

THE MARIND IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

A study on social-economic change in Marind society to assist in the formulation of a long term strategy for the Foundation for Social, Economic and Environmental Development (YAPSEL)

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FOREWORD

YAPSEL (Yayasan Pengembangan Sosial Ekonomi dan Lingkungan Hidup, Foundation for Social, Economic and Environmental Development) is a Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO), working in the district of Merauke, Irian Jaya, Indonesia. Its objective is to help the indigenous population, mostly of Marind and Yei origin, coping with the onslaught of modernisation. The main activities of YAPSEL are in the field of agriculture and human resources development.

In recent assessments of NGDO-activities in Indonesia, long-term goals and strategies to reach these goals are often non-existent. Consequently, unsuccessful project implementation, on even short term endeavours, is easily blamed on the bad attitudes and unwillingness of the target-group.

This, however, originates from the view that the target-group automatically and willingly will follow and accept the bright ideas of a group of social activists, who in most cases have a university educated, urban background. In Robert Chambers' "Rural development. Putting the last first.", this gap between, in his case, consultants and the target-group is superbly described.

Even the use of the word "target-group" is significant. The concept started in the seventies in a new stage in development work. It meant that attention should be given to the poorest of the poor, the target-group, in contrast to "old fashioned" infrastructural development aid, like the building of bridges and hospitals, which turned out to be more beneficial to those who could afford the facilities.

The term "target-group", however is also used in the world of marketing and advertisement. If you have a product to sell, you identify a target-group, which must then be convinced that life is better when in possession of product x. Likewise, an NGDO has its development work "to sell", and the target-group has to be convinced that it is good for them. This sounds more sarcastic than it is, as we shall see.

Theoretically, in this situation there are several kinds of relationships possible between NGDO's and target-groups.

1. The target-group knows what has to be done to improve their situation. The NGDO is primarily a facilitator.
2. The target-group is subject to the "culture of poverty". The NGDO has a much more active role in convincing the target-group that they have the potential to improve their situation.
3. The target-group does not even know that they are poor. This is especially the case with traditional living tribal societies. The problem is the coming infringement upon their way of life. Once completely surrounded by modern society, they "suddenly" find themselves on society's margins, incapable of coping with the onslaught of modernisation. In this case the role of the NGDO is the most active. Firstly, it has to inform the target-group about the coming danger. Secondly, they have to be convinced to prepare themselves. Thirdly,

the question is the best way to prepare. In short, the work of the NGDO is preventive.

It is clear that YAPSEL is in the third category. In this case it would be a grave omission not having a long-term strategy. Without one the NGDO can do more harm than good. The work of an NGDO can be called an "intervention", like any other development-activity of any other institution. Like a military intervention, when insufficiently planned, the "attack" will fail, forcing the attacker to retreat, leaving casualties among the attacked. In NGDO work, this can take the form of changing traditional society without giving sound alternatives.

The logic that **any** development activity should be aware of the culture of its beneficiaries is not new. In the fifties one of the pioneers in the study on cultural change and economic development in Papua New Guinea, Cyril Belshaw, notes that "Though the society I describe [The Southern Massim in PNG, JO] has made remarkable [economic] progress in certain limited fields, it still needs help and guidance for successful change, but this guidance, if unaware [of the cultural context], is just as likely to do harm as good." ¹

The conclusion is that YAPSEL needs a soundly based, well structured, long term strategy.

When people ask about the usefulness of studying history, the standard answer is: "How do we know where we are going to, when we do not know where we are coming from". When trying to formulate a long term strategy, the phrase could be adjusted to "In order to find the right strategy to our goals, we have to use past experiences."

The first chapter will describe for what reasons, the presumptions and the objectives etc. the founders of YAPSEL started their work in 1987. Then we will go back in time and work our way to '87 again.

The historical part will be about social-economic features of Marind society and of modern society infringements upon it. In both, elements have to be identified which may be supportive, or impedimental, to the activities and objectives of YAPSEL.

Chapter two describes the traditional "economic" activities of the Marind, and, when useful, their social backgrounds. The influence of Dutch colonial government and missionary work, before and after WW II, will be dealt with in chapters three and four.

Chapter five is about the influence of Indonesian government policy on the indigenous population of the *kabupaten* (district) Merauke, be it on purpose (intervention), or unintentionally.

Chapter six will describe the present situation. Attention will be given to general developments, new government initiatives, activities of other NGO's etc. Information in this chapter is based on data gathered during field visits to three distinct areas in Marind- territory.

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Belshaw (1954), p.vi.

Lastly, chapter seven will give a summary and some recommendations on YAPSEL's long term strategy.

1. YAPSEL's INITIAL STRATEGY

YAPSEL was established in 1987, after several Irianese working for the Merauke based development organisation Yasanto decided to form an NGO of their own.

Mr. Max Mahuze, one of the founder members and since its inception YAPSEL's director, wrote a paper on development while still working for Yasanto. The paper was called "Rencana Pengembangan Pelayanan Tahun 1986-1990" [Outlines for the Development of Services, 1986-1990]. According to the paper, the major obstacle to development observed in the villages was the total lack of resources that provided a cash-income for the villagers. Hunting crocodiles (for their skin) and birds was already prohibited by government. An economic base did not exist. Furthermore, assuming that the basic problem of lack of resources could be overcome, there remained a significant barrier with regards to the marketing of any products. The long distances, combined with a poor infrastructure, resulted in isolation and hence limited accessibility to potential markets. Coupled with this was the fact that education and skills levels within the villages were generally low, so that without clear action from a third party the villagers would continue to be at a serious disadvantage to transmigrants in competition with them. In order to address these constraints for development in the villages, some proposals on the structure of Yasanto's programme were put forward in Max Mahuze's paper as follows:

1. Laying an economic foundation: perennial cash-crops, animal husbandry and fisheries.
2. Development of co-operatives: transportation, shops and small enterprise.
3. A health-infrastructure for the villages
4. Housing
5. Preparing people for university education
6. Human resources development in the fields of agriculture and animal husbandry.

Mr. Mahuze, in the introduction to his paper, stated that the ideas contained within the paper were based on the experiences of Yasanto to date, "i.e. the response of the people on the presence of Yasanto".²

Point 1 of the proposals, "Laying an economic foundation" is a key concept which returns in the title of the first project proposal YAPSEL submitted to the Dutch funding organisation NOVIB in 1988, namely "Program Pengembangan dan Peletakan Dasar Ekonomi" [Programme for Developing and Laying an Economic Foundation]. NOVIB was to become YAPSEL's main sponsor. In this first proposal, the lack of commodities to provide a cash-income is quoted as a basic problem, together with the low level of "fighting spirit" and creativity among the villagers to face the future. The primary objectives of the programme therefore were stated as:

1. The provision of a cash-income sufficient to cover basic needs.
2. A change in attitude "after struggling a few years". "For instance from being a lazy-bones becoming a worker; hunter becoming farmer; on-looker becoming

² Mahuze (1985). p.1.

fighter; coward becoming daredevil, listener becoming initiator and thinker; receiver becoming promoter and so on".³

3. Obtaining self-reliance.

The project activities contained in the YAPSEL proposal were more limited than those listed in the Yasanto paper, which were ambitious indeed. Perennial cash-crops, however, remain on the top of the list, followed by the development of a seed-bank, human resources, a workshop for appropriate technology, village health-care and transportation.

A basic assumption is that staple foods are available in abundance. Therefore concentration can be focused on the implementation of cash-earning activities.

Later on NOVIB agreed to fund YAPSEL for two years, but the programme actually covers a ten year time frame. In the first five years, 1987-1992, the program will have been implemented, thereby providing the new economic foundation. At the beginning of the next five-year phase, the basis is there and with its produce (also non-material) the people will be on their way to self-reliance, by way of a regular cash income.

In the course of 1988, NOVIB reacted to the proposal. Within this reaction, YAPSEL is praised for the broad, integrated set up of the program. However, it also stresses the importance of looking at development from a local perspective and the accountability of a NGO towards the target-group. The reaction also states that the intervention of a NGO at the local level should be very limited, and neither the NGO or the target group should become dependent on foreign financial resources.

Although NOVIB's knowledge on Irian Jaya is acknowledged to be limited, the letter states that it wishes to provide some advice on the approach of development problems. This approach should be systematic. Firstly, there should be sufficient knowledge on poverty as a phenomena in YAPSEL's working-area. The nature of poverty can differ regionally. Secondly, YAPSEL has to find out "in what way historically, but also currently, the target-group has tried to overcome its poverty".⁴ Thirdly, what initiatives already exist? The letter states that these three activities belong to the preparatory phase of a development-program. All too often, a NGO starts a programme with inadequate background knowledge and it fails to consult sufficiently with the local people. As a result these programmes are frequently unsuccessful and the very people who should have benefited most are left behind.

The fourth step is the selection of the target-group. the fifth is the formulation of the programme's objectives and the sixth step is a description of the way these objectives are to be reached (strategy and concrete activities). Step seven is the production of a budget. The eighth and final step is an important one. The NOVIB letter states that at submitting a proposal, an NGO should be able to identify the point at which its work among the target group is completed. This process of withdrawal by the NGO is known as "phasing out".

As stated above, NOVIB approved the proposal for a period of two years. This was for the years 1989/1990, with a moderate amount of money. In 1990 a new three years proposal (1991/'93) was submitted to NOVIB. A consultant helped writing the

³ -- Program -- (1988), p. 2.

⁴ Letter Mr. Abels (NOVIB) to Mr. Mahuze (YAPSEL), dd. 25 July 1988, p.4.

proposal. It also contained a description of the strategy YAPSEL had followed so far. Through the planting of perennial cash-crops it was hoped to achieve two goals. "First, by planting their traditional lands indigenous villagers would be able to secure their land rights against encroachments by (trans-)migrants and development projects. At the very least they would become entitled to a cash reimbursement if they had to give up their land because the government wanted it for development purposes. Second, the introduction of cash-crops would lessen the indigenous population's dependence on their (dwindling) traditional resources of cash: crocodiles, birds of paradise and other wildlife."⁵

This can be called an active instead of reactive approach, because the villagers are still able to live on their traditional resources. Such an approach tries to keep ahead of future developments. The indigenous population would develop new economic patterns matching future changed circumstances. Perennial crops were chosen because they best suited local conditions, at the same time enabling people to plant large areas, a necessity because of the land rights issue. It also would stabilise and level out the cash flow over the year. Finally, a more regular cash flow would enhance the ability of the villagers to pay for the education of their children.

The description concludes with the assessment that YAPSEL's strategy was "somewhat naive".⁶ Therefore, the new three years programme would use a different strategy.

In the several documents related to YAPSEL's proposals, differences c.q. inconsistencies can be found. In 1989 NOVIB in its turn requested special funding from the Dutch Directorate General for Development Co-operation specially for YAPSEL (this means that, upon approval by the Directorate General, NOVIB will act as an intermediate project holder, using government development money for YAPSEL). In the related document other things are stressed when compared to YAPSEL's own project-proposal. There was more attention to the strategic importance of perennial crops in respect to land rights. In the NOVIB document there is also more attention to cultural issues. It is written that new introduced activities "do comply with traditional Papuan culture". "It is very well understood that trying to preserve Papuan culture is only possible by opening up traditional Papuan society and adjust it to the new circumstances."⁷ "Preserving Papuan culture" is not an explicit stated objective in YAPSEL's project-proposal.

An inconsistency within NOVIB documents concerns the nature of YAPSEL's strategy. Both NOVIB's reaction to YAPSEL's first project-proposal and the above mentioned request to the Directorate General regard YAPSEL's approach as integrated, whereas in YAPSEL's three-years proposal, written by the consultant, it is stated that "Yapsel makes a clear choice for economic programmes as a point of entry".⁸ This does not rule out an integrated approach, but it is clear that in the two documents different points are stressed.

The differences above in part can be ascribed to the dynamics in the relationship between donor and recipient. The partners communicate, but in the end they are

⁵ -- Basis -- (1990), p.10.

⁶ Ibid. p. 3.

⁷ Letter Mr. Pelgröm (NOVIB) to Mr. Berteling (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), dd. March 1989, p.4.

⁸ -- Basis -- (1990), p. 3.

themselves responsible for the contents of their own documents. One also may conclude, however, that there is also no unequivocal understanding between both sides about YAPSEL's strategy. The remark in NOVIB's funding request to the Directorate General for Development Cooperation that "YAPSEL's programme is exceptional given the very sound social and technical preparation, both in Irian Jaya and in Holland"⁹ is therefore overstated.

⁹ Letter Mr. Pelgröm etc. p 7.

2. ORIGINAL CULTURE

Geography and subdivisions

The Marind-anim occupy a vast territory, comprising of a triangle between the southern entrance of Strait Marianne in the west, a point on the coast 15 kilometres east of Merauke in the east and the upper reaches of the Bian River in the north. Although all the people in this area call themselves Marind, they can be subdivided into different groups according to dialect or cult. The total number of Marind around the year 1900 is estimated between 8500 and 10,000 for the coastal Marind and around 6000 for those living in the interior.

The language the upper Bian Marind speak is so different, that it might be called a related language to Marind instead of a dialect. The dialects along the coast, however, are all closely related. The eastern dialect is spoken east of the Kumbe, the western dialect between Kumbe and Strait Marianne, with the exception of the villages of Sangasé and Alatep, where a third dialect is spoken similar to that of the hinterland of Okaba. The fourth dialect is located in the Kumbe valley.

The Marind had four different kinds of cults. The upper Bian Marind had an initiation cult of their own, called *ezam-uzum*. Along the coast there are three different cults. The most important of these is the *mayo*, the cult of the great majority of the coastal Marind. All important mythical events, and the two other coastal cults had their origin in the primeval *mayo*-rites celebrated by the ancestors. The mythical centre of the cult was at Brawa, near Buti in the vicinity of Merauke. The other two cults were the *rapa*-cult of Kondo (an enclave in Kanum-tribe territory, east of Marind territory on the coast), and the *imo*-cult, with more numerous followers, practised in Sangasé and Alatep and by all the inland speakers of the Sangasé dialect.

The territory occupied by the Marind is alluvial flatland. It is protected against the sea by a sandy elevation, upon which the coastal villages are built. This sandy stretch along the coast is covered with coconut-trees. They are lacking only in the mangrove swamps along the northern shore of the Bian mouth and the area east of Sarira, or in places where dunes are absent and the land is high enough to keep the sea out, as between Onggari and Domandé (between Kumbe and Bian rivers) and between Wambi and Welab. In these places there are no villages.

Beyond the sandy ridge there is a swampy area where sago-trees grow and where the Marind made their boat-shaped gardens. Further inland there could be sandy elevations again. Elevations and depressions following one after another suggest that the sea reached much further inland and then withdrew gradually.

Far inland, from the middle Kumbe and the middle Bian upward, the landscape changes. The savannah landscape right behind the coast, with its trees from the melaleuca and eucalyptus families, changes to a more hilly landscape, covered with thicker forest with a greater variety of vegetation. The hills enclose vast swampy areas, which give the area a park-like appearance in the dry season. Through Marind territory, swamp-rivers are slowly meandering to the sea, the current being reversed far upwards from the mouth when the tide is running in.

Food supply and land rights

The difference in landscape results in a difference of food supply. Along the coast, resources are relatively more abundant than in the interior. In the interior, coconut, game and fish are by no means as abundant as it is on the coast. The habitat of deer and wallaby are the open grassy spaces in the coastal savannah landscape. Along the coast it is easier to catch fish, both freshwater and saltwater fish are a ready resource.

Gardening used to be a quite important activity because feasts were frequent, which made the availability of great quantities of kava, bananas, yams and taro a necessity. Hunting and gathering delivered the daily food supply.

