INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LINKAGES

Social Organization and Trade

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THE EFFECTS OF SCALE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

R. Gerard Ward

One of the key characteristics of Melanesia is the relatively small scale of most of its component units - islands, physiographic units, states, villages, linguistic or other social groups. Scale is not a simple linear characteristic, and change of scale brings qualitative as well as quantitative alterations in many phenomena. In a region such as Melanesia, the qualitative aspects are often much more important than the quantitative. We make frequent use of the phrase 'economies of scale' but we might also talk of the 'sociology of scale' or, as Dr McArthur indicates in her paper in this series, the 'demography of scale', or of the 'insurance of scale'. This paper outlines some of the qualitative aspects of small scale which, in the particular context of Melanesia, underlie many of the issues and problems which are addressed in other papers in the series.

The effects of small scale are often increased exponentially by insularity or isolation, either physical or social. A small state like Liechtenstein may exhibit some of the features of small scale units, but place that population on an island five hundred kilometres from its nearest neighbour, or isolate it by barriers to linguistic, social, political or migratory contact, and the range and intensity of the characteristics of small scale will be massively amplified. This has been the situation in parts of Melanesia in the past although some of the diversity which stems from such isolation has been reduced in particular areas. The process continues. The ridges and valleys of the diverse cultural landscape are being smoothed by the erosive forces of wider contact, more movement, new systems of production and administration, more universalistic systems of belief and behaviour induced by formal education, missions, media and, increasingly, the consciousness-bending operations of advertising, both public and private. Although these processes imply the spread of greater uniformity in many respects, the small scale and isolation of some parts of every Melanesian country ensure that diversity will continue. The ideals of equal opportunity which figure prominently in the national goals of some Melanesian states are unachievable for some regions in those states. With changes in the technology of shipping and air transport, in the degree of integration into a world economic and political system, and the concomitant increase in dependence on the monetary sector, scale and isolation assume greater importance than hitherto and lay down, almost deterministically, limits to the range of opportunities which people in some parts of Melanesia can hope to share. They are basic to the new divergence in opportunity which is appearing throughout Melanesia between core areas of expanding monetized economic activity and peripheral areas of stagnant
levels of participation in the monetary sector and declining subsistence activity.

SCALE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

In comparison with Polynesia and Micronesia the states of Melanesia are relatively large. The island of New Guinea is sometimes referred to as the largest in the world. The environment of the region is extremely diverse. Yet a good number of the component parts, whether islands or isolated parts of islands, exhibit many of the characteristics which stem from small scale of habitat. For example, the atolls and coralline islands of northeast Papua New Guinea share most of the same features of restricted resources as eastern Polynesia, the Marshalls, or Kiribati. Only their incorporation in a wider polity, and the escape this offers, through out-migration, counters the limits of small size and narrow resources. To a degree this is a new escape route which compensates for the restricted opportunities within a monetized economy which are offered by the restricted habitats of small islands.

It is important to note that even though the countries of Melanesia have relatively large land areas, the area of usable land is much smaller. Bleeker (1975:60-68) estimates that only 24 per cent of the total land area of Papua New Guinea is suitable for arable crops while 48 per cent (which includes the arable area) is suitable for tree crops. If low capability land is excluded from these categories the percentages are 10 and 21 respectively. In the case of Fiji, Twyford and Wright (1965:218-219) consider that only 19 per cent of the country is 'first class' land suitable for permanent agriculture without improvement, with a further 11 per cent being suitable after minor improvements. In the Solomon Islands, areas designated as 'agricultural opportunity areas' cover only a little over 12 per cent of the land area (Hansell and Wall 1976:153) and these relatively small areas have their potential utility reduced by fragmentation. The 'agricultural opportunity areas' are split into forty-three widely dispersed sections. The chances of taking advantage of significant economies of area scale are limited by this fragmentation of the better land which hinders, in particular, the provision of those services which are essential for effective participation in the monetary economy.

The disadvantages which small size of land area almost inevitably imposes apply to many parts of the region, though some advantages also accrue from small size combined with isolation. For example, the degree of natural quarantine which archipelagic areas enjoy and which, when combined with administrative action, enabled the Lau group of Fiji to escape the ravages of the 1918-19 influenza pandemic, is a case in point. Size of land area is also a form of insurance in the face, say, of hurricane damage. The zone of greatest destruction from hurricanes is usually relatively narrow. It can blanket the whole of a small island, leaving few refuges for retreat or sources for subsequent support. The larger islands do not face such risks to the same degree.
SCALE IN POPULATION AND PROVISION OF SERVICES

McArthor describes (see pp. 27-32) how small populations are inherently unstable with the likelihood of quite rapid fluctuations in size arising from the chance run of births all of one sex. The larger the size of the population unit the greater the insurance provided against such instabilities. The security which small size and isolation can provide against introduced disease must be balanced against the fact that, where communities are small and the population not widely dispersed, introduced diseases can spread extremely rapidly and may well affect a very high proportion of a population at virtually the same time. Thus small size does tend to magnify risks once the benefits of isolation are lost. For small communities which become incorporated in a wider state some of the risks of demographic instability are reduced. Migration becomes an easier means of countering such problems as a run of all male or all female births. However, when the economic advantages lie overwhelmingly in the areas of concentration and centrality, the migration will tend to be from the small and isolated areas to the larger and accessible areas.

A population represents a market. A small population, even one with a relatively high purchasing power, is likely to provide too small a market to reach the threshold necessary for the maintenance of many services or the provision of higher order goods. Herein lies one of the basic dilemmas of all Melanesian countries. Most of them have specific national goals which seek to achieve a degree of equality throughout the country. Such a goal is impossible to achieve completely and those islands or areas with small populations will almost inevitably have a lower level of services. The problem can be illustrated with any one of a whole range of services. For example, it would be impossibly expensive to provide a highly qualified doctor for every small island in Melanesia. Thus small and isolated areas must make do with a paramedical service or a clinic with a restricted capacity. Patients may be moved to higher order centres but this is costly both financially and in time. The risks are increased. In many situations even where a fully trained medical officer may be stationed on a relatively small island, the limited number of patients he will see and the limited range of conditions he will be called upon to treat are likely to result in some deterioration in the quality of his experience and thus of the service provided. This type of situation may be illustrated at many levels. Even at a national level the fact that a certain minimum is essential in the provision of some facilities means that the cost of providing a particular service may be high in relation to the demand. A jet airport requires facilities of air traffic control, fire and other services which may be used only a few times per week, yet the basic costs must still be met. In the case of education it is clearly impossible to provide secondary schools for every small community and the disadvantages of small size and isolation can only be countered by the migration of the teenage population. This in itself discriminates against the smaller communities, for the risk of losing their educated population altogether is thereby increased. Melanesian states all face the choice of either meeting the high cost of serving many small isolated communities or accepting that such communities can only receive low levels of service, and may well decline in population.

The same basic problem applies in the provision of goods. Population and buying power of small island communities are limited; local stores can only carry small stocks. Higher order goods are not economic to stock as
too much capital would be tied up in these slow moving items. The difficulties of inter-island transport (or its equivalent in unroaded inland areas) means that restocking from wholesale is infrequent, and where store keepers can order high demand goods the delay in delivery is inevitably much longer than in the case of the larger urban centres. For the resident on a small, isolated island the utility of the money he earns is likely to be less than for his compatriot in the capital city.

SCALE AND SOCIETY

In an extremely useful paper, Benedict (1967:45-55) has examined the sociological aspects of smallness. He distinguishes between a small scale society and a small territory. 'The criteria of size for territories are area and population; the criteria of scale for a society are the number and quality of role relationships' (1967:45). Most Melanesian societies are small scale either in the sense that the total social field is small, or that the society 'is composed of a series of interlocking small groups which extend through a considerable population' (1967:46). In such situations division of labour cannot proceed very far and certainly in Melanesia in precontact times it appears that the degree of specialization was relatively small. Following Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, Benedict points out that social and economic relations in small scale societies are essentially particularistic in that each member of the society has a unique relationship to all other members and these particular relationships will influence any interaction between members of the society. In larger societies where most relationships are universalistic an individual performing a particular role will treat all others with whom he comes in contact while performing that role according to certain universalistic standards. I would stress, however, that this bipolar classification does oversimplify, as particularistic and universalistic relationships coexist in almost all societies. As usual it is a matter of degree. Virtually all societies in Melanesia are particularistic to a greater degree than in Australia or other larger and more developed countries where universalistic relationships predominate in public and economic affairs. Even in Papua New Guinea, the largest of Melanesian countries, the interplay of particularistic and universalistic values pervades most political activities, from local government to national government levels. It pervades the work of the bureaucracy and the Ombudsman's report on the operations of Air Niugini clearly indicates the particularistic nature of many transactions of expatriate staff in the airline (Ombudsman Commission 1980). The nickname of 'family government' which has been used in post independence Vanuatu is suggestive of a similar situation.

The longer term question is what forms of reconciliation can be made between the demands of the externally oriented commercial world and the internal pressures and loyalties of the small island societies. This is a question which I do not have the competence to answer, but it is clear that many of the tensions of development in Melanesia (such as the lawlessness in some Papua New Guinea towns) are related to the problems of reconciling the particularistic values of the small scale society from which people have come with the universalistic values which are assumed to be prerequisites for a 'modern' apolitical bureaucracy and for commercial or industrial activities.
SCALE AND THE ECONOMY

Obviously some of the issues already raised are closely related to the operation of the economies of Melanesia and scale influences almost all aspects of these economies. In the first place, because of their relatively small scale the relationship between Melanesian states and their main trading partners are inherently unequal. This can be illustrated by the import and export figures for Australia and Melanesia.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Australian imports from and exports to Melanesia as per cent of total Australian:</th>
<th>Melanesian imports and exports to Australia as per cent of country's total:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imports</td>
<td>Exports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea$^a$</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji$^b$</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia$^c$</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands$^d$</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu$^e$</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Trade Report for the Year 1975, Parliamentary Paper No. 31 of 1976, Government Printer, Suva.  
(c) Annuaire Statistique de la Nouvelle Caledonie 1976, Service de la Statistique, Noumea.  
(d) 1979 Statistical Year Book, Statistical Office, Honiara.  

