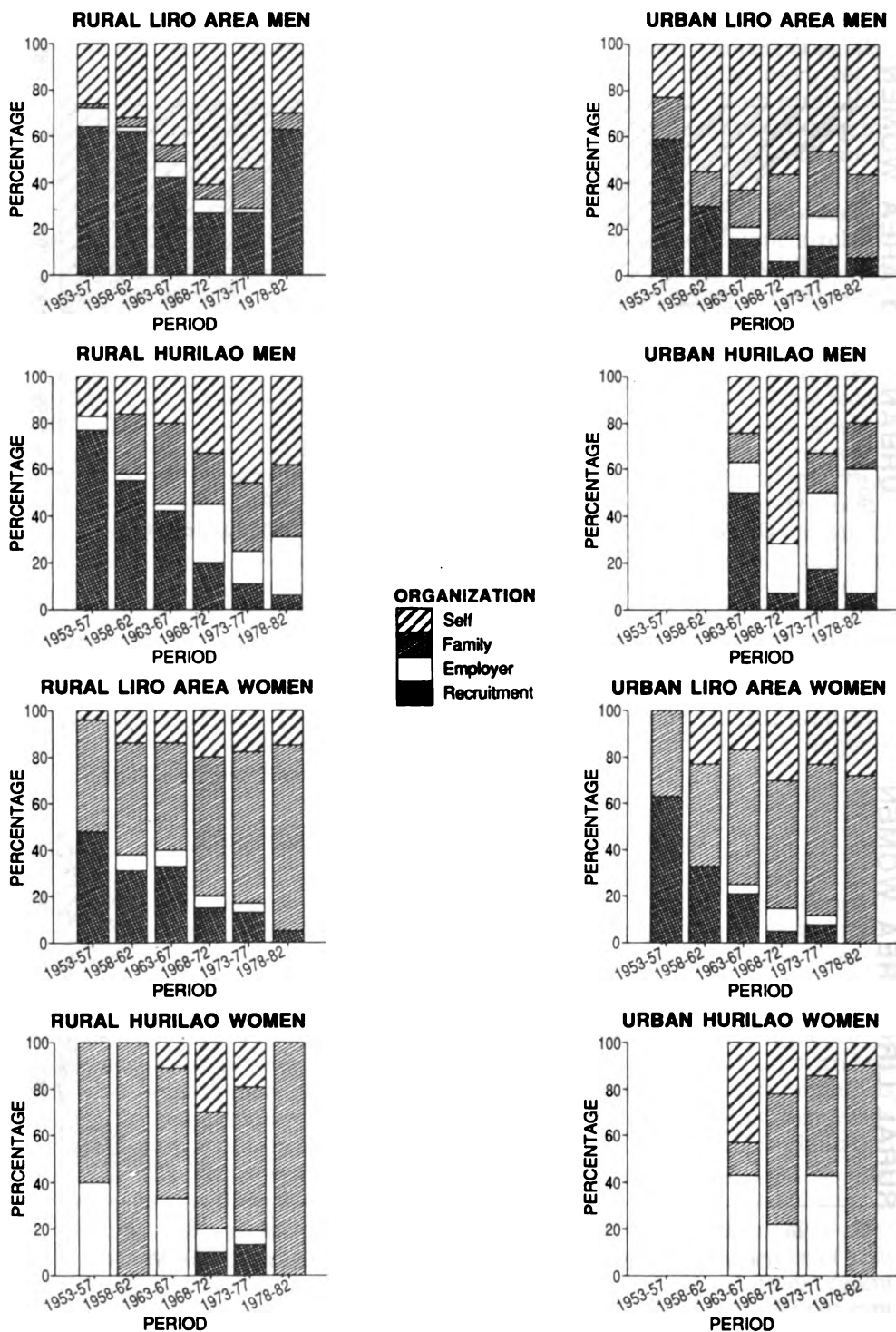


Figure 6.4 Developments in the organization of mobility

men and women, as suggested by diverging urban and rural period mobility ratios. A similar contrast also emerges between rural and urban Hurilao men, although amongst the latter joint husband-wife mobility did not gradually develop but has figured in all but one of the few urban moves by married men. While more than two out of three Liro area and Hurilao residents in Port Vila originally arrived in town unmarried, two-thirds of these men and women have since married and settled in Port Vila with their spouses, which suggests a long-term rather than merely temporary urban residence of these men and women.⁴

Apart from an overall decline in direct labour recruitment, few consistent patterns emerge from Figure 6.4, which suggests that other setting and situational developments may yield a better account for the diverging urban and rural period mobility ratios.

Decomposing period mobility by various forms of employment and education illustrates the diverging mobility processes between rural- and Port Vila-based Liro area and Hurilao residents. The overall similarity previously noted in the mobility of rural and urban Liro area men between 1953 and 1962 (Figure 6.1) disguises two fundamentally different employment patterns: most rural men worked on boats, while urban men were then already engaged in urban wage-labour (Figure 6.5). The growing divergence between temporary rural-

Table 6.4 Developments in the incidence of joint husband-wife mobility by married migrants, 1953-82

	Liro area		Hurilao	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Males				
1953-1957	14 ^a (22) ^b	14 (7)	33 (6)	N.A.
1958-1962	17 (29)	25 (8)	13 (8)	N.A.
1963-1967	33 (24)	40 (10)	10 (20)	100 (1)
1968-1972	10 (48)	56 (18)	42 (12)	0 (0)
1973-1977	24 (46)	63 (19)	44 (18)	100 (1)
1978-1982	3 (59)	60 (5)	22 (9)	67 (3)
Females				
1953-1957	92 (13)	100 (1)	100 (2)	N.A.
1958-1962	62 (13)	71 (7)	67 (3)	N.A.
1963-1967	91 (21)	75 (8)	71 (7)	100 (1)
1968-1972	82 (22)	75 (8)	100 (5)	100 (3)
1973-1977	81 (32)	100 (8)	88 (8)	100 (3)
1978-1982	70 (30)	100 (8)	100 (3)	100 (6)

^a Figures are percentages.

^b Figures in brackets refer to the number of moves by married men and women during each period.