The gardens were constructed in low-lying places where the soil is rich. As these places are flooded in the wet season, the garden beds had to be raised about a yard above ground-level. The long and narrow beds are called *yavun* (canoe) by the Marind, because during the rainy season they resemble floating canoes. The beds are made by piling up lumps of clay which are dug out of the surrounding soil after having been prized loose with a digging-stick which is somewhat enlarged and flattened at its lower end, thus forming a kind of rudimentary spade. The Marind must have spent quite some time and energy making the gardens. Man's status was even partly determined by the number and extent of his gardens. Because of this, Father Vertenten, one of the first missionaries (he arrived in 1911), attributed too much value to the Marinds' gardening activities. In a 1935 publication he says that "the Marind live from the yield of their gardens". He writes this under a section called "Agricultural People".¹⁰

One particular crop was important for the feasts. Kava, called *wati* by the Marind, forms the basis of a narcotic drink. At ceremonies it had to be presented to male guests with a liberal dose. The beverage is prepared by chewing small pieces of the stalk or the main root of the plant (*Piper methysticum*) and spitting the bitter extract into a coconut-bowl until there is enough to make a good drink. After taking in the strong, bitter liquid, the drinker eats some food and shortly after enjoys a deep and long sleep.

The Marind tribe was divided into clans, each having their own totem. For instance, the Gebze clan had the coconut as totem, and the Mahuze clan sago. Property rights on land was divided along clan lines, each clan having their own territory. The boundaries of the clan lands were very precise, using small creeks, trees, marshponds etc. Usually it was no problem for men to make gardens on the land of another clan, but permission always had to be asked. Decisions in these matters were made among the *pakas-anim*, the elderly of the clans. The division of the land found its basis in mythology. Certain Demas, mythical ancestors, stood in relation with certain clans, thus making places where the Demas dwelt the property of its related clan.

When somebody makes a garden or cuts down a tree to make a canoe on clan territory, it becomes his personal property. A garden is inherited by the male children, and even if the garden is not used for a long time, other people are not

10 Vertenten, p. 20. "De Kajakaja's leven van de opbrengst hunner tuinen".

allowed to use it. As the children's male children inherit the garden again, after a few generations the gardens become actually the property of all members of a family.

For hunting on another clan's land, permission had to be asked also. Usually members of several clans made an arrangement to hunt together. The nature of hunting changed according to season, and was also different for Marind living on the coast and those living in the interior.

During the wet season, the coastal people live on the sandy ridges. One is fairly protected against the mosquitos there, and it is almost impossible to go around in the hinterland because of the heavy rainfalls and the formation of many seasonal marshes. For the coastal people this is the time to fish in the sea. When the hinterland dries up again, all the coastal people go there making gardens and holding big hunting- parties, made easy by burning off the grasslands. It is also easy to catch fish in the drying-up ponds and creeks.

In the interior the situation is different. There the only time to catch fish is the dry season, when the empty-running creeks are barred with bamboo, so that no fish can escape. At the end of the dry season, fish become scarce. Then the Marind try to hunt birds close to the few remaining drinking-places. At the beginning of the wet season, young bamboo-shoots become the staple-food for one to two months. When all the depressions are full of water, it becomes easy to hunt. The Marind close the only entrance to dry tracts of land, and the game is trapped. There is an abundance of meat this time of the year.

Material culture

The material culture of the Marind was a simple one. The Marind were still living in the stone-age. The making of tools depended on what nature provided. Knives were made out of bamboo or shells. Animal-teeth could be used for scraping and boring. Bones were used for needles and daggers. As the Marind-region is stone-less, stones for the axes had to come from the interior, through trade or robbery.

The books of the anthropologist Wirz show that there was more variety in weaponry, including the bow and arrow, spear and spear-thrower, and the stone club. The arrows the Marind used show a great variety in shape, size and form. (War)canoes were simple dug or burn- outs. The best canoes were made inland, along the middle course of the big rivers.

Pottery and weaving were unknown. Cooking was sometimes done in bamboo shafts. Bigger meals were prepared in a pit, food being stewed between leaves covered with heated stones. Ingredients consisted mainly of sago mixed with coconut, meat or fish and some vegetables. Plaiting of simple mats and of various kinds of ornaments such as armlets and girdles was generally known.

The houses were simple structures. They were rectangular, gable-roofed constructions, rising directly from the ground. The houses were some 6 meters in width and 7 meters in length. The roof was thatched with plaited sago-leaves and the walls were made of dry sago-leafstalks piled up between thin poles of bamboo or wood. The women's houses were slightly smaller than the men's, but the construction was the same. The houses occasionally had carved posts, originating

from feast- houses, which were erected specially for the occasion. These parts were, together with tifa's (drums), the only products of Marind carving activity. Each building housed some twenty men.

Outside the settlement was the *gotad* or boys' house, usually a long platform under a roof. The boys and male adolescents stayed there in the day-time. After sunset they returned to sleep in the men's house, and returned to the *gotad* before daybreak.

The Marind excelled in their body-art. The Marind could stage "a spectacular show by means of elaborate decorations worn by fantastically painted dancers. The way they used softwood, feathers, plumes and cane to impersonate a mythical hero or simply to decorate a dancer was baffling in its ingenuity and impressiveness. Their dances were feasts of resplendent colours and gorgeous imagery. Their art concentrated on show and ostentation."¹¹

Social organisation and religion

A cluster of men's houses with adjacent women's houses formed a hamlet. Several hamlets huddled together formed a village. Finally there was the territorial group, sometimes identical to a village, but often a combination of two or more villages, which together constituted the most comprehensive social unit consisting of several clans and characterised by a certain degree of co-ordination of activities.

The Marind tribe was divided into two moieties. Seven clans belonged to the Gebze moiety, eight to the Sami moiety. Following the ideal pattern, man and wife should originate from a different moiety. Normal was a brother-sister exchange-marriage. A man, who wanted to marry, had to have a "sister" who had to become the wife of the brother of the wished for woman. This "sister" didn't have to be his real sister. It could be another woman from the same clan. Following the ideal pattern, however, was not always possible because of a numerical imbalance between the moieties. This occurred for instance when the 1918 flu epidemic took a large death toll, and some clans were severely diminished.

Marind society strictly segregated the sexes. Even after marriage, men and women lived apart in the men's and women's houses. Adultery could result in death, while at the same time the many Marind feasts involved promiscuous rituals. These, however, had a strict religious character. In Marind culture, safeguarding fertility was very important. At every occasion where fertility or life was at stake, like marriage, making the gardens, the beginning of the hunting season etc. a feast with extended sexual rituals (called *otiv bombari*) was held. At marriage, for instance, the bride had to have sex first with about ten members of her husband's clan before she was "given" to her husband.

According to Van Baal, the peculiar relation between the sexes in Marind society enhanced the Marind male's aggressiveness (see appendix). This view seems too speculative, but the Marind were aggressive, and were feared by the surrounding tribes. Marind-villages often joined forces and went out as war-parties. They ventured east into British territory (where they were known as Tugeri), west to Frederik Hendrik Island and north across the Digul River. Apart from the religious incentive

¹¹ Van Baal (1966), p. 23.

for head-hunting raids¹², the raids were also used for robbing tools and other artefacts, and for capturing children. The latter were adopted and received into the tribe as members with the same rights as their own children. Remarkably, in spite of the absence of inter village authority and organisation, the Marind managed to maintain relatively peaceful conditions among themselves.

In spite of the Marind's show of force during war, his position towards nature was much weaker than for modern western men for instance. This led to certain common personality traits among all the tribes on the south coast which had similar ways of life. This will be discussed in later chapters more extensively.¹³

¹² See Van Baal (1966), chapter XII.

¹³ This introductory chapter used: the introduction chapter of Van Baal's 1966 standard work, the SPC depopulation report (-- Rapport --) and a small section of Vertenten's 1935 publication. For an extensive description of the original Marind culture, their rituals and mythologies, Van Baal's 1966 publication is referred to.

3. PRE-WAR CHANGES IN MARIND SOCIETY

The establishment of Merauke was a prelude to the influence western culture would have on the Marind. According to western ethics, head-hunting is an evil thing, and Merauke was established because of complaints from the English administration of the eastern part of New Guinea about Marind head-hunting raids on their territory. Thus, the Dutch came with the intention of stopping that head-hunting.

Merauke was established in 1902, after a failed attempt in 1892 to establish a post at Sarira, on the coast east of present day Merauke.¹⁴ Although in the beginning it was practically only safe within the barbed-wire entanglement of Merauke, very soon "trade followed the flag", attracted by rich coconut resources on the south New-Guinea coast. In 1905, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart started their work in Merauke. Finally, in 1914, when the government gave permission for bird-hunting, the last group of people came to Merauke. These bird-hunters penetrated deeply into the interior.¹⁵

The mission and the administration, in a united effort, intervened extensively in Marind society from 1921. Firstly, however, the influence traders had on the Marind will be discussed.

Trader Influence

Right from the start a lively trade began between the Marind and Chinese/Indonesian traders. The Marind called these straight-haired people "pu-anim", "pu" after the sound of their rifles and "anim" meaning human being. The Marind wondered why the pu-anim came all the way down to Merauke only for their coconuts. But they soon found an explanation of their own: the strangers did not have enough food in their homeland.

Coconuts were traded for iron and shortly an "iron- craze" held the Marind in its grip. Traditionally, Marind men used tools made from stone for the heavy work, such as felling sago-trees or making longboats. With the introduction of iron tools, the duties of the men became a lot easier, yet many men handed over tasks to their wives, reasoning that since the work was so much lighter with an iron axe, the women might as well cut down the sago-trees themselves. Although not intentionally, the introduction of iron tools as barter for coconuts caused a shift in the division of labour between the sexes.

The initial period of peaceful trade was short-lived. After the combination of fear and admiration of the Marind for the pu-anim waned, and the iron hunger was appeased, traders' rough and dishonest behaviour began to spark Marind retaliation.¹⁶ Unrest resulted, and in 1906 trade ceased. It was not until 1914, after

¹⁴ Van Baal (1939), pp. 20-1.

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 24 ff, 32.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 26. In Cornelissen (pp. 23, 26), an example is given of foul practices by traders. They told the Marind that the souls of their forefathers, who lived in the west (i.e. Surabaya!), were hungry. If the Marind would bring them the coconuts, the traders would

a second period of unrest, that trading around Merauke was safe, however, conflicts over resources still occurred. In 1921, there was the case of the Kelapa (= coconut) Company. In 1919 this company acquired concessions to exploit coconut gardens for which the Marind received compensation. Because there were enough coconuts (ironically even more after the population decrease, see below), and because it was an easy way to obtain money, the Marind had no objections, until the Kelapa Co. appropriated extra tracts of garden unlawfully. Father Vertenten, who was in general very concerned with the well-being of the Marind (see below), constituted himself as the Marind's lawyer in this case. In 1925, the company started to pull out, probably because of economic reasons and gave back the illegally occupied gardens.

This retreat was later applauded by Van Baal for completely different reasons. In his view the compensation-money robbed the male Marind of their last incentives to work for their own living.¹⁷ Later we shall see that their functions in society were already hollowed out by government prohibitions.

Van Baal's comment indicates that trader activities did not lead to economic exploitation. On the contrary, it seems that the traders were very useful in transforming the Marind's resource surplus into goods which made life so much easier, especially for the man. Due to the sheer abundance of resources, something like famine was hardly possible. This abundance was not only the result of the industriousness of the Marind's ancestors, it was also partially due to a dramatic decrease of the Marind population. This decrease and the subsequent fear for their extinction eventually led to extensive government intervention, at the initiative of the Roman Catholic Mission in Merauke.

Mission Influence

The first four missionaries of The Sacred Heart arrived in Merauke in 1905. The mission was placed under the apostolic prefecture of Netherlands New Guinea, which had its seat in Langgur, Kai Islands. The missionaries came there with a typical 19th century, "mission civilatrice" attitude. In a 1919 booklet, one missionary wrote:

"Here lives an uncivilised, savage and wild primitive nation, without a conception of God and without morality, without administration and without family-life."¹⁸

The missionaries saw it as their duty to bring the blessings of the latter institutions. But it would be a difficult task, as "to them, the Marind seemed to have sunk even lower and deeper" [compared to other Papuans, JO].¹⁹

Completely in accordance with the views cited above, the Marind were not very receptive to the Glad Tidings, and, in their first years the missionaries couldn't do much more than learn the Marind language and care for the sick. Busy with the

transport them to the ancestors. Same with the feathers of the birds of paradise, to dress the ancestors up. After 1920 their credulity vanished.

¹⁷ Van Baal (1939), p. 34; (1984), p. 210.

¹⁸ Cappers, p. 61: "Daar woonde een onbeschaafd, woest en wild natuuroolk, zonder Godsbegrip en zonder zedeleer, zonder bestuur en zonder familie-leven."

¹⁹ Cappers, p. 62: "... maar de Marindineezen leken hun nog lager en dieper gezonken."

latter activity, they came across a widespread disease, strengthening the missionaries in their opinions about the profligacy of the Marind. This disease later turned out to be venereal granuloma. It is almost certain that the disease was imported from Queensland, right after Merauke was founded.²⁰

As the mission had given itself the task to care for the sick, in 1909 a simple infirmary was erected in Merauke. The Marind's sexual practices, however, were responsible for the spread of the disease, so hospitalisation was useless. Eventually the mission came up with the idea of establishing "model-villages". In these villages, people would live the way westerners do: a family of husband, wife and children living together in one house. In this way, the inhabitants of the new villages would of course not join their adat (= customary law) feasts any longer, thereby protecting themselves from the venereal granuloma.²¹

The first model-village was established in 1913 in Okaba, the second in 1914 in Merauke, but due to the outbreak of WW I, this initiative could temporarily not be continued on a larger scale.

The number of healthy children born kept decreasing. In 1918 an influenza epidemic diminished the population by an average of 18.5 % within two weeks.²² The magnitude of this disaster devastated the Marind more than the gradual effect of the granuloma epidemic and it lived on in the memory of the various tribes surrounding Merauke in the form of folk-tales.²³

It also staggered the missionaries because the extinction of the Marind as a tribe was at stake. One of the missionaries, father Vertenten, started a press-campaign and his article "Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea sterft uit" [South New-Guinea dies out] was widely published in Netherlands-Indies and Dutch newspapers in 1919 and 1920, forcing the minister of Colonial Affairs to answer questions in the Dutch parliament.

A medical investigation subsequently carried out by Dr. Cnopius was the first to diagnose the disease with certainty. He put forward that the population decrease was not only caused by the disease, but also by the Marind's hypertrophic sexuality. In their rites-system, many times a year women had to have sex with five to ten men in one night. Not surprisingly this could cause infertility.

The reason the Marind hadn't already died out before was because of their practice of robbing children from neighbouring tribes and raising them as their own. In this way the Marind-population remained stable. However, because of the pacification in the area by the Dutch government, inter-tribal wars had stopped, thereby ending children-abduction.

The doctor advocated a change in popular customs which was completely in line with the mission's ideas. Father Vertenten went to the governor-general in Batavia (now Jakarta) with a rescue-plan, the model-villages being its main feature.

20 For a more extensive discussion on the origin of venereal granuloma, see -- Herkomst -- (discussion by Tillema, Verschueren and Feuilletau de Bruyn) and Geurtjens (1948), both in Tijdschrift "Nieuw-Guinea" [New Guinea Magazine] vol. 1948.

21 Verschueren (1953), p. 187.

22 Van Baal (1939), p. 33.

23 Verschueren (1953), p. 186.

Gradually, the people were to be housed in the model-villages. Attendance to a feast sexual in character should be forbidden; permission should be asked to hold dances; all marriages should be notified to the local government.²⁴

Co-operation between the mission and the government developed. The governor-general agreed with the plan, but in its implementation the local government went much further with it (see below).

But first let us turn to the policy of the local government so far.

Dutch government, 1902-1921.