Although exports to and imports from Melanesia are important for a few individual firms or industries in Australia, at a national scale they are almost insignificant. On the other hand the Melanesian dependence on Australia is very high, especially for imports. New Caledonia is the exception but that territory has an even greater dependence on France.

The lack of bargaining power which is implicit in the unequal relationship operates at many levels and has many facets. The small size of Melanesian markets limits the extent to which island importers can obtain the benefits of bulk purchasing in Australia or other supplying countries. To some extent the fact that Australian companies, such as Burns Philip or W.R. Carpenter, operate in most Melanesian countries allows them to aggregate the separate national markets and use their own vertical integration to obtain some economies of scale. The extent to which these benefits are passed on to island consumers is unclear. It must be noted, also, that these large companies control a high proportion of the Melanesian market in many goods. For example, a survey in Port Vila in early 1976 suggested that one large firm accounted for over one fifth of all the recorded food sales in the town (McGee et al. 1980:122) and a second expatriate firm probably handled another fifth. When combined with
the import monopoly such firms have of many goods through franchise arrangements, the small size of the remainder of the market means that indigenous entrepreneurs often find it very difficult to expand their share of total sales of imports.

The relatively small volumes of imports and exports of all Melanesian countries, and the very restricted amount of trade between Melanesian countries, is reflected not only in the pattern but in the ownership of external shipping services. For example, in late 1977 the New Hebrides was served by shipping lines based in France, Japan, Hong Kong, Noumea and Tonga. None was owned by New Hebridean interests. Crucial operating decisions were made elsewhere. Until mid 1975 New Hebridean copra carried to Europe was charged freight rates over 50 per cent higher than those charged for copra from other Pacific island countries and this reflected the lack of any exporters' organization and the requisite skills for freight rate negotiation in this smallest of Melanesian countries. Almost inevitably the Melanesian countries are price takers. Even their major exports contribute only a very small proportion of total world production of copra or coconut oil, coffee, cacao, or sugar, so that they can have little effect on world market prices.

Although imports make up a high proportion of goods consumed in the monetary sector in all Melanesian countries, the small absolute volumes involved limit the extent to which local industry can be fostered for import substitution. Even in the case of such ubiquitous industries as soft drink manufacture, local producers with their small runs and underused equipment often find it difficult to compete with imported goods. In Port Vila stores, for example, the value of sales of imported soft drink is over three times that of the local product (McGee et al. 1980:229). Consumer preference for tinned drinks rather than bottled, the status (and possibly taste) of the imported product, and the impact of more sophisticated advertising and packaging all appear to be important. For the brands of large foreign firms, the advertising and packaging are simply spinoffs from their vast operations elsewhere. The pattern is repeated in respect of many other products and throughout Melanesia the products of multinational corporations provide a uniform overlay on formerly diverse local production.

The inevitably small scale of many indigenous enterprises and local companies makes them liable to takeover by, or severe competition from, the large overseas firms. Fiji has seen a steady process of takeover of local enterprises by Burns Philp and W.R. Carpenter (see Rokotuivuna et al. 1973), and temporary price cutting is a standard business practice which local firms with limited capital resources often find difficult to withstand. The larger, foreign companies have the advantage of diversity through spread of activities, both spatially and in terms of interests, and product range.

In the case of industrialization within Melanesia, unless the plant is part of a larger (probably foreign) organization, the chances of product diversity are slight. Furthermore, the optimum size of technically efficient plant is often such as to render the activity totally uneconomic for the restricted market of small countries (M. Ward 1975:124). Even in the case of coconut oil extraction, using one of the main products of the land, it has been argued that a coconut oil factory of the size necessary
to fit Vanuatu's copra production would be too small to be fully economic. Given that the producing areas are individually small and very dispersed, local processors must also face considerable costs in accumulating sufficient quantities of raw materials. They are also faced with very restricted opportunities of developing the forward and backward inter-industry linkages which might be expected in larger and more diversified economies. Thus even when industrial plants are established, they are often dependent on distant foreign suppliers for basic materials or equipment servicing, with consequentially greater risks of not being able to ensure continuity of production.

SCALE IN TRANSPORT

The economies of scale, vertical integration and access to new technology, which are open to large foreign firms but not to small Melanesian-based ones, are well illustrated in the transport sphere. Two important and related trends in shipping and air transport discriminate against small nations and against the smaller and more isolated parts of archipelagic states. These are the trend towards larger vessels or aircraft (which offer operators savings in fuel and crew costs per unit of cargo or passenger) and towards the handling of cargo in larger units. These trends, advantageous in the large volume and highly capital intensive situations of large developed countries, provide few benefits to small countries which are shorter of capital than labour.

Containerization and related technical changes have reduced the number of ports in Melanesia which are directly served from overseas. Incoming cargo must be broken down for onward shipment to the small consuming points, and exports bulked at some intermediate point into container units. This results in increases in total shipping or air transport costs. As vessels become larger, they call less frequently, and reduced frequency of supply imposes higher costs on retailers in the form of the need to tie up more capital in stock. It may also reduce the incentive to produce for export and limit the range of possible products to those with long storage life.

The nexus between the size of producing (or consuming) unit and distance from nearest export/import port is of great importance for small states and islands. All Melanesian states face dilemmas in providing services to small, isolated areas. In the Solomon Islands during a six month period in 1977, the Eastern District produced 10 per cent of the country's copra. Getting that 10 per cent to the points of export absorbed 32 per cent of the total ton-kilometres devoted to internal transport of copra (BTE 1980). Small island groups such as the Santa Cruz must obviously carry an inordinate load in transport costs unless some policy of cross subsidy is applied. The small Melanesian states experience the same relative disadvantage on a world scale, with subsidies unlikely to be forthcoming. Foreign aid is rarely addressed to such matters.
SCALE IN ADMINISTRATION

It can be argued that small states or divisions of states have certain advantages in that they can achieve social and political coherence more readily than large units, and that this makes social adjustment easier (Knox 1967:44). This is at first sight a very plausible assumption but it is doubtful if it can be accepted fully. Benedict points out that 'a strong network of particularistic relationships does not mean social harmony' and that the 'intense factionalism of small communities is a matter of repeated observation'. He also raises the question, alluded to earlier, of whether 'universalistic role-relationships [are] essential for economic development?' (1967:44-45). I would add the question, are such roles essential for effective administration? Benedict argues that they probably are, as large or even medium scale operations require functionally specific roles, and universalistic criteria for efficiency and performance based on achievement rather than on an individual's hereditary or non-work relationships to other members of the organization (1967:50). If this is so, then the small Melanesian states may have to expect difficulties in creating administrative systems which are 'efficient' in a 'western' sense.

Jacobs (1975) has provided a useful checklist of the types of problems which are likely to face small administrations. The list includes shortages of specialists and technicians for whom local training is not available and who, because the calls on their services are spasmodic, may be costly to employ and may have difficulty in maintaining skills. The small size of administrations may also limit life career opportunities. The cost of maintaining a basic administration is likely to be higher in a small country than in a larger one, and where the population is itself dispersed in small units this tendency is accentuated. Jacobs also argues that because individuals may have direct access to ministers, and because informal means of communication are often used, the influence of individuals and a lack of recording of decisions make administration more liable to discontinuities and maverick interference.

Clear examples of the higher cost of government for small states are seen in the realm of foreign relations. The perceived need to create a national identity abroad as well as at home encourages membership of the United Nations, development banks and a range of other international organizations, and the maintenance of some diplomatic missions. Even in Papua New Guinea the cost effectiveness of this has been seriously questioned and the Solomon Islands has attempted a unique solution by having a single roving 'ambassador at large' to represent the country abroad. It may save money but kill the ambassador! Such original solutions may also be needed in other quarters, and in the Melanesian case the building up of an international core of skilled Melanesian personnel with long experience in the region as a whole may be a way of handling some of the problems. In a sense the South Pacific Commission and the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation may be seen as initial attempts to meet such needs.
SCALE IN AID

The countries of Melanesia are all major recipients, on a per capita basis, of foreign aid. To some extent this reflects the indivisibility of certain activities or facilities and the higher per capita cost of providing some infrastructural items for small as against large countries. It may also be related to the lack of diversity in the monetary sector economy and the relatively high degree of dependence on imports (see de Vries 1975 and Schiavo-Campo 1975). But the aid business demonstrates a number of the problems faced by small countries in their relations with larger states or with international agencies. (See the chapter 'Aid in Development' in Ward and Proctor 1980:461-475, on which this section is based.) Many of these stem from situations already described above.

The total professional staff employed by government in a country such as Vanuatu or the Solomon Islands is smaller than that of the World Bank, or even the Asian Development Bank. Small developing countries cannot support the wide range of specialist roles found in large and more developed countries. Thus in Melanesia negotiations with aid agencies often place a considerable burden on already overtaxed staff and divert them from other duties. Even the answering of standard requests for statistical information which emanate from multilateral or international agencies may absorb almost as much of the time of Melanesian statistical officers as they are able to devote to data collection. When participating in a survey of agriculture in the region last year we found that on occasions up to three other aid-related missions would be visiting the same professional staff on the same day. The shortage of indigenous staff often means that those negotiating for aid on behalf of Melanesian countries are themselves supported by bilateral aid. It is little wonder that per capita rates of aid are high!

When large bureaucracies with complex procedures deal with small ones, the latter are likely to be strained. This is certainly true in Melanesia where the complex tendering or project approval procedures of some agencies seem out of place and unnecessarily demanding. There is a clear need in some cases for redesigning of procedures specifically to meet the needs of small countries and in this connection the Australian Development Assistance Bureau is very advanced. Certain particularistic features of Melanesian bureaucracies, including greater dependence on face-to-face communication rather than written memoranda, also demonstrate the influence of small size and make communication with large impersonal agencies more difficult.