⁴ A general assessment of changes in the marital status of migrants over time is fraught with danger, given the impossibility of reconstituting reliable base populations. An examination of the proportion of ever-married migrants at the time of move of the present sample of rural and urban men and women, revealed no changes over time, with about 50 per cent of all rural residents married at the time of their moves, whereas only one out of three urban migrants in town was married at the time of their past moves.

based circulation and more permanent urban relocations amongst Liro area men during the mid 1960s and early 1970s, is primarily due to an increased involvement of urban men in white-collar employment and education-related mobility (that is, mobility generally more conducive to long-term employment than unskilled occupations), with few notable differences emerging between urban and rural men working as unskilled labourers. A more pronounced divergence between these mobility processes from around 1972 results both from the stabilization of white-collar employment amongst urban men, and their much greater involvement in urban wage labour, whereas the significance of the latter occupation amongst rural men drastically declined during the same period.

Although opportunities for unskilled labour have declined during the past ten years causing people to hold on to such positions for longer periods, this phenomenon *per se* cannot explain the diverging trend in period mobility ratios between urban and rural labourers (Figure 6.5). Occurring in the aftermath of the New Caledonian nickel boom, this development has to be seen in the context of mobility to New Caledonia. Given the vast demand for skilled and unskilled manpower, many Liro area men, then in their late teens and early twenties, either made their first contact with a wage economy in Noumea, or obtained employment in Port Vila and Santo, filling positions vacated by older relatives and friends who themselves moved on to New Caledonia. Married men with families on Paama generally worked in New Caledonia for periods of six to twelve months, then returned home to their families for short holidays before eventually returning for yet another employment stint. But young and single men remained for much longer periods; if they returned at all to Vanuatu for short holidays or to renew their working permits, many remained with friends and relatives in Port Vila or Santo, rather than visiting Paama before returning again to New Caledonia. The relatively insignificant social, political and economic role of young men in rural Paama, the lack of family pressures for return visits, and the opportunity to earn higher wages if they remained with their employer for longer periods, were the key factors for uninterrupted two-to-three year employment stints by young Paamese engaged for the first time in an urban economy.

Of all 57 rural Liro area men who, at the time of the New Caledonia nickel boom were over 15 years of age, 37 (65 per cent) made at least one move to New Caledonia, and 30 of these men were married with wives and children on Paama.⁵ Of all 40 Liro area men currently residing in Port Vila who, between 1968 and 1972, were over 15 years of age, only ten (25 per cent) went to New Caledonia; seven of these men were then unmarried, and all but one (see illustration below), have lived in Port Vila since their return from New Caledonia. Of the remaining 30 men, 26 worked in Port Vila; 12 of these men were married at the time, and had all arrived in Port Vila before 1968; of the other 14 men who then were unmarried, all but one had made their first ever move to town between 1970 and 1972.⁶

5 Of the remaining 20, seven worked on ships during these years (all married), seven men worked temporarily in Port Vila and Santo (six married), and seven men did not move during that time (three claimed they felt too old to work in New Caledonia, one was not allowed to leave the island by his father, and as to the circumstances of the other three, I could not find out anything).

6 The other four men lived on Paama during these years; two worked on ships, whereas the others did not work anywhere during that time.