As we have seen in the section on the traders, establishment of the "rule of (western) law" was not easy. The area that had to be brought under control was huge and inaccessible. Government personnel was limited, and except for footpaths and waterways, there was no infrastructure. Government could force its law upon the populace by an occasional, reactive punitive expedition.

After the incidents of 1906, a Military Exploration Mission had to map out the region. An attached geologist, Heldring, studied the great initiation- rituals of the Marind (esp. the *Mayo*-ritual), with the result that from then on, celebrating these rituals was discouraged, while there was actually no law prohibiting it.²⁵

In terms of the availability of rules, the execution of law and justice was a problem. The Netherlands-Indies' acts did not cover head-hunting practices, thereby leaving jurisdiction to the insights of local government. According to Van Baal, police-action was reserved, limiting themselves, when the occurrence of a head-hunting raid was proven, to destroy the war-boats, confiscating the hunted heads and imposing a fine in the form of pigs and/or coconuts.

One of the most active assistant-residents at the time was Plate (1912(?) -1915). In his opinion, real governance should be established. His forceful interventions resulted in the end of all head-hunting raids from the coastal villages by 1914.²⁶

He was also concerned about the many diseases that plagued the Marind. In his medical treatment plan, however, more attention was paid to the malaria problem than to the venereal disease. At the same time he was a supporter of the missionaries' activities, because, according to him also, civilising "these primitives" was a *conditio sine qua non* for the future mental and physical well-being of the Marind.²⁷

To summarise, before the great intervention of 1921, the Marind already felt the government influence regarding head-hunting and the big feasts, which limited the activities especially of the men. Government prohibitions took away one of their

²⁴ -- Rapport --, pp. 85-7.

²⁵ Van Baal (1939), p. 28.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 30. Those from the interior continued till 1935.

²⁷ Ibid., pp 31-2. One of the initiatives was to dress the Marind, also to please the sensitive assistant-resident's wife. Thereto, short trousers were hung up in a tree at the entrance of Merauke. Every male Papuan had to take a pair and wear them upon entering the town. When leaving, they hung them back into the tree.

main tasks: warfare. The stopping of head-hunting raids also decreased its attendant activities like making weaponry and war-boats, both typical men's jobs. On top of that, the introduction of iron tools changed the division of labour between men and women.

Sweeping intervention, 1921-1931.

As said above, the Netherlands-Indies government agreed with father Vertenten's proposals, but local government went much further in its implementation. The mission, of course, had no problems with that. Where Vertenten had advocated gradualisation, the administration effected a programme of complete transformation. Everyone had to be concentrated in model-villages as soon as possible. In the old villages, the men and boys houses, places of homosexual activity, were abolished. All feasts and dances having any promiscuous connotations, were forbidden. Marriages and births had to be reported, just as plans to hold dances (those which were not forbidden).

To facilitate better control, many traditionally scattered, small settlements were concentrated in bigger villages. In these villages, as "centres of civilisation", mission-schools were established. Education was foremost directed towards the younger people, legitimised with the saying that "the future lies with the young".

Purely reading from the health statistics, the programme was successful. Veneric granulome disappeared in the coastal regions, and the number of healthy new-borns increased again. The measures were in the form of a five-year plan, and in 1926 they were extended for another five year. Towards 1931, the rules were upheld less strictly. In 1931 the programme was considered successfully completed.²⁸

However, from a cultural viewpoint the programme completely changed Marind society by doing away with those aspects, that played an important role in the whole socio-religious complex, the most important being head-hunting and the initiation and fertility-rites.

An extensive discussion about the Marind's forced cultural change actually started with Van Baal's much referred to 1939 article, and continued after WW II well into the fifties. The discussion was sparked off and influenced by something called "moral depression" which seemed to plague the Marind. A fresh and more modern levy of civil servants and missionaries encountered inertia and general indifference among the Marind to what was going on in their environment. The discussion produced some interesting opinions about cultural change. But first let us turn to the more direct consequences of the programme.

Concentration in model-villages

The Marind used to live in small units, close to their *sago-dusuns* (gardens) and their hunting-grounds. Concentrating them in new villages meant that they sometimes had to walk more than half a day to their old *sago-dusuns*. In addition the government also tried to prevent permanent absence, which led to neglect of

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-- Rapport --, p. 88.

the gardens. Dead leaves and branches were not removed, thus making the *dusuns* more vulnerable to hunting-fires during the dry seasons. As a result, many burnt down. Eventually, *dusun* owners closer to the new village had to share resources with people whose *dusuns* were destroyed.

More people living together meant increasing resource pressure in the surrounding environment. Soon game around the village was gone, forcing the men to go further and further away to their old hunting grounds which was, again, discouraged by government. The decreased availability of meat made the people more dependent on sago, thereby further increasing the burden for women.²⁹

Pacification led to a change in Marind mentality. Living in small isolated groups, in a hostile environment, the individual depended on the group for survival, and the existence of the group depended on a strong sense of reciprocity among group members. These patterns of mutual dependency were broken by pacification. Because of pacification, two, almost divergent changes developed. Contact with other groups belonging to the same tribe was easier and not so dangerous anymore. It made the people aware of belonging to one tribe, one cultural entity, living in a given territory, more spread out than they had thought possible before. On the other hand, reciprocity as a precondition for survival was no longer valid. Danger from outside, which kept the community together, was no longer there. Used to being united for survival, individual interests could differ now, increasing chances of differences in opinion and even fights. The community, "not used anymore to unrest and insecurity, threatened to fall apart in peace and harmony."³⁰

Due to this process of social disintegration, it became more and more difficult to undertake communal activities on a voluntary basis, thereby directly affecting economic activities. People started to hunt, fish or garden alone or within small family groups.³¹

Measures regarding sexual promiscuity

One could say that government policy aimed at complete abolishment of any sexual contacts outside those between man and wife, their marital status being officially registered. To guard against traditional cultural obligations, they had to live in family houses. Knowing the strict segregation between the sexes in daily life in traditional Marind-society, the older generation regarded this family house form of dwelling as completely immoral. The new situation caused a kind of generation conflict, much more fundamental than the one we know of in modern western society.³²

²⁹ Verschueren (1947), pp. 70-1. -- Rapport --, pp. 87-8, 96.

³⁰ Vriens (1959), p. 101: "... de nieuwe maatschappij [the new society], die ontwend aan onrust en onveiligheid, in vrede en rust uiteen dreigde te vallen."

The inner force of a community disappeared, and it fell apart into smaller entities, also in the geographical sense of the world. This occurred in a later period, when government was less strict again, or in later pacified regions, when in most cases there were not enough civil servants around.

³¹ About the influence of pacification: Vriens in a series of articles in "Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea" (1960 no. 1 and 2; 1961), and -- Rapport --, pp. 93-4, 96-7.

³² -- Rapport --, pp. 99 ff.

The new lifestyle fostered drifting individualism. The same accounts for the ban on the promiscuous rituals. Usually, they were the prelude to communal economic activities (like hunting, planting in the gardens, fishing etc.) The rituals played an indispensable role in the Marind's beliefs in the relationship between mankind and the cosmos. Everything centred around fertility, for the simple reason that there is no life without fertility. Fertility could be called the cultural ideal of the Marind. The ban on the essential rituals took away the basis of their world picture, and this was compounded by their general confusion about these white skinned strangers, telling them what (not) to do and where to live. That the Marind survived this, must be proof of their enormous flexibility. With this flexibility they were able to "design" a survival strategy, in the form of an apathetic, static attitude. By making a mental fortress around himself towards his environment, he tried to avoid more loss of cultural identity. Passive, wait-and-see behaviour, again, is not in concordance with western thinking, which calls for an active and dynamic attitude.

Prohibition of the big fêtes also made the people pay less attention to their vegetable gardens, since vegetables had been mainly consumed during the rituals. They were now replaced by banana and wati. The main reason, however, was the ban on *wambad bombari*, the form of *otiv bombari* (the act of regulated promiscuity), held when the gardens had to be planted. Lastly, the government discouraged long absence from the villages, so that it became more difficult to cultivate the gardens properly.³³

The period of 1931-1949

In 1926, after the containment of the venereal epidemic, Merauke was downgraded from a district to a sub-district again, headed by a controller. Economically also, the region became less important; the Kelapa Company retreated and in 1924 bird-hunting ended.

Gradually, less attention was paid to the Marind, because government extended its rule beyond Marind territory, towards the interior (Auwyu and Yakay tribes), towards the border (Mandobo and Muyu) and towards the west (Asmat).

Catholic missionaries also penetrated these areas, often ahead of government, but they were forced to accelerate activities because protestant missionaries tried to gain a foothold in southern New Guinea. This period of double missionary activity ended in 1937, when the protestants gave up.³⁴

After entering a new area, the mission's priority was to establish schools, usually headed by somebody from the Kai or Tanimbar Islands.³⁵ All authors stress that these "beschavingsscholen" [civilising-schools] played a central role in village life.

³³ -- Rapport --, p. 97. This report stresses, after Vriens' findings, that in general the Marind could not bring themselves to take an interest in communal activities anymore.

³⁴ -- Rapport --, p. 89.

³⁵ The reason for this is that the Jesuits already for a long time had worked successfully on the Kai Islands. Being ahead there, they had educated a number of teachers/catechists, which afterwards proved useful for use in southern New Guinea. Cornelissen, p. 4.

The guru did not only teach in school, but also outside of it, subjects like religious instruction, house building, gardening etc. The teacher's wife acted like the "village mother", teaching the women sewing, weaving, cooking etc. She also had medical tasks, like nursing and midwifery. The guru was usually much stronger and important than the government appointed village-head. For instance, the guru also tried to settle quarrels, which in fact should have been the task of the village-head.³⁶

Missionary authors all stress the fact that the guru and his school provided a cultural alternative and a mainstay in the Marind's changing world. Critics, however, saw them as instruments of the new cultural landslide, who often showed a superior attitude towards the villagers. After the war, the church acknowledged themselves to have been mistaken in one aspect, which was the stress they had laid upon educating the youth only, thereby creating an unhealthy gap between the elderly and the young.

Another error during the intervention had been, that the traditional leaders, the *pakas-anim*, had been completely passed over. This happened, because of the general opinion that Marind society had no concept of authority. The *pakas-anem*, however, was not only a war leader, but someone who exerted natural leadership in daily-life, thereby taking up such tasks as settling quarrels, safeguarding the rules concerning land rights and other adat-rules, preparing feasts etc. Disregarding the *pakas-anim* further confused the Marind, created a power-vacuum, and further weakened social cohesion.³⁷

The second world-war may have changed some things for the good. South New Guinea was probably the only part of the Dutch East Indies not occupied by the Japanese. At a given time, more than 10,000 allied troops were encamped around Merauke. A lot of work had to be done and the Marind helped loyally. They were paid quite well and they were treated kindly by the generous allied soldiers. This may have raised the Marind's self-esteem.³⁸

The period after the war was dominated by the Indonesian struggle for independence. In the negotiations leading to independence, The Netherlands held on to special status for New Guinea, excluding the area from the transfer of power

³⁶ Boelaars (1969), p. 247.

³⁷ Verschueren (1957), p. 227. By disturbing the authority relations within the community, vertical dependency (the one to the ancestors) was stressed to the expense of horizontal dependency (the one among the group members), thereby adding to social disintegration.

³⁸ -- Rapport --, p. 90. How this process exactly went is not described. In a biography about Van Eechoud, first acting resident of New Guinea after the war, there is a first hand report about the impact of the presence of the thousands of American troops in Hollandia (now Jayapura). "They saw how negro's, black people as they were, built roads, behind the wheel of large army trucks, and could do all kinds of things as well as the whites. They saw black pilots, black sailors, blacks in nice uniforms and with bottles of Coca-Cola. Of course they knew nothing of racial discrimination in the United States. But what they saw opened their eyes. They were always held in contempt, treated as savages. Not so much by the Dutch, but by the lower civil servants [South Moluccans and Javanese]. In this way, the acquaintance making of the coastal people with the American army in 1944, has laid the basis for later political consciousness." [Ironically, later on, under American pressure, the Dutch had to hand over New Guinea to Indonesia, JO.] Derix (1987), p. 128.

to the United States of Indonesia³⁹ in 1949. Already in 1947, upon signing the agreement of Linggajati, the Indonesian side reserved the right to give another interpretation to the agreement regarding New Guinea. There and then, the New Guinea problem was born.

In order to decide the status of New Guinea after Indonesian independence, a Dutch/Indonesian New Guinea Commission was established. It began in 1950, but the two sides could not come to an agreement. Although the real reason for the Dutch might have been a "loss-of- colonial-power-status" chagrin, the argument for a separate status for New Guinea became an ethnic one. As Papuans were ethnically different, the principle of the right of self-determination could be applied to them. As a result, the Dutch started to govern the area under article 73 of the U.N. Charter, making it mandatory for them to develop this "non-self-governing territory" towards independence as soon as possible.⁴⁰

To prepare the Papuan's for independence, the Dutch government was obliged to study New Guinea's cultures.

The Dutch mandate instigated much government sponsored, but also purely academic, anthropological research. In its wake, discussions were held about the impact of cultural change on the Papuans cq. Marind. That is the subject of the next section.

³⁹ After independence the federate state was quickly turned into a unitarian one.

⁴⁰ Jaarsma, pp. 31-3.

4. GUIDED ACCULTURATION

"Dwang dus? Natuurlijk. Aan een kind dat aan 't verdrinken is, vraagt men niet of het gered wil worden en of vader en moeder dat wel goed vinden. Men redt het, en daarmee uit." (P. Vertenten m.s.c., 1919)

["Compulsion therefore? Of course. To a drowning child, one does not ask whether it wants to be saved and whether mom and dad agree with it. One saves it, and that's that."]

"Welch neues Elend damit ueber di Papua kam, laesst sich kaum schildren. Die Regierung oder vielmehr die Mission, denn von dieser ging ja alles aus, ging mit ruecksichtsloser Strenge vor." P. Wirz, 1928)

[The new misery that came over the Marind-anim with that, can hardly be described. The government or much more the mission, because from them it all originated, acted with ruthless austerity.]

"According to our British ideas this social revolution should have been the end of the Marind-anim. We should expect them to lose all interest in life and simply to disappear." (Sir Hubert Murray, 1931)

"Tegen het uitsterven door het venerisch granuloom moest echter in het belang zelf der onmondige bevolking worden opgetreden en toen gold de regel: 'aux grands maux les grands remèdes'." (H. Geurtjens m.s.c., 1933)

["Against the dying out because of the veneric granulome, however, had to be acted in the interest of the population in tutelage and then the rule applied: 'for great problems, great remedies'."]

"The culture of the Marind-anim, however, is for the greater part lost (...). For an anthropologist this is a distressing picture. But at the same time it must be admitted that any responsible administration could hardly do otherwise." (H. Th. Fischer, 1956)

"The real problem is this: are we allowed to obtrude our own views and beliefs upon these people? For instance, are we allowed to force these people to abandon head-hunting - a practice that may be quite as normal for them as the Palm Sunday procession for us?" (J. Verschueren m.s.c., 1960)⁴¹

Apparently, looking at the quote of Vertenten, he had to defend the coercive aspects of the programme right from the start. We don't know who his critics were. The first severe criticism from ethnographic side came from Wirz in 1928. He limits himself, however, to non-constructive, marxist criticism, which was useless for the people involved.⁴²

More constructive criticism came from Van Baal in 1939. Van Baal had been controller for three years in Merauke, and as a "Memorie van Overgave" [Memorandum of Transfer] to his successor, he wrote a hundred paged article, which was also published in a renowned periodical.

In it, he acknowledges that there was a need for intervention, but he also indicates that mistakes had been made. Van Baal is concerned about the state of affairs

⁴¹ Quotes Vertenten, Wirz, Geurtjens and Verschueren are in Cornelissen, pp. 120, 121-2 and 127 resp. Quote Murray in Van Baal (1939), p. 1. Quote Fisher in Fisher (1956), pp. 92-3.