Lastly, two other distinctive features of aid in the region stem from small scale. First, the maximum size of a project which some Melanesian countries can absorb is often close to, or below, the lower financial limit which an agency considers to be economically worth considering because of its own fixed administrative costs. Second, the problems stemming from the lumpiness of project aid is accentuated in small countries, and the risk of short or long term distortion of labour markets or recurrent budgets by aid projects is higher than in larger economies.
CONCLUSION

Scale is not neutral. Almost every aspect of life in Melanesia is influenced in some way by the small size of countries, islands and communities. Only a selection of examples has been noted. I am sure that one could dwell at some length on the influence of scale on linguistic development, pre contact technological change, migration, or economic activities such as deep sea fishing. Enough examples have been given, however, to suggest that size of community or land area can scarcely be ignored in any consideration of Melanesia. Melanesia is not India or Indonesia writ small. In most social and economic processes some degree of qualitative change occurs as one moves towards the lower end of the size continuum. Many of these changes occur within the range of scale found within Melanesia. A number of later papers in this series deal with them and with the implications for individuals, regions and states of the change of scale now involved in the rapid widening of linkages and degree of dependence and interdependence.

REFERENCES


PRE-CONTACT TRADE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Jim Allen

Trade in this paper is taken to mean the exchange of raw materials and manufactured goods and to a limited extent labour and services between individuals and groups of individuals over short and long distances. At the simplest level trade can be viewed in economic terms as the exchange of materials and goods between areas where the outgoing goods are locally plentiful and the incoming goods are locally scarce or unobtainable; but as is well known, in New Guinea this form of bartering constitutes only a fraction of the exchanges which traditionally took place in all parts of the country. It is possible to elucidate from the ethnographic and anthropological literature of New Guinea a broad spectrum of exchange transactions running from the clear cut economic example above to the ceremonial exchanges in which the social context of the exchange can be deemed to be all important. As a number of observers have noted (e.g. Strathern 1971:101; Hughes 1977:209) while these polar positions can be perceived as different, they nevertheless allow for no clear distinction to be drawn between trade and ceremonial exchange - goods in Papua New Guinea rarely change hands without some social interaction, and by the same token ceremonial prestation involves the movement of goods.

Thus trade, taken as a general gloss, can be examined either in terms of the various social contexts involved or in terms of the movements of the goods themselves; items can be designated valuables or utilitarian items; emphasis can be placed on the socio-political purposes of prestation or the subsistence requirements the goods that are exchanged may fill. What has become increasingly apparent in recent years is that few hard and fast divisions can be drawn along these lines which offer, for any one of them, a 'better' explanation of trade than any other. We can note for example that items can move from one place as utilitarian goods and assume the characteristics of valuables in another; or that seemingly non-economic exchanges, such as live pigs and dogs' teeth moving against live dogs and pigs' tusks may well have an economic purpose in reinforcing trading ties between individuals and groups and facilitating trade in other scarce items. Thus they may provide an economic buffer against localized famine when crops are destroyed in warfare or by natural agencies such as drought or crop blight.

In short, it is at least conceivable that identical exchanges between the same two individuals may, at different times, have different purposes, and that any overall understanding of traditional trade in Papua New Guinea will need to take account of the complexity of variables involved. While this is now freely acknowledged (Hughes 1977:209; Sillitoe 1979) its
accomplishment lies in the future. By far the greatest volume of research into trading in Papua New Guinea has been carried out by social anthropologists with an overwhelming emphasis on the social context and ceremonial aspects of trade; while increasing acknowledgement of economic aspects can be found in the anthropological literature, the school of economic anthropology has had little effect on basic research carried out in Melanesia. Instead, and somewhat belated, these aspects of trade have been taken up by the geographers (e.g. Brookfield 1971; Hughes 1977) and by prehistorians.

The alternate emphasis of prehistorians on matters of subsistence, environment and economics in relationship to Papua New Guinea trade is less a matter of chance than a product of the sorts of evidence with which they work. Those aspects of past social systems which are incorporated into archaeological contexts, such as armshells or graves or configurations of large and small buildings deduced from postholes in the ground do not readily lend themselves to social interpretations. Such interpretations are not empirical and are usually met with a healthy scepticism within archaeology. On the other hand many more tools are available for reconstructing past environments and economic activities of various sorts. The identification of trade and various levels of trade have been the subject of significant discussion and theoretical development in archaeology over the past decade or two. No longer is it sufficient to identify an object or the material from which it is made as exotic to the archaeological context in which it is found and simply explain it as trade. Instead more emphasis is being placed on questions of evolution, mechanism, volume, organization and regularity of trade and the devising of tests which can measure these things in the archaeological record. Such studies in Papua New Guinea are greatly assisted by the wealth of ethnographic data recorded by early missionaries, administrators and anthropologists. It is through these that we all gain, regardless of our particular disciplines, any real comprehension of the fundamental, all-embracing nature of the importance of trade in traditional Papua New Guinea society.

Thus, studies to date of New Guinea trade have reflected the central interests of the major disciplines which have undertaken them; more particularly they have reflected the limitations of those disciplines. The synchronous nature of many social anthropological studies, and particularly those centred on a single village or group have emphasized the social context of trade, with reduced emphasis both on the evolution of the institutions surrounding trade and the geographical spread of trading systems and networks. Borrowing freely from the models of the geographers, prehistorians have begun to correct these imbalances but have introduced imbalances of their own, particularly in failing to ascribe the probable social importance in the movement of material things. Notwithstanding this, to properly explain their data, even prehistorians have on occasion been forced to invoke a social dynamic which, while not immediately demonstrable from the data, can be argued by analogy to contemporary systems, where the embeddedness of the social context of trade argues well for a respectable antiquity (e.g. see Allen 1977a; Rhoads in press). Thus while the remainder of this paper omits specific mention of ceremonial exchange, its presence and importance is implicit in the discussion.
As with much of the prehistory of Papua New Guinea, the highlands on the one hand and the lowlands and coast on the other form largely separate entities. In terms of prehistoric trade this holds true, for although the two regions can be linked in terms of certain items which in the past moved between the two, there are marked differences between the nature of trade in these regions, particularly in terms of distance and organization. The major work on traditional New Guinea highlands trade was carried out by Ian Hughes, as a member of this Research School. Hughes reconstructed traditional trading patterns for a number of utilitarian and valuable items, including salt, stone axes, pottery, shells and pigments over an area exceeding seven thousand square miles in the central western section of Papua New Guinea, stretching from the Upper Ramu River and Schrader Mountains in the north to the Middle Purari River in the south. Some of Hughes' general conclusions may be summarized here.

While the large scale and famous ceremonial prestations involved the accumulation and distribution of large quantities of pigs and staple vegetables, for most of the highlands region trade was not for staple food. Rather, these socio-political occasions not only cemented kinship ties but created a demand for other valuables and prestige foods not universally available, and also to some extent facilitated their movement (although as Hughes makes clear, this should not be confused with any concept of 'market' (1977:206)). Instead, the main thrust of trade was across ecological boundaries and from areas possessing naturally occurring raw materials such as stone for axes and from peoples possessing specialist manufacturing skills such as salt and pottery making. Trade was not formalized either in terms of markets or in the presence of specialized traders, merchants or peddlers. All men took part in ceremonial exchange, and bartered on their own account as the opportunity arose. Such opportunities were facilitated by some degree of institutionalization such as the commercial use of kinsmen and the establishment of trade partners as well as the use of public occasions to negotiate private exchanges, but concepts such as middleman are not applicable. On occasion the spectacular physical barriers to movement in the highlands channelled goods through certain limited trade routes, and thus villages along these routes were better placed to develop trading activity, but Hughes found no evidence for the development of market characteristics in these villages, nor of middlemen. Only in the case of perishable consumer goods passing quickly through a village might this latter term have any value. In other instances durable goods would be used by intermediaries while in their possession.

In addition, the distance of any single transfer was very short. Trading activities often formed only one aspect of multi-purpose journeys which might also include hunting, the gathering of raw materials or ceremonial activities. Hughes (1977:203) suggests that distances involved rarely exceeded eight to ten miles in closely settled regions and only fifteen miles in the sparsely settled lowlands area of his research. The limitations to further movement were warfare and sorcery rather than physical barriers. In summary, when viewed from the point of view of the traders themselves, trade was confined to single transfer operations between small groups and individuals. A better understanding of the importance of trade is gained from the extensive distribution of particular goods and a realization of how many times these must have changed hands to achieve this distribution. Trade in the highlands consisted of complex
webs of exchange, but these webs themselves comprised fairly simple linked chains; while there is a general flow of goods away from a source, at any point the direction of the next transfer is not predictable. In this sense, and unlike coastal Papua New Guinea, we cannot speak of trading systems, and particularly closed systems. The traditional highlands trading network seems likely, in the absence of contrary evidence, to have always been open-ended. It did, however, link the central highlands with both the north and south coasts, and indirectly much further afield. A similar situation has been described for the Dani of the Baliem Valley further to the west (see Brookfield with Hart 1971:329-331 and refs).

Perhaps the most dramatic case of this long-distance movement of goods is that reported by Hughes (1977:184-202; 1978) for marine shells. These goods, as the earliest Europeans in the area were quick to perceive and exploit, formed a basis of traditional currency, and travelled huge distances. As Hughes has pointed out there was at contact a clear variation in the values of different species in different areas, and this suggests the future possibility of tracing trade routes and cultural variation as the highlands archaeological record becomes more complete. Of more immediate importance however is that marine shells have been reported already from highlands excavations which reveal a startling antiquity for this movement of seashells. At Kafivana in the eastern highlands Peter White (1972:93) reports four money cowries which date to about nine thousand years before the present, and at Kiowa in the western highlands, Sue Bulmer reports a ground and polished fragment of black-lipped oyster of more than six thousand years of age (Hughes 1977:199). (This piece may be slightly younger. Bulmer (1975:36) states that marine shell appears in the site 'up to 5,000 years ago'.) A variety of other shells comes from subsequent levels in these sites and also from other younger highlands sites. Although in quantity these represent a trickle only, this is likely to reflect the unrepresentative nature of the archaeological record rather than the unimportance of the trade: rockshelter sites are not the most likely findspots for such decorative items, and such scarce and therefore valuable items are more likely to be deposited accidentally rather than deliberately - that is, lost rather than discarded. However, in archaeological terms, we seem to be looking at a continuous movement of shells from the highlands from at least nine thousand years ago until the present. This is by far the oldest direct evidence of trade, or more precisely the diffusion of a particular class of goods, from the coast to the central highlands. In addition, however, we can note two related pieces of evidence. The pig, an animal not indigenous to New Guinea, has been identified in Sue Bulmer's sites of Kiowa and Yuku in levels dating to ten thousand years ago, and was apparently widespread in the highlands by five to six thousand years ago (Bulmer 1975:18-19). At Kuk, near Mt Hagen, Golson has delineated extensive and intensive agricultural practices reliably dated to nine thousand years ago and has drawn attention to the plausibility of the hypothesis that at that date the plant register under cultivation could have already included the Southeast Asian staples of taro and yam (Golson 1977:613-614; Golson and Hughes n.d.). The presence of (necessarily) humanly transported non-indigenous plants and one animal in the New Guinea highlands at such an early date may either be explained in terms of a movement of peoples, for which there is no archaeological support (Allen 1977b:181), or in terms of the movement of the plants and pig without significant movements of people. While in the latter case it is not necessary to postulate trade as the prime mover (apart perhaps from
getting them across the minimum sixty-five mile water barrier) it is suggestive of lowlands to highlands communication routes being open at this time.