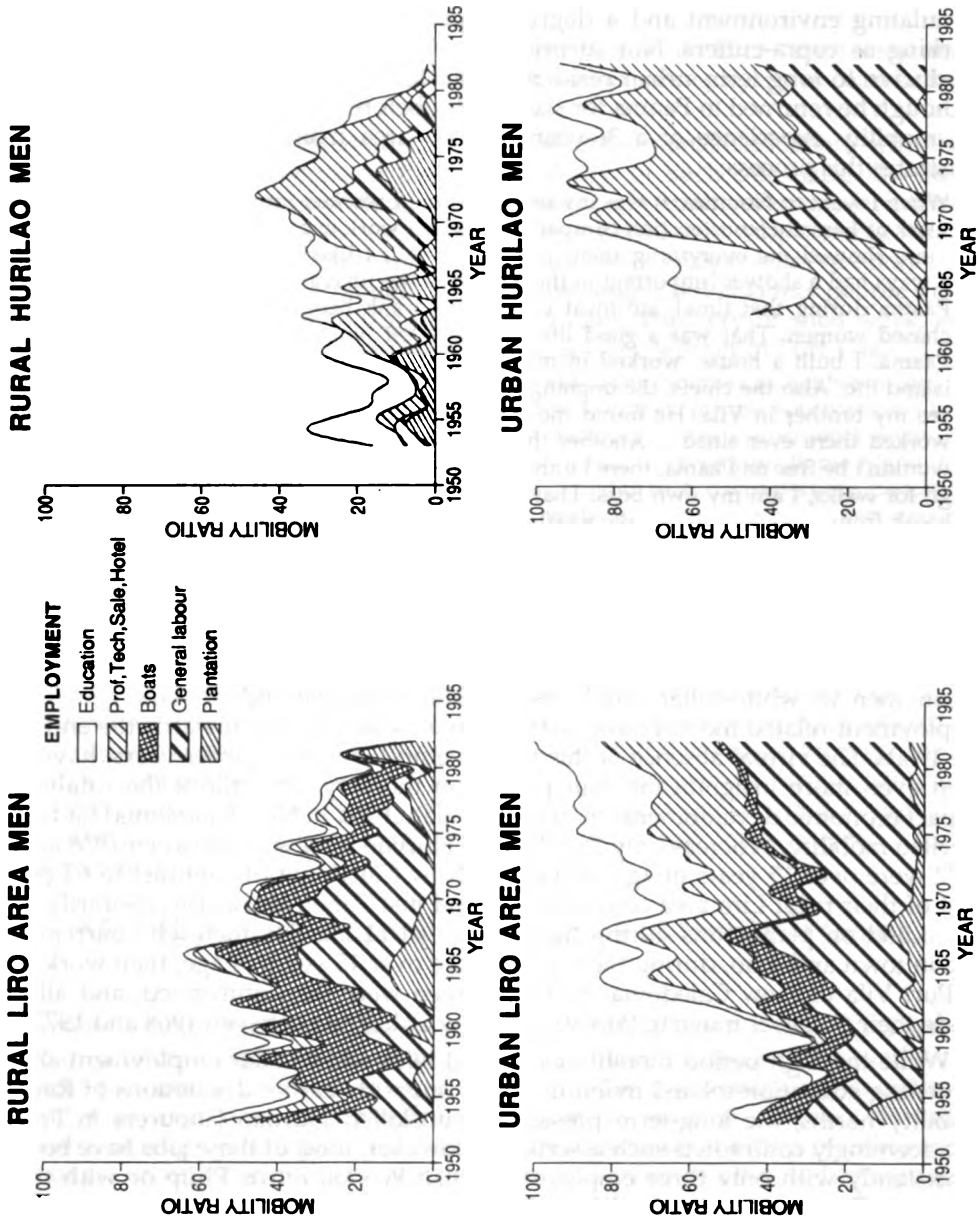


Figure 6.5 Mobility change amongst Liro area and Hurilao men, 1953–82

Young unmarried men, who thus gained their first work experience during these years, experienced mobility under conditions dissimilar to those of older generations. They gained their initial mobility experience in town, under better working and living conditions than experienced by older relatives who in earlier years worked primarily on boats and plantations. They were exposed to a more stimulating environment and a degree of personal freedom unknown to those working as copra-cutters. Not surprisingly, this mobility experience was more conducive to long-term urban residence than to a return to their home islands. Although he returned to Paama for six months, before settling in Port Vila in 1971, the mobility experience of a 36-year-old Liro area man resident in Port Vila, illustrates this process:

When I went to Noumea, it was my first time that I worked for a wage. When I began work at Lassette [construction company], I had no work experience, but all my friends there showed me everything there was to know ... I liked Noumea; after work, we always had a shower [important in the context of the unavailability of water supply on Paama during that time], ate meat every day, drank beer, went to the movies, and chased women. That was a good life ... After I left Noumea [3 years], I returned to Paama. I built a house, worked in my gardens, but I had forgotten the hardship of island life. Also the chiefs, the ongoing jealousy, their constant bitching ... so I went to see my brother in Vila. He found me a job with his employer ... I liked it, and have worked there ever since ... Another thing, I am a free man. This is not to say that I wouldn't be free on Paama, there I only have to work in my gardens, and can sleep and go for walks, I am my own boss. That is a bit harder here, because if I were to take a break from work [take a few days off], I'd lose my job. But I can do what I want, there are no chiefs to interfere, no chiefs who constantly bitch. That's why I like Vila better than Paama.

The diverging mobility developments of rural and Port Vila-based Hurilao men over past twenty years follow a different pattern. The higher period mobility of urban than rural men results from a much more pronounced involvement of urban men in white-collar employment,⁷ and from the sudden emergence of employment-related mobility associated with unskilled labour towards the end of the 1960s. The virtual absence of this type of employment in earlier years, having been even more insignificant than plantation mobility, underlines the catalytic impact economic developments in urban Vanuatu (and in New Caledonia) had on Hurilao mobility. Whereas only 2 of 28 rural Hurilao men who, between 1968 and 1972 were over 15 years of age, worked in New Caledonia (in contrast to 65 per cent of their rural Liro area counterparts), and just 7 men worked temporarily in Santo and on plantations during these years, all 11 Hurilao men who currently live in town and who, during these years were over 15 years of age, then worked in Port Vila or New Caledonia; 8 of these men were then unmarried, and all 8 made their first ever move to Port Vila or New Caledonia between 1968 and 1972.

While the high period mobility associated with white-collar employment and preceding education-related mobility clearly supports earlier discussions of Raga mobility norms, the long-term presence of unskilled Hurilao labourers in Port Vila seemingly contradicts such assertions. However, most of these jobs have been consistently with only three employers: British Works, Burns Philp or with the Vanuatu Government Public Works Department. Despite the compatibility of wages with those paid in the private sector, employment tenure and retirement

⁷ The rather high PMRs of rural Hurilao men engaged in white-collar employment between 1968 and 1977 are due to the mobility histories of two male nurses and one qualified plumber resident in Abwatuntora since the late 1970s.

benefits available in the public service, and also provided by Burns Philp for long-term employees, convey a certain degree of respectability and status to otherwise *low prestige* occupations, and are more conducive to long-term or permanent urban employment than to casual labour elsewhere. A 24-year-old Hurilao employee with the road maintenance crew of the Public Works Department stresses this point:

Never mind the dirty work, it is the same as everywhere else. But if I don't screw things up, I can stay as long as I like. That's different from other employers, who can sack you anytime they please.

The availability of regular and paid annual leave to unskilled labour with these employers not only increased the 'respectability' of such otherwise low-status occupations, but more importantly in the context of mobility change, facilitated a change from temporary to long-term or even permanent employment tenure. Short-term employment stints in such occupations in earlier years not only were the result of contractual arrangements and low wages, but also met people's need periodically to take a break from the monotonous drudgery of such work, as is emphasized by Ronald, a 34-year-old Hurilao sewage worker in Port Vila:

Before Noumea (this date refers to the period of the Noumea nickel boom, and was given as a rough time reference), people had no holidays. In case you wanted a break from the hard work, you could not take any time off ... you had to work every day. Sundays were your only days off ... In case you had to go to your home island, for a wedding or funeral, you could not get leave ... under such circumstances, people just quit their jobs ... that is the answer to your question of why people did not remain in their jobs for longer periods ... But now, things are much better. I have Saturdays and Sundays off, and also get four weeks of paid annual leave, which is something which makes all of us very happy.