⁴² Wirz, p. ..." "We saw that the exploitation of our capitalist system was forced upon the poor. It begins with cloth-making, and it ends with machine-labour."

among the Marind, and makes some policy- proposals. As he, in his criticism, does not spare the mission, the article immediately provokes a reaction from Father Verschueren, published in the same periodical.

Verschueren tries to correct some, in his view, misconceptions of Van Baal about missionary-activities. But basically, they do not differ so much in opinion, as Van Baal also states that " For the Marind as a people, there is only one way out, namely the integral reception of Christianity, i.e. in the form of Roman- Catholicism. The way to heathenism is closed for them by the perverted and not to development susceptible nature of their culture in the first place, and to all that has happened to them after 1910 in the second place."⁴³ Verschueren hardly could have disagreed.

The relationship between Father Verschueren and Van Baal was a peculiar one. Van Baal being a civil servant and a protestant, had an ambiguous attitude towards the mission. Although he acknowledged the importance of their work and knowledge, he criticised them for catholic zealotry whenever he saw it occur.

In his memoires, Van Baal describes how he had his first bonding experience with Father Verschueren.

Till that day I had only known him as an intelligent but at the same time rather bothersome peasant-pastor, who always walked around in a dirty cassock and spoke with a horrible Brabant accent (from Bavel). I had been reluctant to go on a joint trip with this 'barbarian' and now got acquainted with a completely different Verschueren: a not only intelligent but also a full of feeling human being and a smart artist."⁴⁴

Later on, Verschueren would contribute extensively to Van Baal's 1966 standard work on the Marind. Van Baal in his turn saw to it that Verschueren's notes on the Yei-nan tribe were published after the latter's death.

They were friends, but very critical about each others opinion. A interesting and deeper polemic between the two took place in 1956/'57. It was about acculturation, and about the way the Marind, according to the two experts, had coped with it. Both writers tried to reason from the Marind's mind, and tried to describe how they reacted to western culture.

Van Baal opened the discussion, so we shall start with his point of view.

A prelude to his more worked out opinion in '56, can already be found in his 1939 report. In a comment about what direction Marind culture could have taken regardless of western intrusion, he says:

"There is no doubt about the direction of Marind- culture: this was purely sexual and what the Marind could have reached more following this path further, escapes the most perverted

⁴³ Van Baal (1939), p. 99: "Voor de Marind als volk is er maar een uitweg open, n.l. die van integrale receptie van het Christendom, i.c. in den vorm van het Rooms-Katholicisme. De weg van heidendom is hun afgesloten door de verdorvenheid en den niet voor ontwikkeling vatbaren aard hunner cultuur allereerst, door al wat hun na 1910 is overkomen in de tweede plaats."

⁴⁴ Van Baal (1985), p. 291.

fantasy. In its most typical direction, this culture stood before a wall. It was no better with its most important institutions"⁴⁵

He describes these institutions (the clan-system, age- classification-system, economic system, the rituals), and concluded that none of these could be further developed. Note here, that development means progress, as seen through western eyes. Van Baal ends this part of the report with the question whether the Marind really had lost as much as was thought. In '39 he couldn't answer the question yet.⁴⁶

Finally, in 1956, Van Baal tried to answer it, in an article called "Om eigen wereld" [For their own world]. Van Baal, then governor of Dutch New Guinea, ascertained that the symptom generally connected with the acculturation-process under western influence, viz. the moral depression, also showed itself in New Guinea. The source of this moral depression was that the natives, contacting the new world, discovered that their world was a shamworld, a worthless world. Hence the governor made himself the advocate of the idea that, wherever possible, the indigenous population should take an active part in all Dutch initiated activities in New Guinea. Thereby, they could quickly replace their own "worthless" culture by a new, consequently valuable and meaningful one.⁴⁷

This view is supported by Van Baal's conclusion in his 1966 standard work on the Marind, "Dema". It confirms his 1939 opinion that the culture "stood before a wall", now backed by a thousand paged description of it. In one of the concluding paragraphs "The dark secret", it states that among the Marind the relations between the sexes were beset with conflicts and institutionalised controversies. In the Marind's view, the male sex, i.e. sperma, was the source of all life. However, the great secret was that the sperma was effective only if produced in copulation, but in copulation the men must submit to the women, caught *in coitu*, powerless. This was the great frustration of men, causing a basically strained relationship between the sexes. "In a culture so entirely preoccupied with sex as the mainspring of life, the inadequacy of sex- relations is a terrible problem. In fact, it is so terrible that, in ritual, the motifs of death and sex are inextricably mixed up..." No wonder, Van Baal reasoned that the Marind were glad they could escape this unhappy situation by embracing the new culture *ex machina*.⁴⁸

Verschueren could not agree with Van Baal's analysis of the acculturation process. Instead of just doing away with their culture, Verschueren thought the acculturation process was much more a struggle and a challenge. The Marind might outwardly take over western forms, but they did not give up the ideas their world view was based on. Their basic cultural ideas, however, were challenged by western ideas.

⁴⁵ Van Baal (1939), p. 91: "Over de richting der Marindineesche cultuur bestaat geen twijfel: deze was zuiver sexueel en wat de Marind op dien weg voortgaande nog had kunnen bereiken, ontgaat de verdorvendste phantasie. In haar meest typische richting stond deze cultuur voor een muur. Met haar belangrijkste instituten was het niet beter gesteld."

⁴⁶ Van Baal must have had a supporter in father Geurtjens. He wrote an article called "Cultuurverval bij een natuervolk" ["Cultural decline with a primitive nation"], in which he tries to prove that some aspects of Marind culture were in decay.

⁴⁷ Van Baal (1956), summary in Boelaars (1969), p. 261.

⁴⁸ Van Baal (1966), pp. 948-53. See for a more extensive summary of the paragraph "The dark secret" the appendix.

There used to be a situation of vertical (to the ancestors) and horizontal (to the other group-members) dependence. This dependency equilibrium was disturbed by the newly imposed superstructure of western administration. The Marind lost the absolute security they had in their relationship with the ancestors. Their values did not become worthless, but they were no longer sure whether to stick to them or not. An acculturation process raises doubts, and the first reaction is to try to regain the certainties of life. In the end this process leads to the creation of a new world (see the title of the article), a mix of the old and the new.⁴⁹

Instead of Van Baal's rather Freudian description of religio-cultural basics of Marind-society, Verschueren puts the stress on the "transcendent-dependent" attitude to life, "transcendent" here meaning "towards the ancestors". This attitude is often typical in primitive societies, but is worked out differently in the various cultures. Usually one dominant appreciation comes to the fore. This appreciation can be called "culture pattern" or "cultural ideal". It is clear, that for the Marind, fertility in cosmic relations is the cultural pattern, demonstrated by its dominance in myths and rites. Note, however, that according to Verschueren, the whole dependency structure in society is its main feature, only having fertility as a bias in culture. This is the main difference with Van Baal's vision, which stresses the fertility aspect.

The dependency attitude in pre-western culture is also an important element in the writings of another author active in the fifties, Father Boelaars. Boelaars belongs to a new 'breed' of missionaries. While Verschueren was an amateur in anthropology, Boelaars had a masters degree in anthropology before he came to New Guinea.

From his writings, it's clear that Boelaars was particularly interested in the question of how primitive men are formed psychologically by their environment. All tribes might have their own myths and concomitant rituals, but there must be common traits in the personality of all hunters and gatherers in southern New Guinea. Although the findings of Boelaars are mostly based on his experiences with the Auwyu tribe, they are valid for others too, as they are written in very general terms. While Verschueren stresses vertical dependency, Boelaars stresses horizontal dependency in Marind society.

In describing the original culture, Boelaars' point of departure is the harsh natural environment of the Papua-tribes. It creates a kind of permanent emergency situation, in which the people are forced to co-operate with each other on a rigid reciprocal basis. The first concern is survival in a hostile environment, and the awareness of being weak against nature teaches togetherness. Every important activity is directed towards strengthening unity. Improvement of men's position towards nature is considered impossible, making it senseless and even dangerous to strive for individual progress. Dangerous, because it can disturb the oneness of the community, thereby weakening its position towards nature, opposite to the whole survival principle.

The situation described above leads to several characteristics in the Papuan personality. On the one hand he has proven himself capable of surviving, instilling a sense of self-esteem. On the other hand, by accepting the limits nature imposes, the idea that it is useless to try to improve one's situation by hard work or innovative activities is engendered. Also, although able to survive, the margins are narrow.

⁴⁹ Verschueren (1957). Summary in Boelaars (1969), pp. 261-2.

There is no room for self-realisation, because assets are contributed to communal survival efforts.

When Boelaars discusses the acculturation phase, he follows Verschueren's reasoning. Boelaars also asserts that it is not the forms but the ideas that are important in cultural change. Boelaars' Papuan will ask himself whether these new western artefacts (form) will really give more power over nature (idea). For instance, a rifle will confuse him. The new thing makes hunting easier, but can it abate marshland flooding in the rainy-season, which makes hunting so difficult? His whole personality says to him that it is very dangerous to participate individually in the new forms. When things go wrong he is lost, because he has placed yourself outside the community by individual actions. New forms will thus be carefully scrutinized in the context of the community. Then, things like another way of dressing or other kinds of food (rice!) seem quite harmless in comparison to working hard for creating a surplus, or self-interested planning for the future.⁵⁰

As noted by Verschueren, the confusion is strengthened by taking over forms without understanding their meaning. It has links with what might be called the ultimate sign of confusion, namely the infamous cargo- cults. The Papuans saw the riches of the west, without understanding that this wealth was generated by a hard working society dominated by a philosophy of material progress. In traditional society, generated wealth is subsistent and more or less equally divided. Work strengthens communal bonds. Giving away and receiving each others possessions has the same purpose. Prestige is not heightened by personal wealth, but the use of it to service the community. Because of this, a rather egalitarian society is created. Selfishness is kept within bounds by mutual dependency.

On the basis of this line of reasoning, the Papuans did not understand why the pu-anim and the whites did not share their wealth in order to strengthen mutual relations. They were also convinced that the whites had obtained their strange things from the mysterious world of the ancestors which led to the, in our eyes equally queer, cargo-cult ceremonies.

Youth and school

Until now, implicitly we have only talked about the adult Papuan. Fundamental changes in attitude and mentality, however, are brought on by new generations. Therefore it may be said that the youth are the main agents of change in the acculturation process.

The first fifteen years of life are crucial in molding character, attitudes to life and world view. The child's mind internalises its surrounding culture and in the process, the parents' culture becomes hers or his. This process differs greatly between so called primitive and western cultures.

Right from birth a western child is trained to get breast-fed about every four or five hours, skipping the one at night as soon as possible. He is surrounded by all kinds of toys. His little hands can grab all kinds of things. The parents teach him to play and to manipulate things. Later he asks and is asked questions, and the

⁵⁰ Boelaars (1968), pp. 94-7.

parents explain. That is, if it's about things. If the child asks about the neighbours, he gets evasive answers.

At an older age, the child is expected to be active all the time ("Don't you have something to do?" is a typical question from western parents). From the age of four he or she is kept busy in an institutionalised way: school. School is at a certain place at a certain time. From upbringing the child is already familiar with schedules.

When a Papuan kid whimpers, his mother just gives him her breast, any time. He is carried around in a net, no toys. The child doesn't ask questions but should see for himself or is thought the right behaviour towards all the family-related persons (and the neighbours!) in detail. He sleeps whenever he wants and is not expected to be constantly active. Formal education doesn't exist.

The difference is clear. For a western child things are important; he lives a regulated, constantly active life. For a Papuan child, persons are important, he doesn't know what a clock is and he can more or less decide for himself to be active or inactive at any given part of the day.⁵¹

When the child grows up, it will become part of the mutual dependent relationships of the members of the group. This also counts for the relationship between the children and their parents. They need each other to survive. In this situation there is no place for self-sacrifice from the parents towards their children. The other way around, when the child has become an adult, he is may be stronger and better fit for the daily struggle than his parents are. This changes the balance within the family, whereby the young adult may have the last word in decision-making. In their culture unconditional respect towards the elderly is not a matter of course.⁵²

Because of the difference in upbringing and parent-child relations between Papuan and western societies, it is not surprising that the introduction of village schools encountered grave difficulties.

Before the era of imperialism, of all the world's cultures, formal education only existed in western, and to a lesser extent West-, South- and East-Asian cultures. The western form was introduced by the missionaries to New Guinea.

The school-system, being a western product, links up seamlessly with the upbringing of a western child. School is at a fixed time and place. Curriculums stress knowledge related to matter, and the ever attendant background philosophy is positivist progressive.

When transferred to a Papuan village, a huge gap exists between traditional upbringing and formal education. The school system implicitly builds on the societal shaping of western children. In a Papuan context, however, this element is lacking. The Papuan-characters are molded in a completely different form.

Apart from this gap between upbringing and the school system, we have the problem of the role the child is supposed to play in the well-being of his own community. The schools breaks the traditional patterns by taking the children out of the community and giving them dispensation from daily duties. At the same time,

⁵¹ Van Baal (1969), pp. 54-5.

⁵² Boelaars (1961), introduction II, pp. 10-3.

teaching matter has no direct application to daily life, and even the didactic method is based on another way of thinking.⁵³ In the first years of missionary school, its failure could be measured by the pupils achievements to count. With great effort a pupil could count to 6 in the first class, which took most pupils three years to finish, and in the second class (another three years) till 15. The Marind themselves knew only five numerals: one, two, one-two, two- two and five (hand). Every higher figure was indicated as "a lot".⁵⁴

Guided Acculturation

So far, we have dealt with some thoughts on acculturation in the general sense, describing the effect of contact between two cultures. After the war, when the Dutch started with their self appointed task to prepare West New-Guinea for future independence, the term "acculturation" acquired a specific meaning. Acculturation then was directed towards a fairly well defined objective: "their participation as a free nation in world-wide contacts and human progress in accordance with the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations."⁵⁵

This principle of guided acculturation should be dealt with at this point because as a direct result of it, New Guinea became subject to an active governmental population-policy, including the south.

In the fifties, many people started to talk and write about acculturation, anthropological research, community development etc. This decennium of the Dutch period therefore produced significant quantities of material on the acculturation-process.

Van Baal, in his capacity as governor, stimulated ethnographic research. Because he had worked as a controller in Merauke for two years, just before the war, the region had his special attention.

The most important result was the so-called "de- population study" on the Marind. The objective of this study was to find out why the Marind population was still decreasing. The study was financed by the South Pacific Commission (SPC).⁵⁶

The SPC financed the study because depopulation had also occurred elsewhere in the Pacific. Was the reason purely physical, or was it because western impact had created a "moral depression" among the indigenous population, thereby decreasing the birth-rate?

In this period Verschueren, and to a lesser extent Boelaars, were still active among the Marind. They gave attention to acculturation in their subsequent writings. Verschueren became part of the team that wrote the depopulation study.

The people involved started to philosophise about how the Marinds' life could be improved by means of a guided acculturation process. How should that guidance be organised? It was common knowledge that the hunters' mentality made it

⁵³ Van Baal (1969), pp. 136-38. See also Van Baal's *The function of reason in primitive mentality* about the absence of reflective thinking.

⁵⁴ Van Baal (1985), p. 281.

⁵⁵ Van Baal (1960), p. 108.

⁵⁶ Formed by all western countries in the Pacific which were ruling non-self-governing territories.

difficult for the Marind to adjust themselves to western society. This meant that, particularly in the beginning of the process, the teaching of skills and non-material aspects were regarded as equally important. It was important to ensure that the people had the capacity and willingness to respond positively to this new approach. A process of adaptation had to occur in their way of thinking before one could start with the regular agro-economic extension work.