Thus to date, archaeological research in the highlands has been meagre and largely concerned with establishing local sequences, with questions of prehistoric trade being decidedly secondary. At present we can point only to the early long-distance movement of a few restricted items and the extensive but mainly unspecialized trade reported by European observers and the twentieth century owners of the region, and speculate that the intensity and organization of trade has not varied considerably in the last nine millennia.

Just as the interior of Papua New Guinea is enmeshed in an intricate web of short trading links, so are its coasts and nearby islands encompassed by a series of maritime trading systems which also reach out to link it with the Pacific to the east, Asia to the west and Australia to the south. As already suggested, the coastal systems and interior networks interlock at many points but the similarities between them are outweighed by their differences. In general terms the coastal systems share a number of features not found in the highlands, among them being an increased proportion of basic foodstuffs being traded, long-distance trade, specialized traders and the emergence of central places. While the systems interlock, and certain goods either 'leak' or are deliberately passed between systems, nonetheless they are much more easily perceived of as closed systems and this is reflected in the comparatively extensive literature dealing with individual systems. If an overall and extremely simplistic explanation of the differences in coastal versus highlands trade is to be found, it would appear to be related to the fact that there is no uniformly rich subsistence base along the coast and many locations lack not only sufficient space and suitable climate for an agricultural basis for life, but also a variety of other necessary raw materials. Ceremonial exchanges occur as widely, if not as intensely, as in some parts of the highlands and in both places the long-distance movement of goods cross ecological boundaries, but we see in the coastal systems an intensification of trading as an economic option which surpasses anything inland. Specialist manufacturers occur in the highlands where they possess in their territory some special raw material such as suitable stone for axes or plants for making salt. In the coastal systems there is a higher level of artificiality about the development and maintenance of specialist manufacturing activities. The Mailu Islanders for example exercised and maintained by force a monopoly on pottery manufacture in an area in which previously pottery manufacture had been a more widespread and local industry; two Motu villages likewise held the rights to shell jewellery manufacture in an area where the raw material was commonly available to another eight nearby villages. There is no ready explanation in ecological terms why this situation should prevail, except that it facilitates the movement of other goods and develops and maintains social responsibilities beyond the village which can be invoked in times of war or natural disaster. Economically, however, the cost of such specialization is in the increasing brittleness of the system: no individual or group had overall control of the larger systems and failure at any point could invoke a domino effect through the other component parts. Thus when a hiri fleet returning to Port Moresby from the Gulf of Papua with sago was forced to abandon cargo to avoid being lost in a storm, the Hula, waiting at Port
Moresby for a share of the sago, immediately took retribution against the nearby Koita, reasoning that it was their sorcery which had caused the loss of the food (Lawes 1878-79).

Whereas little archaeological research in the highlands has been specifically directed to the study of prehistoric trade, the opposite is true of the coast and islands of Papua New Guinea. Here the reflections of long and short distance transfers of goods are so more visible that much effort has been spent on developing analytical tools for the primary study of trade and exchange in the recovered archaeological data.

While human occupation of the highlands has for some years been known to date back to at least twenty-six thousand years ago, it is only in the last few weeks that any date from a lowlands or island site has approached Pleistocene age. Jim Specht et al. (1981) now report a radiocarbon date of 11,300 ± 1200 BP from the basal layer of a cave site in the interior of New Britain. At two standard deviations we can be 95 per cent certain that people occupied this site at least nine thousand one hundred years ago and possibly up to thirteen thousand seven hundred years ago. Associated with this date are five pieces of obsidian, the nearest source of which is, in a straight-line distance, less than seventy miles away. Spech (personal communication) is of the opinion that since direct access is inhibited by a mountain barrier this material has reached the site by a much more circuitous route. Even if it came directly, however, it seems too far away to have been procured at the source by the occupants of the cave.

The likely source of this material is Talasea, on the north coast of New Britain. This is the same source which supplied obsidian to the occupants of Balof Cave in New Island at a period radiocarbon dated to 6,800 410 BP (White, Downie and Ambrose 1978) a straight-line open-sea crossing of about two hundred miles. This distance would be more than doubled by taking the circular land route. Talasea continued to supply Balof during its subsequent history, but at around three thousand years ago a second source began to supply the Balof people as well. This source is located on Lou Island in the Admiralties group some three hundred and twenty miles to the west, most of it across open sea.

Given the paucity of the data at present at our disposal we are reduced to saying only that the Talasea obsidian source was being exploited and its material distributed widely at an early date, probably with the assistance of sea-going canoes. The later entry of Lou obsidian into the Bismarck Archipelago economy introduces one of the most intriguing puzzles of Melanesian and Polynesian archaeology, the Lapita cultural complex.

Roger Green (1979:27-60) has recently provided an up-to-date summary of this complex which is now demonstrated as being ancestral to Polynesian culture in the western portion of the Polynesian triangle. Archaeologically it is characterized principally, but not entirely, by elaborately decorated pottery now recovered from more than thirty sites stretching from the Bismarcks to Samoa and Tonga and dating mainly within the thousand years between 3,500 and 2,500 years ago. The sites exhibit many similarities including locations in coastal or offshore island situations, true villages rather than dispersed settlements and an economy which included horticulture, the domestic pig and chicken and possibly dog, and exploitation of reef and lagoon, rather than open sea resources. For the
Present purpose we concentrate here on the question of the Lapita people as traders. During the last decade a number of authors characterized the Lapita people as specialized long-distance traders, a persuasive argument in terms of the nearly contemporaneous appearance of Lapita sites throughout island Melanesia and based more particularly on the similarity of pottery styles and decoration, and the presence of exotic materials sometimes extraordinary distances from their places of origin. Ambrose (1978) was quick to point out the dangers of a too facile comparison between the Lapita phenomenon and ethnographically described Melanesian maritime trading systems. Green, originally a principal advocate of the trader concept has recently (1979:37-39) modified his position and three recent papers (Irwin 1980; White and Allen 1980; Kennedy in press) have suggested, along with Green, that an alternative colonization model best fits the data. Thus White and Allen (1980:733) propose that all Lapita sites southeast of the Solomon Islands were those of highly mobile colonists who maintained supply lines back to hearth areas and between colonies. The most easterly sites, in Fiji, Tonga and Samoa were perhaps too distant to maintain such supply lines, except among themselves, for significantly they lack the exotic raw materials found in the sites of their western relations.

While this is the best-fit solution given present data it is also easy to throw the baby out with the bathwater. The fact remains that archaeologically the Lapita cultural complex reflects a relatively wide range of long-distance transfers. These include Talasea and Lou Island obsidians in sites running through New Ireland, New Britain, the Solomons, including the Santa Cruz-Reef Islands, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia (Ambrose 1978:330-331; Green 1979:38); the steady, if not widespread exchange of pots between nearer communities, and stone adzes and other stone materials over like distances and, in the case of the Reef and Santa Cruz sites a stone material possibly from New Guinea (Green 1979:38). More abstractly the high correlation and continuity of ceramic decorative motifs demonstrates the high level of interaction between Lapita groups and the exchange of ceramic information, if not the potters themselves, particularly if these were women. What other goods and ideas may have been transferred at this time can only be guessed at. It is salutory to recall that Talasea and Lou Island obsidian was moving distances of almost two thousand miles at the same time as the Phoenicians were puddle-jumping around Homer's 'wine dark sea'.

In recent years there has been increasing acceptance of the Bismarck Archipelago as the immediate homeland of the Lapita cultural complex, where it was developed by settlers from island southeast Asia. Given that now there is a clear demonstration of people in the Bismarcks for around six thousand years before this later development, and the strong suggestion that they were using sea-going canoes to transfer at least one item relatively long distances, and, to borrow from the mainland New Guinea evidence, that they practised horticulture and kept domestic animals, we can begin to question whether the development of the Lapita cultural complex requires settlers from island southeast Asia. The traits not accounted for locally are presently reduced to two, pottery-making and Austronesian language, and may be reduced still further since on present evidence nowhere in island southeast Asia can we find possible antecedents of Lapita pottery. It may therefore be realistic to explore the Lapita phenomenon as a two stage event: the first being a long-term successful
adaptation in the Bismarck region (which *inter alia* clearly involved trade and the gradual infiltration of the nearer Melanesian islands); with the second stage a more truly colonizing push into the remoter eastern islands. The dynamic for this 'daunting achievement' (Ambrose 1978:332) remains unclear: there is no evidence for population pressure particularly when the numbers involved in the move are considered. Explorational zeal seems lame, and a consciously organized establishment of colonies by a home-based bureaucracy far-fetched. Other factors are nowhere yet apparent in the archaeological record and more perplexing is the lack of time differential between the two areas. However a hearth area/colonies dichotomy with trade between the two does allow us to place the element of trading into a more exact perspective. Current work in the Admiralties is expected to shed further light on this general problem, since although we know that Lou Island obsidian was being deposited in more eastern Lapita sites well over three thousand years ago so far no Lapita sites have been located on Lou containing Lapita pottery, and elsewhere in the Admiralties only four distinctively Lapita sherds have been recovered, from the lower levels of Kohin Cave on Manus Island (Kennedy in press). Prima facie the evidence presently seems to me most suggestive of the Admiralties having been settled not by Lapita colonists but by contemporaneous people who put the valuable resource, obsidian, into the wider Lapita network to the east. This of course presupposes some sort of formal trading connection. This contention finds some support in the presence of other contemporaneous sites within the Lapita ambit further east. These include Lesu on New Ireland (based on my own assessment of the pottery) and sites in the Solomons, on Guadalcanal, Anuta and Santa Ana (Green 1979:47).