This illustration is yet another example of what has been referred to earlier as the application of two different yardsticks regarding employment-related mobility in developing and developed countries. Assembly-line workers, for example, in developed countries can hardly be conceptually treated as circular wage-labour simply because they take holidays, often enforced through annual factory shutdowns; ni-Vanuatu and other Pacific Islands labour migrants, however, have been consistently seen in this role because they had to quit their employment periodically to take the holiday which was freely granted to their counterparts elsewhere.⁸

Mobility Change amongst Liro Area and Hurilao Women, 1953-82

Female mobility histories indicate that an expanding and diversifying domestic urban economy also created employment opportunities for women, and to an extent previously unknown (Figure 6.6). While the consistently low mobility of rural Liro area women throughout the past 30 years is reflected in rather consistent employment patterns, the substantial increase in period mobility ratios amongst urban women during the past decade is primarily due to their growing labour force participation, and to a lesser extent to the increased urban presence of non-working women accompanying their husbands. The most striking change occurred amongst unskilled labour, with most of these women employed by European households as domestic servants. While the growing availability of

⁸ This emphasis on holidays, however, should not detract from these circular migrants' dependence on rural subsistence production in earlier years, to subsidize their wage-labour elsewhere.

such opportunities facilitated an increase in female employment-oriented mobility, a relaxation in female mobility restrictions has to be regarded as of equal analytical importance. Two distinct developments account for this change. First, men, through their own increased mobility to urban areas, have become more aware of employment opportunities and working conditions for women in European households, and realized that sexual abuse, particularly of their young unmarried women, was no longer a threat to the extent previously known on plantations. A growing long-term residence of kin in town, able to keep an eye on their unmarried daughters, also contributed to this relaxation of female mobility norms, as illustrated by a Liro area woman in her late fifties:

In earlier days, men here did not allow us to work for Europeans. They [Europeans] were real bastards. Look at Rosita, the manager of 'Easy Pick' plantation got her pregnant...the same also happened to Maria on another plantation ... and Andrea's oldest daughter is of mixed race.

A second development relates to a change in household survival strategies. With employment opportunities for unskilled female labour expanding at a faster rate than similar jobs for men, many rural families actually encouraged their daughters to pursue such employment. This is reflected in the fact that three out of four moves to Port Vila and Santo by unmarried women from 1968 onwards were family-initiated. Urban kin not only acted as moral guardians for unmarried female relatives from Paama, but equally importantly fulfilled the role of employment broker, sending requests for domestic servants to Paama whenever they heard of a job vacancy. The fact that unmarried daughters were less likely to spend their earnings on alcohol, tobacco and entertainment, and, according to most rural parents, provided remittances more regularly than sons, also contributed to such developments.

The most significant change in the mobility of Hurilao women relates to a vast increase in period mobility ratios amongst economically inactive women, accounting for about half of the period mobility of urban Hurilao women during the past ten years. This striking contrast to analogous developments amongst Liro area women is more an indication of occupational differences between Liro area and Hurilao men (husbands of these women) than a suggestion of different degrees of long-term urban orientation. Given the greater number of Hurilao than Liro area men involved in well-paid white-collar employment, such differences in female economic activity rates simply mean a greater economic necessity for the wives of Liro area men to work to contribute to urban household incomes.

Most of the period mobility ratios associated with menial work among Hurilao women, however, can be attributed to the work of young Hurilao women as domestic labour for urban relatives. Such work does not count as 'rubbish work', since this unpaid or underpaid family labour is viewed as a rural-urban extension of family assistance to others in need. A Hurilao man in his mid fifties, justifies the presence of his eighteen-year-old daughter in Port Vila in such terms:

We people here [in Hurilao] don't like that our young girls go to town to work as housegirls everywhere. If they work for other family members, that's alright with us, because it is the same as here [that is, helping others here]...When Gloria [oldest daughter] asked us for help, I took Susi [youngest daughter] to Vila. If I had refused, who would look after Gloria's children? She has an important job [bank-clerk], and so does her husband. If we wouldn't help, she would have to hire a housegirl, and that would cost quite some money.