The foreign elements in the villages that existed already were the guru and his nyora (wife). As we have seen, the guru was not only a teacher, but he also had a religious function. Exactly these two institutions, church and school, were considered the means to effect the necessary changes in the Marinds' mentality. The non-material education that was assigned to the village-schools had close links to the spiritual tasks of the church. Government delegated village education to the missions. The government had limited human resources, whereas the missions had already been active in village-education for many years. The whole infrastructure was there. Government could now leave it with subsidies and a number of school-inspectors.⁵⁷

Because of the loss of the Marind's traditional culture, according to Dutch government christianity should be the beacon for them to hold on to. Without spiritual welfare, there is no basis for any further activity towards change.

The second institution, school, requires a more detailed explanation.

We have already seen the positive and negative impact of the introduction of the first missionary schools in the villages. We might conclude that it would take a long time before school would become an accepted and integral part of village life.

Yet, in the fifties, school was designated to play the central role in the guided acculturation process. Of course, its curriculum should be adjusted to the culture of the pupils and to the expected achievement level after three or four years. Therefore, government did not transpose the Dutch school system to New Guinea.

One of the most important adjustments was to make agricultural education an important part of the curriculum, because one of the goals of Dutch development policy was to transform New Guinea into an agricultural society. "Population-agriculture" as it was called should be the economic basis of the new nation.

Agricultural education clearly contributed to the long term economic goals for the country. The amount of education, however, should be in balance with the level of economic development in the village at a given time. When education continued to an unrealistically advanced level, young people leaving school would not succeed in finding work where they could apply the knowledge they had obtained. Socially, the disappointment then experienced would be a serious drawback.⁵⁸

Equally, too limited education would also have its negative results. Pupils might think of education as a kind of magic key, the illusion being that it would easily open the door to a new and prosperous society. It would be enough to receive

⁵⁷ Kroeskamp (1962), p. 104.

⁵⁸ Van Baal (1960), p. 119.

education passively and thereafter personal wealth would be ensured. The right balance of education could prevent the emergence of this form of cargo-cult.⁵⁹

To fulfil the requirement that the village-school matches the level of development in the village, a flexible school system was introduced during the late fifties. Considering village-education only, three kinds of schools existed:

- Village school-C : where the village was unfamiliar with education
- Village school-B: in those villages where it was useful to introduce a complete three-years programme.
- Village school-A : where a fourth year could be added. ⁶⁰

All these efforts were directed towards the objective to make the Papuans conscious christian farmers. Only in that way, the people of West New-Guinea would go through a phase of successful acculturation, in the sense that they will know how to play their role in world-community. This was the policy of the Dutch government.

To us, these ideas may sound rather naively optimistic. The assumption was that societies could be shaped and moulded at will, as long as sufficient resources were poured into them. In the fifties hardly anybody questioned whether it would be difficult to turn hunters and gatherers into cash-crop farmers. It was commonly assumed that the right kind of education and projects would do it.

An example of the thinking behind government policy is the following quotation of former governor Van Baal.

"Education must bring them at least something of the elementary fundamentals of Western secular success. School training is in itself a useful stimulus towards another approach to the surrounding world. The repeated manipulation of figures and their application in expressing different items of that world in terms of space and number contribute to the birth of another attitude towards the world surrounding them, to making that world more into an object of research and activity, and to diminishing the sway of that mystic experience in which the world is an all embracing, awe- inspiring power full of unexplained intentionality. To that end more and better education is indispensable." ⁶¹

History did not give the Dutch time enough to prove their point. The examples of other countries under benign colonial rule⁶² prove that it would have been difficult.

Agriculture

Apart from preliminary agricultural education, the government took measures to initiate practical agricultural activities. These initiatives came in two forms.

The first form consisted of large state-owned farms, usually for the production of cash-crops, with high capital input and often with an agricultural research station attached.

⁵⁹ Kroeskamp (1962), p. 103.

⁶⁰ Kroeskamp (1962), p. 107..

⁶¹ Van Baal (1960), p. 119.

⁶² For instance PNG and Surinam. Both countries became independent in 1975.

The second form is small-scale, people based agriculture (the Dutch called it "bevolkingslandbouw", "population-agriculture"). Taking the form of community development projects, these initiatives attempted to upgrade traditional subsistence farming (if there was any) to a level in which a surplus would be created.

The one example of the first kind in the neighbourhood of Merauke was the "Kumbe mechanised rice project". It was part of a plan to make New Guinea self-sufficient in rice-production. The preparation of 400 hectares of rice-field (the goal upon completion was 10,000 ha) started in 1955 . The project was beset by plagues of insects and birds. Because of the poor soil, a high fertiliser input was necessary. The project never progressed beyond its experimental phase into a profitable one. After the Indonesian take-over, the project was abandoned because of lack of capital.

During the years the project ran, the Marind-anim living in the neighbourhood showed much interest, probably because heavy machinery was used. Many of them participated in the work as labourers. As a result of its premature ending, the project did not have a lasting impact on the participating Marind.⁶³

For those who had lived for a while among the Marind, like Verschuieren, it was clear that the Marind-anim were not agriculturally minded. Initiating "population-agriculture" therefore would require a protracted effort. As agricultural projects would have their impact on the Marind's way of life, again, special attention was paid to the youth. Children who had finished the village-schools successfully, subsequently could receive agricultural education in a boarding school.

During the war, such a school was already established in Sula, Yei-nan tribe region, by Father Verschuieren. Actually it was a kind of self sufficient agricultural community. They built their own houses, school and other community buildings. Their agricultural activities (education in practice) made the school- community self-sufficient in food.

The school was a success, but only while the pupils stayed in Sula. The weak point was the follow-up in the boys' respective villages. After their return they fell back into the old ways of life. "After leaving school the youth loses his only teacher for the new, but receives in return as many teachers of the old ways as there are people in the village."⁶⁴

After three years, when the war was over, the school was replaced by one in more centrally located Merauke. One agricultural boarding school for the south coast was considered enough, and probably the maximum possible because of the limited resources available.

Economic activities with close links to traditional activities had a good chance for success. The export- economy of South New-Guinea in the fifties floated on two corks: the production of copra and the sale of crocodile skins. Both trades were in the hands of ethnic Chinese, with the Papuans in the (self-chosen) role of suppliers of the raw material. In the fifties, the economic attitude of the Marind changed however. A kind of economic nationalism emerged along with heightened political

⁶³ -- Verslag --, (1958), pp. 52-3.

⁶⁴ Sula is well-documented in Boelaars (1953), pp. 44-51. Quotation p. 49.

consciousness. They were also stimulated by government and mission to establish copra-production co-operatives. The same change could be seen among the papuan crocodile-hunters.⁶⁵

A Dutch company, "The Southcoast Ltd.", stimulated the formation of "copra working-communities" along the southcoast. In 1960 fifteen of those communities existed, together producing copra with a value of Dfl 250,000.- a year, a large amount in those days. Every community possessed a central copra-processing unit. Each member sold his coconuts to the co-operative, or brought in an equal amount. Members were enlisted into the working-schedule for making copra. "The Southcoast Ltd." took care of transport and paid in cash or goods for the co-operative's shop, which commonly each co-operative had established.

Another interesting copra-activity was formed by the Kolam-Kolam coconut-plantation owned by the mission. The mission used it for extension-work and community development. Regularly, people from other areas where copra-production was not yet developed, were invited to Kolam-Kolam to receive on-the-job-training for a few months. Returning to their villages they functioned as copra-production propagandists.

The mission also established a co-operative called "Kongsi Kali Kumbe" ("Kumbe River Co-operative"), consisting of several villages along the Kumbe river. Produce comprised mainly crocodile skins, sago, coconuts/copra and vegetables. Of every sale to the co-operative, 10% was withheld for the co-operative cash. The money was used to establish multi-functional community buildings. In each village they served as a church, had a small shop, a room for the pastor and a room for the village health worker. Every year the co-operative organised a big harvest-home, an interesting idea of Verschueren.⁶⁶ The KKK gradually ceased to function after Verschueren left in 1969. One of the contributory factors to this decline was a fraud case.

Early in the 1960's, the government just had started a large population-rubber-production project.⁶⁷ After 1962 this activity was taken over by a body created by FUNDWI, the Dutch development fund for West Irian.

What has been said earlier about a certain naive optimism on the part of the Dutch government regarding the changing potential of education, could also apply to its community development activities. At the same time government acknowledged that there were still large white spots on the map of cultural knowledge, some community development projects were already initiated. In the end they failed, exactly because of wrong assessments of the receiving cultures i.e. "the beneficiaries".⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Considering later developments (or lack of it), the article by Van Dooren (1962), on which this information is based, is probably too optimistic in this respect.

⁶⁶ Van Baal always stressed the point that life had become so boring in the villages as a result of the prohibition of the traditional feasts. The people needed events that broke the dull rhythm of daily life.

⁶⁷ Van Dooren (1962).

⁶⁸ The failure of one of the first, and thus prestigious one, the Nimboran project near Hollandia, is well-documented in a dissertation by Kouwenhoven (1956).

In general, it was assumed to easily, that guided acculturation could be achieved within a few years. A culture was there to be reformed, provided a good community development project was initiated for guidance.

In addition during the fifties, more conscious thinking about the relationship between economic development and social change emerged. One of the pioneers in this field, Cyril S. Belshaw (see foreword), who made a study on the subject in Southeastern Papua, used for his study a set of assumptions that are still valid today. The first one is that "in the early stages of development there are many features in indigenous cultures which have a positive supporting role to play, and without which local business might never emerge".⁶⁹ It is understood here that the criteria for successful economic development are relative to the social context.

We have examples in West New-Guinea too. There exists a biography of a successful indigenous trader on the northcoast (Sarmi). He operates, however, within commonly accepted cultural boundaries, which in themselves may change very slowly overtime.⁷⁰ In the south we have the Muyu-tribe as an example. We might call their cultural ideal the accumulation of as much as wealth (in the form of shells) as possible. Other tribes exchanged goods in a competitive form (the Kanum f.i.). The village that produced the most and the best won.

The elements suitable in the cultures could be guided into a more "modern" economic direction.

The question is, what Marind culture, in its traditional or changed form, had/has to offer in this respect.

⁶⁹ Belshaw, p. vi.

⁷⁰ A.C. van der Leeden, p. 18-22.

5. GOVERNMENT POLICY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SINCE 1963

The major concerns of the government of Indonesia regarding New Guinea after it was handed over to them (sanctioned by the "Act of Free Choice" in 1969) were: government rule should be established all over the territory, and it should be economically integrated with the rest of Indonesia. Both asked for the improvement of infrastructure and communications.⁷¹

This was not an easy task. The Indonesian government found a poorly developed infrastructure and low levels of education. These characteristics being shared by other areas in eastern Indonesia, Irian Jaya⁷² showed some other more unique problems. Human settlements were highly dispersed, creating a fragmented economic structure. Farming was still predominantly subsistence.

As a consequence the chief non-agricultural sector in Irian's economy consisted of government expenditures, mainly civil servant salaries and infrastructure construction.

The Indonesian take-over marked the beginning of the influx of all kinds of migrants. At first, mainly Javanese moved in to fill government posts. After 1969 the in-migration of people from South and South-east Sulawesi (called MBB by the Irianese: Makassarese, Bugis and Butonese) began. In 1977, Irian Jaya was declared a major transmigration recipient region, leading to a large-scale settlement program in the province of mainly poor Javanese.

Transmigration in Irian Jaya has been the subject of much controversy, especially concerning its impact on the indigenous Irianese population. In our assessment of this, however, we should also pay attention to uncontrolled, spontaneous immigration. Of the total number of in-migrants to Irian Jaya in the period 1950-'80, only 11.2 % were contributed by government sponsored transmigration.⁷³ Even taking into account that in 1980 transmigration on a large scale basis had just started, the numbers of non-sponsored migrants must be considerable. The figures also show that this category of in-migration is largely urban biased. Towards 1980, 77.8 % of all in-migrants to Irian Jaya came to live in urban areas.⁷⁴

Contrarily, when we look at in-migration only to rural areas, transmigration contributed considerably, namely 50%.⁷⁵ This is an all Irian figure, making the percentage higher for those areas specially designated to become recipient areas

⁷¹ References for this chapter: 1. Manning (Chris) and Rumbiak (Michael), (1989). A more extensive version of this article has been published as number 20 in the Pacific Research Monograph series, University of Canberra. 2. Manning (Chris), Maude (Alaric) and Rudd (Dianne), (1989).

⁷² After initially being given the name Irian Barat, it was in 1970 renamed Irian Jaya. Henceforth we will use the name Irian Jaya.

⁷³ Manning, Maude and Rudd. p. 33.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p.35

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.33

for large numbers of transmigrants, as in the case of Merauke. As YAPSEL's activities are concentrated in the rural areas of the kabupaten Merauke, transmigration is an important topic for this study. We will have a closer look at the subject in the next section.

Government spending has been the major stimulus for economic and employment growth within the province. Per capita grants to Irian Jaya were approximately double those made to comparable resource-rich and isolated provinces outside Java (1985/'86 figure). This is partly caused by the relatively high number of civil servants in the province and their higher salaries (a special Irian Jaya allowance).⁷⁶

Although regional economic growth was quite high by both national and international standards (from '71 to '84 at an annual rate of 7%, excluding oil and mining even 10%), government expenditures did not manage to create a well-balanced economic development. Four main economic disparities ensued:

1. between the northern kabupaten and the highland and southern kabupaten,
2. between urban and rural areas,
3. between the immigrants and the indigenous Irianese,
4. between subsistence economy and enclave (resource based industry) economy.

Indeed, government contributed to the imbalance by encouraging investment and employment in trade, transport and construction in major urban centres, and agricultural production in hinterland close to the towns. Most of the newly created job opportunities in the towns benefited in-migrants. Also, the large number of non-Irianese in government service limited the impact which government expenditures could have otherwise had on employment and income of the indigenous population. Most of the development budget for rural areas went to the preparation of transmigration sites.

Despite income inequality, traditionally living Irianese, like the interior Marind, are still able to make their living by hunting and gathering. However, but in the future this could be threatened by resource based industries, especially logging, or by large transmigration sites because they diminish the physical environment of the Irianese.

Developments in the kabupaten Merauke

In their long term development guidelines, the government of the *kabupaten* Merauke gives an outline of the major constraints for development in the region. There is a striking similarity with the problems the Indonesian government encountered thirty years earlier. The dispersed population is living on subsistence level. They are difficult to reach because of the poorly developed infrastructure. Education in the villages is of low quality and the government apparatus is underdeveloped, both in quantity and quality. The local government is concerned about the big difference in development between urban and rural areas, especially those that are isolated in the interior.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Manning and Rumbiak in Hill, p.83.

⁷⁷ -- Peraturan --, pp. 39, 50-1.

In order to structure development efforts, the *kabupaten* has been divided into four development areas. The first area (*Wilayah Pembangunan I*) consists of the *kecamatan* Merauke, Muting, Kimaam and Okaba. Almost the whole Marind-population of the *kabupaten* lives within this development area.

General development policy has two approaches: "mikro spatial" (small, geographically limited, one-purpose projects) and "makro sektoral". The two approaches should support and reinforce each other.⁷⁸

In the field of agriculture, the *kecamatan* Merauke, Kimaam and Okaba are designated for food-cropping. Agricultural development in *kecamatan* Muting will concentrate on horticulture and tree-cropping. 274.000 ha of Muting's soil have been classified as suitable for this.⁷⁹ Other economic activities identified as having potential are logging, animal husbandry and fisheries.

In the development plans, the differences between indigenous population and immigrants are hardly dwelt upon, and when they are, they are discussed in very general terms. "In order to create an even spreading of welfare for the population, attention has to be given to the development of people's enterprises among the isolated tribal groups which are living dispersed in the interior."⁸⁰ Apart from a remark regarding to special attention that should be given to formal education in isolated areas⁸¹, this topic is not further elaborated upon.