The final focus of this review of prehistoric trade in Papua New Guinea centres on the south Papuan coast and brings us back to more familiar territory in the sense that archaeological research in this region has concentrated upon the evolution of two well-known trading systems, that operated by the Mailu Islanders, and that of the Western Motu of Port Moresby. Here, in addition to archaeology, linguistics and oral history have provided significant evidence to aid our understanding of this evolution, although I presently concentrate mainly on the archaeological evidence.

Well-defined settlement of the Papuan coast began about two thousand years ago when pottery-making marine-oriented agriculturalists swept along some four hundred and fifty miles of coast and occupied a range of coastal and offshore island locations, also in some places making inroads into the immediate hinterland. In many respects, although on a smaller scale, this spread is reminiscent of the colonizing push of the Lapita people. Firstly it was achieved with great speed: so far the basal dates from most sites cannot be differentiated, so that like Lapita we must postulate large numbers of people involved and the use of ocean-going canoes. Secondly the repertoire of tools and implements, including elaborately decorated pottery, adzes similar to particular Polynesian forms and a wide range of shell and bone tools and ornaments have caused a number of researchers to comment on the similarities to Lapita. Thirdly the subsequent evolution of these groups reflect Lapita patterns: in particular this is true of the ceramic sequences which attest to close and continuing interaction between these groups, although this must be qualified by saying this is more true of sites between Port Moresby and the Gulf of Papua than those further east. Fourthly this unity is reinforced in the archaeological record by
the presence of the ubiquitous obsidian in these sites, this time deriving from the Fergusson Island source. Again this obsidian is the best reflection of trading, despite its generally low occurrence, particularly in the most westerly sites; added to this, however, there is again some evidence for pot trading, at least to the Gulf sites where suitable pot making clay is apparently lacking (see Rhoads 1980) and the possible movement of some shell objects (Vanderwal 1973:179). Like the Lapita situation the dynamics of the movement of materials are at best vaguely perceived: in both cases there are elements of open-endedness, and chain-like transfers may be the best explanation for obsidian movement, but at the same time ceramic similarities and differences hint at developing areas of more formal integration.

This state of affairs continues along the Papuan coast for seven to eight hundred years but around 800 AD the archaeological record right along the coast reflects some sort of disruption. Around Mailu, ceramic changes take place which appear not to be evolutionary, although other aspects of material culture and settlement pattern continue. Further west similar ceramic disruptions occur with some site locations being abandoned and other new ones begun. Subsequently the archaeology of this coast may be generally interpreted as reflecting increasing local diversity in contrast to the general homogeneity of the previous eight hundred years (White and Allen 1980:732 and refs). By 1200 AD several sites at least show subsistence patterns ancestral to those recorded at the turn of this century.

Within these patterns it is now possible to discern the evolution of the two elaborate maritime trading systems recorded at European contact on this coast. Working on the Mailu system Irwin (1977; 1978; 1980) has demonstrated that two thousand years ago Mailu Island was only one of a number of centres producing pottery in the area and it was not the most centrally located site in the area. By about 1600 AD however it was a much larger village than any other in the region and the most centrally located in terms of the connectivity analysis employed. Mailu held a monopoly on pottery manufacturing and was the only village in the area possessing large ocean-going canoes, and thus extending this monopoly to long-distance trading. Pottery, the principal manufacture of the island, had become an extremely standard and commercial item traded mainly for food, in the production of which the island was not self-sufficient.

In the Port Moresby area I have argued extensively (see Allen in press for the most up-to-date summary) for the off-shore islet of Motupore having been the site of people whose economy was based extensively on trade. The long-distance factor of this trade is difficult to estimate since it requires locating recipient sites and I have avoided making any suggestion that the occupants of Motupore ranged as widely as we know later Motuans did. Working on the local evidence I have reconstructed a scenario which suggests however that because of trading activities the Bootless Bay area (in which Motupore Island is situated) became a focus of population which stressed local resources to the point where it disintegrated through local warfare. With the aid of oral history we know that some of these people resettled in Port Moresby Harbour, ecologically a more pauperate region. I have argued (Allen 1977a) that the intensification of trade under these conditions was the best, and perhaps the only logical solution to subsistence needs and that the evolution of the 

hiri trade which saw vast
quantities of pottery and other goods being exchanged for Gulf sago and canoes took place under this impetus.

It will be noted that both these systems, at least in their ethnoarchaeographic form, have antiquities of only several hundred years. Archaeological research in other regions where similar specialized trading systems have been recorded, such as the kula, the Vitiaz Straight system, and the Manus system, is either preliminary or non-existent. However, indications (see Allen 1977a:396-398) are that no great antiquity is to be expected for the ethnographically recorded configurations of trade in these areas.

I conclude with some short observations. The patterns of trade along the south Papuan coast can, in my opinion, best be modelled in a cyclic fashion with the peaks growing higher and more closely spaced through time. I believe that further research along this coast will confirm a pattern of increasingly formal trade throughout the first millennium AD which peaked and disintegrated around 800 AD. The disruptions right along the coast at this time suggest that this was either a single extensive network or a series of systems sufficiently interconnected that the domino effect mentioned earlier caused successive breakdowns throughout. The next suggestion of a buildup of trade, at least in one local area, is seen in the Bootless Bay scenario. Changes in the Mailu sequence at this time are slight, and it would be pressing the data too far to posit any real connection.

The eventual dominance of Mailu as the hub of a trading system at about the same time as the Western Motu system reaches its ascendency seems less coincidental, and we can predict the archaeological recovery of a further trading centre between the two, somewhere in the Hood Peninsula - Aroma Coast region. On historical grounds and based on a survey in the region done by Geoff Irwin and myself the village of Maopa suggests itself as a likely candidate. I am suggesting here, in other words, that the endpoint in the evolution of these maritime systems, until disrupted by the European presence, was a series of systems which, while effectively closed systems, were nonetheless interdependent and interlocking, and were held together by the exchange of a small series of valuable items. Thus armshells, beginning as raw shell in the Rossel Islands reached to the Papuan Gulf. Moresby shell beads penetrated the kula, and axes from the kula system moved westwards, less as 'leaks' than as 'links'. Seen as closed systems the principal trade within was in food and utilitarian items. The long-distance passage of these other items may not only have facilitated, but been vital to the ordered functioning of the internal exchanges within systems. If this is true the breakdown of one system would affect the others, and conversely the growth and expansion of one might require similar growth in the others. Thus the contemporaneity of these systems is seen as historically related. The similarity of this overall model and the kula as a system within a system, where the kula valuables circulated around the ring and facilitated a wide range of other exchanges which moved through only one or two nodes of the ring, is obvious.

This model has recently received some confirmation from the work of Jim Rhoads working inland from the Gulf along the Rikori River (Rhoads 1980; and in press). Here the dominant settlement pattern of dispersed
settlement and seasonal movement is disrupted by the presence of a permanent riverside village for several hundred years during the first millennium which ceased to be occupied around 800 AD. It was not reoccupied on a permanent basis until about four hundred years ago. Rhoads sees the occupation of Kulupuari as a sensitive indicator of trading activity on the coast. Its occupation was viable only when trade was sufficiently intense for it to act as an intermediary between coastal and inland and highlands groups. In this sense the chronology of its occupation is striking.

Finally the contrasts between recent maritime systems and the inland networks of trade in Papua New Guinea are also striking, and it is too tempting not to attribute this almost entirely to transport. Canoe transport and the harnessing of wind energy not only made bulk carrying over long distances feasible, it also offered speedier delivery of goods and protection in that hostile groups could be more easily avoided. Canoes provided the means by which the economic systems of the coasts and islands took on a different form from inland ones. Thus, while specific differences exist between the maritime systems, their general similarities are to me more interesting. They share the development of middleman traders, the emergence of central places, increased size of trading villages or conglomerations of trading villages, the ability to settle locations where the immediate subsistence base could not, without trade, support the populations involved and ultimately the possibility of the elaboration of social institutions. Trade on the one hand fostered specialization and the cultural diversity of which Papua New Guinea is justly famous, but on the other, and more perhaps that any other single institution, it enabled traditional Papua New Guinea to move beyond that diversity.

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THE PERSISTENCE OF TRADITIONAL TRADE AND CEREMONIAL EXCHANGE IN THE MASSIM

Martha Macintyre and Michael Young

I

The study of systems of exchange in Papua New Guinea – as elsewhere in Melanesia – has been extraordinarily fruitful both for an understanding of particular societies and for the development of anthropological theory. In all their wonderous variety Melanesian societies have this in common: reciprocal exchange is an important and often dominant principle which articulates a range of social, economic, political and ritual institutions. It is the woof to the warp of the social fabric, the means to its cyclical regeneration in time. The survival of exchange systems into the present, in more or less modified form, is at once indicative of their fundamental importance to the maintenance of Melanesian societies and of their resilience in the face of colonial intervention.

Of particular fascination to anthropologists have been the coastal trading systems (such as the hiri and the kula) and the highland ceremonial exchange systems (such as the moka and the te), all of which have provided spectacular evidence for considerably wider regional interconnections of intertribal 'polities' than were enabled by local political organisations centred on the village or clan territory. Almost everywhere, internal exchange (transactions occurring within the political community) was underwritten by external exchange (transactions taking place between political communities), such that it is contentious to elevate the functional importance of one over the other. It has also proven hazardous to insist upon firm analytical distinctions between 'trade' and 'ceremonial (or gift) exchange', whether in terms of the nature of goods transacted, or according to the relationship and social distance between parties to a transaction. There is agreement that these terms represent ideal-typical poles of a continuum of exchange institutions (van Baal 1975:50; Hughes 1977:209-210).