The sending of such help represents a degree of rural 'subsidization' analogous

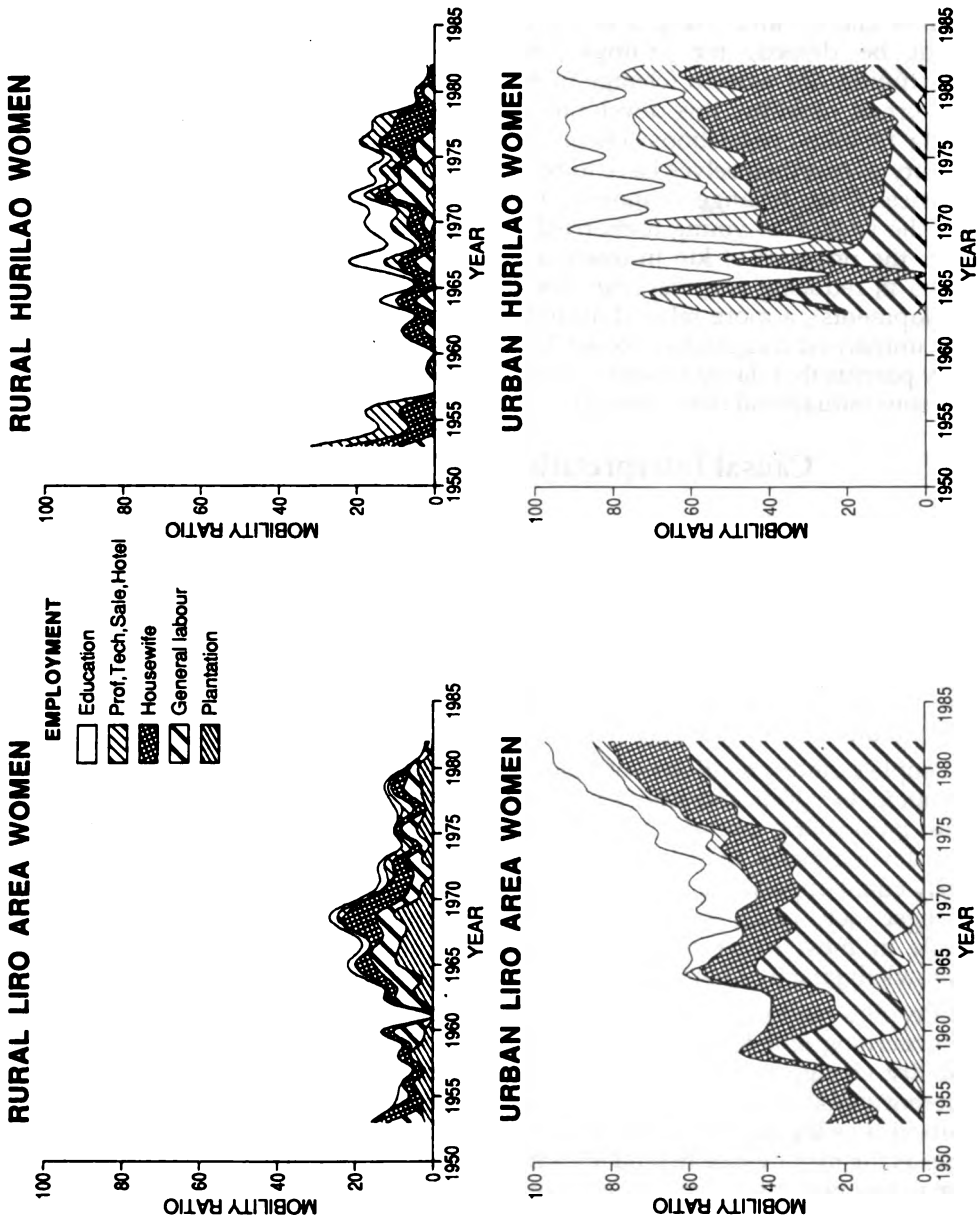


Figure 6.6 Mobility change amongst Liro area and Hurilao women, 1953–82

to the sending to town of island food supplies. However, such behaviour is not entirely altruistic, as admitted by Gloria's and Susi's father, who conceded that such arrangements help the flow of urban-rural remittances.

These developments in Liro area and Hurilao mobility, particularly concerning the movement of women, neatly illustrate the continuing interplay between mobility change and changes in the setting and situation of mobility. While it cannot be denied, for example, that an increase in urban employment opportunities for women (change in economic setting), facilitated an increase in rural-urban mobility, this development was greatly assisted by a relaxation of female mobility restrictions (change in social-political setting). Such changing mobility norms themselves have to be associated with a growing long-term urban presence of kin (change in mobility) who act as employment-brokers and look after the welfare of young unmarried women (change in social-political setting). While the presence of kin in town, as well as fathers' own mobility experience, helped in reducing parental fears about the well-being of daughters (situational developments), a more relaxed attitude of rural parents towards the mobility of their unmarried daughters to town has to be also linked to an awareness among many parents that daughters are a more reliable source of urban-rural remittances than sons (situational developments).

Causal Interpretations of Mobility Change

The awareness of such an ongoing interplay (dialectic) between setting and situational developments in source and destination areas on one hand, and mobility change on the other, clearly emerges from people's own causal interpretations of mobility change.⁹ The notion of a change from temporary and rural-based circulation to more permanent forms of rural out-migration as the most important development in Liro area and Hurilao mobility is clearly evident from Table 6.5, with only a minority of men and women emphasizing changing rural circulation practices and a gradual decline in overall mobility.

People's interpretations of mobility change underline the significance attributed to social and political developments in both source and destination areas, particularly amongst women, who attribute a much greater importance to such developments than to economic change (Table 6.6). This feature, with the nearly equal importance attributed to economic and social-political developments amongst men, lends support to earlier criticism of the economic determinism visible in most structural mobility analysis, and to the call for an adequate acknowledgement of both social-political setting and of situational developments.

People's perceptions of developments in source and destination areas, as well as concerning female mobility, point to some variations in the interpretations of mobility change between rural and urban residents which seem indicative of different mobility experiences. Half of all rural Liro area men refer to social and political developments on Paama and to changes in the economy of destination areas as the major cause behind such mobility developments, whereas three out of four urban men cite economic change in destination areas as the principal cause while ascribing much less importance to changes in Paama's economy or to

⁹ Respondents were asked whether or not contemporary mobility from Paama or Raga was the same as about 15-20 years ago. In the case of denial, they were then asked to mention some of the major changes that have occurred. If simple answers were provided, such as 'more people move nowadays', or 'people stay away longer than they used to', two probing questions were added: (i) What are the reasons behind such changes? (ii) How did these changes come about?

Table 6.5 Perceptions of mobility change

	Liro area				Hurilao			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Change in mobility	92	80	68	100	88	100	92	93
Mobility same as always	4	-	11	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know/too young	4	20	21	-	12	-	8	7
Type of change ^a								
(A) Change from circulation to permanence	92	80	68	100	88	100	92	93
(B) Mobility decline	9	3	14	9	30	11	25	14
(C) Change in circulation practice	8	9	9	12	18	-	18	-
Total no. of respondents	(78)	(67)	(92)	(58)	(40)	(18)	(48)	(14)

^a Figures are percentages. Since respondents were not limited in their interpretations of mobility change, percentages may exceed 100 per cent.

general social and political developments. Considering that Paama's economy has remained constantly troubled throughout the years by the lack of local economic resources, the more recent re-introduction of *kampani* work and its interference with everyday life, for example, stands out more prominently in the perception of rural men as a major change in the rural setting. The greater emphasis placed by urban men on changes in the urban economy naturally reflects greater first-hand experience gained from their urban mobility. Far more Liro area women than men, particularly those resident in town, associate the change from temporary circulation to more permanent forms of mobility with island-specific developments rather than with changes in destination areas, which may reflect their limited mobility experience.

Hurilao men, in contrast to Liro area men, regard structural transformations in destination areas as playing a major role in the change from temporary circulation to more permanent forms of mobility, with three out of four rural men and all urban men emphasizing the importance of economic change. Urban-based men also associate developments underlying female mobility with this general mobility change to a much larger extent than rural men. While few urban men, but one-third of rural men, attribute any significance to changes in the rural setting in influencing such a mobility change, four out of ten men acknowledge the importance of situational developments. Rural and urban Hurilao women, in contrast, hardly differ in their interpretations of such a mobility change. Like their male counterparts, yet contrary to Liro area women, more women refer to developments in destination areas as primarily responsible for the change from temporary circulation to more permanent forms of mobility.