In the development guidelines the government declines to give special attention to specific ethnic groups. The government's view is that all inhabitants of the *kabupaten* are Indonesians, and therefore treated equally, without preference.

The policy regarding transmigration is an example of this. Transmigration is primarily treated as a vehicle for regional development, especially in the field of agriculture. Here transmigrants provide input of skilled labour. It is hoped that the exchange of knowledge and skills between indigenous peoples and transmigrants will create a mental preparedness to ensure an active role in the local development process. The term "acculturation" is used for this process.⁸² To facilitate it, the government tries to incorporate "translocals" into the settlements. In addition, according to the guidelines, transmigration is beneficial to national defence and strengthens the unity and welfare of the people.⁸³

In 1979 full scale transmigration started in Merauke. Up to September 1991, about 44,000 transmigrants (10,700 families) have settled in the *kabupaten*, spread over 31 sites. Within the same period, total population in the *kabupaten* grew from a mere 172,000 in 1980 to more than 246,000 in 1990. When spontaneous migrants are included, this means that population growth is almost completely brought about by immigration.

Each transmigration-village has about 300 families and each village is provided with several public facilities such as a school, a government-office, a dispensary, places

78 -- Peraturan --, p. 107.

79 -- Yasanto's --, p. 54.

80 -- Peraturan --, p. 16.

81 -- Peraturan --, p. 38.

82 -- Peraturan --, p. 63.

83 -- Peraturan --, p. 30.

of worship etc. Each transmigrant gets a house, a holding of 2 ha and a food and agricultural package for one and three years respectively.

In the eighties, surveys identified a settlement capacity of over 150.000 families in the *kabupaten*. There are detailed plans for these areas, but during implementation of the programme, real settlement lagged far behind targeted figures. In the mid-eighties, as a result of a slump in oil-prices, the budget for transmigration was cut. Within the programme itself, organisational and sustainability problems were encountered, causing a slow down in implementation.⁸⁴ However the programme continues, and after two years of standstill, about 6200 transmigrants came in again in 1990/91.⁸⁵

In order to put the government development plans described into perspective, the following chapter aims to give an idea about the social-economic situation in the villages at present. The information has been compiled as a result of several short field visits to areas inhabited by Marind.

84 -- Yasanto's --, pp. 31-2. For a general story on transmigration in Irian Jaya see Arndt (1986).

85 -- Merauke --, p. 29.

6. CURRENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

A. OKABA

Okaba has a population of a little more than 8000. In the Dutch period, the town was more important as a centre of government and trade than it is now. There were police, military and the usual government post with its various services. These are still there, but in much smaller numbers. Okaba is the capital of the sub district (*kecamatan*) Okaba, which territory contains about 25 villages.⁸⁶

Because of Merauke's growing importance, many Okaban shopkeepers have gravitated to it. Okaba now only has about ten small shops, with limited stock. The majority are owned by Makassarese, a few by Chinese. Two shops specialise in clothing. Other non-Irianese occupations in Okaba are in trade and civil service.

When travelling from Merauke to Okaba (about 120 km), one has to cross the Maro, Kumbe and Bian rivers. Since these crossings are by small boats, only motorcycle travel is possible. A bridge over the Maro is under construction, but will not be finished before 1995. A few kilometres after crossing the Kumbe River, the road turns into a small dirt road. It is better to use the beach, South Irian Jaya's motorcycle highway. Tide dependent, this is possible for about seven daytime hours, more than enough time to reach Okaba. The Bian crossing-service is very irregular, although there are usually boats around. The price of a crossing, regardless the number of people, is Rp. 25,000.-. A badly kept dirt road leads you to the village of Sangasé, where the beach can be taken again, straight to Okaba. A motorcycle ride from Merauke to Okaba takes about four hours, when rivers can be crossed quickly.

Other motorised transport available for Merauke-Okaba v.v. are small traders' ships and once a week a small 15-seater plane. Around Okaba itself the Jaya Abadi coconut-plantation operates a truck, which has to use the beach to bring goods to Okaba's "harbour" (not more than a small bay, the mouth of a river). Some individuals own old jeep-type motorcars. Police and military are equipped with motorcycles, which are otherwise only owned by some traders and civil servants.

Health services in the sub district are rather poor. Along the coast between Wambi and Sangasé, only Okaba has an operating health centre. The highest level of staff education is nursery school. The nearest doctor is in Kumbe, 80 km away, who pays a visit to Okaba maybe once a year. Some villages, like Wambi, have a health centre, but the building stands unused. Most common diseases are leprosy, malaria and framboesia. Veneric granulome still occurs too.

Under-staffing is also common in the educational services. This is partly caused by the government's eagerness to establish state-schools alongside those of the protestant and catholic educational foundations. For example in Wambi, which has

⁸⁶ This section is based on a field visit to the sub district of Okaba from August 1 to 8, 1992. The main informants were Yulianus Bole Gebze, villager, Wambi (see also his paper Gebze, 1992); Joachim Dumatubun, Camat, Okaba; Suster Lusia, Okaba; Simon Wegui Mahuze, villager, Wambi; ...(?), teacher, Wambi; ...(?), teacher, Wambi; Amatus Samkakai, villager, Duvmira; Frans Tan, trader, Alatep; Mr. Hukubun, teacher, Alatep; Herman Kesi Mahuze, village head, Sangase; Yezekiel Wenep Balagaise, civil servant, Okaba.

not more than a 1000 inhabitants, there is a catholic primary school and a state primary school. The latter has one teacher, a protestant from Biak, with one helper for about 70 pupils. The former is better staffed with five teachers. Last year both schools combined had only six graduates from the sixth grade, which indicates that a lot of pupils drop out during the six years of school. All six went on to secondary education in Okaba, but usually only four out of ten finish, pointing to low quality of primary education. On the positive side, children are not forced to wear school-uniforms, as it is acknowledged that few parents care or can afford them.

Daily life

Actually only in Okaba itself one can speak of the existence of a regular money-economy. In the rest of the sub district many aspects of traditional Marind-life have survived remarkably unchanged. It remains a barter-economy of hunters and gatherers. Sago and coconut are the staple-foods, enriched by meat, fish and the products of subsistence farming like cassava, taro and bananas. Hunting and gathering is strongly influenced by the change of seasons. In the dry season it is easy to travel in the hinterland. Then sago is harvested far from the village in order to save the sago-dusuns closer to home. Game and fish are easy to catch. In the rainy season the hinterland is much more inaccessible and infested with mosquitoes. The people stay on the coast, getting protein from sea-fish, which is much more abundant during the rainy season.

To obtain everyday needs, everybody has the same skills. There is no specialisation. From this the Marind have concluded that all men are equal (but above women). However, this does not mean that society is communal. It is, on the contrary, individualistic, in terms of both property and work. This is demonstrated by the Marind way of working together: *kahâunawn*. When work has to be done that needs group involvement - like clearing land for a garden - the landowner invites his neighbours and/or fellow clan-members to help him. Nowadays it can also be people from outside the clan. The owner has to provide food and/or *wati* (one informant said that no compensation at all is also possible) to those invited, but afterwards the produce of the garden is not shared with them. In his turn, the owner has the obligation to help others. Here strict reciprocity applies. The division of labour between the sexes can be summarised as follows: men do the heavy work, but a little; women do the light work, but a lot.

The land is still divided along clan lines. Within clan-territory land can be owned by families, and passed on to individuals. In Duvmira for instance, an old man had just given 1 ha of land to this nephew, 1 ha to the other etc. Only male offspring can inherit land. Land cannot be sold, only exchanged, given or loaned.

The sense of belonging to and owning the land is still strong. During commemorations of the deceased, the elderly of each clan name all places the clan possesses in Marind-territory. This enumeration takes all night and indicates a good knowledge of the existing boundaries. These boundaries are clearly marked by paths, creeks, trees etc. Conflicts over boundaries are usually only among families belonging to the same clan. Disputes are settled by the elderly, the *pakas-anim*.

Not only goods are exchanged. The exchange-marriage is still common. When a marriage is arranged, it is common practice that the brother of the bride takes the

sister of the groom as his wife. In order to have an equal number of boys and girls to make this possible, children are exchanged with other families, or children are traded for land. One of the writer's informants had obtained a girl in this way.

Changing environment

Nowadays, the Marind cannot do entirely without money. Modernisation has incited new wants, like iron tools, simple household utensils, oil-lamps, medicine etc. and necessities, like clothes and school fees. Money making activities, however, are conducted with a hunter's attitude. When money is needed for a purchase, one starts "to look for" money, but only to the amount needed. After the transaction, the Marind returns to his daily routine of hunting and gathering.

The main money-maker in the Okaba region is copra. Copra is dried and cut coconut-pulp and can be used to make margarine, oil, cookies and soap. For 100 kg of copra, about 400 coconuts are needed. The coconuts have to be peeled, cut in two and then smoked for about four to five days. The pulp separates from the skin and is removed. 100 kg of copra is about a weeks work for a family. Unfortunately, the price of copra greatly varies. In August 1992, the price was Rp 300 per kilogram, but a year earlier it was only Rp 100.

The availability of coconuts close to the village for making copra is continuous but limited because coconuts are also used for daily consumption. The rich, undisturbed coconut resources are quite far from the village. Lack of time and means of transport prevents full use of these resources.

Lack of time is also the reason that the Marind tend to dry the copra too fast. This lowers its quality which makes it difficult to compete with higher quality copra from Sulawesi on the Surabaya market. Even so, demand from Surabaya is still high. However, copra export from Merauke diminished in 1991 because of limited transport capacity.⁸⁷

Other products that are sold, or bartered, are unprocessed coconuts, (dried) deer meat and antlers, shark fins, *gelembung* (airbags of Kakap-fish), fish/shrimps/terasi and garden-produce like bananas and beans. When bartered, it is usually for stimulants (*pinang* (areca nut), tobacco).

The Marind have no outlet to the Merauke market themselves. They fully depend on non-Irianese traders, mostly Chinese and Makassarese, to sell their produce. As production is irregular, transport is irregular too. The small traders sell to bigger ones in Merauke, who export to, almost exclusively, Surabaya. The most important traders in Merauke are C.V. Fajar, C.V. Jaya Agung, C.V. Bulan Cahaya and C.V. Tunas Jaya (Jaya Abadi), all owned by ethnic Chinese. Jaya Abadi owns a coconut-plantation close to Okaba that used to be the Kolam-kolam plantation operated by the mission, but because of neglect its production is quite low.

Apart from the irregularity of transport, another problem for both traders and producers is price instability. Copra is one example and *dendeng* (dried deer meat) is another. Around Independence Day (August 17), when demand is high, prices

⁸⁷ Tifa Irian, first week July '92, p. 4: "Produksi Kopra di Merauke Turun, Bukan Salah Pertani".

can reach Rp 1500 per kilo in Okaba, but a few months later the price can drop to Rp 700. Low prices diminish incentives to produce and in case of a sudden drop small traders see the value of their stock decrease dramatically.

In some villages, a few people have taken initiatives to intensify agricultural activities. Whether these initiatives are taken or not depends on two factors. If there is still a lot of sago available, people are usually not very interested in increasing agricultural activities. Secondly, not all soil surrounding the villages is that fertile. Salivation is also a problem in the coastal area.

Because of their hunter/gatherer background, the Marind are mostly interested in seasonal crops which give short term yield used for direct consumption. Perennial crops are more difficult to understand. They usually take at least five years before they can be harvested for the first time. Also, perennial crops are cash crops, clearly belonging to the money-economy. The Marind do not feel confident in that field. Apparently, favouring agriculture for consumption above money making activities is quite strong, even to the extent that the people are more enthusiastic for trying something new for consumption (rice-growing), than for money making activities they are already familiar with (making copra).⁸⁸

This is valid for the coastal-dwellers, but in the villages of Okaba's hinterland some changes have occurred. The development organisation Yasanto has already started to support groups in several villages with *jambu mete* (cashew nuts), coconut and coffee seedlings. This was done at the request of these groups themselves. A group from Jomob was the first, and other villages followed its example.

Here also, transport and marketing are the major problems. Being far from the nearest trading town - Merauke - transport can be costly. Carrying goods by foot from Jomob to Okaba takes at least a full day. Roads are in bad condition and especially during the rainy season hardly practicable. To transport larger quantities an ox-cart is necessary at least. Another problem is the scattered and small amount of produce. This is difficult to market. Enlarging the planted areas is not easy because a) it is still a new activity (people are still uncertain of its success) and b) already the people have difficulties looking after their gardens well because they also have to organise the gathering of their daily food and other needs. All these problems make the fulfilment of the main objective of planting perennial crops - providing a regular cash-income - rather questionable.

Another factor in the area is the government. Every village in the sub district receives about Rp 4 million government aid (Bandes = bantuan desa). The people of each village make an activity plan which is sent to the *camat* (government representative in the sub district), who forwards it for approval to district government.

Apart from Bandes, the government implements projects on its own initiative. In Okaba sub district this is limited to some small scale projects. Government extension-workers have given courses on salted-fish making. Onward extension work and follow-up, however, seem to be insufficient. The plan is to market the fish inland (Tanah Merah, Mindiptana) under mission supervision. Also, a co-operative in Merauke is willing to buy the produce.

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In the village of Aletap.

Government agricultural projects can cause problems regarding land rights. There are examples of projects supporting certain families to clear land for agriculture, but according to Marind adat the land belongs to another family or clan.

A general problem concerning land rights is, that adat law on land rights and Indonesian state law are not in concordance. Indonesian law only acknowledges cultivated land under the terms of land titles, whereas Marind adat rules that land rights are based on the hunting ground boundaries of the different clans. For Marind, "wasteland" doesn't exist.

This problem especially comes to the fore when transmigration-sites are established and roads are constructed. Transmigrants have not come to Okaba yet. There was one site near Kabtel village, but it never received transmigrants. The placement of translocals (Irianese transmigrants) was a failure, and now the houses are already dismantled for the use of the Kabtel villagers.

The advancement of money-economy, however, inevitably erodes the Marinds' adat on land rights. We have seen that in the more urbanised environment of Merauke, but just recently also in Okaba the Marind have started to sell land for money, something which is not allowed in adat law (also, adat doesn't know what money is). To non-Irianese, land can only be given in usufruct.

At the moment the land-issue also plays a role regarding an interesting venture. In the interior, behind Sangasé and Alatep, the Pt. Resa Eka Prasetia has plans to start a large deer-raising ranch. The villagers are not willing to sell the land, but they might rent it out.

Prospects and constraints

It is clear that resource abundance in the sub district of Okaba gives ample economic opportunities. The main constraints for efficient use of these resources are:

1. Infrastructural problems: car-traffic to Merauke is not possible, and sea transport is irregular and relatively expensive.
2. Cultural constraints: the mentality of hunters and gathers create specific problems in development efforts, especially those being part of the money-economy.
3. Organisational problems: bodies that take care of the management of production and sales efforts of the villagers do not exist.

The above constraints above indicate that a survey on the economic output opportunities of the region should be backed up by ideas about the organisation of that output. The people themselves are talking about forming co-operatives. The villagers would sell their produce to the co-operative, which would be responsible for sales and marketing. The co-operative would also operate a shop, so that money would keep circulating in the village itself. However, one should not think lightly about forming a co-operative. Too many failures have already occurred. Usually two problems come to the fore. Firstly, the Marinds' individualistic lifestyle is not always in concordance with the ideas supporting a co-operative (the word comes from co-operation!). Secondly, it is often difficult to find qualified staff that

can take the responsibility for running a co-operative. Looking back to the efforts of father Verschueren, among others, we can see that there is a need for almost constant guidance and support for the people's efforts to become conversant with new means of production. This includes quality control.

Inexperience is partly also responsible for the fact that no Marind himself is able to market his produce in Merauke. He lacks transport and market sense. Any development effort should pay attention to these constraints.

As said above, there are many production opportunities. To conclude this chapter, a list of ideas is given.