Although there is diversity in the ways particular exchange systems responded to European contact – much of it explicable in terms of the accidents of environment and the vagaries of local contact history – some broad patterns are evident. Their study by anthropologists needs little justification, for ceremonial exchange involves a heavy investment of people's time and resources, and altering patterns of exchange are at once a reliable indication of transforming socio-economic relations and a sensitive measure of changing values.

Many New Guinea societies – particularly well-described for the highlands – responded to pacification and the intrusion of steel tools by intensifying exchange activities. As warfare lapsed, ceremonial exchange
became an increasingly important arena for group competition (Salisbury 1962, Strathern 1971, Meggitt 1974). The introduction of shells into the highlands by Europeans caused inflation and devaluation; the monopoly of 'big-men' was broken, and exchange systems took on a more democratic character leading to the expansion of exchange activities and a diversification of the kinds of goods used in prestations (Strathern 1971, Hughes 1978). 'Big-men' later regained control by pouring cash — earned from coffee-growing and other capital enterprises — into competitive exchanges; the 'money-moka' was born, in which many thousands of dollars, motor vehicles, cartons of beer and commercially-produced pigs entered the exchange system (Strathern 1976, 1979). Meanwhile, the expanded te cycle had begun to disintegrate through over-extended chains of debt and increased litigation over defaulting (Meggitt 1974, Feil 1978).

Coastal or lowland regions have been relatively neglected in recent anthropological literature on exchange systems; or rather, since there is less cultural homogeneity than in the highlands, thematic parallels are more difficult to discern. Some of the maritime systems were early casualties of colonial contact, notably the canoe-bourne trade of the Torres Straight and the *hiri* of central Papua (Seligmann 1910); while others, such as the trading system centred in the Vitiaz Strait, became fragmented and lost their regional scope (Harding 1967). Uniquely perhaps, the *kula* of southeast Papua — arguably the most celebrated exchange system in the annals of anthropology — has not only survived into the present but also been revitalized.

One of the aims of this paper is to take up yet again the challenge to anthropological explanation which the *kula* offers. In what follows we focus on the Massim, and within this insular theatre of *kula* activities we compare two communities in respect of those aspects of their internal and external exchange systems which have been transformed following European contact.

Tubetube is the westernmost of the Engineer Group, a tiny island of some 400 people. Traditionally an entrepot of 'merchant venturers' in one of the most strategic locations in the *kula* ring, Tubetube's importance was recognized by the earliest ethnographers (Seligmann 1910:526, Malinowski 1922:495). It was the second island in the region to receive the zealous attention of the Methodist Mission, which had begun to spread along the sea-lanes of the *kula* from its headquarters in Dobu — another important location in the ring. Goodenough is the westernmost of the D'Entrecasteaux Group, a forbiddingly mountainous island of some 14,000 people. Traditionally peripheral to the *kula*, Goodenough nonetheless maintained trading relations with the Trobiands, the Amphletts, neighbouring Ferguson Island, and the adjacent coast of the mainland (Jenness and Ballantyne 1920:34). Goodenough received its first missionary in 1899, about the same time that it began to export labour to the mines and plantations of British New Guinea.
Recent anthropological and archaeological studies in the Massim have challenged the familiar conception of the kula (kune in the central and southern Massim) as primarily a ceremonial or gift exchange system (e.g. Lauer 1970, Egloff 1978, Irwin n.d.). Prehistorians particularly have attempted to reconstruct the precolonial trading cycles according to geographical and ecological models, focusing on the regional interdependence of particular groups which formed trade relationships in order to gain access to scarce or exotic resources. The trade between islands in the Massim undoubtedly lends itself to such an interpretation. There was only one source of stone suitable for axes and other implements, Murua; many islands lacked clay deposits from which pottery could be made; several islands bore trees from which canoes could be constructed, while others had no forest at all; Fergusson Island was the only source of obsidian; some islands were very fertile, permitting surpluses of yams and other foods to be grown, while others were stony and infertile, rarely yielding sufficient for the subsistence requirements of their small populations. There is also the relatively neglected factor of periodic or seasonal drought and consequent food shortages (see Young 1971:3, for references); though major overseas kula voyages seem to have only taken place during periods of plenty.

While ecological interdependence models provide a material basis for the existence of elaborate inter-island trade, they do not explain the cultural processes by which such complex systems as the kula evolved. This is not to discount ecological determinants, however. As Shirley Campbell has noted of modern Vakuta Island in the Trobriands: 'Kula is valued because of the opportunities for setting up trade routes to enable one Kula community to procure exotic materials from other Kula communities' (n.d.). Hence, the trade in locally-produced commodities persists throughout the Massim. Many people have no access to cash, and utility items such as clay pots, mats and baskets, as well as pigs and vegetable foods, are widely traded.

Tubetube's trade dominance in the southern Massim was directly related to its control over the distribution of stone axes. Axe blades formerly figured significantly in the second sphere of kula (see below), being essential for the purchase of pigs and canoes. In the early contact period some steel axes were incorporated into the kula, but as the European traders moved in, so the trade in stone tools declined and by 1890 they were no longer being produced. The eclipse of the stone axe has undoubtedly changed the form of the kula, as it used to constitute the most versatile valuable, one which was exchangeable in either direction. Today the ceremonial exchange of stone axe blades persists in the Trobriands and in the southwest Massim, but their use as kula objects has ceased. Tubetube people exchanged them in kula for pigs until recently, but in the past seven years most were traded southeast to the Sudest-Panaeti area where they are still used for mortuary payments. Tubetube received shell necklaces in exchange for axe blades and these were then re-routed on kula paths. The shifts in currency flows, patterns of inflation, and the debasement or devaluation of particular items of currency have been documented for the highlands (Hughes 1978); the decline in the stone axe
TRADE IN THE MASSIM AND THE RESULTANT DISLOCATIONS IN THE FLOW OF OTHER VALUABLES CONSTITUTES A PARALLEL CASE.

At the technological level, the introduction of steel tools meant that the time expended on food production was significantly reduced (cf. Salisbury 1962). Steel axes also enabled people to cultivate gardens in areas which had previously been unsuitable owing to the difficulty of felling huge trees. It has been argued that this technological innovation increased the leisure time available to men, and that this was a major factor in the expansion of ceremonial exchange or competitive feasting (Salisbury 1962, Scheffler 1964, Young 1971:255). The evidence from Tubetube does not wholly endorse this view, for although there was an increase in the volume of kula exchanges and in the number of people directly involved in kula, oral testimony suggests that the actual time spent on journeys to other islands decreased as the commodity trade declined. As this technological revolution coincided with the establishment of copra production, it is likely that the time gained by men in the area of subsistence production was redirected into production for the cash sector. Factors such as the rapid incorporation of Tubetube into the cash sector, its proximity to the commercial centre of Samarai, and the decline of its own mercantile role in the Massim must be seen as important elements in maintaining a comparatively high labour input by men.

The pattern of post-contact changes on Goodenough was commensurate with its relative isolation and its fundamentally self-sufficient, parochial communities. There was a rapid contraction of external trade and a more gradual florescence of internal exchange. Goodenough 'specialised' in little save the production of food surpluses, betel nut and pigs; it imported clay pots and inferior kula-type shell valuables - presumably those which were permitted to leak from the ring. The trade in pots from the Amphletts persists to the present day, but few other items of traditional wealth are still imported, though they continue to be used in restricted circulation in marriage and mortuary payments. Internal exchange - mainly in the form of competitive feasting and food exchange - was stimulated by a number of factors. Being a 'prestige' as well as subsistence activity, gardening absorbed the extra time and energy saved by the use of steel tools; Goodenough Islanders increased food production for 'prestige' purposes. This was in part a consequence of pacification, which deprived leaders of an important avenue to fame and groups of the sovereign right to engage in restitutive warfare. Developed as an alternative to fighting, competitive exchanges became a surrogate for it; peace not merely 'permitted' the elaboration of 'fighting with food' but, given the cultural premises, virtually demanded it (Young 1971). We may note at this point that Malinowski made a similar conjecture about the origin of kula: 'For the Trobrianders at least, the kula is to a large extent a surrogate and substitute for head-hunting and war' (1935:456).

As on Goodenough, pacification was effected on Tubetube by the joint efforts of the mission and the government over a period of about thirty years. At the time of the establishment of the mission on Tubetube the people were fierce raiders, and according to oral tradition, warfare between the islands was actually increasing in intensity. During the period 1885-1901 there were at least five major raids by Tubetube warriors on the mainland, Doini and Normanby islands; there were also several reprisal raids on Tubetube trading canoes. Armed raiding on Goodenough
seems to have occurred in some parts of the island as late as the 1920s, though the last government punitive expedition was in 1910.

The abolition of warfare in the southern Massim altered the social and political basis of inter-island exchange, for this had required the manipulation of internal resources and external trade by village leaders, guyau, who gained prestige not only through such exchange but also through their status as warriors and diplomats. Prior to pacification only guyau had engaged in kula on Tubetube and, apart from succession, the principal route to the achievement of full guyau status was through warfare. Colonial intervention in traditional political processes, therefore, was a major factor in the democratization of kula participation, not only on Tubetube but throughout the Massim.

The cessation of warfare also had a profound effect on the flow of shell valuables and the quantity of them available for kula exchanges. Formerly, large numbers of valuables had been required for ransom and homicide payments and peace-making ceremonies. Tubetube people believe that the origin of all kula relationships lies in the alliances made following warfare. Psaouli, a homicide payment, was made to retrieve the skulls of cannibal victims. Each skull was redeemed by one or more high-ranking shells. These exchanges, with their connotations of headhunting, were among the very first to be suppressed by the missionaries, so the relationship between inter-island peace-making exchanges and the kula is now very difficult to reconstruct. The legendary origin of the kula on Tubetube, however, is represented as a peace-making ceremony between two guyau, one from Tubetube and the other from Nasikwabu. This political alliance was later reinforced by marriage and the shell valuables exchanged were put onto the kula road. It is notable, too, that the origin of abutu, the sumptuary competitive food exchanges of Goodenough, is said to lie in peace-making ceremonies between enemies; though latterly abutu developed into a means of humiliating rivals, and 'enemies' were even cultivated for the express purpose of exchanging food with them.