The significance of this change from temporary rural-based circulation to more permanent forms of mobility is also implicit in the interpretations of the few people who refer to changes in the nature of circulation as an important recent development. Their principal association of continuous Liro area and Hurilao

Table 6.6 Interpretations of mobility change^a

	Liro area				Hurilao			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
(A) Change from circulation to permanence due to:								
change in economic setting	68	78	39	81	83	100	54	57
change in social-political setting	80	69	52	81	75	100	75	93
situational developments	49	60	14	33	50	78	23	21
change in economic settings ^b								
in Paama/Raga	24	28	25	64	32	11	12	21
in destination areas	49	73	14	36	75	100	38	36
regarding female mobility	17	18	11	19	2	39	8	-
change in social-political setting								
in Paama/Raga	46	19	29	55	38	11	23	57
in destination areas	19	24	13	24	35	56	31	29
regarding female mobility	55	55	29	36	55	89	48	50
situational developments								
in Paama/Raga	26	34	3	9	40	44	6	21
in destination areas	6	5	3	2	10	6	2	-
regarding female mobility	23	36	8	28	13	28	15	7
(B) Mobility decline due to:								
change in economic setting								
in Paama/Raga	-	-	3	-	22	11	8	-
in destination areas	9	3	11	7	7	-	15	-
change in social-political setting								
in Paama/Raga	-	-	-	2	7	-	4	14
(C) Change in circulation practice due to:								
change in economic setting	8	9	9	12	18	-	18	-
in destination areas								
No. of respondents	(78)	(67)	(92)	(58)	(40)	(18)	(48)	(14)

^a Figures are percentages. See Table 6.5 for comparison.

^b These figures disaggregate the totals shown in the top section of the table; due to multiple references, they may exceed these totals.

circulation with a decline in urban employment opportunities for unskilled labour, and in jobs conducive to long-term employment, points to a characteristic of this type of mobility, namely that those rural residents who cannot obtain long-term employment, continue periodically to circulate to plantations and urban areas. This perception of contemporary rural-based circulation as a 'second-best' alternative corresponds with future residential expectations amongst rural residents (Chapter 4), when 50 and 33 per cent of all rural Liro area men and 24 and 50 per cent of Hurilao men who expected to reside in their home areas or town respectively by 1987, made these residential expectations explicitly contingent upon developments in the urban labour market. This concept of

'default' is also apparent in Liro area residents' emphasis on fewer employment opportunities as solely responsible for a general mobility decline in recent years. Although Hurilao residents also recognize such developments, they also attribute some importance to economic and social-political change in Hurilao. These different interpretations, and a stronger emphasis on mobility decline amongst Hurilao than Liro area residents (Table 6.5), relate to differences in the rural setting of mobility, and also reflect a much more pronounced decrease in recent Hurilao-based circulation.

CHAPTER 7

Port Vila: Transit Station or Final Stop? A Conclusion

This study essentially grew out of scepticism regarding a notion, expressed in Vanuatu's First Development Plan (1982), that ni-Vanuatu population mobility still follows and essentially temporary and rural-based pattern. Bedford and Bonnemaison, whose work on mobility in Vanuatu had begun in the late 1960s, had both argued that ni-Vanuatu mobility would tend to become long-term, especially amongst urban migrants, in the light of structural transformations in urban and rural economies during the 1970s. A comprehensive examination of ni-Vanuatu mobility since the Second World War and an analysis of the 1967 and 1979 census data appeared to support this argument. A detailed empirical analysis of recent developments in Paamese and Raga mobility was therefore proposed in a bid to unravel the causality underlying mobility developments, their original evolution, their subsequent maintenance and their ongoing maintenance.

A multi-level analytical approach was adopted, incorporating Mitchell's (1983) conceptualization of mobility as being simultaneously manifest on two different levels (setting and situation). It also recognizes Swindell's (1979) more explicit emphasis on the interplay between individuals, their families and local communities on one side, and the wider political and economic setting on the other. Recognizing the importance of individual variations beyond the situational level, this particular study also sought to emphasize a cognitive dimension of mobility, as manifest in people's different interpretations of (objective) settings and (subjective) situations.

In this study, several reasons have been suggested as to how and why changes in the urban setting of destination areas might have effected a change in ni-Vanuatu mobility: the gradual decline in direct labour recruitment with its temporal limitations; the gradual disappearance of employment-tied accommodation formerly geared towards single workers; a slow, but steady increase in urban wages also no longer explicitly geared towards the urban sustenance of single workers; an expanding and diversifying urban economy from the late 1960s onwards which provided ni-Vanuatu not only with more employment opportunities, but also with positions in semi-skilled and skilled employment formerly out of their reach; and also Port Vila's change in character and appearance from a sleepy little port town to a sprawling urban area. Parallel to these developments, rural source areas also underwent considerable social, political and economic change since the turn of this century (Chapters 2 and 3)..

Several structural differences can be highlighted between Paama and Raga which might be expected to cause and maintain the development of distinct mobility systems. The analysis also illustrated the working of mobility as a dialectic process. With regard to Paama, for example, it was shown that the individualization of land tenure at around the turn of the century, the monetization of bridewealth payments, and the more recent (re)emergence of *kampani* work not can not only be identified as a major cause underlying Paamese mobility, but clearly resulted from such mobility as well. The cases of bridewealth payments and *kampani* work, in particular, illustrate the dialectic between mobility and its setting, as appears from the escalation of Paamese bridewealth payments and general wedding expenses over the years, and the growing pressure of *kampani* work on those remaining who, in having to compensate for the substantial exodus of others, may find themselves facing mobility as a necessity.

Given the considerable fluctuations in the incidence of mobility as noted from synchronic data, a diachronic analysis was proposed, and a ten-year reference period adopted, which served to underline the integral part which mobility plays in the life of rural men. An examination of the duration of moves unmistakably points to temporary and rural-based circulation as the predominant form of recent mobility amongst usual rural residents. While some contrasts between Liro area and Hurilao mobility, such as the much larger proportion of frequently moving young Liro area than Hurilao men, were readily explained in terms of different mobility settings, the lack of more explicit differences in the mobility of 25-44-year-old men and married men in general, for example, could not be explained at this level. Neither could the similar incidence of plantation mobility amongst rural men.