Seafood: courses for making salted fish have already been given. The villagers are already able to make shrimp-paste (terasi). Shark fins sell well, but this activity is probably not sustainable. Selling airbags of kakap-fish probably has better prospects. Due to transport problems, sale of fresh fish to distant markets is difficult.

Coconut: several sources suggest the establishment of a simple coconut-oil factory. It could stabilise prices, increase profit as well as provide employment. Supply of coconuts is guaranteed and technology is simple. A feasibility study, however, is needed.

Animal husbandry: deer-raising is a possibility that should be looked into. Fresh or dried meat and antlers constitute its produce.

Rice growing: when fertile soil is available. People are enthusiastic because it is for their own consumption and can easily be stored. Part of the produce could be sold.

Medicinal oil: *kayu putih*, which this oil is made from, grows abundantly in Okaba's hinterland.

B. THE UPPER BIAN REGION

For several years now, Muting, capital of the *kecamatan* with the same name, has been linked to Merauke by an all-weather road. The road is part of the so called Trans-Irian Highway, which eventually will link Merauke with Jayapura. At the Merauke end, the road has almost reached Mindiptanah. The road, however, still has long unpaved tracts. It takes an experienced driver about six to seven hours to cover the approx. 240 km. Two to three times a week an old Landrover goes back and forth, carrying goods and passengers. Recently YAPSEL's new truck has regularly taken passengers to Muting. Other car-traffic is chartered. Airline services to Muting have been stopped for about four years. Muting (approx. 3750 inhabitants) has six shops with limited stock, one operated by the church-council, one by a Chinese and the remainder by Makassarese.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ This section is based on a field visit to the sub district of Muting from September 11 to 19, 1992. The main informants were Father Bennebroek, Muting; Franciscus Konowok, health worker, Muting; Harry Ndiken, development worker, Muting; Daniel Keize, village head, Pahas; Sebastianus Ndiken, village head, Kindiki; Ludia, Adriana and Aser Samkakai, villagers, Waan; Adonia Samkakai, development worker, Waan; Tersisius Mahuze, teacher, Kolam; Bernardus Ndiken, villager, Boha.

When taking the trans-Irian road, the first villages that are passed within the *kecamatan* Muting that are passed are Kweel, Tanas and Bupul, at the upper reaches of the Maro River. A half-day walk from Kweel, at the Kumbe River, is Keisa village. Muting and the other villages (Selil, Kindiki, Pahas, Boha, Waan, Kolam and Selauw) are all along the upper reaches of the Bian River. The villages on average have a population of about 250. Muting and Pahas are linked to the Bian River for about nine months of the year, depending on rainfall. In the last months of the year the marshes are only passable by foot, because the marsh-creeks are too shallow for canoe-traffic.

Within the neighbourhood of Muting there are three transmigration locations, near Bupul one. At the moment Muting SP 4 (SP = *Satuan Pemukiman*, housing unit) and Bupul SP 2 and 3 are under construction. The sites are inhabited mainly by Javanese and Florinese. There is little influence of the transmigration-sites on the surrounding indigenous population as both groups keep to themselves. The transmigrants on bicycles, who can be seen trying to sell some of their garden produce, are the only clear sign of any contact between the two groups in Muting. As a result of transmigration, the Javanese already outnumber the Marind in the *kecamatan* Muting. 42% of the population is Javanese, against 35% Marind.

Muting has a health-centre with eight staff and recently a doctor has joined them. The villages Bupul, Tanas and Kweel and four transmigration-sites each have one health-worker. About three times a year a health-worker (BA in nursing) visits the villages along the Bian River. However, when this is done un-announced, there is a chance that half the village will be in the forest, so that usually only the schoolchildren undergo regular examination. According to the villagers, the immunisation-programme has decreased the children's death rate during the last three years. The most common diseases found are skin-diseases (leprosy, scabies etc.), those affecting the respiratory system (TB), gastro-intestinal problems (diarrhoea, worms), malaria, framboesia, venereal diseases and anemias. In the villages many edema-bellies can be seen, caused by an imbalanced food-intake. Especially protein-intake is irregular.

Muting receives its medicine supplies from Merauke, but this is not totally satisfactory. Shortages occur, while at the same time medicine which is still in plentiful supply in Muting is sent unnecessarily.

Every village has a primary school, each having approx. 70 pupils and three teachers. Absenteeism is more a problem among the teachers than among the children, but one has to take into account the less than favourable working-conditions of the teachers. Some are acting as volunteers because it takes a long time before licences are arranged. Others have to go to Merauke in search of their salaries which have not been paid.

Some children who have finished primary-school go on to the SMP in Muting (From Pahas 75 %, from Kolam 20 %), but thereafter there are hardly any from the Upper-Bian villages who continue with their education.

Traditional life

Just as in the coastal regions, the provision of daily needs has remained fairly unchanged over the years. A money-economy has slowly crept in, but the villagers are not really dependent on it. Some old customs have survived, but have changed in form. For instance, there are remnants from the old ceremonies which are associated with children going from one age-group to the next. At an age between six and ten, the girls have their ears pierced in a ceremonial way. The boys likewise undergo ceremonies when they start to learn how to use bow and arrow.

To satisfy their urge to feast, religious high-days are used to organise outdoor activities. On these occasions the traditional songs are replaced by christian ones. Commemorating the deceased is also an occasion for important gatherings, but only among catholics. In the Upper Bian area, Pahas and Waan are protestant villages. The 40 and 100 days commemorations are forbidden by the protestant church. However, in the protestant villages traditional pig and wedding-feasts are also very much alive.

Weddings play a significant role in planting habits. The parents of the groom are required to provide a large amount of food to be used at the wedding- ceremony. It is also the reason that the beds with the wati-plants are always well kept because wati plays an important role in the ceremonies. "Menaman untuk anak" (plant for your children) is a good slogan found on Yasanto's extension-posters.

In the town of Muting, the institute of marriage is in a transition period. The parents still want to exert their influence but the children usually go their own way. In case of disapproval of the parents, the lovers just start to live together, have children and later on arrange an adat- and church-marriage. By that time, the parents have no alternative but to acquiesce to the situation. Because the parents' influence has diminished, exchange-marriages hardly occur anymore.

What is still clearly organised according to adat is land ownership. When conflicts arise, it is usually within a clan or family, but the boundaries between the clan-owned lands are clear. There is no sale of land to private companies or individuals. Land is rented out. There is an example of a saw-mill company which employed a person specially for negotiating with the landowners. This process requires a lot of patience, because time and again new claimants to the land show up.

Agriculture

Agricultural activities other than subsistence agriculture were introduced after WW II during the Dutch period. The area around Muting was a producer of *jeruk manis* (sweet oranges) in the fifties and sixties. Thereafter new activities on a larger scale did not occur until the mid eighties. In 1987 YAPSEL started to help the villagers of the Upper Bian River region with land-clearing and the supply of seedlings. Extension work and lotting out was done in co-operation with the government service for horticulture. Emphasis is on cash-crops such as cashew-nuts, coffee and chocolate. Seasonal crops were planted in between the perennial crops but many of these were eaten by pigs and deer, in some locations causing the end of this venture. Seasonal crops planted close to the village are usually not disturbed.

Initially YAPSEL supported crop-planting in small dispersed plots close to the village, but after 1990 the clearance of large plantation-like sites for perennial crops started. Land clearance was done by the people together, after which lots were

measured to be handed out to families and single males. Each lot measures about a half or one hectare, depending on the local situation (i.e. the availability of suitable land).

After initial enthusiasm during land clearing and planting, YAPSEL noticed that the villagers did not keep their gardens neat and clean. At first lack of interest was blamed for this, but later on it was also acknowledged that the villagers needed ample time 1) to look after their daily needs, 2) to work for government initiated activities and 3) for cash-earning activities.

ad 1. Obtaining the food supply for the villages of Bupul, Tanas and Kweel takes longer than for the other villages in the *kecamatan*. Their sago-resources are quite a distance from the villages and game is less abundant than it used to be. The Upper Bian villages seem to have no problems in that respect, deer especially are numerous.⁹⁰

ad 2. There is a special form of government intervention in the region called *Gersahtera* (Gerakan Desa Sejahtera, Movement for Village Welfare). Gersahtera programmes are implemented in regions which according to government need extra support. The border region in Irian Jaya is considered one of them. Gersahtera has helped mainly with the supply of seasonal-crops seedlings and small livestock like chicken and goat. During the field visit the people of Waan were busy making goat-pens. The programme, however, has a poor follow-up, so that after consumption of the harvest not much was done to replant. Another weakness in the programme is that seedlings and animals are usually given for free, so that the following year the villagers expect new free supplies. When this is not available enthusiasm dwindles.

Government can also request the people to work for the common cause. Because of an administrative re-organisation (the division of the *kecamatan* into 12 instead of the original 4 *desa*'s) several villages necessitated the building of a *balai desa* (community meeting house).

ad 3. The main cash-supplier is dendeng. Sometimes it is sold to traders who come directly from Merauke, but usually the market for dendeng is Muting. Produce can be sold to the shopkeepers there (price is Rp 1200 per kg), or patrolling government-personnel may buy it in the villages (for Rp 1000). Buyers also provide the villagers with salt (needed for dendeng making) and other goods in exchange for a quantity of dendeng.

Although hit by government restrictions, the sale of *burung kuning* (yellow birds) and crocodile-skins still goes on, however their importance as cash-suppliers seem to have diminished.

Loggers, road-builders and consultancy firms provide temporary jobs for day-labourers. This requires a long absence from the villages. One villager mentioned his experiences with this kind of work as very beneficial for upgrading his skills. He owns a chainsaw and his brother is the only one in the village possessing an outboard-motor, which when necessary they can repair themselves.

⁹⁰ In the fifties there were no deer in the region, showing the fast multiplication of the deer population in southern Irian Jaya.

Although YAPSEL is not currently aware of the precise number of trees growing, the impression is that after a couple of years the production-volume will be sufficient for export. Some trees were already fruit-bearing last year, but the first harvests are not suited for sowing-seed or for selling. The producers, however, do not seem to be fully informed about this and are nervous about the future marketing possibilities. YAPSEL has laid much stress on keeping the gardens clean, but apparently did not discuss in detail about post harvest follow-up. Still, the producers admire clean, well kept plots, and the owners are proud of it. This pride could be enhanced by more attention from YAPSEL and by discussing future prospects for cash-income.

As YAPSEL has initiated much perennial-crop planting in the region, the foundation also has the responsibility to look after the subsequent cash-income opportunities. YAPSEL owns a fairly large dug-out canoe with outboard-motor and recently operates its own truck, so that transportation should not pose a problem. The next step is finding a buyer, either in Merauke or Surabaya.

Meanwhile, it is hoped that the cash-crops will prove to be as profitable as the current cash-earning activities. This is not completely clear yet however and should be investigated further.

Economic opportunities

Much of what has been concluded in the chapter on Okaba also applies to the Upper Bian region. Development efforts should be conscious of cultural constraints and as a consequence should be careful with the introduction of hitherto unknown activities. The impression is that traditional cash-earning activities show good opportunities for expansion. The availability of resources does not constitute a problem. Usually it is transportation and marketing that have to be improved. This also holds true for the newly introduced cash-crop activities.

It is recommended that YAPSEL pays more attention to organisational matters, with the aim of ensuring that producers (be it cashew-nuts or dendeng) have a better outlet to the market. Initially the economic possibilities of the existing resources should be investigated (deer, fish), while at the same time trying to improve (but not enlarge) and consolidate cash-crop ventures. Animal husbandry is another potential cash-earner.

C. THE LOWER KUMBE REGION

In the Dutch period, the lower reaches of the Kumbe river were the scene of economic activities initiated by the government and the catholic mission. The former started a mechanised rice project in Kurik and the latter established a co-operative, its area of operation encompassing the villages along the Kumbe River (the Kongs Kali Kumbe).⁹¹

⁹¹ This section is based on a field visit to the villages Baad, Wayouw, Koa and Kumbe, from September 29 to October 2, 1992. The main informants were Martinus Solo Balagaize, villager, Baad; Christianus Ndiken and Onosensia Nemo, teachers, Baad; Simon Mahuze, villager, Wayouw; Hermina Ikanubun, teacher, Wayouw; Paulus Mahuze, villager, Wayouw; Gervasius Ndiken,

Nowadays, the area is dominated by large transmigration sites. Starting in Merauke heading west along the coast, after approx. 40 km one crosses the Kumbe River. On the other side of the river is Kumbe village. From there a recently built asphalt road winds through the transmigration sites. The nine sites, Kurik I to VI and Salor I to II, look rather distressing in the dry season. The treeless, dry and dusty stretches are desolate, without people to be seen. The farmers have to wait patiently for the rainy-season before they can resume working again. In the dry season (drinking) water-supply is an ever returning problem.

Near Salor II, the paved road ends and one has to turn off onto a dirt road to reach, after one hour by motorcycle, the first Marind-village along the Kumbe River, Baad. There is a large contrast between the human made agricultural lands for transmigration and the unspoilt vegetation of the Marind-territory.

Baad is a small village (54 KK). In the fifties, half of the villagers left due to a conflict that affected the whole village. The houses here look unkept. This is caused partly by the fact that the inhabitants are often away for long periods of time, staying near their sago dusuns, which are located close to the Maro River. The food situation here is better than in Baad itself. Around Baad, deer are not found in abundance anymore, possibly due to the proximity of the transmigration-sites. In the dry season, lack of water makes the processing of sago difficult. The process of extracting the sago-flour from the trunk requires large amounts of water. Usually water is available in the marshponds that the sago-trees are standing in. In the dry season these dry up and the tree trunks have to be rolled to the village where water from the river can be used.

Fruit and vegetables from the forest are also scarce during the dry season. The menu therefore consists only of sago, sometimes with fish, coconut or banana. The people do not appear to be very active in making vegetable gardens. A few have been noted to use the services of Yasanto, whose main activity in the region consisted of introducing jambu mete. There are approximately a hundred jambu mete trees in Baad. Cashew nuts sell for Rp. 500 per kg. However, transportation to the market is a problem. Income from that source is therefore negligible. The main source of cash is deer meat. A deer can be sold for Rp. 15,000 to Rp. 35,000, while one kilogram sells for about Rp. 1500. Deer meat is sold to transmigrants. For transportation of the meat the people generally do not use the Kumbe River. Nobody has an outboard motor so in the dry season bicycles are used, while in the wet season canoes can go through the marshes.

Once, an outboard motor (now out of order) was provided as part of a land deal. The Indonesian government obtained 8000 ha of land for the transmigration sites Sermayam I and II from several Baad families for 100 sacks of cement, 300 pieces of sheet-iron, 6 bicycles, 3 sewing-machines, a chainsaw and the outboard motor, with a total value of Rp 8,500,000.-. This deal had to be negotiated afterwards, because the contractor had already started clearing the land.

With regards to education, in Baad there are two teachers for 65 pupils. One of the teachers works on a voluntary basis, with a small allowance from the local catholic educational foundation. The volunteer teacher was a villager from Baad who had

his education in Merauke before returning to his village. Now he is waiting to become an official government-paid teacher.

Medical facilities are limited. The nearest Puskesmas is in Salor II, a one day's walk from Baad. Occasionally a nurse visits the village.

Wayouw is a village further inland with approximately 60 KK. In Wayouw the houses appear better cared for than in Baad. The people are also more active in planting food- and cash-crops. Approximately 500 jambu mete trees are standing in the vicinity of the village. Unfortunately, an equal number of trees has already burnt down. Last year, twenty families together harvested a ton of cashew-nuts. The harvest was bought (Rp. 500 per kg) and collected by a *bélang* (small riverboat) from Kumbe, operating for a Merauke based entrepreneur. Jambu mete was introduced a few years ago by Yasanto. However, the villagers complained that since a PBD-office (a kind of sub-office to Yasanto with independent status) was established in Kumbe, nobody from Yasanto has come to visit the village again.