Today the kula is perceived as a system of exchange which supports and reinforces entirely peaceful alliances between islanders, but oral evidence suggests that this is a rather recent construction fabricated in terms of the paw britannica. Tubetube elders indicate that the government-imposed peace allowed them to travel widely 'looking for' pigs and shell valuables, so that in the early years of colonial rule there was an increase in kula activities and many new 'roads' were made.

In the 1890s the Methodist Mission on Tubetube negotiated peace between traditional enemies and orchestrated psaouli ceremonies at the mission station. No skulls were used, but the transactions were otherwise similar to those traditionally practiced. One of these peace settlements had a profound effect on Tubetube's subsequent role in the kula. J.T. Field, the missionary, arranged for a Nuakata clan to pay shell valuables, pigs and rights over a small uninhabited island as compensation for their killing of thirteen Tubetube men. This island, Dawson or Koyagaugau, was later settled by the guyau Dabau, who was at the time the principal kula trader on Tubetube. The flow of kula valuables became severely dislocated, to the extent that nowadays all kula routes to the south pass through Koyagaugau, and in recent years new roads have been
established which by-pass Tubetube and the rest of the Bwanabwana region altogether.

The existence of a mission station on Tubetube, then, had a more profound, historical effect than might otherwise have been the case; there are simply no parallels on Goodenough, where mission influence has been more diffuse and less decisive in instituting specific changes. There were other consequences for Tubetube arising from its relative accessibility. The sale of copra to pay contributions to the Wesleyan Mission was an established institution by 1896, which meant that when government taxation was imposed in 1919 Tubetube Islanders readily complied with the new regulations. Goodenough Islanders on the other hand began to pay tax as late as the mid-to-late 1920s. But, again in contrast to Goodenough, few Tubetube men left their island to work, and the mission actually discouraged labour migration. Both peoples, however, have had access to cash over a long period and during this time they have become increasingly dependent upon store goods. Almost all income from copra on Tubetube is spent on items for domestic consumption; taxation and nowadays school fees are the only other uses of cash. The same is true for Goodenough, with the proviso made in Section IV. Cash income on both islands is subject to the same redistributive obligations as other goods which are produced, and there is little or no accumulation of cash as capital. In spite of government encouragement, there has been no significant expansion of cash-cropping, and on Goodenough there is considerable under-exploitation of the trees planted many years ago by governmental directive (cf. Moulik 1973).

III

In this section we present a modern perspective of the essentials of the kula and a revised view of the significance of the valuables which circulate along its roads. Although the perspective is grounded in the southern Massim it is intended to be generally valid for the whole ring.

The persistence of this institution in the face of broad economic changes in the region is a problem which must be answered, finally, in terms of the overdetermination of exchange relations within each community in the kula. It is still through kula that men (and in the southern Massim women also) win prestige as controllers of people and wealth. Kula valuables are not—pace Malinowski—mere symbols of prestige, like the 'Crown Jewels'. The claim that kula items are valued as if they are 'supremely good in themselves, and not as convertible wealth, or as potential ornaments, or even as instruments of power' (Malinowski 1922:512), is contradicted by all the evidence, including that available to Malinowski himself. If one has a kula valuable, one can use it in a wide range of internal exchanges: to marry, acquire pigs, canoes or land, to pay mortuary debts and compensation for injury; to purchase magic or the services of a curer or sorcerer.

The kula today is a system of delayed exchange involving armshells, shell necklaces, pigs, canoes, feasting pots, and a few unique shell ornaments. Some items, such as decorated limesticks, boar's tusk pendants, belts of shell beads, and stone axe blades, which were all part of the
precolonial kula currency, no longer circulate. But the valuables — Malinowski's vaqgu'a — are substantially the same. The participants conceive of the system as circular, not as an inter-island network. The links or roads (keda, Trobiands; komwasa, Tubetube; ked, Muyuwa) are built between individual men and women on different islands; some roads by-pass some islands in the familiar, ethnographically-constructed kula ring, for the links are between people and not places. A 'big road' is one which links many high-ranking people and which carries many high-ranking valuables. Prominent traders know the names of all the partners on a 'big road'.

But the kula is by no means (in Malinowski's phrase) 'a simple affair' of two different valuables constantly changing hands around an imaginary ring. The purpose of kula is to forge alliances through a sequence of indebtedness and to accumulate valuables which can be used for internal exchanges. At every exchange, a debt is created which must be repaid at some later date. The object of kula is to keep a valuable in circulation, accruing 'interest' in the form of other, lower-ranking, valuables. Although a kula trader may retrieve or remove his or her high-ranking shell to deploy in an internal exchange, this is undesirable as the path would then 'die'.

A valuable which is owned by an individual but which is not in the kula (and is therefore unencumbered by debt), is called kitomwa in Tubetube (kitoma, Trobiands and Dobu; kitown, Muyuwa). Valuables are referred to as kitomwa in all other exchanges where they are used, and an owner can convert his or her kitomwa into a kula valuable by 'throwing' it on an established road. But it is as kitomwa that these valuables function as a flexible currency in internal exchanges for marriage, land transactions and mortuary payments. We shall briefly outline the spheres of exchange relevant to an understanding of kula in its present form:

1. Kula I:
The circulation of armshells and necklaces involving the accumulation of other valuables as kitomwa.

2. Kula II:
The acquisition of pigs and canoes through delayed reciprocity. The participants are often partners in a kula I relationship, and the exchange may involve kitomwa or pigs. This form of kula exists on Duau (Normanby), Gawa (Marshall Bennets), Muruwa (Woodlark), and the islands known as Bwanabwana (including Tubetube) in the southern Massim.

3. Marriage and mortuary exchanges:
The sequence of exchanges of shell valuables, pigs and vegetable food which structures affinal alliance. The shells and pigs used in these exchanges are ideally acquired in kula II and therefore free of other obligations. In practice however, inter-island marriage exchanges between guyaau families or high-ranking kula men often incorporate transactions which are part of kula I, and outstanding kula debts are sometimes repaid in mortuary exchanges.
4. Inter-island commodity trade:
The exchange of pots, mats, baskets, and carved wooden utensils for
yams, taro and other foodstuffs. In the northern Massim gimsali
refers to a system of free bartering; in the south and northeast
gimsali is a perjorative term, and most commodity exchange entails
fixed standards of equivalence. In the southern Massim there are
traditional trading alliances between villages and these coincide with
marriage alliances.

All four spheres of exchange are constructed in terms of kin
relations. Kula partners are ideally clan brothers (that is, men who are
not consanguinely related, but who share the same totem) or sisters'
husbands. The bonds between partners are represented as altruistic
and enduring, and kula debts are conceptualized in the same terms as those
incurred in marriage – where responsibility for the transaction extends
beyond the two persons directly involved.

This sketch of the modern kula points to the persistence of at least
two things: the integrity of internal exchange systems, and the structure
of indebtedness which keeps the valuables moving along the roads. This is
not to claim that the kula is the same as it used to be. It has become
democratized; the volume of valuables in circulation has probably
increased, and monetization has intruded to the extent that shell valuables
can now be purchased and put into the kula.

IV

In this section we show how similar parameters of persistence and
change define what is ostensibly a colonial institution, but one which has
been adapted to meet the need for an external exchange system. We refer to
the practice of migrant wage-labour on Goodenough, which has become a
surrogate for the visiting exchange expeditions of the past – themselves
pale copies of kula voyages.

These expeditions were said to 'ask for niune'. This is a cognate of
kune, the term for kula in the D'Entrecasteaux and southern Massim, and it
can be glossed as 'a gift which cannot be retained'. With respect to any
gift designated niune, therefore, at least three parties are involved: the
giver, the receiver, and the latter's kinsman or partner who accepts (and
may consume) the gift on his behalf. Niune gifts are given and received
between parties to all major exchanges on Goodenough – from marriage to the
spectacular abulu contests. In visiting exchange, the men of a village
used to make periodic expeditions – by land or sea – to distant
communities, where they would 'ask for niune' in the form of pots, shell
valuables, mats, pigs, yams and betel nut. The leaders of such expeditions
would be obliged to pass the fruits of their wanderings to their exchange
partners back home. Subsequently the visits would be reciprocated and
goods would flow in the opposite direction (Young n.d.). These expeditions
are now almost a thing of the past, although new canoes are still sent to
solicit food gifts from neighbouring villages. During the course of the
century, visiting ceremonial exchange has given way almost entirely to an
analogous quest for wealth: migrant labour.
The men of the D'Entrecasteaux ('Gosiagos') rapidly established a reputation for themselves as strong and tractable workers, more willing than most to endure the harsh conditions of the goldmines on Woodlark, Misima and the Mambare (Nelson 1976). Goodenough Islanders were particularly in demand. Their participation in the search for white men's wealth began in 1898, when a hurricane and a drought brought famine to the islands. At this time their recruitment was virtually a matter of survival - or an alternative to cannibalism (Young 1971:172). In 1900 as many as one thousand Goodenough men signed on as contract labourers, which must have been almost half the number of able-bodied men on the island. Except for the war years and a brief period in the late 1950s when a ban on recruitment was imposed, the number of absent workers has remained at a similarly high level. The regular exodus of young men for one or two years at a time became a common feature of community life on Goodenough (cf. Jenness and Ballantyne 1920:18).

When trying to explain their popularity among recruiters, present-day islanders appeal to their traditional value of tobakula, the ideal of the industrious and abstemious gardener. They define their own incentives as 'the search for wealth', the need to 'go to the trader' to 'find money' and bring it home. Just as important, they regard the wage-labour experience as an essential one for every young man to undergo in order to achieve adult status. And indeed, migrant labour quickly took the form of a classic rite de passage, a ceremonial 'initiation' involving phases of separation, transition and incorporation. This is all the more remarkable in that Goodenough, like most areas of the Massim, traditionally lacked puberty ceremonies or ritual initiation into manhood.