While the lack of discriminatory power of other individual-level variables, such as occupational and educational status, was readily explained by their conceptual irrelevance in the present case, the similar recent mobility experience of many adult Liro area and Hurilao men appeared contradictory in light of the previous setting analysis. An examination of individual circumstances (situation) as manifest from their own interpretations of mobility (cognitive dimension) pointed to the operation of two different mobility systems: mobility as survival versus mobility as convenience. This was also suggested by the recent mobility experience of rural men, their interpretations of their own and others' mobility during the past ten years (cognitive dimension), and by their future residential expectations and different causal explanations (cognitive dimension).

In attempting to resolve the central issue of this work, namely whether or not Port Vila has become a final stop for Liro area and Hurilao migrants in town, several static and dynamic indicators of urban permanence were examined. The result of this analysis was that, from a demographic viewpoint, these migrants do indeed appear to be more than just in transit. For example, they demonstrated features such as: a more balanced age and sex structure compared with their rural counterparts; near universality of marriage amongst those over 25 years of age; the co-residence of spouses in town; and the large number of children in town (most of whom were born in Port Vila and have, occasional visits apart, never lived in their parents' home areas). These all convey a picture of demographic stability which is inconsistent with what one ought to find in a temporary circulation environment. By themselves, these factors, coupled with the long duration of continuous urban residence, reveal little about a growing urban permanence. However, the temporal localization of these developments in the early 1970s, a time of major structural transformations in rural and urban Vanuatu (which led Bonnemaïson to speculate about the possibility of future urban

mobility becoming more permanent in nature) suggests that these developments are more than just deviations from an otherwise unchanged standard, namely temporary rural-based circulation.

Long periods of employment with the same employer, even amongst unskilled labour, and even longer periods of urban residence testify to the impact such structural changes in Vanuatu's urban economy have had on the mobility process. In former years, a greater flexibility applied to periodic temporary engagements in such occupations, and an excess of labour demand over labour supply facilitated such mobility. Indeed, labour contracts, employment-tied accommodation, and single wages did not allow anything else. However, a cut-back in such urban jobs from the mid 1970s onwards necessitated a long-term residence in town if these people did not want to risk unemployment.

A low incidence of urban-rural visits by Liro area residents in town, and a generally low incidence of urban-rural remittances by both Liro area and Hurilao migrants tends to give the impression of a more pronounced commitment to, and involvement with, Port Vila than with their areas of origin (see Hugo 1983a; Chapman 1985). A reversal of visiting practices by Paamese, involving indirect forms of economic assistance such as accommodating rural visitors and rural kin attending urban schools, and payment of their school fees, and various remittance strategies in order to avoid rural visitors yet still maintain family honour, required a questioning of this view of urban-rural contacts as an indicator of varying degrees of urban versus rural commitment (see Macpherson 1984). While the expectation of most Liro area and Hurilao residents in town to continue their residence in Port Vila in the immediate future corresponds to other empirical evidence presented, it is unwise to extrapolate on this basis towards the urban permanence of these migrants.

The extent to which indications of a growing urban permanence represent a true mobility development was assessed using a comparative evaluation of mobility histories between usual rural and current urban residents, based on a period and cohort analysis. Period mobility ratios indicated divergent mobility developments between rural and urban cohorts, amongst men and women, and amongst Liro area and Hurilao residents. Period mobility ratios of rural women have remained consistently low throughout the 30-year reference period, while the period mobility ratios of rural men revealed a substantial decline from the early 1970s onwards, which casts some doubt about the future importance of temporary circulation (a view also supported by rural residents' overall low expectation of future circulation). Yet period mobility ratios of urban men and women have increased steadily throughout the 1960s and 1970s. An examination of cohort mobility developments ruled out a possible age interference underlying these developments, which could have occurred through a generally older rural population having moved less in recent years (at an older age) than younger migrants in Port Vila.

Different mobility experiences at an early age of rural and urban residents (particularly for men), as reflected in the relative importance of various mobility destinations, and concomitant different employment experiences, provide a more meaningful explanation for these diverging mobility developments. Urban Liro men, for example, despite period mobility ratios virtually identical with those of their rural counterparts during the 1950s and early 1960s, were then already more urban-oriented in their mobility, whereas employment on boats and on plantations featured more prominently amongst rural men. During the urban economic boom, many Liro area men currently in town not only were better equipped with job qualifications and experience attractive to prospective

employers, especially in the construction industry, but had by then established the necessary contacts (*mekem rod finis*), both of which facilitated their subsequent engagement in urban employment. Amongst Hurilao men a different pattern emerged. Employment mobility until the mid 1960s was virtually non-existent, and education, with the subsequent engagement in skilled employment, emerged as the principal explanations for the onset of different mobility developments between rural and urban Hurilao men. This underlines a particular normative context in Hurilao mobility, not apparent on Paama, which not only favours but somehow expects rural-urban mobility of educated men and women (so as not to 'waste' their education), and which implicitly accepts a concomitant long-term, even permanent rural absence of these people. With most educated people living outside Hurilao and, for that matter, outside the Liro area as well, it becomes clear why education had no explanatory power when assessing the propensity to move amongst usual rural residents. The relative lack of employment mobility before the mid 1960s and the greater emphasis placed on obtaining *klin wok* (white-collar employment) in town has to be seen in the context of two different rural mobility systems. The importance of prior mobility experiences in accounting for diverging mobility developments between usual rural and current urban residents does not extend to Liro area and Hurilao women.

An examination of further developments of the mobility process, such as changes in the organization of moves and in employment- and education-related mobility, illustrates why and when mobility developments between rural and urban residents diverged, and also highlights the continuous interplay between such mobility change and the setting and situational developments. Implications of this ongoing dialectic became unmistakably clear in the particular case of the dramatic increase in female urban mobility from the mid 1960s onwards. While an increase in urban employment opportunities for women (change in the economic setting in destination areas) facilitated an increase in rural-urban mobility, the latter development was greatly assisted, perhaps even rendered impossible otherwise, by a relaxation of female mobility restrictions (change in the social-political setting in source areas). The latter, once again, cannot be dissociated from a growing long-term urban presence of kin (change in the mobility process) who fulfilled a dual function of employment brokers and guardians, particularly for young and unmarried women (change in setting and situation in destination areas). The early long-term presence of kin in town, and the increasing mobility experience of fathers (mobility change, situational developments) helped to reduce parental fears about their daughters' well-being (situational development)—all of which contributed to a gradual relaxation in the attitudes of rural parents to the mobility of their daughters. This process was also helped by recognition of the fact that their daughters could become a more reliable source of economic support than unmarried sons (situational development), who, amidst Port Vila's gradual assumption of an urban character (change in setting in destination areas) tend to favour expenditure on their own amusements in town rather than on remittances (situational development).