Other cash-income comes from the deer meat and *ikan kaloso* (aquarium fish). Catching *ikan kaloso* is limited to the last months of the year, the litter-season. Only the young fish are caught and they sell for Rp. 1000 each.

Wayouw has a Puskesmas building, but there are no health care-personnel in the village. As in Baad, occasionally a nurse visits the village. In Wayouw, a husband and wife team takes care of education. They teach about 60 pupils at the primary school. Among them are some children from Koa village, whose parents felt education was important enough to send them to Wayouw during the school days. This is due to the fact that in Koa the teachers do not attend school for long periods of time. Regularly parents or children cover the two hours walk from Koa to Wayouw to bring or get food. In 1992 all of those who finished school (11 pupils) went to the recently opened SMP boarding-school in Kumbe.

Koa village is a 1.5 hours walk (without luggage) from Wayouw. The path to Koa is suitable for motorcycle traffic however, the last opportunity to buy gas is in Kurik, so that enough has to be brought from there to reach Koa. The whole village is surrounded by a fence, and everything looks well kept. A striking feature in the village is the presence of two rows of electricity poles along each side of the central street. These and a generator were bartered against *ikan kaloso*. Although the barter could have been more advantageous for the villagers, it is a good example of considerable income that can be obtained from these kinds of activities. Another cash-earner is deer meat.

One has the impression that government and missionary involvement in the Marind-villages is much less than it was in the Dutch period. Many Baad villagers for instance stay away from their village for long periods to live near their dusuns, something the Dutch government would have discouraged as much as possible. Then, however, something was done in return, to keep the villagers in their village. The Kongsu Kali Kumbe set up co-operatives in the villages, providing an outlet for the people's produce (mainly crocodile-skin, sago and copra), encouraging the people to make gardens for food production to cover the dry season and opening small shops in the villages. Nowadays nothing is left from these activities.

In contrast, in the transmigration-sites a lot of government money has been spent to establish the certain minimal level of services required for transmigration

locations. For instance, in the transmigration-areas, three junior high schools (SMP) have been established, while for village children just recently a SMP boarding-school has been opened in Kumbe.

In the mid-eighties, Yasanto was quite active in the region, and their attention was primarily directed towards the indigenous population however, of the original thirteen, only two groups remain active. These two groups are not villagers, they are translocals living in the transmigration area.

The proximity of transmigration to the villages can also have advantages. Because of the large number of people, the area has become an economic entity of its own, with a market primarily running on local demand and supply. Although the Marind-villages are some distance away, thus preserving much of the natural wealth in their environment, they are close enough to transmigrants to make selling produce there easier than bringing it to the far away Merauke market. Therefore, on condition that the indigenous population has equal access to services like schools, agricultural extension etc., stronger economic ties between the hunters of the villages and the transmigrant-farmers will be of mutual benefit.

Looking at the economic possibilities of the indigenous population, resources seem to be sufficient to continue traditional cash-earning activities like deer-hunting and fisheries (ikan kaloso, salted fish, trassi). The people are also familiar with horse-breeding, therefore the introduction of animal husbandry can expect acceptance from the villagers. Production of cashew nuts should be continued, but extension-workers should assist the farmers more. Lastly, the production of food crops that is now done on a subsistence basis could be upgraded in order to create a surplus for the market.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the formulation of a long term strategy for YAPSEL. To this end it is necessary that the development organisation is aware of the cultural background of the target-group. Therefore a large part of the study describes the changes Marind society underwent since 1902, when western intrusion started with the foundation of Merauke.

In order to have an idea of the nature of poverty in YAPSEL's working area, another requirement for the formulation of a long term strategy, the study continues with a social-economic description of the area until the present day.

In the historical section we have seen that the Dutch government founded Merauke with a preconceived purpose: the stopping of head hunting. Other changes were brought about unintentionally, like those caused by the introduction of iron. Both intentional and unintentional changes caused a shift in the division of labour between the sexes, the men usually loosing tasks, whereas the work-load for women generally increased.

Later on, as the result of diseases that plagued the Marind, a combined action of the Netherlands-Indies government and the catholic mission intervened thoroughly in the Marind's social organisation, in a coercive way. The Marind were "requested insistently" to live in model-villages and copy the western family system. The customary regulated promiscuity as part of the fertility cults would come to a halt and would be replaced by christianity as the spiritual basis. However, to the older generation the western family-system was regarded immoral, thereby causing a deep rift between the generations. The passing over of the traditional leaders when local government was established added to this gap.

Already before WW II, people who were working with the Marind encountered inertia and indifference towards their environment and the changes therein. Often it was not necessary any more to work very hard to obtain the daily basic needs. Demand (consumption) was already quite low, and now supply was increased in two ways. First, due to a dramatic decrease of the population figure, caused by venereal disease and influenza, resources became available in abundance for those who survived. Secondly, this resource surplus could be easily transformed into goods because of the presence of traders who were willing to barter.

While the necessity to sustain production at the same level disappeared, at the same time the incentive to produce disappeared too. The big feasts, for which large amounts of food were needed, were prohibited or scaled down (also, the Dutch regarded these amounts of food wasteful). The feast that marked the beginning of the planting season, was prohibited too.

Planting activities were communal activities, but the willingness to undertake group-activities diminished because of the *Pax Neerlandica*. People became more individualistic because, with the environment less hostile, a social organisation characterised by mutual dependency became anachronistic. Besides pacifying the region, government actively discouraged the Marind from staying outside the villages for long periods, in order to be able to exert better

control. This decreased traditional agricultural activities further. Harvesting forest products was already disturbed by combining several old settlements into the new model-villages. As a result, people often came to live further away from their sago resources and hunting grounds.

The acculturation discussion in the fifties tried to provide answers regarding the effect these changes had psychologically. The discussion produced two opposing opinions. One states that the Marind, after getting to know the new world, discovered that theirs was a sham world. Combined with the thesis that their culture was not able to develop itself any more, the Marind were happy they could embrace the new western culture.

The other opinion argues that the acculturation-process is much more a struggle and a challenge for the people who undergo it. The whole situation is confusing and therefore the Marind try to find a new balance, a mixture of the old and new they are happy with. This process takes a lot of effort, and the outcome is not always positive.

The study gives examples of difficulties and failures in acculturation, which tend to support the second opinion. It is described why it was so difficult to introduce a school system in the villages. Christianity was adopted, but usually only superficially. Many initiatives in the agricultural field failed.

After the Indonesians took over in 1963, the nature of government changed. Making the new province an integral part of Indonesia was priority for the Indonesian government. But resources were limited and the Indonesians interfered relatively less in the Marind's daily life than the Dutch had done. This changed when large scale transmigration started to affect the region. As the government was not very active in helping the indigenous population to cope with modernisation, non-interference could now be called neglect.

Nowadays it is striking to see how traditional, in many aspects, the Marind still live, despite past influence of government and missionaries. They are still predominantly hunters and gatherers. In trade relations, barter is dominant. Culturally, the Marind seem to have put old pictures into new frames. Features of the old culture have been adapted so that they are acceptable for church and civil authorities alike. There are indications that old rites are still performed secretly.

This may indicate that efforts to mould a society according to an outside plan have limited effect in many fields. Many processes in acculturation cannot be controlled or guided because the members of a society undergoing change decide for themselves what they will and will not accept. Some features in the original culture are susceptible to change in new directions, while others are not. Some Irianese tribes could adjust themselves very well to western social-economic patterns, others could not and tended to fall apart culturally.

The early discovery of a "moral depression" among the Marind indicates that they constitute one of those tribes that have problems dealing with new developments. That makes the tribe vulnerable. Yet, the area where the Marind live experiences irreversible changes, and it is YAPSEL's concern that these changes will not victimise the Marind, turning them into a sorry, cultureless, marginalised lot.

YAPSEL's strategy

YAPSEL's objective is to help the Marind adjust themselves to their changing environment, in such a way that they will become socially, economically and culturally emancipated Indonesians. In chapter I YAPSEL's initial strategy has been described. This strategy clearly shows an economic bias, with the assumption that sufficient cash-income will create independence and will broaden the range of choices that can be made. This will bring the target-group closer to emancipation.

The time that YAPSEL had given itself to accomplish the goals, after which the target-group would not need YAPSEL's support any more, was ten years, to begin in 1987. In the first five years intensive intervention would create a new economic foundation, enough to provide the basis for economic self-reliance.

But a few years of experience has made YAPSEL more aware of the limitations of their work. Not merely trying to make farmers out of hunters, but trying to make cash-crop farmers out of them in most cases proved to be a leap forward too far. It led to a re-orientation in YAPSEL's strategy towards more attention to food-crops, thereby also improving the nutritional value of the daily menu. Growing annual food-crops is definitely closer to a hunter's mentality. The activity is short term and its produce can be used for own consumption.

Looking back to five years of YAPSEL activity, it is clear that the ten years time-frame is unrealistic. Taking into account the Marind's history of coercive change and the current situation as described in chapter six, it is justified to say that YAPSEL wanted to induce changes too quickly. In point 2 of YAPSEL's main objectives (p. 8, "For instance from being a lazy-bones..."), being a hunter is linked (probably unconsciously) to all kinds of negative connotations (on-looker, coward, lazy-bones etc.) It is illustrative of a way of thinking whereby it is too easily assumed that the target-group can change itself quickly and drastically, for their own good.

In spite of its own advise to YAPSEL regarding the requirement for the sound preparation of the development-programme (see p. 8), the funding agency decided to support the programme without having proof for such a sound preparation. Then, during implementation, some things went wrong.

YAPSEL, however, was not afraid to change her strategy when experiences indicated its necessity. More attention to food-crops has already been mentioned. But growing food-crops in large quantities is not easy either. The villages being in the middle of unspoilt nature, the crops are often eaten by forest animals. This means that a lot of extra input is necessary in the form of fences, rat poison, insecticides etc. In addition, food-crops need daily care and attention. Because food-supply has to be secured and therefore hunting and gathering goes on, the combination with agricultural activities implies complicated (for the Marind's mind) time-management.

As difficulties are experienced concerning farming initiatives because of socio-cultural constraints, it is proposed here that attention should be given to activities that are closer to the life-style and skills of the target-group.

The chapter on the current situation gives some ideas for such activities. Good use can be made of existing natural resources. Examples are deer meat, sustainable

logging, aquarium-fish, medicinal oil and fish (in general the potential for non-timber forest production should be investigated). It is usually a matter of organisational and managerial improvement that is needed to increase production of traditional cash-earners.

The assumption that because of the Marind's cultural vulnerability one should be cautious with introducing new activities, leads to the conclusion that from the start YAPSEL reversed the logical order. The logical order would be: start to make use of available natural resources to its fullest extent, in a sustainable way, then slowly introduce annual food-crops and finally introduce perennial cash-crops. YAPSEL started with the last step and later added the second (diversifying food-production).

In general, cautiousness should be observed with introducing any hitherto unknown activity, like animal husbandry, new forms of co-operation etc.

As YAPSEL clearly takes the initiative in certain fields, YAPSEL also has responsibility for its follow-up. In practice this means that YAPSEL has to look into and obtain experience in the marketing end of production. Here the target-group is the most vulnerable and hardly skilled. Marketing efforts can also improve YAPSEL's own financial position. If YAPSEL is able to generate surplus income out of business-activities, the foundation will become less dependent upon outside funding sources.

YAPSEL's programme has an economic bias and attention has been paid mainly to the economic aspects of its strategy. We have seen, however, that cultural constraints caused to change that strategy. In the historical chapters we have seen the, sometimes devastating, effect on Marind culture by earlier benign interventions. The Marind having such a history, it would be insufficient if YAPSEL only pays attention to economic activities. A healthy socio-cultural base is indispensable. To pursue a state of welfare, non-material aspects are as important. For instance, it will have a positive psychological effect if interest is shown in the Marind's culture. To date YAPSEL has not paid much attention to the cultural aspects of their work, partly because this might induce suspicion from the side of government. Nowadays, the climate seems to be better for activities in the cultural field. One could think of writing up folk-tales, reconstruct traditional dances, saving and continuing skills regarding traditional material culture (musical instruments, weaponry, plait-work).

Another important non-material aspect is the communication with the target-group. Because YAPSEL is not just a facilitator, but instead plays an active role itself, the organisation should have a clear idea about the way the target-group should be approached. Most employees at the head-office are indigenous and therefore communicate easily with members of the target-group. YAPSEL's staff and especially its leadership, however, is higher educated and has a more urban mentality. This is probably the main reason that there is a difference in pace between YAPSEL and the target-group, causing the development-organisation becoming impatient and dissatisfied with progress. To prevent this, the organisation should pay more attention to the psychological aspects of their work in the field. Extension-work should be more professional and structured, with a clear understanding of its mid- and long-term impact. This also holds true when YAPSEL wants to pay more attention to the role of women in development.

Working on development in southern Irian Jaya is difficult. The peculiarities of the region make most handbooks on development not applicable. Working with a tribal society that has so many problems in adjusting itself to a changing environment calls for a strategy that can be unique and daring. YAPSEL therefore should not be afraid to try out uncommon activities and original approaches, for the Marind deserve their support, and YAPSEL deserves success.

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APPENDIX

Below is a summary of one of the concluding sections of Van Baal's standard work "Dema. Description and analysis of Marind-anim culture (South New Guinea)" (The Hague, 1966). The section has as title "The dark secret". The summary is actually a series of key sentences from the original text, without alterations.

"Marind-anim religion is a phallic religion. All life derives from sperma and the phallus brings both life and death. Everything derives from it and yet, the secret of the great cults is that the men must submit to the women, caught in coitu, powerless. The great secret is that the venerated power is not really as powerful as it is pretended to be. The source of all life, sperma, is effective only - at least, in principle - if produced in copulation. These self-sufficient males need the females and they know it; only, they do not care to admit it. At least, not overtly so.

It is certain that among the Marind the relations between the sexes are beset with conflicts and institutionalized controversies. [follows examples of the ambiguous relationships between men and women] The effect of sodomy on sexual relations generally should not be minimized. The social approbation of homosexuality is reflected in myth. The Geb-ze are the true homosexuals, superior to the Sami-rek, who are the copulators. And yet, how perfectly pitiable these proud Geb-ze are. In ritual it is the Geb-ze moiety who suffer the humiliation of having to submit to the female because they are trapped in copulation.

In myth the conflict of homosexuality and heterosexuality is reflected in the castration anxiety motif, a recurrent theme in the mythology of either moiety. The original culture of the Marind did not provide a way out of the problem. The glorification of their sex put the males in a position which they experience as humiliating. The women are despised and the men are afraid of them.

The inadequacy of the relations between the sexes is sustained by another peculiar facet of Marind-anim culture. It is a culture of males and the women have no culture of their own. They follow the men. It seems probable that the efforts of the females to imitate the males were inspired by the unsatisfactory place which their sex occupied in the cultural pattern and we are inclined to suppose that there is a causal relation of some sort between the frustrations of the female sex and the low fertility-rate. All the evidence tends to suggest that sexual life was emotionally unsatisfactory, not only so for the females, but for the males as well.

In a culture so entirely preoccupied with sex as the mainspring of life, the inadequacy of sex-relations is a terrible problem. In fact, it is so terrible that, in ritual, the motifs of death and sex are inextricably mixed up. The insoluble contradictions resulting from the pretended absolutism of the male function in the life-giving process lead to the equally irreducible inconsistency of a combination of copulation and death in the cult."

The last sentences of the book are, after a quote from Goethe's Faust:

"Unfortunately, they had not the deep wisdom of that old sage and wizard, Goethe, and failed in their appreciation of the female sex. They recoiled where they should have been charmed. Yet, for all its oddities, its entanglements and contradictions, this past is a human past, and even more than that. In its failure - and more particularly in this than in anything else - it is also human glory."