The man who departs to work abroad is designated toyage: one-who-embarks. He remains a toyage until he is homeward bound, when he is re-designated tolautomu: one-who-dismbarks. His departure is generally sudden, ideally in the dead of night. There are taboos on grieving for him, speaking his name, or making a noise in his hamlet - proscriptions which implicitly liken him to a dead man. His return is as secretive as his departure, and he will hide on the boat if necessary and slip home unobserved after dark. The tolautomu then secludes himself for several days in his parents' house, working hard in his gardens during daylight hours and returning to the village after dusk. The incorporation of the tolautomu occurs when his father or a sibling kills the pig which they named for him on his departure. The whole community will feast, but since the pig is the new arrival's niune he cannot eat of it himself.

Of most concern to us here is what the tolautomu does with the wealth he has brought home. Nowadays it consists of bags of rice and sugar, cases of tinned fish and meat, cartons of beer and stick tobacco, garden tools, domestic utensils, blankets and clothing. All such wealth is designated lokoloko, the term for items of traditional wealth. Significantly, the principle of niune applies to this new wealth, and the young tolautomu will keep for himself only the clothes he stand up in (cf. Jenness and Ballantyne 1920:95). The rules which govern its distribution are quite explicit. If the youth is a firstborn son, then the first fruits of his wage-labour career should go entirely to his mother's brother. This is in recognition of the latter's 'gift' of a woman to the youth's father. (Unlike the majority of societies in the Massim, those of Goodenough are patrilineal; sons belong to their father's group and reside with it, while
daughters marry out and bear children for other agnatic groups.) Secondborn sons hand over their earned wealth to their fathers, as do firstborn sons following their second expedition. Belonging to the same agnatic line, however, a father treats this wealth as niune and distributes it widely, in theory keeping nothing for himself. Finally, we may note that if the firstborn is a girl her bridewealth should be given wholly to her mother's brother; and if this has been done it releases her own brother from the obligation to give his first earnings to the same man. Instead, the girl will rear a pig for her brother to be killed on his return, and he will reciprocate by giving her the bulk of his first earnings. This of course is her niune too, and she passes it on to her own husband for distribution. Later, this man will return a similar amount of wealth to his brother-in-law.

It will now be clear how goods acquired through wage labour are assimilated to the pattern of exchanges between kinsmen and affines. They are subjected to the same rules of niune which forbid their consumption by the producer and the immediate recipient. In this manner, modern consumer goods are poured into the local exchange system where they circulate (or are consumed) according to traditional rules. Moreover, insofar as these goods are now preferred to wealth items of traditional origin, the exchange system generates its own demand for them, thereby re-inforcing the cash-earning incentive (cf. Belshaw 1955:30). Niune is a mechanism, too, by which elders maintain control over juniors and minimize the subversive effect of their unique access to the sources of money.

The catch, of course, is that although niune morally insulates villagers from the capitalist mode of production, it does not emancipate them from its general sway. By the rule of the gift, the giver must later be repaid in similar if not identical coin. So other men, too, must go away and sell their labour to meet obligations to repay niune. Here the demands of the exchange system are as relentless as the forces of capital—the difference being that the former are apprehended as the very goals which give meaning to people's lives. Nor should we forget that although the institution of migrant labour has been domesticated by Goodenough Islanders and adapted to conform to a traditional pattern of seeking wealth, it is too exploitative to them to constitute an external 'exchange system' by any objective criteria. There is symbolic acknowledgement of the worker's alienated labour, perhaps, in the 'inner dualism' of the toyage/tolautoum contextual distinction. Recent years have seen raised level of expectation for better employment, and some young men now compete—as their fathers never did—for jobs which allow them to escape the stultifying regime of menial labour. Cash is now being invested in children's education, and more rapid change will surely follow the long-scheduled opening of a secondary school on Goodenough itself.

Comparison with Tubetube, where migrant labour participation is relatively low, reveals similar strategies for the assimilation of wage-earnings. Pasuwe is a traditional gift-giving ritual whereby those returning from a trading voyage or a prolonged absence are required to give token gifts to all who have congregated on the beach to greet them. Pasuwe for a returning wage-earner can be an expensive affair. Gifts of tobacco, sweets and other small items such as combs must be provided for as many as thirty people. Most workers return during the holiday period, around Christmas, and this becomes the occasion for gifts of love, mulolo, to all
relatives. Cloth, items of clothing, small luxury items such as china cups, pocket knives and children's toys are given as Christmas presents. Most of the money that the person has saved is given to a parent or mother's brother as kwaqa, a gift of respect which reaffirms the age hierarchy within the family. This money is then spent on food or other goods for the whole household. If he is remaining on the island, the returning worker usually distributes most of his personal belongings to relatives and friends of his own generation as yaqa, 'sharing gifts'. Thus, the egalitarian social structure of Tubetube requires that all the fruits of wage-labour are rapidly redistributed, and the worker's re-incorporation into the community is structured around the sequence of pasuwa, kwaqa, yaqa, and mulolo.

V

Our approach in this paper implicitly confronts that of previous anthropologists who predicted the demise of traditional exchange in Melanesia once money and trade goods had entered the economy (e.g. Belshaw 1955, Hogbin 1958, Salisbury 1962). We have tried to show that economic change is determined and mediated by many factors which are not amenable to analysis in terms of the economic logic of capitalist society. While we do not deny that the Massim has been subject to pervasive changes as Papua New Guinea has been incorporated into the world economy, we stress that these changes have not produced the dramatic effects predicted by those writers whose analyses were founded on models of market forces. Consumption patterns and commodity circulation are socially constructed and historically specific. We have argued that, in spite of Western colonial contact over nearly a century, basic social formations in the Massim have remained intact and have been able to subsume new economic relations in ways which are compatible with traditional values.

Massim societies have responded to economic changes by structuring them in accord with existing ideologies of wealth and by establishing notional equivalences between the fruits of traditional labour and cash. This equivalence, however, is not primarily economic. The social component in the exchange of commodities — whether they are locally produced or bought in trade stores — accounts largely for the persistence of particular systems of exchange. The social obligations of kinship and marriage, and the economic responsibilities generated within the systems of marriage and mortuary obligations, are powerful constraints upon any individual who attempts to accumulate or consume in terms of the cash sector alone.

Beyond these intrinsic reasons for the 'inertia' of traditional systems of exchange, however, lie extrinsic factors, such that we might conclude — somewhat tautologically — that the survival of these systems is to do with insufficiently powerful forces for change. Firstly, the penetration of the capitalist mode of production has been limited, and the Massim has remained economically peripheral. The subsistence mode of production has been spared the shocks which have occurred in regions where cash-cropping or mineral development have become important sources of livelihood for local populations. Given the geographical and productivity limits of copra production in the Massim, it is not unduly surprising that the traditional mode of production has persisted with minimal structural change.
Secondly, the geographical isolation of most Massim societies must be acknowledged to be a crucial factor in their socio-economic conservatism. The Massim, after all, is an insular region. Men may leave their islands to work abroad but there are very few large, expatriate-owned plantations in the kula ambit; more than half the copra produced in Milne Bay Province comes from mainland plantations (Henton 1979). Wage-labour was perhaps only initially attractive to those, like Goodenough islanders, whose subsistence production was precarious. Even then, the very fact that workers migrated meant that its effects were indirect. The two modes of production were physically separated as well as morally insulated.

Thirdly, traditional economic values centred on the production and distribution of food. The value of food has not been affected by colonial intervention (though missionaries have consistently tried to influence patterns of distribution). Hence, the cultural values associated with food-production and the social institutions which impinge upon subsistence (marriage, descent, land tenure etc.) have largely escaped outside pressures for change. Distribution remains the practical task and the ideological concern of the exchange system, which, being grounded in the realm of kinship, is inherently conservative.

Lastly, when considering the 'value' of money in the Massim, it must be remembered that most islanders are a long way from markets for their produce and from stores large enough to alter consumption patterns and thereby stimulate the cash-cropping sector. Money is more useful, where it is more useful, and it is significant that cash has penetrated the traditional spheres of exchange most pervasively in those areas closest to Samarai and Arolat, the commercial and administrative centres of the Province.

We conclude with an observation concerning Massim people's own impulse to venture 'beyond diversity'. For the anthropologist, beguiled by the 'uniqueness' of the society he or she studies, it is easy to overlook the similarities between neighbouring cultures. For the peoples of the Massim, however, who share an Austronesian heritage, many if not most contemporary social practices are mutually intelligible. One of the consequences of colonial rule has been the mutual acculturation of different groups, facilitated by greater mobility and locations - such as towns, schools and plantations - where people of different cultures can meet and mingle (Chowning 1969). Inter-island marriage is becoming increasingly common. But predating the advent of the European, there were totemic clans which provided an ideological basis for a broader cultural unity - one which found expression in trade and exchange relations. Even today, when a strange boat pulls into Tubetube the visitors identify themselves by giving the names of their 'birds', and their fellow clan members offer hospitality and address their guests by appropriate kin terms. Clan obligations, then, extend to strangers who may speak different languages. In the southern Massim a clan is obliged to bury a foreign clan member who has died away from home, and the deceased's relatives pay shell valuables to the buriers. In such ways did inter-island contacts in the kula circuit embrace a wider range of principles and imperatives than the quest for mere economic gain.

It is an impertinence, perhaps, to characterize Massim peoples as 'conservative' and their societies as 'inert' when the sheer complexity of these ancient cultures and the intricacy of the ceremonial exchange system
which they have evolved attest to their success in reaching beyond diversity.

NOTES

1 Prehistoric ceramic evidence suggests that prior to AD 1500 Goodenough was part of a large northern Massim and mainland trading network - which could have been an earlier form of the kula (Egloff 1978).

2 These points are aptly illustrated by an anecdote. In April of this year one of us (Michael Young) was entertaining Lepani Watson in Angau Lodge, the School's transit house in Port Moresby. Lepani is an eminent Trobriand Islander, a previous Member of the national House of Assembly and a prominent man in the kula. On glancing out of the window, he noticed the doctor who lives across the street backing his car out of the drive. Lepani recognized him. 'He's Dobuan. His mother's brother is big in the kula and he's got a famous bagi (necklace) that I want. I must ring him about it.' Briefcase kula by air, it seems, is already a reality.

3 In 1978 Milne Bay Province produced only 4.31 per cent of the total amount of copra produced in Papua New Guinea (Henton 1979).

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