Taken together, all evidence presented here suggests that Liro area and Hurilao residents are in town to stay. The length of their continuous urban residence averages about ten years, a fact which indicates that Port Vila can no longer be regarded as the transit station it had been in the 1960s and 1970s when the town saw a constant in- and out-flow of temporary rural migrants. However, it must be stressed that temporary rural-based circulation from Paama and Raga is by no means extinct. This analysis has shown that, although no longer the predominant form of mobility (long-term Liro area and Hurilao absentees

outnumber temporary absentees in ratios of 4:1 and 7:1 respectively), temporary rural-based circulation still plays an integral part in the everyday life of usual rural residents on Paama.

Having acknowledged the magnitude of structural transformations in rural and urban Vanuatu from the late 1960s onwards which gave rise to an emerging permanence in rural-urban mobility, the question of the likely future persistence of urban permanence must be raised. Given a scenario of a declining urban economy, coupled with successful rural development ventures (which, according to Vanuatu's First National Development Plan accounted for 73 per cent of all planned capital expenditure in the productive sector), can one realistically expect such mobility developments to persist in the future? Or would such possible changes in the setting of mobility in turn not favour rural return migration and/or a decline in rural-urban movements altogether?

Based on the foregoing analysis and on this author's experience in Vanuatu and Paama and Raga in particular, a major reversal of mobility developments in the immediate future seems unlikely. First, while some urban migrants from these islands may remain *man Paama* or *man Raga* in their hearts, their public views of 'home' (see Macpherson 1984) are Port Vila-oriented: they pay their Local Government taxes in Port Vila (although some older residents pay those in their areas of origin as well so as not to 'spoil' the name of rural kin); most spend their annual holidays in town; they place more emphasis on investing in urban houses than in rural prestige dwellings; and most have become generally so accustomed to the basic amenities of urban life which do not exist in their areas of origin that most admit that even if they wanted to return, they know that they would not stay for long. The fact that 93 per cent of all Liro area and Hurilao migrants originally interviewed in Port Vila in early 1983 were still residing there in late 1987 speaks for itself and corroborates the validity of their future residential expectations expressed in 1983.

Secondly, a large number of Paamese and Raga residents in Port Vila are second-generation migrants and have to be regarded as urbanites. According to Vanuatu's 1986 Urban Census, just under 50 per cent of all people who declared their *stamba* to be Paama or Raga belong to this category (Vanuatu 1986). Many young people, particularly those born to parents with only one member from Paama or Raga, have grown up in Port Vila speaking Bislama and are no longer conversant in Paamese or Raga, and many have never lived on their parents' home islands. Although some of these second-generation migrants may still have a stake in their parents' communities, particularly so if their parents have maintained active contact throughout their years of urban residence, a future 'return' by these young men and women to a 'home' they have never known appears to be highly unlikely - particularly since many of the local conditions that prompted their parents to leave in the first place are likely to have worsened rather than improved.

And lastly, although changes in the economic setting as hypothesized above cannot be ruled out, their impact on mobility will be only marginal, if they are not accompanied by parallel social and political developments. As in most other developing countries, a decline in urban employment opportunities in recent years has failed to stem the tide in rural-urban mobility, and if anything, has only contributed to a growing urban permanence amongst those migrants already in town through having to hold on to more scarce employment opportunities for much longer periods than in the past. This, and the situation illustrated earlier concerning the reluctance of jobless urban youth to work on peri-urban coconut

plantations, and who regard unemployment in Port Vila as a real alternative to rural un- and underemployment, raises some serious doubts on the theoretical validity of various microeconomic models of population mobility. In a similar way, rural development projects are unlikely to prevent rural out-migration if they are conceptualized merely in economic terms and concentrated in the agricultural sector, without parallel developments affecting the social and political structure of rural societies. Considering that traditional modes and relations of production, in contemporary Raga more so than on Paama, are articulated largely through the mobility of disenchanted and dispossessed villagers, the mere injection of capital and 'modern' technical and managerial expertise in rural areas will have little effect on either redirecting mobility, or preventing villagers from leaving in the first place. This will be particularly so if such measures are undertaken in an otherwise unchanged social and political setting, with the traditional elite as its principal beneficiary.

Beyond these more obvious implications for development planning, two further implications of an emerging urban permanence come to mind as they affect both source and destination areas. First, the scenario of a gradual demise of island communities, with a widening economic gap between source and destination areas, would appear to be a strong force, perpetuating more permanent relocations from the islands. With past migration having been primarily the domain of men and of a short-term and circular nature, any substantial increase in female mobility will have a quite obvious demographic impact in terms of declining rural birth rates. Women have also played the more significant role in rural subsistence production than their frequently absent male counterparts. Besides the more obvious function of securing a year round supply of food for their families, female subsistence production also subsidized absent male wage labour. An increase in female mobility then not only affects rural subsistence production and the food supply of those remaining, but, with a growing absence of entire families, more earnings will come to be consumed and invested in town, with increasingly less money remitted to rural areas. Although more and longer-lasting rural absences have an immediate beneficial impact on rural residents as is evident from a wider accessibility to sparse garden land, this mobility ultimately only increases the hardships of those remaining, such as in the form of increased *kampani* work requirements on Paama, thus re-creating the very conditions that caused others to leave in the first place.

Secondly, the emergence of towns as principal destinations for ni-Vanuatu migrants in recent years, in conjunction with the trend towards more permanent rural-urban relocations, should remind planners and politicians that assumptions about the eventual return of migrants, even if they cannot find adequate employment or proper housing, may reflect wishful thinking rather than any grasp of reality. Although it is difficult at this stage to conceive of social and economic problems occurring in Vanuatu on a par with those associated with urban poverty in the towns and cities of larger, less-developed countries, Port Moresby's recent troubled development should serve as a timely reminder that social problems associated with urban unemployment and poverty are by no means the prerogative of cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

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